

Resolutions

Seven resolutions were presented on the floor of the Synod Assembly, all of which either failed or were out of order.

Resolutions 1 and 2 were substitute proposals offered by the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee in place of 12 resolutions related to actions on ministry policies taken at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly relative to human sexuality and ministry policies.

Resolution 1 would have requested the reconsideration of the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust." The resolution failed 264-308.

Resolution 2 would have memorialized the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to rescind the ministry policies approved by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. The resolution failed 269-307.

Resolution 3 would have required the Nebraska Synod and its member congregations to

relinquish their status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The resolution was ruled out of order because it conflicted with the church constitution and state and federal law.

Resolution 4 would have encouraged greater communication about advocacy activities and issues. A portion of Resolution 4 that would have called for redirecting money from the ELCA Washington Office was out of order. The remainder of the resolution failed 223-317.

Resolutions 5 and 6 both related to abortion and life issues. Both resolutions were ruled out of order because they were inconsistent with the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion.

Resolution 7 related to restrictions on holding Synod activities in jurisdictions with laws similar to the immigration passed recently in Arizona. The resolution did not receive the necessary vote required for late consideration by the Assembly.

Elections

The following individuals have been elected to positions by the Synod Assembly:

2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

Jeff Akerson (Holy Trinity/Sidney)
Janet Anderson (St. Mark's/St. Paul)
Pam Ciulla (First/Blair)
Kitty DeBoer (American/Fairbury)
Leanne Fox (St. Peter/Bassett)
Jon Fredricks (St. Michael/Omaha)
Janice Gustafson (Alma/Mead)
Lindsey Lueth (St. Paul & St. Luke/Emerson)
Beth Meyer (First/Fremont)
Steve Meysing (St. John's/Alliance)
David Nelson (Immanuel/Bertrand)
Steve Nelson (Bethany/Axtell)
Michael Ostrom (Sinai/Fremont)
Sara Pahl-Ramirez (St. Luke's/Omaha)
Brenda Pfeifly (Salem/Stromsburg)
Bev Rautenberg-Panko (St. John's/Eustis)
Joel Remmers (First St. Paul's/Hastings)
Gretchen Ritola (St. Paul & St. Luke/Emerson)
Amalia Spruth-Janssen (St. James/Humboldt)
David Stenberg (Grace/Lexington)
Keith Waechter (St. Paul/Blue Hill)
Jennifer Wallwey (Holy Cross/Omaha)
Tobi White (Our Saviour's/Lincoln)

Synod Council

Vice President: Ardith Hoins (Christ's/Davenport)
Terry Christensen (Bethany/Minden)
Liz Conner (Cristo Rey/Omaha)
Layton Jensen (St. Luke/Emerson)
Nathan Metzger (Our Saviour's/Plainview)
Ryan Ostendorf (American/Gothenburg)
Joel Remmers (First St. Paul's/Hastings)
Eric Spruth-Janssen (St. James/Humboldt)
Betty Wilken (Spirit of Hope/Lincoln)

Consultation Committee

Rita Borgstadt (Messiah/Ralston)
Patrick Gregory (First/Blair)
Gail Madson (Our Saviour's/Lincoln)
Tom Miller (Morning Star/Omaha)

Discipline Committee

Les Jessen (St. Mark's/Bloomfield)
Alena Lamirato (Alma/Mead)
Steve Meysing (St. John's/Alliance)
Sue Stover (Our Saviour's/Wayne)



2010 Nebraska Synod Assembly Review

The 2010 Nebraska Synod Assembly was held June 4-5 at the Heartland Event Center in Grand Island.

The theme of this year's Assembly was "Joy in the Journey" taken from Isaiah 55:12: "For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace."

Bishop deFreese: "Our deepest hunger..."

Bishop David deFreese gave his message to those at the 2010 Synod Assembly and began by asking people to agree to one simple statement.

"Our deepest hunger is to know God better and to serve God in our lives."

The bishop challenged attendees to think about when they grew the most spiritually and asked them to share with one another what was going on in their lives at that time. Following that, he told the crowd the number one factor that most people say produces spiritual growth in their lives is their suffering.

Bishop deFreese quoted Isaiah 43:19, which says "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." The last year, the bishop said, has felt like a wilderness and a desert in many ways.

A deep recession, pension concerns, tensions and polarization in culture, two wars, terrorism, human and natural disasters, and a culture permeated by consumerism have heightened anxiety about our situation, he said.



The bishop talked about psychologist Albert Ellis' "ABCs of Life." The antecedents are those things that happen to us, our circumstances and situation. The consequences are how we feel about the results and outcome and how we respond to our situation.

Just focusing on the antecedent and the consequence, he said, is a dangerous illusion.

(Bishop deFreese - continued)

“Your situation does not have to determine your consequence,” he said.

Rather, he said, it is our beliefs that help determine our outcome and the way we feel and respond.

Bishop deFreese said we can get caught in the trap of asking God to pray for more pleasant circumstances to make our lives easier. Instead, he suggested a different prayer:

“I have given up trying to get God to engineer the circumstances I want and I am devoting my life to partnering with God in the circumstances I have been given.”

“We’re the church. We’re the body

of Christ. What do you want to get together with God to do today?”

The bishop finished by giving Assembly participants a “Dave’s Top Ten” list of beliefs to ponder.

1. We are faithful, not fearful.
2. Sin is selfishness and we are set free.
3. We will live an abundant life lived through connections to God and to one another.
4. We will respond to God’s claim upon us as children of God.
5. We will live out of the profound rhythm of our lives.
6. We are sent to serve.
7. We do mission!
8. Disagreements can be catalysts for good, not division.
9. We need each other.
10. We trust God with the future.

Q&A with Stephen Bouman



The Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman served as the Churchwide Representative to this year’s Nebraska Synod Assembly. Here are the answers to three of the questions he answered during the Synod Assembly’s second day:

Q: How can we help and sustain new congregations in the ELCA?

A: Bouman said a recent ELCA report indicated that new startup congregations are not digging down roots and attaining sustainability.

The primary reasons behind successful mission starts are the connections and relationships they make with other local institutions and the connections they make within their own communities.

Q: What are some hopeful signs as you travel around the ELCA?

A: Bouman said he is seeing a strong desire for the church to get beyond controversy and conflict and focus on mission. Seminary students today want to

(Bouman - continued)

be a part of doing mission in the church, he said. He specifically highlighted the Nebraska Synod’s focus on mission.

He added that he is encouraged by a real renewal in youth ministry throughout the country and by those congregations that are starting new congregations.

Q: With respect to the decisions of last year’s Churchwide Assembly, will the ELCA listen to the word of God?

A: “We need to keep the word of God right between us all the time,” Bouman said. “To be together around the word of God, we make the decisions within relationship, not out of relationship.”

Rolf Jacobson: Be Filled With All Joy in Believing

The Rev. Dr. Rolf Jacobson delivered the Assembly’s keynote address. Jacobson is a professor of Old Testament studies at Luther Seminary.

Titled “Be Filled With All Joy in Believing,” Jacobson’s presentation focused on the book of Psalms. The Psalms are full of joy and hope, he said, and are “God’s soundtrack for the life of faith.”

“We go to church not just to sing those songs there, but to take those songs and sing them all day long,” Jacobson said.

He led the Assembly in study by breaking the Psalms down into three types: communal songs of thanksgiving, hymns, and individual songs of thanksgiving. He also emphasized the importance of praise.

“Praise is telling people what God has done. If we don’t do that, we hide God’s grace from others.”



Synod celebrates relationship with Argentina/Uruguay

The Nebraska Synod celebrated the 20th anniversary of its relationship with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina and Uruguay by generously giving \$18,712.60.



The assembly also welcomed three of our brothers and sisters in Christ from Argentina and Uruguay: Pastor President Alan Eldrid, Pastor Gustavo Gomez and Beatriz Simonassi.