

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
August 5, 2007
Crystal B Ballroom
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Chicago, Illinois**

The fifty-seventh meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened on Sunday, August 5, 2007, in the Crystal B Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, called the meeting to order at 1:11 P.M. He welcomed everyone, especially the newest member of the council, the Rev. David P. Anderson. He asked that the Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap open the meeting with prayer.

ORGANIZATION OF MEETING
(Agenda I.A.-I.D.)

The following persons were present for all or part of the meeting:

Voting Members

Officers:

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop
Mr. Carlos E. Peña, Vice President
The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary
Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, Treasurer

Church Council:

Pr. David P. Anderson	Mr. David M. Nelson
Mr. Grieg L. Anderson	Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus
Ms. Faith A. Ashton	Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar (<i>excused</i>)
Ms. Judy Biffle	Ms. Lynette M. Reitz
Ms. Judith Anne Bunker	Pr. John C. Richter
Pr. Joseph G. Crippen	Pr. Kenneth M. Ruppap
Mr. Bradley Dokken	Ms. Sandra Schlesinger
Mr. Mark S. Helmke	Pr. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson
Ms. Norma J. Hirsch	Pr. Sarah J. Stumme
Pr. Keith A. Hunsinger	Mr. Allan E. Thomas
Pr. David E. Jensen	Pr. Jennifer J. Thomas
Pr. Jonathan W. Linman	Mr. David Truland
Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr.	Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr
Pr. Steven P. Loy	Mr. Richard L. Wahl
Pr. Charles W. Mays	Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace
Ms. Jessica M. McKee	Mr. Gary L. Wipperman

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops:

Bp. Leonard H. Bolick	Bp. Dean W. Nelson
Bp. Gary L. Hansen	Bp. E. Roy Riley
Bp. Marie C. Jerge	Bp. Peter Rogness
Bp. Kevin S. Kanouse	Bp. Paul Stumme-Diers
Bp. A. Donald Main	Bp. Martin D. Wells

Advisory Members:

Youth:

Ms. Briana R. Watts

Mr. Samuel Schlouch

Advisors:

Pr. Virginia Anderson-Larson, chair, Global Mission program committee

Pr. James M. Brandt, chair, Church in Society program committee

Mr. Kent Burgess, social ministry organizations (*excused*)

Pr. Chi Shih Chen, Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders

Ms. Annette Citzler, chair of the Board of Trustees, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

Pr. Khader El-Yateem, chair, Multicultural Ministries program committee

Mr. Joseph A. Husary, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (*excused*)

Ms. Kathryn Johnson, chair, Vocation and Education program committee

Pr. Phillip D. W. Krey, ELCA seminaries

Ms. Kristen Kvam, chair, Consulting Committee for Justice for Women

Pr. O. Dennis Mims, president, African American Lutheran Association

Mr. Richard L. Torgerson, ELCA colleges and universities (*excused*)

Mr. Jack R. Ohle, ELCA colleges and universities (*substitute*)

Ms. Carmen Richards, president of the board, Women of the ELCA (*excused*)

Mr. Francis R. Ramos Scharron, chair,

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program committee

Pr. Francisco L. Sosa, president, Association of Latino Ministries (*excused*)

Mr. Larry Thiele, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association

Resource Persons

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, Executive for Leadership Development

Pr. Kathie Bender Schwich, Executive for Synodical and Constituent Relations

Pr. Charles S. Miller, Executive for Administration

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, Executive for Governance and Institutional Relations

Section Executives and Staff:

Pr. Michael L. Burk, Executive for Worship and Liturgical Resources and Chaplain

Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, Executive for Research and Evaluation

Pr. Randall R. Lee, Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

Pr. Darrell D. Morton, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries (*excused*)

Pr. A. Craig Settlage, Director for Mission Support

Ms. Else B. Thompson, Executive for Human Resources

Office of the Secretary:

Pr. Ruth E. Hamilton, Executive for Administration and Official Documentation

Mr. Phillip H. Harris, General Counsel

Pr. Paul A. Schreck, Executive for Constitutional and Rostering Interpretation and Oversight

Mr. David A. Ullrich, Associate General Counsel

Office of the Treasurer:

Section Executives and Staff:

Ms. Karen Rathbun, Executive for Management Services

Ms. LaRue R. Unglaube, Executive for Information Technology

Program Unit Executives:

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director, Women of the ELCA
Pr. Sherman G. Hicks, Executive Director, Multicultural Ministries
Pr. Rebecca S. Larson, Executive Director, Church in Society
Ms. Beth A. Lewis, President, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers
Pr. Richard A. Magnus, Executive Director, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission
Pr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, Executive Director, Global Mission
Pr. Stanley N. Olson, Executive Director, Vocation and Education

Service Unit Executives:

Ms. Kristi S. Bangert, Executive Director, Communication Services
Pr. Donald M. Hallberg, President, Foundation of the ELCA, and Executive Director, Development Services
Mr. John G. Kapanke, President, Board of Pensions
Mr. Daniel J. Lehmann, Editor, *The Lutheran Magazine*
Ms. Eva M. Roby, Executive Vice President for Administration, Mission Investment Fund

Press:

Mr. John R. Brooks, Director, ELCA News Service
Ms. Elizabeth M. Hunter, *The Lutheran Magazine*
Mr. Frank F. Imhoff, Associate Director, ELCA News Service
Ms. Melissa Ramirez-Cooper, ELCA News Service

Ecumenical Guests:

Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, North American representative, Lutheran World Federation

**Sunday August 5, 2007
Plenary Session I**

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA
(Agenda 1.E.)**

Background:

Agenda items had been distributed by mail. Additional items were distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource and advisory persons.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called on the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary, to read the action pertaining to adoption of the agenda. After receiving a second, Vice President Peña called for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.08.54 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

REPORTS OF THE OFFICERS

(Agenda II; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Parts 1–2)

Reports from the officers were distributed. A copy of the Churchwide Assembly Briefing Guide, prepared by the secretary, had been sent to council members for information. Vice President Carlos E. Peña announced that the presiding bishop and the treasurer would make their reports during the joint meeting with the Conference of Bishops.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(Agenda II; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 3)

Secretary Lowell G. Almen called council members' attention to the summary of parochial statistics for 2006. He indicated that the report would receive attention at the October meeting of the Conference of Bishops, but he would provide a summary of it for the Church Council at this meeting. Secretary Almen reported that the statistics on membership were troubling: in the last two years, the loss in total baptized membership equaled the membership of the Saint Paul Area Synod and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. In contrast, the income of congregations continued to increase significantly, following a pattern of many years. Secretary Almen also pointed out that the report contained information about total synodical and churchwide mission-support contributions by region for the years 1990-2006, total congregational income by region for the same years, and loss of baptized membership for the same years. Together, the information highlighted the importance of the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, he stated. For instance, in Region 3 the income of congregations between 1990 and 2006 nearly doubled, but mission-support commitments had decreased by 2.1 percent (\$400,000). That figure did not take into account the decline in purchasing power of the dollar during the period. He noted that Region 9 led in percentage of increase of support during 1990-2006. Finally, Secretary Almen highlighted those synods that had the best rate of response in reporting parochial statistics. The Greater Milwaukee Synod, Southeastern Minnesota Synod, and La Crosse Area Synod all achieved 100 percent response, while the Northern Great Lakes Synod, North/West Michigan Synod, Lower Susquehanna Synod, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, South Carolina Synod, and East-Central Synod of Wisconsin all were above a 95 percent response rate. Secretary Almen commented that when the response rate dropped below 80 percent, the value of parochial statistics for use in planning by synods and congregations decreased substantially. He urged members of the Church Council to commend or nudge the persons in their synods responsible for parochial reports, depending on the synod's response rate.

AUTHORIZATION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda III.B.)

Background:

At its meeting on August 5, 2007, the Executive Committee considered how its functions would be carried out between the Churchwide Assembly in August 2007 and the first regular meeting of the newly constituted Church Council in November 2007. The Executive Committee requested that the Church Council adopt a process used successfully in previous years.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña provided background information to the proposed action and asked Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read it. He called for discussion. There being none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.08.55 **To authorize the officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the continuing members of the Executive Committee to serve as the Executive Committee of the Church Council between the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and the November 2007 meeting of the Church Council.**

RATIFICATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES FOR THE 2007–2009 BIENNIUM

(Agenda III.C.)

Background:

In preparation for the August 2007 meeting of the Church Council, continuing members of the Church Council were invited to indicate their preferences for service on one of the four standing committees of the Church Council, plus the Board Development Committee: Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, Planning and Evaluation, and Program and Services. At its August 2007 meeting, the Church Council ratified the provisional membership for the four standing committees.

Following the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, newly elected members will indicate their preferences prior to the November 2007 meeting. A final list of committee members for the biennium will be ratified by the Church Council at its November meeting.

At its November 2007 meeting, the Church Council also will appoint members to related advisory committees for the biennium. Members of the Board Development Committee for the 2007–2009 biennium will be appointed by the Executive Committee at its November 2007 meeting.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced the proposed action and asked Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read it. He called for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC07.08.56 **To ratify the following appointments to Church Council committees for the 2007–2009 biennium:**
Budget and Finance Committee
Pr. Keith A. Hunsinger
Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus
Ms. Lynette M. Reitz
Pr. John C. Richter
Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace

Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

Mr. Mark S. Helmke
Pr. Jonathan W. Linman
Pr. William R. Lloyd Jr.

Planning and Evaluation Committee

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker
Mr. Bradley Dokken
Pr. David E. Jensen
Pr. Jeffrey “Jeff” B. Sorenson
Mr. David Truland
Mr. Richard L. Wahl
Mr. Gary L. Wipperman

Program and Services Committee

Ms. Norma J. Hirsch
Pr. Steven P. Loy
Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar
Ms. Sandra Schlesinger
Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE *EN BLOC* ACTION
(Agenda IV.A.)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the resolution that had been removed from the *en bloc* action:

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT AS A CHURCH BODY

Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F)

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been a church body for twenty years; and

WHEREAS, the overall culture we live in has grown more polarized and contentious; and

WHEREAS, we continue to struggle to discern truth together as a large, complex church body serving the Gospel in very different contexts; and

WHEREAS, we believe there are other ways of discerning and working together to following Jesus and that our process might be adjusted in ways that would help our life together; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod ask the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call together a task force to explore and analyze other models and possible adjustments of our model of communal discernment as a church body; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod ask that a report be given about what is learned in the study of other large Christian bodies’ work of engaging difficult church and social issues as well as recommendations about how we might work together in a way that fosters trust and deepens our spiritual discernment of challenging dilemmas and issues in our future together following Christ Jesus.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Jeffrey “Jeff” B. Sorenson asked a question for clarification, then commended the resolution. He proposed an amendment:

Moved;

Seconded: *To amend the proposed action as follows:*

To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod related to communal discernment;

To refer the resolution to the Church Council Planning and Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Administrative Team and in consultation with the Conference of Bishops with a request to name a communal discernment task force and a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Pr. Sorenson inquired whether it was feasible to expect a report at the April 2008 meeting.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson commented that this church had a number of models for moral deliberation that were underutilized because they had not been embedded in the ELCA's culture. He asked the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Church in Society unit, and the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, to speak further to Pr. Sorenson's question.

Pr. Miller replied that the feasibility of the timeline depended on how the proposed task force undertook its work. If it were to be convened in person, rather than electronically and through conference calls, funds were not available in the current budget. It might be possible to fund an in-person meeting in 2008 from the strategic initiatives fund.

Pr. Larson responded that her answer could be shaped better by knowing the intention behind the resolution. She stated that her unit had done considerable work on moral deliberation and had ample information on processes and resources related to that topic. Looking at how church bodies make decisions relative to theology would be an ambitious undertaking, she remarked, but possibly worthwhile.

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman pointed out that "discernment" was a technical term with spiritual and theological dimensions and thus was different from "deliberation." He wondered about the intent of the resolution.

Vice President Peña called for further discussion.

Pr. Sorenson stated that he had called the Rev. Jon V. Anderson, bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, who had informed him that the intent of the resolution, which originated with the Synod Council, was not moral deliberation but the decision-making process. The request to look at models used by other church bodies was to discover if there were ways of deliberating that were less polarizing than the one use by this church.

Secretary Almen indicated that he was struggling to understand the proposed process outlined in the amendment. The original recommendation allowed for steps to be taken to provide for an analysis of the scope of the assignment and the gathering of information that might well inform any action by the council at its April 2008 meeting. He noted that the amendment called for appointment of a task force before the Planning and Evaluation Committee, the Administrative Team, and the Conference of Bishops had any opportunity to gather information and present recommendations and a charter for the task force.

Pr. Sorenson withdrew the part of the amendment concerning appointment of a task force.

Moved;

Seconded: *To amend the proposed action as follows:*

To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod related to communal discernment;

To refer the resolution to the Church Council Planning and Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Administrative Team and in consultation with the Conference of Bishops with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote on the amendment.

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried: *To amend the proposed action as follows:*

To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod related to communal discernment;
To refer the resolution to the Church Council Planning and Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Administrative Team and in consultation with the Conference of Bishops with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Vice President Peña called for a vote on the recommendation as amended.

VOTED:

CC07.08.57 **To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod related to communal discernment;**
 To refer the resolution to the Church Council Planning and Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Administrative Team and the Conference of Bishops with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and
 To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

***EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS**
(Agenda IV)

VOTED:

CC07.08.58 **To take action *en bloc* on the items listed below:**

EN BLOC

1. LIAISON ROLE OF SYNODICAL BISHOPS
(Agenda IV.B.1)

Background:

The Blue Ribbon Report on Mission Funding and the experience of the past 20 years both underscore the crucial role of synodical bishops from all regions of this church serving a strategic liaison role between the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. To reflect and underscore that responsibility, the following amendment was proposed.

VOTED:

CC07.08.59 ***To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly adoption of the following amendment:***
 To amend bylaw 14.32.01. to reflect the liaison responsibility of bishops from regions between the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council and to identify the chair of the Conference of Bishops as a non-voting participant in meetings of the Church Council:
14.32.01. The Church Council shall have as ~~advisory~~ liaison members nine synodical bishops, each elected by the Conference of Bishops to one four-year term, with voice but not vote in meetings of the Church Council. One bishop shall be elected from each region. In addition, the chair of the Conference of Bishops shall be present with voice but not vote for meetings of the Church Council.

EN BLOC

B. REVISION OF SYNODICAL TERRITORIES
(Agenda IV.B.2)

Background:

Bylaw 10.01.11. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* defines the territory of the respective synods. Periodically, adjustments are requested by synods. A change now

must be made related to the Montana Synod and the Rocky Mountain Synod to reflect the responsibilities currently in practice.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.08.60

To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly adoption of the following amendments:

To amend bylaw 10.01.11., sub-sections 1.F and 2.E, to reflect current responsibilities of the respective synods:

Synod 1.F—Montana. The state of MONTANA; and the counties of Big Horn, Park, Sheridan, and Washakie in the state of WYOMING.

Synod 2.E—Rocky Mountain. The states of COLORADO; NEW MEXICO; UTAH; and WYOMING, excluding the counties of Big Horn, Park, Sheridan, and Washakie; and the counties of Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Loving, Presidio, Reeves, Ward, and Winkler in the state of TEXAS.

To amend bylaw 10.01.11., sub-section 2.D, to reflect the responsibility of the Grand Canyon Synod:

Synod 2.D—Grand Canyon. The state of ARIZONA; the counties of Clark, Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye in the state of NEVADA; and the town of St. George in the state of Utah.

C. ADDITIONAL VOTING MEMBERS FOR THE 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

(Agenda IV.C)

Background:

For each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, provision for additional voting members has been made for certain synods. This has been done in keeping with this church's "Principles of Organization." Under those principles, the Church Council is assigned responsibility for ensuring that at least 60 percent of the members of assemblies shall be lay persons and that at least 10 percent of such voting members shall be people of color or people whose primary language is other than English (provision 5.01.f.).

Experience in the registration process for assemblies has demonstrated the need for allocation of additional positions to help ensure fulfillment of the organizational principles and also to provide for broader representation in synods that normally would be entitled to only two voting members, one of whom would be the synodical bishop (for example, the Caribbean Synod).

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.08.61

To allocate for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly two additional voting-member positions to the Caribbean Synod (9F), with the provision that these additional voting members shall be people of color or people whose primary language is other than English;

To allocate for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly one additional voting-member position to the Alaska Synod (1A), with the provision that the position shall be filled by an Alaska Native person;

To allocate for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly one additional voting-member position each to the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) and the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) for a individual of color or an individual whose primary language is other than English; and

To allocate for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly one additional voting-member position for a lay member of the Slovak Zion Synod (7G).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda III.A.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit B)

After information about the November 2007 Church Council meeting and about the group photograph of the council had been disseminated, the Church Council entered into executive session at 1:44 P.M. for the purposes of approving the citation accompanying the conferral of the *Servus Dei* award on Secretary Lowell G. Almen and debriefing the members of the class of 2007. The executive session concluded at 2:40 P.M.

Sunday, August 5 Plenary Session II

On August 5, 2007, at 3:06 P.M., the Church Council met with the Conference of Bishops for a joint session in the Crystal Ballroom B of the Hyatt Hotel. The joint meeting began with worship, which the Rev. Paul R. Landahl, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, led. The text for his sermon was Acts 10:34-48. Synodical vice presidents also were present for worship.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Church Council, convened the joint meeting at 3:31 P.M. He thanked the Rev. Paul R. Landahl, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, for leading worship. The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, introduced new members, including bishops and bishops-elect: the Rev. David H. Brauer-Rieke, bishop of the Oregon Synod; the Rev. Bruce H. Burnside, bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; the Rev. Jessica R. Crist, bishop-elect of the Montana Synod; the Rev. Robert L. Driesen, bishop-elect of the Upper Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. H. Julian Gordy, bishop-elect of the Southeastern Synod; the Rev. Richard H. Graham, bishop-elect of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; the Rev. B. Penrose Hoover, bishop-elect of the Lower Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. Kurt F. Kusserow, bishop-elect of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; the Rev. Felipe Lozada-Montanez, bishop-elect of the Caribbean Synod; the Rev. Wayne N. Miller, bishop-elect of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod; the Rev. Duane C. Pederson, bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; the Rev. Michael W. Rinehart, bishop-elect of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod; the Rev. John D. Schleicher, bishop-elect of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod; the Rev. Lawrence R. Wohlrabe, bishop-elect of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod; and the Rev. David B. Zellmer, bishop-elect of the South Dakota Synod.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, gave a brief report. He welcomed the new bishops and bishops-elect, saying how privileged he had been to be part of several synodical elections. He termed himself “deeply impressed” with the formation process for bishops that had begun in June, and he commended those who had attended as having come to the calling of bishop with love for this church, centeredness in the Gospel, and curiosity about what God is calling the ELCA to be and do. Presiding Bishop Hanson compared the transition process in synods to a relay race, with batons being passed and one person getting up to speed while the other was still running at full speed. Synodical staffs continued to handle difficult situations while discerning their own futures and preparing the new bishops and bishops-elect. He assured the synodical bishops that the prayers of the churchwide organization accompanied them in this time of transition.

Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed heart-felt gratitude to the Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, and the Rev. Rolf P. Wangberg, bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, who were completing their terms in office, for their service. He noted that one-third of the members of the Church Council also were completing their terms and earlier had shared wonderful reflections on the significance of their service as well as wisdom for future.

Presiding Bishop Hanson recounted the many meetings across this church during the past months, the fullest summer schedule he could remember. Among them were the “Let the River Flow” gathering for large-member congregations, the Global Mission Event, the ELCA leaders of color gathering before a joint meeting with the Reformed Church, the Small Town and Rural (StaR) alliance meeting, the Worship Jubilee, and the just-completed Lutheran Men in Mission event. Presiding Bishop Hanson concluded his remarks by saying that he would supply a preview of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly later in the meeting.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER (Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A)

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, provided a brief update on 2007 current operating funds' revenue and expenses thus far. She reviewed the summary that had been distributed previously, indicating that total revenue, as of June 30, 2007, was \$32.648 million while expenses totaled \$32.6 million. She noted that an operating deficit of \$2 million had been projected for this point in the fiscal year.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton commented that while total revenue surpassed that of the previous year at the same point by \$755,000, it was slightly (\$137,000) behind budget. Although expenses had increased by \$2.1 million over the prior year, they still were within budget by \$2.2 million. She reminded those present that 2006 mission-support revenue had increased compared to the prior year for the first time in five years and hoped that the trend would continue.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton noted that about 80 percent of the churchwide organization's total revenue came from mission-support contributions. Revenue in that category showed an increase of \$289,000 (1 percent), compared to the previous year, and also was favorable to budget (\$47,483). Vision for Mission revenues were down slightly (\$62,568), she reported, and under budget (\$21,364). Investment income, which had been strong the previous two years, compared unfavorably (\$76,260) to the prior year but was \$297,034 ahead of budget. Bequests and trusts income was doing well compared to 2006, but was a little behind budget. Variances in this category generally evened out over the course of the year, she explained. The Mission Investment Fund was up \$375,000 compared to the previous year, due to a timing difference.

Turning to details of expenses, Treasurer Jackson-Skelton observed that total expenses were at 93.64 percent of budget. She remarked that she and her staff meet with units on a quarterly basis to review spending. All units were doing well in meeting their spending plans. Treasurer Jackson-Skelton called attention to the detailed charts concerning synodical remittances. She then focused on the World Hunger Appeal, which had received record-breaking revenue in 2006. Its income goal had been increased for 2007, and it seemed likely that the goal would be reached. General World Hunger income totaled \$5.5 million, an increase of \$585,000 over the previous year, although \$74,086 under the projection. Designated revenues added up to \$254,000, of which \$207,000 had been given for the "Stand with Africa" campaign. It was a good start to the year, she commented.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton concluded her remarks by offering thanks to the Conference of Bishops for their work with congregations on the subject of mission-support contributions and to the members of the Church Council for telling the story of what mission-support income accomplishes. She also expressed gratitude to three retiring colleagues, the Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, executive director of Development Services and president of the ELCA Foundation; the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration; and Secretary Lowell G. Almen.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY PREVIEW (Agenda V.A.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 2)

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, and the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, gave an overview of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly business and procedures. A copy of the Churchwide Assembly Briefing Guide, prepared by the secretary, had been distributed previously.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson observed that he hoped that people left the 2007 Churchwide Assembly pondering how much they had dwelled richly in the word of Christ. He noted the changes and additions to the assembly schedule that had made God's Word a continuing presence throughout each assembly day: mid-day worship, dwelling in the Word reflections, Bible studies, and action on the Book of Faith initiative. He asked that leaders be attentive to the Word and help others be mindful of its centrality for the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reviewed a number of the significant actions before the assembly. He called attention to the reception of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, commenting that one-third of this church's congregations were using it and the number was continuing to grow. He highlighted the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding and pointed out that biblical stewardship was central to those recommendations. He commended the social statement on education and the changes it had undergone through the development process. Presiding Bishop Hanson termed the social statement a rich description of why this church was involved in higher education and faith

formation, mindful of its civic duty to seek the common good. He hoped for lively discussion of the social statement but a minimum of micro-managing.

Turning to the topic of human sexuality, Presiding Bishop Hanson summarized the Memorials Committee's recommendations on various memorials coming from synods. He trusted that members of this church had matured in their capacity to listen to one another, to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to be the church together after significant votes. He reported that he, Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Parliamentarian David D. Swartling, and Secretary Lowell G. Almen had prepared diligently in order to help the assembly do its work. Their role was not to control but guide as the assembly deliberated, listened, and made decisions.

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that passage of the budget was an important action because it undergirded the mission of this church. He expressed his preference for considering elections to office as call processes, a time of prayer, listening, and discerning who shall be called to be the presiding bishop and secretary. The assembly also would be fed by those who see this church and the world through different eyes, he added. These perspectives would be evident in the keynote address by Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, retiring secretary general of the YWCA; a greeting from the Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation; an address by the Rev. Munib A. Younan, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land; and remarks by other global and ecumenical partners. Finally, Presiding Bishop Hanson stated, there would be time for giving thanks for the leadership of Secretary Lowell G. Almen and for celebrating 20 years of being this church together.

Before addressing logistical matters, Secretary Almen focused on the topic of his health, expressing gratitude for the assurance of prayer from people throughout this church, some of whom he had not met, and especially from the members of the Conference of Bishops, Church Council, and the Cabinet of Executives. He discussed his treatment, adding that in the future he would be more sensitive to anyone who undergoes any kind of radiation treatment. Secretary Almen then explained that it had not been possible to invite everyone he wished to his farewell dinner; those invited served as representatives of the Church Council, Conference of Bishops, Cabinet of Executives, churchwide staff, and synodical staff. He stated that he had wanted to invite everyone, so he could thank them all for the privilege of having worked with them.

Secretary Almen reviewed a number of logistical matters. He cautioned advisory members of the assembly against giving advice unless called upon to do so. If an advisory member was called upon to speak, he or she should line up with voting members at microphones.

The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, made a number of closing announcements. He asked bishops in even-numbered regions to decide who would be the liaison to the Church Council and report that information to him prior to the beginning of the next day's session.

ADJOURNMENT **(Agenda VI)**

The fifty-seventh meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adjourned at 4:30 P.M.