

## Western Iowa Synod ELCA

## 2009 Assembly

Friday May 1 Opening of assembly: plenary began at 5:05 pm with comments & introductions.

Intros: Billy McLaughlin & band

Dr. Richard Swanson for Bible study/keynote Professor of Religion, Augustana College, Sioux Falls

Introductions - Rev. Mark Grorud--Director for Relationships with Large Membership Congregations, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission ELCA, Rev. Phillip Blom, ELCA BOP Regional Representative , Lance Ehmcke, Gerald Clausen. Pr. Michael Schmidt, Pr. Kathy Wicks, Jean Knight

***MOTION to grant privilege*** of voice on the floor of the assembly to Lance Ehmcke – parliamentarian, Rev. Mark Grorud, representative of the churchwide organization, and Dr. Norma Hirsch, representative of the human sexuality task force of the ELCA.

**PASSED**

### Credentials Report

#### 2009 Western Iowa Synod ELCA ASSEMBLY

As of 5 pm the Assembly Registration is:

PASTORS	88
AiMs	2
LAYWOMEN	102
LAYMEN	75
YOUTH	14
TOTAL VOTING	281
INTERNS	1
TOTAL VISITORS	60

TOTAL ATTENDING 341

Jean Knight was called on to teach use of Quizdom – electronic voting

**Dr. Norma Hirsch** introduced

### Adopt Standing Rules

***Motion to amend*** by Pr Paul Bengtson – Resolutions dealing with memorials to the ELCA assembly require 2/3 majority for passage.

Vote 179 in favor – 101 against - 5 abstain

**PASSED**

***ADOPT Standing Rules*** as amended: 211 in favor-69 against -3 abstain **ADOPTED**

***Adopt Agenda*** - **ADOPTED**

***APPROVE 2008 ASSEMBLY MINUTES*** 248 in favor – 3 against – 9 abstain

Nominating Committee and Seminararians introduced

(Larry Wendland, Pr. Mark Decker, Pr. Del Olivier). Nominees asked to stand.

Seminarians - Lorene(John) Glant Ben (Monica)McIntire Sarah Nye MDiv Joel Nye (MA diaconal minister)

Julie Sevig spoke on The Lutheran

Treasurer's report

Worship at First Lutheran Church

Recessed until tomorrow morning at 9:15.

Saturday May 2

8:00 am Morning Prayer with Billy McLaughlin and Richard Swanson

Friday night worship offering totaled \$ 7950

Introduce Keynote/Bible study - Richard Swanson

9:15 am Plenary session #2

CREDENTIALS REPORT

2009 Western Iowa Synod ELCA ASSEMBLY

As of 8:30 am the Assembly Registration is:

PASTORS	101
AiMs	2
LAYWOMEN	122
LAYMEN	93
YOUTH	18
TOTAL VOTING	336
INTERNS	3
TOTAL VISITORS	80
TOTAL ATTENDING	416

9:17 am Nominations Report

Additional nominations for the positions announced for election at this assembly.

Pr. Vic Johnson - Nominating for conference Nishna Valley

Molly Hall - Nominee for Synod Council Youth

Kermit Smith - Conference election to Board for Ministry

Motion vote to cast unanimous ballot for uncontested positions.

PASSED

**Center for Agricultural Development presentation – Cindy Wells**

**RESOLUTION #9 Funding of Internships**

**9. Funding of Internships**

Submitted by Pastor John Wolf, Inwood Lutheran Parish, Inwood

WHEREAS, nearly all studying to become a Lutheran pastor are required to spend a year as an intern in a parish or an institutional setting; and

WHEREAS, the whole church benefits by having well-trained pastors; **congregations apply for a grant and do self study to understand being a teaching congregation;** and

WHEREAS, the Western Iowa Synod has a large number of rural and small town congregations; and

WHEREAS, the need for pastors in rural and small town settings is particularly acute, and

WHEREAS, under the present system, candidates for ordination, for a variety of reasons, are unfamiliar with or may have a preconceived opinion of rural and small town ministry; and

WHEREAS, most first calls for pastors tend to be to small town and rural congregations; and

WHEREAS, a good way to expose candidates for ministry to the joys and blessings of rural and small town ministry, and to encourage them to consider such ministry, is to provide internships located in such areas; and

WHEREAS, hosting an intern can cost a parish as much as \$30,000 per year, an amount which few small town and rural congregations can afford: Therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod offer a grant of \$5000 per year to each of its congregations which hosts a pastoral intern, those funds to be distributed in January; and be it further

RESOLVED that, to fund this effort entirely, the bishop of the Western Iowa Synod appoint one person to canvass all the congregations of the Synod, informing them of this mission and its benefits, asking for financial support; and be it further

RESOLVED that this effort be begun as soon as in the fall of 2009 as we know how many interns we will have, and continue each year until this resolution is repealed.

**ADOPTED The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption. 246 – 59 – 16 Second vote 223-97**

**TO AMEND Resolution #9 add to the second WHEREAS: congregations apply for a grant and do self study to understand being a teaching congregation (Pr Amy Fondroy Eich )**

**AMENDMENT PASSED 216 in favor 78 against and 19 abstain**

**TO AMEND Resolution #9 in the first resolved, change \$2500 to \$5000, failed; after consideration the chair ruled that it didn't fail when abstentions were eliminated, for lack of majority. A new vote was taken 156 -148-14**

***Vote Call the question: 294 -16 - 5***

**POINT OF ORDER: Challenge to chair to count only votes cast, not votes credentialed. Eligible and present are the criteria; #10 on standing rules. "To be eligible to vote, a Voting Member must be seated in the assembly"**

**Based on a chair ruling with the parliamentarian, ELCA rep, & bishop.**

**All either yes & no, no abstentions are possible.**

**So a second vote is needed on the amendment which has been ruled as passed. 223-97  
The resolution #9 "Funding of Internships" has been adopted as amended.**

**TO AMEND the agenda to consider Resolution #5 (on Rejecting Proposed Social Statement) and Resolution #8 (on Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy) at Assembly Plenary #3 on Saturday, May 2 (Pr Ron Rasmussen)**

**MOTION TO AMEND THE AGENDA failed 187 in favor 213 against not a 2/3 majority**

**RESOLUTION #7 Resolution Affirming Marriage for Western Iowa Synod Assembly**

Submitted by:

Pastor Stephen Ellerbusch, Bethany Lutheran Church, Emmetsburg

Pastor Paul Wiegman, Trinity Lutheran Church, Estherville

Pastor Tim Nappe, First Lutheran Church, Milford

Pastor Bob Vaage, First Lutheran Church, Milford

Pastor Luther Thoresen, Zion-Lost Island Lutheran Parish, Ruthven

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America "accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life" (*Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - ELCA Constitution, 2.03; Synod Constitution, S4.03; Model Constitution for Congregations, C2.03*); and

WHEREAS, Jesus taught that "from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate;" (*Mark 10:6-9 - Jesus quoted Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24*); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teaches that "Marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman" (*Sexuality: Some Common Convictions - A Message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1996*); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church in America, one of the predecessor churches of the ELCA, taught that "Christian faith affirms marriage as a covenant of fidelity — a dynamic, lifelong commitment of one man and one woman in a personal and sexual union" (*Sex, Marriage, and Family - A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America, 1970*); and

WHEREAS, The American Lutheran Church, one of the predecessor churches of the ELCA, taught that "Scripture sets the standard of a lifelong monogamous marriage of one man and one woman" (*Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church, 1980*) and that "Marriage is a structure of human life built into the creation by the Creator. It builds upon our creation as male and female (Gen. 1:27). Sexual differences are of God's good design, intended to bring joy and enrichment to human life as well as to provide for procreation. The essence of marriage is that in the act and relationships of marriage two persons become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). In this complementary nature of the two sexes as God created them lies the basis for marriage and each new family" (*Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church, 1982*); and

WHEREAS, the proposed *ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality* teaches that Marriage is "a covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God;" therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly affirm this synod's commitment to marriage as a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman .

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

**Amendment #1**

TO AMEND Resolution #7 by omitting the words (from fifth whereas the words after Marriage is a structure of human life built into the creation by the Creator. It builds upon our creation as male and female (Gen. 1:27). Sexual differences are of God's good design, intended to bring joy and enrichment to human life as well as to provide for procreation. The essence of marriage is that in the act and relationships of marriage two persons become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). In this complementary nature of the two sexes as God created them lies the basis for marriage and each new family" (*Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church, 1982*); **FAILED**

#### **Amendment #2**

TO AMEND Resolution #7BY Ending last resolved with "lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman" **PASSED**

Motion #1 to divide the Resolved and vote on each PASSED

Resolved #1 PASSED 211 in favor, 113 against

Resolved #2 FAILED 196 in favor, 125 against 2/3 needed

***The resolution "Affirming Marriage for Western Iowa Synod Assembly" has been adopted as amended.***

#### **11:45 am RESOLUTION #10 Background and Reference Checks**

##### **10. Resolution on Background and Reference Checks**

Submitted by:

Pastor Stephen Ellerbusch, Bethany Lutheran Church, Emmetsburg

Pastor Paul Wiegman, Trinity Lutheran Church, Estherville

Pastor Tim Nappe, First Lutheran Church, Milford

Pastor Bob Vaage, First Lutheran Church, Milford

Pastor Luther Thoresen, Zion-Lost Island Lutheran Parish, Ruthven

*Originally drafted by Pastor Peter Soli, Intentional Interim Pastor, currently serving Estherville Lutheran Church*

WHEREAS, pastors as well as other rostered and non-rostered leaders are called to minister to vulnerable people both young and old; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of congregations to call leaders who can be trusted to know and respect professional boundaries in their work with congregation members; and

WHEREAS, when professional boundaries are crossed the damage to individuals and congregations is extremely serious, and this includes financial loss, disillusionment of members, emotional pain, congregational upheaval, etc.; and

WHEREAS, history reveals that there are leaders who have committed boundary violations in prior congregation or other previous work and that these are issues of which a congregation should be apprised of prior to employment or call; and

WHEREAS background and reference checks can reveal positive or negative history related to boundary issues; and

WHEREAS, such background and reference checks are mandated by law in some states and church-wide office of the ELCA highly recommends that congregations conduct such checks prior to employing or calling a new leader; and

WHEREAS protecting members, congregations, and the church from harm is a shared concern for all congregations of Western Iowa Synod; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that congregations are strongly encouraged to conduct background and reference checks prior to the congregation's vote to call a rostered leader; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations are strongly encouraged to conduct background and reference checks prior to the congregation's decision to employ non-rostered staff; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these background and reference checks be conducted in a way which is thorough, complete, accurate, and according to best practices; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the office of bishop in the Western Iowa Synod suggest resources to congregations in the call process or considering the hiring of non-rostered staff which would help congregations complete such background and reference checks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the office of bishop in the Western Iowa Synod provide regular (at least once every 2 – 4 years) opportunities for boundary training for rostered and non-rostered leaders who have direct, unsupervised contact with children or other vulnerable populations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations strongly encourage rostered and non-rostered leaders, and others who have direct, unsupervised contact with children or other vulnerable populations, to successfully attend or complete a boundary training workshop as a condition of their employment or volunteer position; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the assembly direct the synod council to implement this plan.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

**279 -27 ADOPTED**

**Break for Lunch recess until 2:00 pm**

**2:00 pm Keynote/Bible study – Dr. Richard Swanson**

**Plenary #3**

#### CREDENTIALS REPORT

#### 2009 Western Iowa Synod ELCA ASSEMBLY

As of 2:00 PM the Assembly Registration is:

PASTORS	101
AiMs	2
LAYWOMEN	123
LAYMEN	93
YOUTH	19
TOTAL VOTING	338
INTERNS	3
TOTAL VISITORS	82
TOTAL ATTENDING	420

**BOP Report – Rev. Phillip Blom, ELCA BOP Regional Representative**

**Elections Results**

**Nomination Committee report Ballots cast: 279 – 7 spoiled 144 needed for election**

**128 Jane Johnston      144 Paul Bengtson**

**I will declare those receiving the majority vote as indicated on the election results sheet elected.**

**Gerald Clausen, Synod Vice-president**

**Rev. Paul Bengtson, Mark Juhl, Vic Johnson, Gary Hayungs, Rev. Gary Landness,**

**Marlene Levine – Nominating Committee**

**Kermit Smith – Board for Ministry**

Jeff Levine, Rev. Mark Youngquist, Rev. Jean Morse, Rev. Lilette Johnston, Molly Hall – Synod Council

Kim Tessum, Rev. Tim Nappe – Committee on Discipline

Report from Call Process Task Force - Pr. Jim Mossman – Significant change in call process to a more churchwide effort.

Budget Presentation – 2009 revised budget and 2010 proposed budget.

Note a 2% increase in mission support proposed by congregations.

New Item: event administration of 5% is added

Challenge budget – any excess in receipts will be divided 49.5 % to churchwide; 50.5% to agencies and institutions

Resolutions # 1(2, 6, 4)

**RESOLUTION #1 Amend the Western Iowa Synod ELCA Constitution**

**1. Amend the Western Iowa Synod ELCA Constitution**

Presented by Synod Council

WHEREAS, the Western Iowa Synod ELCA Constitution has been updated to incorporate recent provision, bylaw, and continuing resolution changes; and,

WHEREAS, the Western Iowa Synod ELCA Constitution has been edited to correct number sequence and other formatting errors; and,

WHEREAS, the Synod Council of the Western Iowa Synod ELCA has reviewed and recommends the updates and corrections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Iowa Synod ELCA Constitution be adopted as presented to the 2009 Synod Assembly.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

***The resolution “Amend the Western Iowa Synod ELCA Constitution” has been adopted.***

***291 in favor – 26 against***

**TO MOVE RESOLUTION #2 to plenary session 4; 81 in favor, 235 against FAILED**

**RESOLUTION #2 Western Iowa Synod 2010 Compensation Guidelines**

**2. Western Iowa Synod 2010 Compensation Guidelines**

Presented by the Board for Ministry

WHEREAS, congregations call rostered leaders “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”; and

WHEREAS, congregations desire to provide for the financial, spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of those called to serve them; and

WHEREAS, the compensation guidelines have been developed by the Board for Ministry for congregational use;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Assembly of the Western Iowa Synod ELCA adopt the proposed guidelines and urge that congregations compensate rostered leaders at the recommended levels.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

***The resolution “Western Iowa Synod 2010 Compensation Guidelines” has been adopted***

**269 IN FAVOR, 49 AGAINST**

**RESOLUTION #6 Vision and Expectations Resolution for Western Iowa Synod Assembly**

**6. Vision and Expectations Resolution for Western Iowa Synod Assembly**

Submitted by:

Pastor Stephen Ellerbusch, Bethany Lutheran Church, Emmetsburg  
 Pastor Paul Wiegman, Trinity Lutheran Church, Estherville  
 Pastor Tim Nappe, First Lutheran Church, Milford  
 Pastor Bob Vaage, First Lutheran Church, Milford  
 Pastor Luther Thoresen, Zion-Lost Island Lutheran Parish, Ruthven

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* “seeks to express the high value and importance that the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament has in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is offered for those who are already on the roster of ordained ministers of this church as a statement of expectations and hopes for the shape of ordained ministry, as well as an invitation for reflection and consideration to those who seek to serve in the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (*Vision and Expectations* introduction); and

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* is an expansive document with four sections built on the framework of the four questions that are addressed to candidates in the Rite of Ordination:

1. The Call to Ordained Ministry
2. Faithfulness to the Church’s Confession
3. The Ordained Minister as Person and Example
4. Faithful Witness; and

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* was adopted by the ELCA Church Council in 1990; and

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations: Associates in Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* was adopted by the ELCA Church Council in 1993; and

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations* was adopted by the ELCA Church Council rather than by an ELCA Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of *Vision and Expectations* by a Churchwide Assembly would affirm and clarify the vision and expectations the ELCA has for its pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to formally adopt *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as a statement of the vision and expectations the ELCA has of its pastors; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to formally adopt *Vision and Expectations: Associates in Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church*

*in America* as a statement of the vision and expectations the ELCA has of its associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

***The resolution “Vision and Expectations Resolution for Western Iowa Synod Assembly” has been defeated. 2/3 needed: 201 in favor, 116 against***

**RESOLUTION #4 Super Majority Resolution for Synod Assemblies**

**4. Super Majority Resolution for Synod Assemblies**

Submitted by:

Pastor Stephen Ellerbusch, Bethany Lutheran Church, Emmetsburg  
 Pastor Paul Wiegman, Trinity Lutheran Church, Estherville  
 Pastor Tim Nappe, First Lutheran Church, Milford  
 Pastor Bob Vaage, First Lutheran Church, Milford  
 Pastor Luther Thoresen, Zion-Lost Island Lutheran Parish, Ruthven  
 Pastor Dennis Meyer, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Atlantic

WHEREAS, the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted “to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church;” and

WHEREAS, the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the ELCA Church Council recommended that “any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption;” and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority vote to change ELCA standards to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships;” and

WHEREAS, a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and

WHEREAS, a decision to change church policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” holds the potential to test the unity of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, a super majority vote — such as a two-thirds majority — would require an overwhelming majority of Churchwide Assembly voting members to make such a significant change to church teaching and practice;

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopt its rules for the assembly and could set a two-thirds majority for adoption of any changes to policies and practices for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to add the following provision to the rules of procedure for the assembly: “Any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption.”

The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.

*The resolution “Super Majority Resolution for Synod Assemblies” has been adopted. 247 in favor, 72 against*

MOVE to include the vote count for all resolutions passed or not by our synod assembly memorializing the 2009 churchwide Assembly, that the vote count be included with the memorialization. Pr John Wolfe 186 in favor 128 against. PASSED

4:45 pm Rev. Mark Grorud – Report from churchwide organization (includes BP Hanson DVD)

MOTION TO recess until after worship at 10:15 tomorrow

Sunday May 3

9:00 am Communion Worship with Billy McLaughlin

10:15 am Plenary #4

Credentials Report

ML - Call on Credentials & Elections committee chair Joan (Jo Ann) Turner to present the fourth Credentials Report. (Joan will present printed copy to ML.)

CREDENTIALS REPORT

2009 Western Iowa Synod ELCA ASSEMBLY

As of 10:15 am the Assembly Registration is:

PASTORS	103
AiMs	2
LAYWOMEN	126
LAYMEN	93
YOUTH	19
TOTAL VOTING	343
INTERNS	3
TOTAL VISITORS	82
TOTAL ATTENDING	425

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LYO report

Synod Council Installation

*Gerald Clausen*

*Jeff Levine*

*Molly Hall*

*Mark Youngquist*

*Jean Morse*

***Lil Johnston***

**Assembly for 2010 will be first weekend in May @ Sioux City Convention Center next year. This has been changed because Waldorf will be owned by Columbia Southwest University.**

**Behind the scenes – staff introduced Cynthia, Cindy, Danette, Russ, Kay, Irene, Lynn, Michelle**

**Resolution #3 Adopt the Budget**

**3. Adopt the Budget**

Presented by Synod Council

RESOLVED, that the Assembly of the Western Iowa Synod ELCA adopt the revised budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2009, and the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2010.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

***The resolution “Adopt the Budget” has been adopted. 265 in favor, 4 against***

**Resolution #5. Resolution Rejecting Proposed Social Statement and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality**

**5. Resolution Rejecting Proposed Social Statement and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality** (Submitted by Pastor Dennis Meyer, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Atlantic

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider the adoption of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a possible Social Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, “Social statements and other resources on social concerns build on the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As a confessional church with an historical sense, this church continues to look to the social statements of The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America for guidance, while it develops its own social statements and further deliberates on social concerns” (*Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns*); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Confessions state: “We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone” (*Book of Concord, Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule & Norm*); and

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: “This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” (*ELCA Constitution, 2.03*); and

WHEREAS, in addition to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, the current teaching of the ELCA on human sexuality is guided by the ELCA Messages *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* (1996) and *Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (2001); and by the social statements of the ELCA’s predecessor churches: *Sex, Marriage, and Family - A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America* (1970); *Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1980); and *Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1982); and

WHEREAS, the adoption of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a Social Statement of the ELCA would replace the ELCA Message *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* and such predecessor church statements as those noted above – all of which are faithful and time-tested statements that are a part of the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the ELCA; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly thank the members of Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a proposed Social Statement for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to affirm the teaching of the ELCA Messages *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* (1996) and *Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (2001); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to express the ELCA's intention to continue to rely on the social statements of its predecessor churches — *Sex, Marriage, and Family - A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America* (1970); *Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1980); and *Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1982) — as historical documents expressing faithful Christian teaching on human sexuality.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption (with divergent opinions).**

**#5 “Resolution Rejecting Proposed Social Statement and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality” has been defeated. 156 in favor-151 against**

**Resolution #8 2009 Resolution Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy and Affirming Current ELCA Policy**

**8. 2009 Resolution Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy and Affirming Current ELCA Policy**  
(Submitted by Pastor Dennis Meyer, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Atlantic)

WHEREAS, the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted “to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church;” and

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider recommendations from the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* asks the ELCA to change its policy to affirm the possibility of “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: “This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” (*ELCA Constitution*, 2.03); and

WHEREAS, a synodical or congregational option on ministry standards would represent a change in the teaching of our church, affecting all ELCA synods and congregations; and

WHEREAS, “this church also acknowledges that consensus does not exist concerning how to regard same-gender committed relationships, even after many years of thoughtful, respectful, and faithful study and conversation. We do not have agreement on whether this church should honor these relationships, uplift, shelter and protect them or on precisely how it is appropriate to do so.” (*Human Sexuality, Gift and Trust*, p. 17, lines 634-627); and

WHEREAS, the interdependent relationship between the churchwide, synod, and congregational expressions of the ELCA requires one Office of Ministry, one roster of pastors, and one set of expectations for pastors and other rostered leaders throughout the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA currently expresses its expectations of pastors and other rostered leaders through documents called *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* which have served the ELCA for most of its history; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly thank the members of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject the proposals in the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm the ELCA's current standards for pastors and other rostered leaders as expressed in *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.

**The Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel reports this resolution and recommends its adoption.**

Call the question – 195–66 2/3 (175 needed)

**The resolution “2009 Resolution Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy and Affirming Current ELCA Policy” has been defeated. 150 in favor 118 against 175**

**NEEDED FOR 2/3 vote**

**Bishop's Report**

### **Report of the Bishop**

The rich blessings God has provided the Western Iowa Synod since our last assembly are **as Luke says, “pressed down, shaken together, running over.” Luke also says, “for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”**

Mission support from individual congregations reached a three year high with growing contributions to the Churchwide organization and agencies and institutions. Additionally, Companion Synod contributions reached a record high of over \$200,000, as well as Mission Partner giving exceeding a quarter of a million dollars. To the congregations and members of the Western Iowa Synod let it be said, **congratulations for a job well done!** Because of your faithful stewardship, lives are impacted with acts of love and generosity.

God's work. Our hands.

The trend established over the last years continues with many congregations exploring shared ministry partnerships. The success we have experienced with the formation of many such partnerships has caused others around the church to ask, “How have you been able to do that?” It's good to be a leader synod in arenas so important to the life of the church. Additionally, the synod is known across the ELCA as a leader synod for its Companion Synod Program. Last year the Western Iowa Synod was 13<sup>th</sup> of 67 ELCA synods in Companion Synod programs/activities and contributions, as well as numbers of those who participated in visitor exchanges.

God's work. Our hands.

A hallmark of the synod's ability to **resource congregations** has been to focus in several areas: stewardship planning, transformational ministry, Discovering Hope, the School of Evangelism, and the Academy for Administration. Additionally, the Lay School of Ministry continues to be very

popular. Many congregations have asked the synod to provide goal setting planning retreats, as well as listening post conversations meant to clarify concerns and issues that emerge in the course of local ministry. Youth ministry in the synod has also grown significantly with ConFest gatherings reaching over 600 confirmands, Sr. High and Middle School LYO events, as well as 21 WIS youth traveling to Tanzania. Bus loads of synod youth, as well as the bishop, will be headed for the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans later this summer.

Significant events coming up this summer will be the Tour De Revs bike ride on August 4<sup>th</sup>, Cherokee to Storm Lake, in order to raise significant money for World Hunger and the CAD event (Center for Agricultural Development) on August 30<sup>th</sup> at the Clay County Regional Events Center in order to raise mission dollars for this new Companion Synod initiative.

A new funding alliance for the Companion Synod Clean Water Well Drilling Program is Rotary. Rotary Clubs internationally have a similar commitment to providing clean water around the world. They have shown significant interest in the synod's well drilling capacity in Tanzania and are providing encouragement to Northwest Iowa Rotary clubs to support the synod's efforts. If you are a Rotarian and you think your Rotary Club might have an interest in joining financially in this effort, WIS well drilling advocates are happy for the opportunity to tell the story of clean water saving lives.

In August of this year we will again be hosting two visitors from Tanzania, Provost Rev. Dr. Lechion Kimilike and Assistant Southern Diocese Secretary Elisha Mkomole (both fluent in English) who will be traveling extensively throughout the Western Iowa Synod. If you would like them to visit your congregation, I urge that you contact Cindy Wells at the office of the bishop and find a date for them to visit your congregation. As our Tanzanian guests will only be in Iowa for three weekends, it will also be necessary to schedule "during the week" events in order to accommodate what I hope will be considerable interest.

At this assembly we will be considering two separate documents addressing the Social Statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust and the Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies.

Any more than you, I cannot predict what will be the mind of the Churchwide Assembly voting members. What I can say is that regardless of any action at the Churchwide assembly, there is no provision in the recommendation on ministry policy that would force any synod, candidacy committee, bishop or congregation to retain, approve, or call a particular candidate. The Recommendation on Ministry Policies says, referencing the Human Sexuality's 2005 report, "in keeping with the established standards of this church for ordained ministry, a congregation should strive, after prayer and deliberation, to call a person whose gifts for ministry seem well-suited to the needs of that particular community of faith."

Just a word regarding the economy. Your bishop understands that everyone feels the uncertainties related to today's economy. Economic development has been slower in western Iowa than in other places. Yet economic decline has also been less threatening here than in other places. I

am grateful for the strength of the commitment of WIS congregations in continuing strong mission support. I am grateful as well for what appears, at the time of the writing, that there is a hopefulness in the air that senses the economy is showing early signs of an economic upturn. That will remain my prayer.

Finally, I was saddened that earlier this spring Our Savior's/Nuestro Salvador Lutheran Church on 19<sup>th</sup> and Jones in Sioux City voted after 120 years in ministry to close its doors. For both its pastor, Michael Schmidt and its members, closing was much like the experience of losing a loved one. A memory to celebrate is the commitment of Our Savior's people to provide significant funding that has helped birth the Synod's newest congregation, Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Sergeant Bluff which was received on the roster of congregations at our 2008 assembly.

The ebb and flow of synodical life has many challenges. But this has been a particularly good year overall. It is a joy filled privilege to serve with you in a synod of 164 congregations, in a denomination of nearly 5 million members, with 8 seminaries, 28 colleges, many social service agencies, over 10,000 congregations, hundreds of missionaries and volunteers, hunger and disaster relief efforts nearing \$27,000,000 in 2008.

God's work. Our hands.

+ Bishop Michael A. Last  
**Adjourn Assembly**

**CLOSING OF AN ASSEMBLY**