

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS OF SYNOD COUNCIL AND SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2008-2009

“The Northwestern Minnesota Synod, rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, exists to nurture members, congregations and leaders call to mission in their community and the world.”

Moved Synod Office from Concordia College Outreach Center to newly-remodeled space in the Concordia College Riverside Center. Approved and thanked Concordia College for the office arrangement and location. The synod office/staff, following six months of temporary relocation in the Grant Center, moved to the Riverside Center in September 2008. An open house was held on 5 December 2008.

Made recommendations/appointments to synod leadership groups:

Synod Assembly Planning Committee

Synod Nominating Committee (*in process*)

Synod Committee on Reference and Counsel

Election of Executive Committee Members: Dennis Minks, Pr. Allyne Holz, Pr. Eric Lemonholm with the four synod officers (Bishop, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer).

Set meeting dates for the 2008-2009 Synod Council year.

Accepted and approved staffing changes through the ELCA program unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission [EOCM]. Effective February 1, 2009 Pr. Keith Zeh became Director for Evangelical Mission, with time split 50/50 between the Eastern North Dakota and Northwestern Minnesota Synods. (Formerly his time was divided among five synods.) Cheryl Zeh also joined the NW MN Synod staff as support staffer to Keith, but is compensated out of a grant from EOCM.

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Continued to seek a Regional Gift Planner in collaboration with the ELCA Foundation, Luther Crest Bible Camp and Pathways Bible Camps. *Note: since the February 2009 synod council meeting the search committee met and offered the position to Mr. Bill Elmstrom of Ortonville, MN. He will be introduced at the synod assembly.*

Continued discussion of current Synod Strategic Plan, looking at four specific areas:

1. Thanking God for what has been.....
2. Continuing God's good work in this time....
3. Straining forward to God's future....
- 4.. Living out God's abundance....

Revised continuing resolution on sexual boundaries education

Previous continuing resolution

S14.21.A01. It is the responsibility of all currently rostered persons of this synod to complete, or demonstrate previous completion of, at least six contact hours of education in sexual boundary issues within one year of passage of this resolution. It shall be the responsibility of any person new to the roster of this synod to complete, or demonstrate previous completion of, at least six contact hours of education in sexual boundary issues within one year of being added to the roster of this synod.

NEW continuing resolution

S14.21.A08 Within twelve months of the first time a rostered person or synodically authorized minister assumes office in a congregation or ministry agency in this synod, whether under call or contract, he or she is expected to provide the synod office with documentation showing completion of at least six contact hours of continuing education in the prevention of sexual boundary violations.

Discussed and approved a cell phone policy for synod personnel.

Granted requests to three organizations to do fund raising in the NW MN Synod:

Lutheran Campus Ministry – Moorhead and Bemidji

Peoples Church [Bemidji] “People for People” Capital Appeal.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

Adjusted deadline for resolutions addressing the Social Statement on Human Sexuality.

Current standing rule: *Unless an exception is granted by the Synod Council, to be considered by the assembly a resolution must be submitted to the synod office 60 days prior to the assembly.*

Adjusted deadline for 2009 assembly: *For the 2009 Synod Assembly, any resolutions pertaining to the recommended social statement on sexuality (or any recommendations from the task force on sexuality statements accompanying this social statement), which must be submitted to the synod office no later than April 30, 2009.*

The proposed ELCA social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, as well as the *Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies* was released on February 19, 2009. The Executive Committee recommended that we set aside no more than 60 minutes for a public conversation time in a ***Quasi-Committee of the Whole*** session during the Saturday afternoon plenary session of our 2009 Synod Assembly.

Continued to hear updates on Bishop Election Study ask Force.

Endorsed the Pastor to Pastor Program:

“RESOLVED that the NW MN Synod Council supports and endorses the Pastor to Pastor Program being developed cooperatively by the NW MN Synod, the Concordia College Campus Ministry Department and the Dovre Center for Faith and Learning at Concordia College.”

Reviewed policy/practice on synod council calls for interim pastors serving outside our synod. The NW MN Synod Council will approve Interim Calls only for clergy serving within the NW MN Synod.

Dealt with All Roster Matters: synod calls; on leave from call status, and clergy rosters status changes [active, on disability, retired]

Reviewed, discussed and recommended a revised budget for FY 2009.

Reviewed, discussed and recommended the fiscal proposal for FY 2010.

Reviewed and discussed the Proposed Salary Guidelines for 2010.

The scheduled 4 April 2009 Meeting of Synod Council was cancelled due to the flooding in the Red River Valley.

Looked at and discussed ways to emphasize Stewardship synod-wide. During the past autumn and winter months, synod council members made phone calls or visits to congregations in their conferences on synod mission support. *Note: Synod assembly participants will be encouraged to ask their congregation councils to consider increasing their 2009 mission support commitment, along with “talking points” about the synod financial condition.*

Synod Assembly issues, discussed at several meetings:

1. Discussed and approved procedure for the Quasi Committee of the Whole discussion of the ELCA’s proposed social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, and the *Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies*.
2. Reviewed plans for the Reference and Counsel Committee
3. Reviewed Synod Council terms.
4. Decided that 2009 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members will be introduced and identified (with buttons) early in the assembly. These folks will also meet with the synod executive committee and synod council on Friday, May 15, 2009 (just prior to the synod assembly.)
5. The Bishop Election Study Task Force Report will have time to make their report and recommendation(s) during the 2009 Synod Assembly

Submitted by
Pastor John E. Martinson, Synod Secretary
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