

2009 ELCA-SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD ASSEMBLY  
Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia  
**FIRST PLENARY SESSION**  
**Friday, June 5, 2009**  
**2:30 p.m.**

**CART SERVICES PROVIDED BY**  
*EDUCAPTION, INC.*  
*ATLANTA, GEORGIA*  
*PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA*

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>> WOULD THE PERSON WHO JUST LEFT AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT LIFE, PLEASE RETURN TO THE BOOTH.

>> WE'RE NEEDING TO BEGIN.

WE'RE ACTUALLY A LITTLE BIT LATE SO IF YOU COULD PLEASE COME INTO THE PLENARY IF YOU'RE A VOTING MEMBER, AND TAKE YOUR SEAT.

YOU HAVE THIS AMOUNT OF TIME.

[ MUSIC PLAYING ]

OKAY, IS EVERYBODY SEATED NOW?

PLEASE, AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN, FIND YOUR SEATS SO THAT WE CAN BEGIN.

WE HAVE A VERY FULL AGENDA.

WE ALSO ONCE AGAIN THIS YEAR HAVE A PODIUM THAT'S NOT AS BIG

AS MY BOOK.

MY NAME IS JULIAN GORDY, AND I'M THE BISHOP OF THE  
SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD, AND I CALL THIS SESSION OF THE 22<sup>nd</sup>  
ANNUAL SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD ASSEMBLY TO ORDER.

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS, PLEASE TAKE OUT YOUR CELL PHONE, AND  
TURN IT OFF OR SET IT TO "STUN," ONE OF THE TWO, SO THAT WE WILL  
NOT GET TO LISTEN TO IT.

AND UNLESS THE CALL IS DIRECTLY FROM GOD, WE'LL GIVE YOU DIRTY  
GLANCES IF YOUR CELL PHONE GOES OFF.

WOULD YOU PLEASE TURN TO TAB-A, PAGE A-2 IN YOUR MATERIALS,  
TAB-A, PAGE A-2.

FOLLOWING THE STATEMENT OF ASSEMBLY OBJECTIONS, WE'RE GOING  
TO THANK ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED MAKE THIS YEAR'S  
ASSEMBLY POSSIBLE.

IT'S A BIG UNDERTAKING TO GET ALL THIS TOGETHER.

AND THEN WE'LL COVER SOME BASIC HOUSEKEEPING GUIDELINES, AND  
HEAR SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS.

I WANT TO SAY ONE MORE TIME, WE HAVE AN INCREDIBLY PACKED  
AGENDA, SO FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT, FOLKS, AND WE'LL START.

WE GATHER AS THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA IN ASSEMBLY.

WE GATHER ASSURED OF JESUS' PRESENCE AMONG US.

WE GATHER TO PRAISE AND REJOICE IN THE TRIUNE GOD WHO  
CREATED US, SUSTAINS US, AND HEALS THE WORLD.

WE GATHER TOGETHER TO BE FED BY THE WORD AND THE HOLY  
EUCCHARIST.

WE GATHER TO GIVE WITNESS TO OUR UNITY IN JESUS, WHO IS THE  
CHRIST.

WE GATHER TO HEAR WHAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH OUR HANDS, IN  
OUR CONGREGATIONS, IN OUR SYNOD AND OUR AGENCIES, AND  
THROUGH OUR NATIONAL AND GLOBAL ELCA.

WE GATHER TOGETHER TO ENGAGE IN MUTUAL CONVERSATION,  
CONSOLATION, AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

AND WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WE GATHER TO MAKE  
DECISIONS ABOUT THE WORK WHICH WE ARE CALLED TO DO  
TOGETHER IN THIS CHURCH, IN JESUS' NAME.

WE HAVE THIS CANDLE HERE.

IT'S BEEN PART OF OUR ASSEMBLY FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER,  
A REMINDER THAT THE RISEN CHRIST IS ALWAYS WITH US WHENEVER  
WE MEET TOGETHER IN JESUS' NAME, AS WE DO HERE THIS WEEKEND.

WE HAVE A NEW CANDLE, WHICH JEANETTE TELLS ME IS 39 INCHES  
LONG, SO WE CAN MEET AS LONG AS WE NEED TO THIS WEEK.

[ LAUGHTER ]

LET ME INTRODUCE OUR CHAPLAIN FOR THIS ASSEMBLY, PASTOR

MICHAEL LIPPARD, WHO'S THE PASTOR OF ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH IN FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE.

PASTOR LIPPARD, ARE YOU AROUND SOMEWHERE?

THERE HE IS.

HE'LL BE WITH US THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY.

AND IT'S NOT TIME TO PRAY YET.

JUST WANTED TO TELL PEOPLE WHO YOU ARE.

THIS YEAR, WE ALSO HAVE A CHAPEL AVAILABLE FOR PRAYER, FOR MEDITATION.

IT WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE ASSEMBLY.

IT'S LOCATED IN THE WAVERLY ROOM.

IF YOU GO OUTSIDE AND TURN TO YOUR RIGHT, YOU'LL SEE THE ROOM OVER THERE.

WE'RE BLESSED AGAIN THIS YEAR TO HAVE MS. JAN LEVENGOOD.

JAN HERE SOMEWHERE?

SHE'S OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

SHE'S A PARISH NURSE AT LIVING GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TUCKER, GEORGIA.

SHE'S AVAILABLE FOR YOUR FIRST AID NEEDS.

LAST YEAR, I WAS HER FIRST PATIENT WHEN I FELL BETWEEN THE WALL AND THE DAIS BACK THERE.

THERE WAS A CRACK.

AND I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT SHE HAS FOLLOWED UP WITH ME FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR.

SO IF YOU DO CALL ON HER, BE PREPARED FOR GOOD ATTENTION AND CARE.

I PROMISE TO BE MORE CAREFUL THIS YEAR, AND I ALSO PUSHED THE DAIS UP AGAINST THE WALL.

SERIOUSLY, IF YOU NEED FIRST AID DURING THE ASSEMBLY, YOU CAN GO OUT TO THE INFORMATION BOOTH, AND THEY KNOW HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH JAN, AND SHE'LL COME TO YOUR AID.

A FEW HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS, IF YOU'LL GIVE YOUR ATTENTION.

THIS YEAR, WE'LL HAVE A CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST, A LIGHT BREAKFAST, FOR EVERYONE IN THE ASSEMBLY BOTH TOMORROW MORNING AND SUNDAY MORNING FROM 6:45 TO 8:00, RIGHT OUT THERE IN THE GARDEN COURT AREA.

DINNER TONIGHT AND LUNCH AND DINNER TOMORROW ARE ON YOUR OWN.

THERE ARE LOTS OF OPTIONS AROUND HERE.

THERE'S SOME IN THE HOTEL AND IN THE LITTLE MALL THAT'S OUT THAT WAY, AND THERE'S SOME ACROSS THE STREET WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE AT CUMBERLAND MALL.

SOMEBODY TOLD ME LAST YEAR THAT WASN'T WITHIN THEIR WALKING DISTANCE.

BUT IT IS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE.

IF YOU NEED A MAP OR IDEAS ABOUT WHERE TO GO AND COUPONS TOO, RIGHT, YOU CAN GO OUT IN THE GARDEN COURT, THE COBB COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU HAS AN INFORMATION BOOTH, AND YOU CAN LEARN ALL KINDS OF THINGS ABOUT WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW.

TO MAKE THE MOST OF OUR TIME TOGETHER, ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PODIUM WILL BE LIMITED TO THOSE MATTERS THAT ARE RELATED DIRECTLY TO THE ASSEMBLY, THINGS LIKE ROOM CHANGES, LOST AND FOUND, SCHEDULE CHANGES, PASTOR JASON TALSNESS MIGHT BE A FATHER.

HE'S NOT YET, BUT HE'S WAITING.

ANY SECOND.

THERE'S ALSO A BULLETIN BOARD LOCATED BY THE INFORMATION BOOTH TO THE LEFT AS YOU EXIT THE PLENARY HALL.

IF YOU HAVE AN ITEM THAT NEEDS TO BE ANNOUNCED FROM THE PODIUM THAT FITS THOSE QUALIFICATIONS, PLEASE WRITE IT LEGIBLY, SIGN IT, AND BRING IT TO JEANETTE BURGESS SITTING HERE ON MY LEFT, YOUR RIGHT, AND THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ONCE AGAIN THIS YEAR WILL BE MADE, AS USUAL, BY THE EVER DEBONAIR SYNOD VICE PRESIDENT WESLEY CRENSHAW OF SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH.

[ APPLAUSE ]

I'VE KNOWN WES LONG ENOUGH NOW THAT I USUALLY KNOW WHEN HE'S KIDDING AND WHEN HE'S NOT.

NOT ALWAYS, BUT USUALLY.

IF YOU ARE A REPRESENTATIVE OF ANY OF THE MINISTRIES OF THIS SYNOD AND YOU WANT TO DISPLAY A SHORT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THESE PLENARY SCREENS ON EITHER SIDE, THOSE ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU.

YOU WOULD GIVE YOUR REQUEST TO MS. LINDA FEW, WHO IS SITTING BACK THERE DOING HER TECHNOLOGICAL THING.

LINDA IS A MEMBER OF ST. MARK IN EAST POINT, AND WILL BE HELPING OUT WITH OUR TECHNICAL MATTERS.

WRITE YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT LEGIBLY SO THAT LINDA CAN READ IT, AS WELL AS YOU, AND SHE'LL MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO GET IT UP ON THE SCREEN BY THE VERY NEXT PLENARY SESSION.

BY POPULAR DEMAND, WE HAVE GONE TO WHAT TURNS OUT TO BE CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE TO BRING YOU ALL OF YOU LAPTOP OWNERS, ACCESS TO THE INTERNET THAT WE HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET FROM ANY PLACE DOWN IN THE PUBLIC AREAS OF THE HOTEL -- THE GARDEN COURT, THE LOBBY, AND SO FORTH.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW TO CONNECT, YOU CAN GET INFORMATION ABOUT THAT AT THE INFORMATION BOOTH.

THEY'LL GIVE YOU AN INSTRUCTION SHEET.

TO OFFICIALLY DECLARE THE BOUNDS OF THIS ASSEMBLY, WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, ONLY VOTING MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY ARE TO BE IN THE AREA THAT'S IN FRONT OF THE BLACK CLOTH BARRIER BACK THERE.

SOMEBODY SITTING NEAR THE BARRIER CAN KIND OF SHOW US WHERE THAT IS, THE AREA BACK THERE.

THANK YOU.

IF YOU ARE A VISITOR, PLEASE STAY BACK THERE.

IT'S NOT THAT WE WANT YOU IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM, BUT WE WANT TO BE SURE THAT VOTING MEMBERS ARE THE ONES WHO VOTE.

ALL VISITORS ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE.

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE, BUT DURING THE PLENARY SESSIONS, IF YOU'RE NOT A VOTING MEMBER, PLEASE STAY IN THE DESIGNATED VOTING AREAS.

DURING WORSHIP, YOU CAN SIT ANYWHERE YOU WANT.

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING ELECTION BALLOT PROCEDURES.

VOTING MEMBERS, YOU ARE TO GIVE YOUR COMPLETED BALLOTS ONLY TO PERSONS WHO ARE WEARING GREEN BADGES THAT SAY "PLENARY VOLUNTEER" OR "ELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBER."

DO WE HAVE ONE OF THOSE HANDY THAT COULD SHOW US WHAT THOSE LOOK LIKE?

GREEN BADGE.

THERE'S ONE OVER THERE.

DON'T GIVE THEM TO ANYONE ELSE, OR THEY MAY NOT BE COUNTED.

THE PEOPLE WHO ARE COLLECTING BALLOTS WILL TAKE THEM ONLY FROM PEOPLE WEARING A GREEN VOTING MEMBER DESIGNATED.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR GREEN NAMETAG, YOU NEED TO GET UP RIGHT THIS MINUTE, TAKE UP YOUR CHAIR AND WALK OUT TO THE INFORMATION BOOTH AND GET YOURSELF ONE.

NOW, PASTOR LIPPARD.

I WANT TO CALL ON PASTOR MICHAEL LIPPARD, CHAPLAIN OF THIS ASSEMBLY, FOR OUR OPENING PRAYER.

>> THANK YOU, BISHOP GORDY.

I HAVE ONE ANNOUNCEMENT TO SHARE WITH THE ASSEMBLY, AND THAT IS THAT THE REVEREND DON ELAM PASSED AWAY EARLY THIS MORNING AFTER SUFFERING WITH LIVER CANCER.

SERVICES WILL BE HELD AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE, THIS COMING MONDAY, JUNE THE 8th, AT 11:00 A.M., WITH THE FAMILY RECEIVING AT 10:00 A.M.

WE'LL BE SENDING THE OBITUARY THROUGH THE NETWORK,, WITHIN THE DAY.

MAY GOD'S LOVE AND PEACE REST WITH DON'S WIFE, AUDREY, AND THE ENTIRE ELAM FAMILY.

ONE OTHER NOTE I SHOULD MENTION, IS THAT WE HAVE A CHAPEL HERE, AND IT IS OUTSIDE TO THE RIGHT, AS YOU GO OUT THE DOORS. I THINK IT'S -- WAVERLY MAY BE THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE ROOM. AND YOU CAN GO IN THERE.

IT'S OPEN FROM 10:00 A.M. UNTIL 10:00 P.M. AND THERE'S A CARDBOARD BOX IN THERE WHERE PRAYER REQUESTS MAY BE MADE AND YOU'LL ALSO FIND SOME CARDS THERE, WHERE YOU CAN WRITE DOWN YOUR PRAYER CONCERNS AND DEPOSIT THEM IN THAT BOX. WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO INCORPORATE THE CONCERNS THAT ARE PUT THERE IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES AND ALSO DURING THIS TIME WHEN WE HAVE DEVOTIONS.

ONE THING I WANT TO DO IS, AT THE FIRST SESSION, WHERE WE HAVE OPENING PRAYER EACH DAY, SHARE A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAINT OF THE DAY.

AND SO WE BEGIN WITH TODAY'S SAINT, BONIFACE.

BONIFACE IS THE PATRON SAINT OF GERMANY.

HE WAS AN 8th CENTURY ENGLISH MISSIONARY TO THE NETHERLANDS AND GERMANY, AND AN ARCHBISHOP OF THE CHURCH.

HE WAS MARTYRED AT SUNRISE ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, JUNE THE 5th, IN THE YEAR 754 WHILE READING THE GOSPEL TO A GROUP OF NEW CONVERTS.

BONIFACE WAS BURIED AT A MONASTERY HE'D FOUNDED IN FULDA,

GERMANY.

ALSO THERE IS A GOSPEL BOOK WHICH HAS BEEN SLASHED IN SEVERAL PLACES, AND WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN HELD BY BONIFACE WHEN HE WAS KILLED.

IN ONE OF HIS LETTERS, HE MAKES USE OF A VERY FAMILIAR IMAGE TO DESCRIBE THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION.

HIS REFLECTIONS FROM THE 8th CENTURY OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT TO CHURCH LEADERS IN ANY HISTORICAL PERIOD, WHATEVER THE ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF THE DAY HAPPEN TO BE.

AND HERE'S A QUOTE FROM THAT.

"IN HER VOYAGE ACROSS THE OCEAN OF THIS WORLD, THE CHURCH IS LIKE A GREAT SHIP BEING POUNDED BY THE WAVES OF LIFE'S DIFFERENT STRESSES.

OUR DUTY IS NOT TO ABANDON SHIP, BUT TO KEEP HER ON COURSE.

THE ANCIENT FATHERS SHOWED US HOW WE SHOULD CARRY OUT THIS DUTY.

THEY ALL STEERED CHRIST'S SHIP, OR RATHER HIS MOST DEAR SPOUSE, THE CHURCH.

AND I WOULD GLADLY GIVE UP THE TASK OF GUIDING THE CHURCH WHICH I HAVE ACCEPTED IF I COULD FIND SUCH AN ACTION WARRANTED BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE FATHERS OR BY HOLY SCRIPTURE.

LET US TRUST IN HIM WHO HAS PLACED THIS BURDEN UPON US.

WHAT WE OURSELVES CANNOT BEAR, LET US BEAR WITH THE HELP OF CHRIST.

FOR HE IS ALL POWERFUL AND HE TELLS US: MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT."

MAY CHRIST BE WITH YOU.

>> AND ALSO WITH YOU.

>> LET US PRAY.

ALMIGHTY GOD, WE PRAISE YOU FOR YOUR SERVANT BONIFACE TO WHOM YOU GAVE GIFTS TO MAKE THE GOOD NEWS KNOWN TO THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

EMPOWER THIS ASSEMBLY WITH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, THAT GUIDED BY YOUR WORD AND STRENGTHENED BY YOUR SACRAMENTS, WE MAY PLAN AND DO THINGS THAT WILL BE FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR CHURCH, AND THE GLORY OF YOUR NAME.

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR, AMEN.

>> AMEN.

>> THANK YOU, PASTOR LIPPARD.

NOW, IF YOU WOULD TURN TO TAB-A.

AT THIS TIME WE WILL CALL UPON THE -- YOU CAN HOLD TAB-A FOR JUST A MINUTE, BECAUSE WE NEED TO CALL UPON THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.

THE CHAIR IS MS. LINDA LARSON, WHO WILL PLEASE COME TO THE PODIUM AT THIS TIME.

LINDA IS AN ASSOCIATE IN MINISTRY ON THE STAFF OF LUTHERAN SERVICES OF GEORGIA.

SHE'S A MEMBER OF ST. PAUL'S IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

>> BISHOP GORDY, THE FIRST REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE FOR THE ASSEMBLY IS AS FOLLOWS --

CLERGY UNDER CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 129.

IN ATTENDANCE, 113.

CLERGY ON LEAVE FROM CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 3.

IN ATTENDANCE, 5.

CLERGY RETIRED, PRE-REGISTERED, 24.

IN ATTENDANCE, 21.

DIACONAL MINISTERS UNDER CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 2.

IN ATTENDANCE, 2.

DIACONAL MINISTERS ON LEAVE FROM CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 0.

IN ATTENDANCE, 0.

DIACONAL MINISTERS RETIRED, PRE-REGISTERED, 0.

IN ATTENDANCE, 0.

ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY UNDER CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 6.

IN ATTENDANCE, 6.

ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY ON LEAVE FROM CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 0.

IN ATTENDANCE, 0.

ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY RETIRED, PRE-REGISTERED, 0.

IN ATTENDANCE, 0.

DEACONESS UNDER CALL, PRE-REGISTERED, 1.

IN ATTENDANCE, 1.

LICENSED LAY MINISTERS, PRE-REGISTERED, 2.

IN ATTENDANCE, 3.

LAY VOTING MEMBERS, PRE-REGISTERED, 255.

IN ATTENDANCE, 235.

LAY MEMBERS OF SYNOD COUNCIL, PRE-REGISTERED, 15.

IN ATTENDANCE, 13.

ECUMENICAL PASTORS, PRE-REGISTERED, 3.

IN ATTENDANCE, 1.

TOTAL VOTING MEMBERS PRE-REGISTERED, 440.

IN ATTENDANCE, 400.

TOTAL VOTING MEMBERS OF 400 CONSTITUTES A QUORUM.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE, LINDA

LARSON, CHAIRMAN.

AND I MOVE TO APPROVE THIS REPORT.

>> IS THERE A SECOND TO THE APPROVAL OF THE REPORT?

WE HAVE A SECOND.

ALL IN FAVOR, PLEASE SAY AYE.

THOSE OPPOSED, SAY NO.

WE HAVE APPROVED THE REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MS. LARSON.

IF YOU COULD HAND THAT TO THE ACTING SECRETARY THERE.

NOW, IF YOU WOULD TURN TO TAB-A.

AT THIS TIME, WE WILL ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR THIS WEEKEND,  
WHICH IS IN YOUR ASSEMBLY MATERIALS.

AND THERE ARE SOME CHANGES TO THIS, SO IF YOU'LL PLEASE  
CAREFULLY AND PATIENTLY FOLLOW THIS.

FIRST OF ALL, AT SOME POINT DURING THE FIRST PLENARY SESSION  
THIS AFTERNOON, YOU WILL HEAR THE REPORT OF THE BISHOP.

I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN THAT HAPPENS, AND WHEN I'M DOING IT.

[ LAUGHTER ]

NOT TO CALL NAMES, BUT ONE OF THE STAFF PEOPLE LEFT IT OFF, I  
THINK IN HOPE, HAVING SEEN HOW LONG IT IS.

BUT WE WILL HAVE THAT.

ALSO, PLEASE LOOK AT PAGE A-3, ITEM K, AND STRIKE THE WORDS "AT  
THE LUTH BOOTH," PAGE A-3, ITEM K.

STRIKE THE WORDS "AT THE LUTH BOOTH."

THE LUTH BOOTH IS NOT HERE.

PAGE A-4 -- EXCUSE ME.

WELL, I HAVE SOME ADDED HERE.

PAGE A-4, THANK YOU.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE RIGHT.

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THIS HAPPEN HERE.

PAGE A-4, ITEMS F AND G, YOU WILL SEE TWO BLANK LINES.

THOSE ARE EXHIBIT 17, EXHIBIT 17, AND THEN ON PAGE A-6, AT ITEM K, YOU'LL ENCOUNTER ANOTHER BLANK LINE, WHICH IS ALSO EXHIBIT 17.

EXHIBIT 17 IS A REALLY BIG EXHIBIT.

PAGE A-6, PLENARY SESSION FOUR.

OKAY, I HATE TO HAVE TO SAY THIS, BUT IT WILL NOT BEGIN AT 3:00.

IT WILL BEGIN AT 2:30 INSTEAD.

WE HAVE A LOT TO DO THIS WEEKEND.

SO PLEASE MAKE THAT CHANGE, AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

PAGE A-6, PLENARY FOUR, BEGINS AT 2:30.

AND FINALLY, PAGE A-7, ITEM I, STRIKE THE WORDS "DVD FROM MINISTRY MOMENTS BOOTH."

STRIKE THE WORDS, "DVD FROM MINISTRY MOMENTS BOOTH."

I THINK THAT'S OUT HAVING A GOOD TIME WITH THE LUTH BOOTH, AND ARE NOT WITH US.

IS THERE -- WOULD SOMEONE BE WILLING TO MOVE THE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AS CORRECTED?

>> SO MOVED.

>> WE HAVE A MOTION.

IS THERE A SECOND?

>> SECOND.

>> AND A SECOND.

ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF ADOPTING THE AGENDA AS CORRECTED,  
PLEASE INDICATE SO BY SAYING AYE.

ALL OPPOSED, SAY NO.

THE MOTION CARRIES.

THE AGENDA IS ADOPTED.

NOW, IF YOU WOULD TURN TO TAB-I, EXHIBIT 1.

THE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE.

TAB-I, EXHIBIT 1.

THE ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE  
REQUIRE A 2/3 VOTE.

WE HAVE FROM THE SYNOD COUNCIL THE RESOLUTION THAT THE  
RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE RECOMMENDED BY THE  
COUNCIL IN JANUARY AND JUNE OF 2000 BE ADOPTED -- EXCUSE ME,  
DOESN'T NEED A SECOND.

IT'S FROM THE COUNCIL.

IS THERE ANY DISCUSSION OF THE RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND  
PROCEDURE?

I KNOW ALL OF YOU HAVE BEEN READING THESE CAREFULLY OVER THE  
LAST FEW DAYS.

I DON'T SEE ANYONE APPROACHING ANY MIC SO I BELIEVE WE'RE READY TO VOTE.

ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF ADOPTING THE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE, PLEASE INDICATE SO BY SAYING AYE.

ALL THOSE OPPOSED, NO.

WE HAVE ADOPTED THE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE.

HEY, THIS IS GOING REALLY SWIMMINGLY SO FAR.

LET ME INTRODUCE TO YOU NOW OUR PARLIAMENTARIAN, NO STRANGER TO MOST OF YOU.

MS. ESSIE ROWSER IS AGAIN OUR PARLIAMENTARIAN.

SHE IS A NURSE, WHO WORKED FOR MANY YEARS, I THINK 34 YEARS, AT THE GEORGIA PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

SHE HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN PUBLIC HEALTH, WORKED FOR THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

SHE'S ALSO A MEMBER OF ST. PAUL IN DECATUR.

SHE'S RETIRED FULL COLONEL IN THE U.S. ARMY, WHICH MEANS SHE OUTRANKS BUD ONSTAD.

AND SHE'S A CERTIFIED PARLIAMENTARIAN BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS.

SHE'S BEEN TRYING TO RETIRE FOR TWO YEARS.

WE MIGHT LET HER DO THAT NEXT YEAR.

BUT LET'S THANK MS. ROWSER FOR HER WILLINGNESS TO SERVE.

[ APPLAUSE ]

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

TAB-I, EXHIBIT 2, IS THE ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE.

THIS IS FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVEN'T SPENT THE LAST SEVERAL NIGHTS READING ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER.

IT WILL BE HELPFUL, IT WOULD BE GOOD, TO TRY TO KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT THAT AS POSSIBLE WHEN WE COME TO MAKE RULES, BUT THE POINT OF THE RULES IS NOT TO MAKE THINGS CONFUSING OR DIFFICULT, BUT TO MAKE THEM POSSIBLE AND SIMPLE.

LET ME GIVE YOU A LITTLE OVERVIEW OF THE RULES.

IN THE POLITY OF OUR CHURCH, WHEN THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY MEETS, WE DO NOT MEET AS CAUCUSES OF CONGREGATIONS, OR CONFERENCES OR CLUSTERS, BUT AS GATHERINGS OF ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS IN AN ASSEMBLY.

THAT'S WHY WE DON'T CALL THIS A CONVENTION.

IT'S AN ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH.

THIS IS A THEOLOGICAL POINT, BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN WE GATHER TOGETHER IN THE NAME OF CHRIST, CHRIST IS WITH US, THE SPIRIT DIRECTS US, AND WE NEED TO BE FREE TO ENGAGE ONE

ANOTHER AND NOT SIMPLY SHOW UP TO VOTE AS WE'VE BEEN INSTRUCTED.

SO EVERY VOTING MEMBER OF YOU MUST THEREFORE PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCEEDINGS, PRAY FOR WISDOM, AND THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT, DELIBERATE TOGETHER, AND VOTE ON ISSUES AND IN ELECTIONS.

WE NEED TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO ONE ANOTHER, AND EVEN MORE CAREFULLY TO WHERE WE THINK THE SPIRIT IS LEADING US.

WE USE ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER AND THE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE NOT TO MAKE THINGS ARCANE OR DIFFICULT, BUT IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT OUR IS ASSEMBLY IS RUN IN A FAIR MANNER, AGREED TO BEFOREHAND, THAT IT IS RESPECTFUL OF THE RIGHTS OF EVERYONE WHO IS A VOTING MEMBER, SO THAT THE MAJORITY RULES, BUT THE MINORITY'S RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT EVERYBODY BE HEARD, AND THAT WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER WITH COURTESY AND RESPECT, AND AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST.

SO HERE'S SOME NOTES ON HOW WE PROCEED.

AS BISHOP OF THE SYNOD, I AM ALSO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SYNOD, AND WILL SERVE AS THE CHAIR OF THE ASSEMBLY.

ON OCCASION, THE CHAIR MAY CALL ON THE VICE PRESIDENT, MR. WESLEY CRENSHAW, WHO ALSO CHAIRS THE SYNOD COUNCIL,

WHO WILL PRESIDE OVER SOME OF THE ITEMS IN OUR AGENDA.  
CRUCIAL TO THE WORK OF THIS ASSEMBLY IS THAT PACKET OF  
ASSEMBLY MATERIALS WHICH HAS BEEN POSTED ON THE INTERNET,  
AND YOU RECEIVED HARD COPIES OF WHEN YOU GOT HERE.

AS YOU'VE NOTICED, IT'S DIVIDED INTO SECTIONS.

THE PAGES WITHIN EACH SECTION ARE NUMBERED AT THE BOTTOM  
CENTER OF THE PAGE, EXCEPT FOR -- YOU KNEW THERE WOULD BE AN  
EXCEPTION -- SECTION-I, THE EXHIBITS SECTION.

AND EACH EXHIBIT IS LABELED AT THE TOP RIGHT CORNER.

SO ALL THE OTHERS YOU SHOULD FIND THE PAGE NUMBER AT THE  
BOTTOM.

THE PROGRAM GUIDE FOR THE ENTIRE WEEKEND IS FOUND IN  
SECTION-A BEGINNING AT A-1.

WE JUST ADOPTED THE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND  
PROCEDURE AND ACCORDING TO THOSE RULES, WE USE ROBERT'S  
RULES OF ORDER TO GOVERN PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE IN THIS  
ASSEMBLY, EXCEPT IN THOSE CASES WHERE OUR OWN ADOPTED  
RULES ARE DIFFERENT, AND THEN THEY TRUMP ROBERT'S RULES OF  
ORDER.

DURING THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY, PLEASE BE SEATED  
AT THESE TABLES.

THE BADGE THAT YOU GOT WHEN YOU REGISTERED NEEDS TO BE

WORN AT ALL TIMES, SINCE THIS GIVES US AN IDEA OF WHO'S A VOTING MEMBER AND WHO'S NOT.

IT ALLOWS YOU INTO THE VOTING MEMBER SECTION OF THE PLENARY HALL AND ALSO INTO WORKSHOPS.

VOTING MEMBERS, I CAN'T REALLY SAY THIS NEXT ONE IN GOOD CONSCIENCE.

IT SAYS, VOTING MEMBERS SHOULD REMAIN IN THE PLENARY HALL AT ALL TIMES DURING EACH SESSION.

NEVER HAVING DONE THAT BEFORE, PERSONALLY, SO I JUST NEED TO CONFESS THAT.

BE HERE AS OFTEN AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN, BECAUSE PROXY AND ABSENTEE VOTING ARE NOT ALLOWED IN OUR ASSEMBLY FOR THE SAME REASON WE TALKED ABOUT EARLIER.

IF YOU IMMEDIATE TO GO GET SOME COFFEE, THOUGH, THAT'S FINE. THERE ARE MONITORS OUT THERE.

YOU CAN SEE WHAT'S GOING ON AND CAN COME BACK.

AS A VOTING MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO THIS ASSEMBLY.

THE PROPER PROCEDURE IS TO GO TO ONE OF THE MICROPHONES NUMBERED 1 THROUGH 4 THAT ARE IN THE AISLES -- THERE ARE TWO IN THE CENTER AISLE AND ONE ON EACH SIDE AISLE -- AND WAIT TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR.

IT'S NEVER APPROPRIATE TO SHOUT OUT A PROPOSAL OR TO SPEAK WITHOUT FIRST BEING RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR.

THAT'S EXCEPT TO MAKE A SECOND WHEN THE CHAIR ASKS FOR A SECOND.

WHEN YOU SPEAK, REMEMBER THAT YOU ADDRESS THE CHAIR, AND NOT ANOTHER VOTING MEMBER.

YOU CAN IMAGINE WHY THAT MIGHT BE A GOOD REASON TO KEEP US ALL COURTEOUS TO ONE ANOTHER.

IT IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT AND PART OF ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER THAT WE SPEAK ONLY TO THE ISSUE AT HAND.

IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS NOT GERMANE TO THE ISSUE, THE CHAIR WILL HAVE TO RULE YOUR COMMENTS OR DISCUSSION OUT OF ORDER.

UNDER THE RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY, ANY SPEECH YOU MAKE DURING THE ASSEMBLY, DURING THE DISCUSSION PART, IS LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES, UNLESS THE ASSEMBLY VOTES OTHERWISE.

BUT PART OF OUR RULE OF ORDER IS THAT THE LIMIT IS 3 MINUTES.

IF YOU ARE A VOTING MEMBER, YOU OUGHT TO HAVE A SET OF RED, GREEN, AND YELLOW CARDS THAT YOU GOT WHEN YOU REGISTERED.

EVERYBODY HAVE A SET OF RED, YELLOW, AND GREEN CARDS?

THOSE BECOME REALLY IMPORTANT.

THE YELLOW CARD IS A POINT OF ORDER, OR POINT OF INFORMATION CARD.

THE ONLY TIME THAT IT'S APPROPRIATE TO USE A YELLOW CARD, IS IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE PROCEDURE, IF YOU NEED CLARIFICATION ABOUT SOMETHING THAT'S BEING DISCUSSED, OR IF THERE'S AN ISSUE THAT NEEDS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE'S A FIRE IN THE CORNER OF THE BUILDING.

PLEASE USE YOUR YELLOW CARD IN CASES OF THAT NATURE.

IF YOU THINK THAT THE RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY ARE BEING VIOLATED, THEN YOU USE YOUR YELLOW CARD TO MAKE THAT POINT OF ORDER, WHICH MEANS THAT YOU THINK THERE'S AN INFRACTION OF THE RULES, AND RAISE THAT POINT OF ORDER.

ALL POINTS OF ORDER HAVE TO BE RAISED IMMEDIATELY.

IF WE GET BY DOING IT INCORRECTLY, AND NO ONE CALLS IT TO OUR ATTENTION, IT JUST GETS BY.

SO IF YOU SEE SOMETHING IN ERROR, AND THERE COULD BE, PLEASE MAKE THAT IMMEDIATELY.

IF YOU HAVE A POINT OF ORDER THAT YOU WANT TO MAKE, TAKE YOUR YELLOW CARD, GO TO A MICROPHONE.

THE FOLKS AT THE MICROPHONE WAITING TO SPEAK, IF THEY DON'T HAVE YELLOW CARDS, SHALL ALLOW YOU IMMEDIATELY TO THE FRONT TO MAKE YOUR POINT OF ORDER OR POINT OF INFORMATION.

AND AS ONE WHO AT LEAST ONCE HAS MADE A MISTAKE HERE, BE FAIRLY SURE THAT YOU HAVE A POINT OF ORDER OR INFORMATION SO

THE CHAIR DOESN'T SAY: I DON'T THINK THAT'S A POINT OF ORDER OR INFORMATION.

AS WE CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS AND MEMORIALS, PLEASE APPROACH THE MICROPHONE, HOLD A GREEN CARD IF YOU WANT TO SPEAK IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION OR AMENDMENT, AND A RED CARD IF YOU WANT TO SPEAK AGAINST IT.

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, THE CHAIR WILL RECOGNIZE A SPEAKER ON ONE SIDE OF AN ISSUE FOLLOWED BY A SPEAKER ON THE OTHER SIDE. IF YOU WISH TO AMEND A RESOLUTION OR MEMORIAL WHICH IS BEING CONSIDERED, YOU WOULD GO TO THE MICROPHONE, WAIT TO BE RECOGNIZED, IDENTIFY YOURSELF BY NAME AND CONGREGATION, AND THEN SAY, "I MOVE TO AMEND BY," ADDING SOMETHING OR STRIKING SOMETHING AND SO FORTH.

YOUR MOTION TO AMEND HAS TO BE SECONDED BY ANOTHER VOTING MEMBER.

IF IT ISN'T SECONDED, THEN WE DON'T GET TO TALK ABOUT IT.

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT -- AND YOU MAY SECOND A MOTION WITH WHICH YOU DO NOT AGREE, IF YOU THINK IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO TALK ABOUT.

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT AMENDMENTS BE SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY IN WRITING BEFORE OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MOTION TO AMEND IS PROPERLY MADE.

SO IF YOU CAN, BEFORE YOU GO TO THE MICROPHONE OR WHILE YOU'RE WAITING IN LINE TO GET TO THE MICROPHONE, WRITE YOUR MOTION OUT CLEARLY SO THAT IT CAN BE GIVEN TO THE SECRETARY. TO MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION AND END DEBATE, A VOTING MEMBER SHOULD APPROACH ONE OF THE MICROPHONES WITH A RED CARD, NOT A YELLOW CARD.

IT'S NOT A PRIVILEGE MOTION.

WAIT YOUR TURN IN LINE.

AND THE RULES THAT WE JUST ADOPTED SAY THAT YOU MAY NOT MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION IF YOU'VE JUST FINISHED SPEAKING ON THE MATTER BEFORE THE HOUSE.

A MOTION TO MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION HAS TO BE SECONDED, BUT IT'S NOT DEBATABLE OR AMENDMENT, AND IT HAS TO BE APPROVED BY A 2/3.

IF IT'S NOT, THEN WE GET TO KEEP TALKING.

YOU CANNOT MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION UNLESS YOU'RE AT A MICROPHONE AND HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR.

WE HAVE MORE RULES, BUT I'LL GET TO THOSE LATER.

AS WE CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO OUR SYNOD STRUCTURE LATER IN THE ASSEMBLY, YOU'LL HEAR THE TERM "REMOVAL FROM EN BLOC CONSIDERATION."

THE SYNOD COUNCIL HAS PROPOSED WE CONSIDER ALL OF THE

CHANGES TO THE BYLAWS AND TO THE CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS AND THE CONSTITUTION TOGETHER EN BLOC.

YOU CAN SEE ALL THE PROPOSED CHANGES BEHIND TAB-F OF YOUR MATERIALS.

AS A VOTING MEMBER, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO REMOVE A SECTION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES FROM EN BLOC CONSIDERATION SO THAT WE WILL THEN CONSIDER IT INDIVIDUALLY.

TO DO THIS, TURN TO TAB-I, EXHIBIT 16, COMPLETE THE FORM THAT SAYS "NOTICE TO REMOVE SPECIFIC BYLAW CONTINUING RESOLUTION FROM EN BLOC CONSIDERATION," FILL IT OUT, AND TURN THAT INTO THE WILTON ROOM, THE ASSEMBLY OFFICE IN THE WILTON ROOM, BY 7:00 A.M. TOMORROW IF YOU WANT IT REMOVED FROM EN BLOC CONSIDERATION.

EVEN AT THAT, THAT WILL REALLY PUSH US TO HAVE THIS READY TO GO IF THERE ARE MANY THAT ARE REMOVED, SO PLEASE BE SURE TO DO THAT AS QUICKLY AS SOON AS YOU CAN.

THAT'S A LOT OF INFORMATION.

IN THE SHORT TIME, I SAID I HAVE MORE, BUT WE'LL LEAVE THAT.

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION REGARDING THE RULES OR PROCEDURES, JUST PLEASE COME UP TO THE DAIS IMMEDIATELY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT RECESS, AND ASK YOUR QUESTION.

IF IT'S SOMETHING THAT -- AN ERROR THAT NEEDS TO BE ANNOUNCED

TO EVERYONE, WE'LL DO THAT AT THE NEXT SESSION.

THE OFFICERS AND STAFF, OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD AND THE STAFF OF THE SYNOD, ARE HERE TO HELP US CONDUCT OUR BUSINESS, AND TO MAKE THESE DAYS UPLIFTING AND ENJOYABLE.

IF YOU NEED THEIR ASSISTANCE, MOST OF THE STAFF HAVE ON RED JACKETS.

YOU CAN FIND THEM, THE ASSISTANTS TO THE BISHOP ARE PROBABLY OUT IN THE GARDEN AREA HAVING COFFEE.

YOU CAN FIND THEM OUT THERE.

[ LAUGHTER ]

DON'T HESITATE TO GO TO THE ASSEMBLY OFFICE OR THE WILTON ROOM, AND -- ONE OF THE ASSISTANTS WHO IS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HERE ON THE FRONT ROW IS CLEARING HIS THROAT AT THE MOMENT.

PASTOR CHILTON IS IN THE HOUSE.

BEFORE WE MOVE TO THE REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE, LET ME CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FIRST OF TWO DEADLINES FOUND ON PAGE A-2 OF THE ASSEMBLY MATERIALS.

NOMINATION FORMS FOR NOMINEES FROM THE FLOOR NEED TO BE TURNED INTO THE ASSEMBLY OFFICE IN THE WILTON ROOM BY 5:00 TODAY.

NOMINEES FROM THE FLOOR, IF YOU WANT TO NOMINATE SOMEONE

FROM THE FLOOR, PLEASE HAVE THAT MATERIAL FILLED OUT AND  
TURNED INTO THE ASSEMBLY OFFICE BY 5:00.

I NOW CALL UPON THE CHAIR OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE,  
MR. HENRY HARRIS OF CHRISTUS VICTOR IN OCEAN SPRINGS,  
MISSISSIPPI, WHO WILL GIVE THE REPORT OF THE NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE.

>> BISHOP GORDY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, I THINK I NEED  
TO PASS OUT A COUPLE OF THINGS FIRST.

I'D ASK YOU NOW TO PLEASE TURN TO TAB D IN YOUR ASSEMBLY  
MATERIALS, WHERE YOU'LL FIND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR  
THOSE NOMINATED BY EITHER THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE OR THE  
SYNOD COUNCIL, STARTING ON PAGE D-3.

NOTE THAT THE NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR MAY SUPPLEMENT  
THOSE MADE BY THESE GROUPS, BY THESE TWO GROUPS.

BEGINNING WITH THE NOMINATION FOR POSITION OF SYNOD  
SECRETARY, THIS IS A 4-YEAR TERM, UNTIL 2013, THE SYNOD COUNCIL  
HAS NOMINATED THE FOLLOWING:

PASTOR RANDY JONES.

AND PASTOR TERRY STAGNER-COLLIER.

>> THANK YOU, MR. HARRIS.

PASTOR RANDY JONES AND PASTOR TERRY STAGNER-COLLIER ARE  
PRESENTED BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

ARE THERE OTHER NOMINATIONS?

OTHER NOMINATIONS?

I DON'T SEE ANYONE GOING TO A -- YES, EXCUSE ME, THERE IS SOMEONE WORKING HER WAY TO A MICROPHONE.

>> THANK YOU.

PASTOR JILL HENNING FROM TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, CONFERENCE 11.

I NOMINATE PASTOR DALE SILLICK.

>> THANK YOU.

PASTOR DALE SILLICK IS PLACED IN NOMINATION.

ARE THERE OTHER NOMINEES FOR SECRETARY?

THIS IS TO FILL THE SPOT OF SECRETARY MADE VACANT WHEN THE PREVIOUS SECRETARY, PASTOR JOHN STIREWALT, TOOK A CALL TO FLORIDA.

WENT DOWN THERE WHERE IT'S ALWAYS WARM.

OTHER NOMINATIONS?

I DON'T SEE ANY MORE, SO WE'LL DECLARE THE NOMINATIONS CLOSED.

MR. HARRIS?

>> I'D LIKE TO MAKE A COMMENT ON THAT NOW -- ALMOST SAID

"PASTOR GORDY."

AS BISHOP GORDY SAID, NOMINATION FORMS MUST BE TURNED IN BY 5:00, BUT I HAVE A SPECIAL NOMINATION FORM HERE FOR THE SYNOD

SECRETARY THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE IN YOUR BROCHURES.  
SO SEE ME AFTER THIS SESSION.

>> PASTOR HENNING, DID YOU GET THAT?

OKAY.

>> FOR THE POSITION OF YOUTH MEMBER OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL,  
THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATES THE FOLLOWING TWO  
PEOPLE:

MR. PRESTON SCOTT -- I HOPE I PRONOUNCE IT CORRECTLY -- JUTTE,  
AND MS. UDY OBOT.

>> ARE THERE OTHER NOMINATIONS FOR YOUTH MEMBER OF SYNOD  
COUNCIL?

I DON'T SEE ANYONE GOING TO A MICROPHONE, SO WE'LL DECLARE  
THOSE NOMINATIONS CLOSED.

MR. HARRIS?

>> FOR THE AT-LARGE POSITIONS ON SYNOD COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL  
WILL SUBMIT ITS NOMINATIONS TOMORROW, AFTER THE VOTE ON THE  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SYNOD BYLAWS AND CONTINUING  
RESOLUTIONS.

AT THIS ASSEMBLY, WE'LL ALSO BE ELECTING SEVERAL MEMBERS OF  
THE CONSULTATION AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES.

FOR CONSULTATION, THERE ARE 3 POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED.

ONE IS TO BE AN ORDAINED PERSON, AND 2 ARE TO BE LAY PERSONS.

ALL POSITIONS ARE FOR 6-YEAR TERMS TO 2015.

FOR THE CLERGY POSITION ON THE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, THE  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATES THE FOLLOWING:

PASTOR KATHERINE PASCH.

PASTOR DON VOLLENWEIDER.

>> ARE THERE OTHER NOMINATIONS FOR THE CLERGY POSITION ON  
THE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE?

I DON'T SEE ANYONE GOING TO A MICROPHONE, SO I'LL DECLARE THE  
NOMINATIONS CLOSED FOR THE CLERGY POSITION OF THE  
CONSULTATION COMMITTEE.

MR. HARRIS?

>> FOR THE TWO LAY POSITIONS ON THE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE,  
THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATES THE FOLLOWING:

MELISSA FULLER.

AND PAUL ROWE.

>> ARE THERE OTHER NOMINATIONS FOR LAY POSITION TO THE  
CONSULTATION COMMITTEE?

I DON'T SEE ANYONE GOING TO THE MICROPHONE, SO WE'LL DECLARE  
THE LAY POSITION ON THE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, THOSE  
NOMINATIONS ARE DECLARED CLOSES.

MR. HARRIS?

>> FOR THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE, THERE ARE 4 POSITIONS TO BE

ELECTED.

2 ARE TO BE CLERGY.

AND 2 ARE TO BE LAY POSITIONS.

ALL POSITIONS ARE FOR 6-YEAR TERMS TO 2015.

FOR THE CLERGY POSITIONS ON THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE, THE  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATES:

PASTOR ROBERT HARREL.

AND PASTOR -- CAN I SAY "AMY"?

THE OTHER'S TOO LONG, I'M SORRY.

PASTOR AMY ONSTAD.

>> PASTOR ROBERT HARREL AND PASTOR AMY ONSTAD ARE  
NOMINATED FOR THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE, CLERGY POSITIONS.

ARE THERE OTHER NOMINATIONS?

I DON'T SEE ANY, SO I'LL DECLARE THE NOMINATIONS CLOSED.

MR. HARRIS?

>> FOR THE LAY POSITIONS ON THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE, THE  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATES THE FOLLOWING:

MS. GLENDA ROWE.

MS. BEVERLY BROWN SHAW.

MR. GARY TABOR.

>> FOR THE LAY POSITION, GLENDA ROWE, BEVERLY BROWN SHAW,  
AND GARY TABOR.

ARE THERE OTHER NOMINATIONS?

LAY POSITION FOR DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE.

SEEING NONE, WE'LL DECLARE THE NOMINATIONS CLOSED.

MR. HARRIS?

>> AND, SIR, I BELIEVE THAT COMPLETES THE REPORT OF THE  
NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>> THANK YOU, SIR.

>> WE ARE ARRIVING AT THE PART OF THE AGENDA THAT WAS LEFT  
OUT, THE REPORT OF THE BISHOP.

I JUST NOTICED BY MY WATCH THAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE OVER NOW.  
HANG ON.

WE'RE GOING TO ROLL HERE.

I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF BEING THE BISHOP OF THIS SYNOD FOR  
THE PAST 1 YEAR, 9 MONTHS, AND 5 DAYS.

AND I'VE LEARNED A FEW THINGS DURING THAT TIME.

MOST OF THEM HAVE TO DO WITH THE LOCATIONS OF THE VARIOUS  
PILOT GAS STATIONS AND STARBUCKS ON THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS  
OF OUR FOUR STATES.

BUT I'VE LEARNED A FEW OTHER THINGS, AS WELL.

IT'S BEEN ONE OF THE CHIEF BLESSINGS OF THIS CALL TO BE INVITED  
TO PREACH AND PRESIDE AT SUNDAY WORSHIP IN OUR

CONGREGATIONS, AND TO EXPERIENCE THE MARVELOUS SPIRIT, TALENT, AND DIVERSITY WITH WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THIS SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD WORSHIP GOD IN OUR WEEKLY ASSEMBLIES. I'M SURE OF ONE THING: THE SPIRIT HAS POURED OUT GIFTS ON THIS SYNOD.

OUR CONGREGATIONS ARE FULL OF PEOPLE WITH ABSOLUTELY AMAZING ABILITIES AND GOOD HEARTS FOR THE GOSPEL. WE HAVE A LOT OF GOOD BUILDING BLOCKS IN THIS HOUSE OF LIVING STONES.

GOD HAS CERTAINLY GIVEN US, AS SCRIPTURE SAYS, ALL THE GIFTS THAT WE NEED TO DO THE WORK TO WHICH WE HAVE BEEN CALLED. ONE OF THE CHIEF GOALS OF THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF HAS BEEN RECONNECTING WITH OUR CONGREGATIONS.

TO THAT END, THOSE OF US ON THE STAFF WHO TRAVEL HAVE TRIED TO BE PRESENT IN CONGREGATIONS AT TIMES OF CELEBRATION, AND NOT JUST WHEN SOMEBODY IS IN TROUBLE.

SINCE LAST YEAR, RACHEL ALLEY, OUR YOUTH COORDINATOR, AND THE FOUR ASSISTANTS TO THE BISHOP AND I, HAVE BEEN IN AT LEAST 125 OF OUR 170 CONGREGATIONS FOR PURPOSES OF CELEBRATION, WORSHIP, OR EDUCATION.

MY BACKSIDE IS PERMANENTLY IN THE SHAPE OF A CHEVY MALIBU DRIVER'S SEAT.

IT'S BEEN CHALLENGING TO DO ALL OF THAT TRAVEL, BOTH IN TERMS OF TIME AND IN TERMS OF MONEY.

OUR TRAVEL BUDGET HAS BEEN STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT, AND ACTUALLY, A GOOD BIT BEYOND THE LIMIT.

STILL SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS AND THE WORK THAT THEY DO IN JESUS' NAME IS OUR CHIEF CALLING IN THE SYNOD OFFICE.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CONGREGATIONS AND BETWEEN CONGREGATIONS IN THE SYNOD OFFICE IS CRITICAL WORK IF WE'RE GOING TO CARRY OUT OUR MISSION IN THIS REALLY CHALLENGING GEOGRAPHY, THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY.

I'M GOING TO BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO JUST A FEW THINGS THAT I WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MISS, BECAUSE I KNOW YOU'VE SPENT TIME STUDYING CAREFULLY THE BISHOP'S REPORT THAT WAS IN THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY MATERIALS, BUT JUST IN CASE SOME OF IT HAS SLIPPED YOUR MIND BY NOW, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH IS THAT AFTER 6 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE AS OUR MISSION DIRECTOR, PASTOR GARY CHRISTENSEN RESIGNED TO RETURN TO THE PARISH AT CROSS AND CROWN IN CHAMBLEE, GEORGIA.

AND WHILE WE CELEBRATE PASTOR CHRISTENSEN'S CALL, WE CELEBRATE WITH THE PEOPLE OF CROSS AND CROWN, WE DEEPLY FEEL HIS ABSENCE IN THE MISSION DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN OUR

SYNOD, AND HOPE THAT WE WILL SOON HAVE SOMEONE TO BE OVERSEEING THAT EFFORT.

WE'RE CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS, IN FACT, OF WORKING WITH EVANGELICAL OUTREACH AND CONGREGATIONAL MISSION UNIT OF THE ELCA TO FIND AND CALL A DIRECTOR OF EVANGELICAL MISSION, A REPLACEMENT FOR PASTOR GARY CHRISTENSEN.

MAYBE NOT A REPLACEMENT, BUT SOMEONE TO DO THE SAME KIND OF WORK.

THIS SYNOD HAS MORE MISSION DEVELOPMENTS AND REDEVELOPMENTS THAN ANY OTHER SYNOD IN THE ELCA.

FOR THIS REASON, AND BECAUSE OUR AREA OF THE COUNTRY CONTINUES TO GROW RAPIDLY, EOCM, EVANGELICAL OUTREACH AND CONGREGATIONAL MISSION, IS WILLING TO FUND AN ADDITIONAL HALF-TIME POSITION IN MISSION DEVELOPMENT IN OUR SYNOD.

IT'S A NEW WAY OF DOING MISSION DEVELOPMENT.

THE DIRECTOR OF EVANGELICAL MISSION WILL BE A MEMBER OF THE SYNOD STAFF, AND WILL WORK WITH THIS OFFICE AND WITH EOCM UNITS, TO START AND RENEW CONGREGATIONS IN OUR SYNOD.

AND THESE MISSIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN WITH SIGNIFICANT INVOLVEMENT OF EXISTING AREA CONGREGATIONS, CLUSTERS, AND CONFERENCES, IN IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING AND IN SUPPORTING MISSION STARTS.

THAT'S ACTUALLY NOT NEW.

THAT'S A VERY OLD WAY OF STARTING MISSIONS.

PART OF OUR NEW MISSION STRATEGY INCLUDES A STRONG EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING CONGREGATIONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT.

IN 2007, 300,000 AFRICAN AMERICANS, MANY OF THEM THE CHILDREN AND GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, OF THOSE WHO MOVED NORTH AND WEST DURING THE JIM CROW ERA, RETURNED TO THE SOUTHEAST.

300,000.

170,000 OF THOSE, OVER HALF OF THEM, CAME BACK TO ATLANTA.

OUR SYNOD IS STRATEGICALLY PLACED TO WELCOME AND INVOLVE THESE SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY WE SHARE IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH, AND I'M EXCITED THAT OUR CHURCHWIDE STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH, AND HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO HELP US MEET THIS CHALLENGE.

IF YOU NOTED IN THE NECROLOGY SECTION OF THE ASSEMBLY MATERIALS, THERE WERE DEATHS AGAIN AMONG THE CLERGY IN THE SYNOD.

ONE OF THEM THIS YEAR WAS A FORMER ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP, PASTOR GENE POWELL, A LOVING, GENTLE SOUL.

MOST PEOPLE WHO MET GENE WOULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT HE USED TO PLAY FOOTBALL FOR THE NFL NEW YORK GIANTS BEFORE

GOING TO TRINITY SEMINARY.

HE -- I REMEMBER HIM WITH SPECIAL FONDNESS, BECAUSE HE SERVED AS MY CONTACT PASTOR WHEN I WAS A SEMINARY STUDENT A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.

WE CELEBRATE HIS LIFE, AND WE GIVE THANKS FOR HIS EXCELLENT SERVICE TO THIS SYNOD AT ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, AND IN THE SYNOD OFFICE.

SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS REFER TO THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD AS "DISASTER CENTRAL."

THEY REFER TO IT THAT WAY BECAUSE IT IS.

WE HAVE AN ABUNDANCE OF DROUGHT.

THAT SEEMS TO BE OVER.

SOMEBODY ASKED ME IF IT WAS OVER.

I SAID: IT'S BEEN RAINING SINCE JANUARY, AND NOBODY'S COMPLAINING.

WE HAVE TORNADOES, WE HAVE FLOODS, WE HAVE HURRICANES, AND WE EVEN HAVE A SEISMIC EARTHQUAKE FAULT UP THERE IN WEST TENNESSEE.

THEY HAVE PLAGUED OUR PART OF THE WORLD FOR THE PAST YEARS, THESE DISASTERS.

IT'S NOT A REPUTATION THAT WE WANT, BUT IT UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR THOSE WHO LIVE AND

SERVE IN THIS AREA.

I ASKED PASTOR MORGAN GORDY, WHO SERVED FOR BISHOP WARREN ON THE GULF COAST AFTER KATRINA, TO GATHER ALL THE PARTNERS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN DISASTER RESPONSE AROUND THIS SYNOD AND PUT TOGETHER A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR OUR SYNOD.

THAT PLAN WAS APPROVED LAST NIGHT BY THE SYNOD COUNCIL, AND WILL BE PUT INTO PLACE IMMEDIATELY.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO MORGAN FOR A LOT OF WORK, FOR DOING THAT, AND FOR ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED.

YOU ALSO KNOW THAT ALMOST FOUR YEARS AGO, FOUR YEARS AFTER KATRINA, THE GULF COAST IS STILL A LONG WAY FROM BEING RECOVERED.

MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL NOT IN THEIR HOMES, AND I KNOW THAT SOME OF YOU AND MANY OTHERS IN THIS CHURCH AROUND THIS COUNTRY HAVE MADE MULTIPLE TRIPS TO THE COAST TO HELP IN THE RECOVERY.

I THANK YOU FOR THAT.

AND I HOPE YOU'LL KEEP IT UP, BECAUSE THERE IS STILL A LOT TO BE DONE.

MUCH HAS BEEN DONE, HOWEVER, AND I WANTED TO SPEND A MOMENT OF MY TIME THANKING SOMEONE WHO'S NOT HERE WITH US TODAY, BUT MR. MARK JOHNSON, WHO'S AN EXPERIENCED -- HE WAS

AN EXPERIENCED LDR COORDINATOR WHEN HE CAME TO THE GULF COAST RIGHT AFTER KATRINA IN 2005, JUST A FEW DAYS AFTER.

THE FOLKS AT CHRISTUS VICTOR IMMEDIATELY SENT HIM UP ON THE ROOF WITH THE INSURANCE ASSESSOR, AND IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, MARK WENT TO WORK SHARING HIS ENORMOUS CONSTRUCTION REBUILDING DISASTER EXPERIENCE.

HE GAINED THAT MOSTLY IN THE CARIBBEAN.

AND WHEN HE SAW THAT THE EFFORTS ON THE MISSISSIPPI COAST, AS HUGE AS THEY WERE, WERE PRETTY WELL ORGANIZED, HE HEADED EAST TO BAYOU LA BATRE, ALABAMA.

THERE THROUGH THE AUSPICES OF LUTHERAN FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN MISSOURI, WHICH WAS THE DESIGNATED LDR AGENCY FOR ALABAMA AT THE TIME, AND WORKING VERY CLOSELY WITH ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH AND A HOST OF OTHERS, HE DEVELOPED A STRONG INTERFAITH COALITION OF DISASTER RESPONSE MINISTRIES THAT'S DONE AMAZING WORK IN A BATTERED COMMUNITY.

AND NOW, MARK AND HIS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS HAVE GOTTEN TO A GOOD PLACE IN THEIR WORK THERE, AND MARK IS LEAVING US TO GO TO COLORADO, BUT HE LEAVES BEHIND A COMMITTED SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATION WHICH WILL NOW BE UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF LUTHERAN MINISTRIES IN ALABAMA, FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING THE

NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN SOUTH ALABAMA.

SO EVEN THOUGH HE'S NOT HERE, I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CONVEY TO HIM YOUR APPRECIATION.

SO COULD WE HAVE YOUR APPRECIATION FOR MARK JOHNSON.

[ APPLAUSE ]

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING EITHER ABOUT HOW WHEN MARK DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING, IT WAS REALLY HARD TO DISSUADE HIM IN ANOTHER DIRECTION, BUT THAT'S ANOTHER SUBJECT.

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT MY FAVORITE SUBJECT: MONEY.

IT REALLY ISN'T MY FAVORITE SUBJECT.

BUT THIS YEAR, THIS ASSEMBLY IS GOING TO BE ASKED TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE CONGREGATIONS IN THIS SYNOD TO GIVE AT LEAST A TITHE OF THEIR UNDESIGNATED INCOME TO MISSION SUPPORT.

MANY OF YOU REMEMBER THAT WE'VE BEEN DOING SOMETHING LIKE THIS FOR YEARS, DECADES EVEN, ASKING CONGREGATIONS TO GIVE AT LEAST 15%.

YOU ALSO KNOW THAT VERY FEW CONGREGATIONS DO THIS, AND IN FACT, THE NUMBERS WHO DO HAVE BEEN DECLINING OVER THE YEARS.

CURRENTLY, THE AVERAGE MISSION SUPPORT IN OUR CONGREGATIONS IS ABOUT 6% OF UNDESIGNATED RECEIPTS.

WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE, WITH THAT GIVING, TO SUPPORT OUR AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS AND THE WIDER WORK OF THE CHURCH. I WISH YOU COULD ALL HAVE BEEN AT THE SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING LAST NIGHT, BECAUSE EVERY AGENCY THAT REPORTED IS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE IN THIS ECONOMY.

THE REFRAIN THAT WENT OVER AND OVER AGAIN IS: WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY, WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY, WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY. AS A RESULT OF THE DECLINE IN MISSION SUPPORT TO SYNODS AND CHURCHES, AND CHURCHWIDE RATHER, FROM CONGREGATIONS, OUR AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS ARE IN TROUBLE.

SEMINARY TUITION HAS SKYROCKETED AS STUDENTS ARE ASKED TO PAY WITH THEIR TUITION THE PART OF THE OPERATING EXPENSES THAT USED TO BE PAID BY THE LARGER CHURCH.

SOME GLOBAL MISSIONS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED.

THIS YEAR IN THE FACE OF DEVASTATING LOSSES, FOR THOSE ALREADY IN THE POOREST PLACES IN THE WORLD, THERE'S AN ANTICIPATED DECLINE IN RECEIPTS FOR ELCA WORLD HUNGER APPEAL.

RECENTLY, THE ELCA ANNOUNCED 7% BUDGET CUTS ACROSS THE BOARD, ALONG WITH LAYOFFS OF DOZENS OF PEOPLE WHO SERVE THIS CHURCH.

ONE EXAMPLE: ALL 4 OF THE CAMPUS MINISTRY REGIONAL

DIRECTORS WERE LAID OFF, LEAVING THE WORK THAT THEY WERE DOING OF OVERSEEING CAMPUS MINISTRIES IN OUR SYNODS TO OUR REGIONAL COORDINATORS, WHOSE PLATES ARE ALREADY FULL. IN OUR CASE, OUR REGIONAL COORDINATORS ARE LAYING OFF OR CUTTING BACK, RATHER, HOURS OF SOME OF THE PART-TIME VERY SMALL STAFF THAT THEY HAVE.

SOME OF THE HELP WE USED TO COUNT ON IN THE SYNOD OFFICE FROM THOSE FOLKS IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE, AND THEREFORE, OUR WORKLOAD IS GOING TO INCREASE, EVEN AS THE QUALITY OF HELP THE CHURCH GIVES TO OUR CAMPUS MINISTRIES AND OTHER AGENCIES DECLINES.

PART OF THIS DOWNTURN IN MISSION SUPPORT, OF COURSE, IS DUE TO THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN IN THE COUNTRY, BUT IT'S BEEN GOING ON FOR 20 YEARS.

IN THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD, WE WERE ON COURSE FOR A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MISSION SUPPORT LAST YEAR, UP UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR, WHEN THE ECONOMY TANKED.

WE DID MANAGE TO FINISH THE YEAR WITH A 3.1% INCREASE, WHICH IS AGAINST THE TRENDS IN THE CHURCH.

NOT BAD IN THIS ECONOMY, I GUESS, BUT NOT WHAT WE NEED IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO PAY THE EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE STAFF THAT WE HAVE.

WHY IS THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDING A PUSH FOR 10% MISSION SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF THIS ECONOMY?

IN A WORD OR TWO, BECAUSE IT'S NECESSARY, IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE TO DO THE WORK THAT YOU HAVE CALLED US TO DO.

SYNOD COUNCIL HOPES THAT THE CONGREGATIONS OF THIS SYNOD WILL SET THE EXAMPLE OF THEIR OWN TITHE TO THE GOOD WORK IN JESUS' NAME OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF MISSION SUPPORT.

IF YOU ASK OF PEOPLE IN YOUR CONGREGATION, SET THE EXAMPLE.

FINAL WORD ABOUT OUR TIME TOGETHER IN THE ASSEMBLY.

IT'S NOT ESCAPED ANYONE'S ATTENTION, I DON'T THINK, THAT IN THIS ASSEMBLY, WE'RE GOING TO DISCUSS AND DELIBERATE ON SOME IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT, SOME WOULD SAY POTENTIALLY CHURCH-DIVIDING, MATTERS.

MANY OF US DO NOT LOOK FORWARD TO THIS CONVERSATION.

SOME OF US WOULD LIKE TO WAKE UP AND DISCOVER IT WAS SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

IT'S CLEAR TO ME, AND IT'S NOT NEWS TO ANYBODY HERE, THAT WE ARE NOT ALL IN THE SAME PLACE ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT WE OUGHT TO ORDAIN PERSONS WHO LIVE IN PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE COMMITTED LONG-LIFE MONOGAMOUS SAME-GENDER RELATIONSHIPS.

WHILE I DON'T QUESTION THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS AND THE PASSION WITH WHICH PEOPLE CLING TO ONE SIDE OR

ANOTHER, I DO BELIEVE THAT THE WAY THAT WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER, THE WAY WE LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER, THE WAY WE TRY TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, IS AS IMPORTANT AS ANY DECISION THAT WE MAKE.

THE BIBLE'S COUNSEL HERE IS SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

SPEAK WHAT YOU BELIEVE TO BE THE TRUTH.

BUT SPEAK IT AS ONE WHO LOVES THE OTHER, EVEN WHEN THE DISAGREEMENT IS STRONG, AND THE ISSUE IS IMPORTANT.

SPEAK AS ONE WHO KNOWS THAT GOD LOVES EACH OF US ENOUGH TO DIE FOR US, NO MATTER WHO WE ARE, AND NO MATTER WHAT WE BELIEVE.

SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE, AND KNOW THAT THE ONE WHO IS LOVE AND TRUTH IS LEADING US.

DON'T FORGET THAT JESUS' LAST PRAYER FOR HIS FOLLOWERS WAS NOT THAT THEY BE RIGHT, BUT THAT THEY BE ONE.

IN THE CREED, WE AFFIRM THAT WE BELIEVE THERE IS ONE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

AND SO WHEN WE ARGUE, WE ARGUE NOT AS ENEMIES OUT TO DEFEAT ONE ANOTHER, NOT AS COMPETITORS OUT TO SCORE POINTS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, BUT AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, WOMEN AND MEN DEEPLY LOVED AND VALUED BY GOD.

SO WE DARE NOT TREAT EACH OTHER AS ANYTHING LESS.

WHENEVER WE MEET IN JESUS' NAME, GATHERED AROUND FONT AND BREAD AND WINE AND WORD, WE GIVE WITNESS TO OUR RELIANCE ON THE GRACE OF GOD AND NOT ON OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

OUR HOPE IS IN JESUS, WHO WILL NEVER LET US GO, EVEN WHEN WE'RE WRONG.

MAY GOD BLESS OUR TIME TOGETHER.

IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

[ APPLAUSE ]

WE MOVE A LITTLE BIT LATE INTO OUR TIME OF BIBLE STUDY.

OUR BIBLE STUDY LEADER THIS YEAR IS -- THERE ARE A LOT OF WORDS ON THIS THING -- IS DR. TERENCE FRETHEIM.

HE'S THE ELVA LOVELL PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT AT LUTHER SEMINARY IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA.

HIS BIOGRAPHY IS LOCATED AT THE FRONT OF YOUR ASSEMBLY MATERIALS, ROMAN NUMERAL THAT WOULD BE 7, VII.

THERE'S A LONG INTRODUCTION THERE, BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO READ THAT WHILE HE'S SPEAKING, BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS MAN.

HE'S A MEMBER OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION AND THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

HE'S THE EDITOR OF THAT SOCIETY'S OLD TESTAMENT MONOGRAPHS.

HE SERVED ON THE BUDDHIST AND MUSLIM TASK FORCES OF THE

AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH.

HE WAS CO-CHAIR OF THE THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION FOR THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.

HE'S BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE MINNESOTA CONSORTIUM OF  
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS, AND OLD TESTAMENT BOOK EDITOR FOR THE  
JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

FOR THOSE OF YOU NOT FAMILIAR WITH ESOTERICA OF BIBLICAL  
STUDIES, THIS IS HIGH COTTON, FOLKS.

LAST YEAR, DR. FRETHEIM LED A SERIES OF BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE  
CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS THAT I HEARD, AND HE BLEW THE WINDOWS  
OUT OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM ON THE 11th FLOOR OF THE  
LUTHERAN CENTER, AND I KNEW YOU'D WANT TO HEAR HIM, TOO.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING A WARM SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD WELCOME  
TO DR. TERENCE FRETHEIM.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH, BISHOP GORDY.

IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE, TO BE A PART OF THE ELCA, AND A PART OF  
THE COUNTRY THAT I DON'T NORMALLY VISIT.

I BRING YOU GREETINGS FROM YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN  
CHRIST AT LUTHER SEMINARY IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA.

I GREW UP IN A PARSONAGE.

MY FATHER GREW UP IN A PARSONAGE.

I'VE GOT THIS HERITAGE TO WHICH I BELONG CAN BE REFERRED TO AS NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN PIETISM.

AND ONE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THAT PARTICULAR BRAND OF LUTHERANISM YOU MIGHT SAY IS A HIGH REGARD FOR THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER.

AND MY AUNT ADA, WHO DIED A FEW YEARS AGO, TOLD ME SHORTLY BEFORE SHE DIED THAT SHE HAD PRAYED FOR ME EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE.

I QUICKLY GOT OUT A CALCULATOR, AND FIGURED THAT OUT, AND IT WAS OVER 23,000 PRAYERS AT THAT TIME.

AND YOU WONDER, DO PRAYERS REALLY HAVE AN EFFECT?

IS THAT TRUE?

AND A COUPLE MONTHS AFTER ADA'S DEATH, MY WIFE CAME UP TO ME, AND SHE SAID: YOU KNOW, TERRY, I'VE COME TO BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PRAYER.

AND I SAID: WHY?

AND SHE SAID: EVER SINCE AUNT ADA DIED, YOU'VE BEEN GOING DOWNHILL.

[ LAUGHTER ]

SO YOU'LL HEAR SOME OF THAT PIETISM ON OCCASION IN MY TIME HERE WITH YOU TODAY AND TOMORROW.

ESPECIALLY INTERESTING DURING THESE TIMES TOGETHER OF ISSUES

OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AS PRESENTED BY THE PROPHETS.

I THINK THIS ISSUE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY URGENT IN OUR OWN TIME, AT LEAST BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.

AND TO THAT END, I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN WITH A TEXT FROM JEREMIAH 22, NOT A PART OF THE LECTIONARY, AND SELDOM READ IN THE CHURCHES.

JEREMIAH 22, BEGINNING WITH VERSE 1.

"THUS SAYS THE LORD, GO DOWN TO THE HOUSE OF THE KING OF JUDAH AND SPEAK THERE THIS WORD.

THUS SAYS THE LORD.

HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD.

O KING OF JUDAH SITTING ON THE THRONE OF DAVID, YOU AND YOUR SERVANTS AND YOUR PEOPLE WHO ENTER THESE GATES, THUS SAYS THE LORD.

ACT WITH JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND DELIVER FROM THE HAND OF THE OPPRESSOR ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN ROBBED.

AND DO NO WRONG OR VIOLENCE TO THE ALIEN, THE ORPHAN AND THE WIDOW, OR SHED INNOCENT BLOOD IN THIS PLACE.

FOR IF" -- NOTE THE "IF -- "FOR IF YOU WILL INDEED OBEY THIS WORD THROUGH THE GATES OF THIS HOUSE SHALL ENTER KINGS WHO SIT ON THE THRONE OF DAVID, RIDING IN CHARIOTS AND ON HORSES THEY AND THEIR SERVANTS AND THEIR PEOPLE, BUT IF YOU WILL NOT HEED

THESE WORDS, I SWEAR BY MYSELF, SAYS THE LORD, THAT THIS HOUSE SHALL BECOME A DESOLATION."

THE THEME YOU HAVE FOR YOUR ASSEMBLY IS "GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS," IT'S NOT JUST YOUR -- BUT IT'S NOT THAT YOUR HANDS DO NO ACTUAL WORK.

TEXTS LIKE THIS, WHICH WE'LL FOCUS ON, CLAIM THAT WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE, WHAT YOU DO COUNTS, WHAT YOU DO, MAKES A DIFFERENCE, EVEN WITH REGARD TO THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE.

THE PROPHETS HAVE TO DO WITH MINISTRY, THEIRS AND OURS, BECAUSE MOST OF THE PROPHETS WERE LAY PERSONS, AND NOT CLERGY.

IT'S NECESSARY TO THINK ABOUT MINISTRY IN A BROAD WAY.

AND MY PLAN IS TO INTERWEAVE CONCERNS ABOUT OUR MINISTRY TODAY WITH THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHETS.

ONE OF THE STRIKING THINGS ABOUT THE PROPHETIC TEXTS THAT CONGREGATIONS COMMONLY HEAR ON SUNDAY MORNING IS THAT THEY'RE USUALLY THE COMFORTING AND THE PROMISING TEXTS.

BUT THE PROPHETIC WORDS OF INDICTMENT AND JUDGMENT, ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, WHICH WE CENTER ON IN THESE PRESENTATIONS, ARE COMPARATIVELY RARE IN THE COMMON LECTIONARY, IN THE TEXTS WE REGULARLY HEAR ON SUNDAY MORNING.

ONE WONDERS WHY.

AT LEAST ONE REASON IS THAT WE ARE LIVING IN A TIME WHEN IN MUCH OF THE CHURCH, MINISTRY IS DEFINED IN THERAPEUTIC TERMS. ONE SEEKS CONFLICT RESOLUTION, NOT STIRRING THINGS UP. WE'RE LIVING IN A NON-RISK GENERATION, INTENSIFIED BY CERTAIN ECONOMIC FACTORS.

WHO'S GOING TO RISK ONE'S JOB OR ONE'S SALARY OR THE MONEY FLOWING INTO OUR CONGREGATIONS BY UPSETTING SOMEONE'S APPLE CART?

AT LEAST IF THEY GO BY THE NAME OF BIG GIVER, OR BISHOP. WE'LL BE PROPHETIC IN THIS SENSE, WHEN IN A CLOSE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, OR WHEN WE CAN REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

WE WILL CAREFULLY CALIBRATE THE RISK FACTOR WHEN BEING PROPHETIC.

WE MAY BE LIVING THROUGH A TIME OF IDENTITY CRISIS FOR PROPHETS, OR IN OTHER TERMS, A LEADERSHIP CRISIS IN THE CHURCH.

BUT I THINK IT'S NOT PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO ASK WHO OF THE PROPHETS AMONG US TODAY MIGHT WELL BE.

THEY'RE ALMOST ALWAYS IDENTIFIED ONLY IN HINDSIGHT.

I THINK THAT THE MORE APPROPRIATE QUESTION IS THIS: HOW MIGHT WE, IN OUR MINISTRIES, SEE FAITHFULLY TO ONE OR ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE PROPHETIC TASK?

THIS MIGHT BE A CLEAR WORD OF THE GOSPEL, AND CERTAINLY THE PROPHETS ARE CAPABLE OF THAT.

"COMFORT, COMFORT YOU, MY PEOPLE, SAYS THE LORD.

FOR THE LORD HAS FORGIVEN YOU DOUBLE FOR ALL YOUR SINS,"

ISAIAH 40.

OR IT MIGHT BE AN ESPECIALLY SHARP WORD OF CRITIQUE AND JUDGMENT, AS IN THE TEXT WAS PLACED BEFORE US, JEREMIAH 22.

TWO UNDERSTANDINGS OF A PROPHET HAVE BEEN COMMON OVER THE YEARS, AND HOW WE SORT THIS OUT HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR THINKING THROUGH OUR TOPIC.

ONE, THE PROPHET IS ONE WHO PREDICTS THE FUTURE.

THIS DEFINITION OF A PROPHET IS PROBLEMATIC.

THE LANGUAGE OF PREDICTION SUGGESTS THAT THE PROPHETS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT PRECISION REGARDING FUTURE TIMES AND PLACES.

THE PROPHETS DO HAVE A BASIC FUTURE ORIENTATION.

I THINK THERE'S LITTLE DOUBT ABOUT THAT.

BUT IT WOULD BE MUCH TRUER TO THEIR MESSAGE TO SPEAK OF THE PROPHET AS THE ONE WHO PROCLAIMS OR ANNOUNCES A WORD OFTEN ABOUT THE FUTURE.

AND TWO BASIC PRINCIPLES SHOULD GUIDE OUR THINKING HERE.

ONE IS THAT THERE'S SELDOM A LITERAL CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN A PROPHECY AND A FULFILLMENT.

ILLUSTRATION, IF I MIGHT.

A FATHER MADE A PROMISE TO HIS YOUNG SON IN THE LATE 1900s THAT IF HE MAINTAINED CERTAIN PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR, THE FATHER WOULD GIVE HIM A HORSE AND BUGGY ON HIS 21st BIRTHDAY. AND THE YEARS WENT BY.

THE SON MADE GOOD ON HIS END OF THE BARGAIN.

THE TIME FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE WAS AT HAND.

BUT IN THE MEANTIME, HENRY FORD HAD BEEN AT WORK, AND MODEL Ts WERE ON THE STREETS.

THE LAST THING IN THE WORLD THE SON WANTED WAS A HORSE AND BUGGY.

AND THE FATHER COULD HAVE SAID: I MADE YOU A PROMISE.

I'M GOING TO FULFILL IT PRECISELY IN THE TERMS THAT I MADE IT.

BUT THE SON WOULD HAVE WANTED THE FATHER TO CHANGE THE FORM OF THE PROMISE, AND GIVE HIM A MODEL-T.

INDEED, IN ORDER TO BE TRUE TO THE PROMISE, THE FORM OF THE FULFILLMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED.

SO THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE WAS ADAPTED TO THE AUDIENCE TO WHICH IT WAS DIRECTED, BUT BY THE TIME WE GET TO JESUS, MANY OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES WERE LOOKING FOR A LITERAL FULFILLMENT OF SOME OF THESE PROPHECIES COMMONLY IN TERMS OF GOD'S

COMING ON A WHITE HORSE AND DELIVERING THEM FROM THE ROMANS.

THE DISCIPLES GOT PAST THE LITERAL FORM OF GOD'S PROMISES AND SAW THAT JESUS WAS TRULY THE ONE THAT GOD PROMISED, BUT IN A FORM AND A CONTENT THAT WAS MUCH MORE MARVELOUS THAN THE PROPHETS EVER IMAGINED.

TODAY, THERE ARE VARIOUS FOLKS AROUND WHO ARE LOOKING FOR A HORSE AND BUGGY.

THEY MAY MISS THE CAR.

A SECOND ELEMENT HERE IS THERE'S OFTEN, NOT ALWAYS, A CONTINGENT ELEMENT WITH RESPECT TO PROPHETIC WORDS OF INDICTMENT AND JUDGMENT.

THAT IS, THE WAY IN WHICH PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THE PROPHET COULD AFFECT THE SHAPE OF THE FULFILLMENT OF A PARTICULAR WORD THAT THE PROPHET SPOKE, THOUGH ALL SUCH CONTINGENCIES ARE UNDERSTOOD FROM WITHIN'S GOD'S LARGER SAVING WILL, FOR ISRAEL AND THE WORLD.

IN SOME WAYS, GOD IS LIKE PARENTS WHO PLAY CHESS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, KNOWING THAT THEY COULD FINALLY WIN THE GAME IF THEY CHOSE.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, BECAUSE THEY VALUE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILD, THEY CHOOSE TO PLAY IN A WAY THAT DOESN'T

OVERPOWER THE CHILD.

AND GIVEN THIS KIND OF RELATIONSHIP, AS THE CHILDREN IMPROVE IN THEIR CHESS-PLAYING, THE PARENTS WILL HAVE TO COPE WITH THE INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED MOST THAT THE CHILD MAKES.

SO THE WAY IN WHICH THE GAME WILL PROGRESS, AND FINALLY BE WON, AND THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT WILL TAKE, WILL BE SHAPED BY THE VARIOUS MOVES THAT THE CHILD MAKES.

AS THE TEXT PUTS IT, IF YOU DO THIS, THEN THIS.

IF YOU DON'T DO IT, THEN THIS.

THE MOVES THE PEOPLE OF GOD MAKE IN THEIR LIVES MATTER TO GOD, BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP THAT GOD HAS ESTABLISHED WITH THEM, REAL RELATIONSHIPS TO WHICH BOTH PARTIES COUNT. AND SO GOD TAKES INTO ACCOUNT WHAT PEOPLE SAY AND DO IN MOVING INTO THE FUTURE.

THINK OF GOD AS A SEAMSTRESS OR A QUILT-MAKER.

GOD IS ONE WHO TAKES THE THREADS AND PATCHES OF YOUR WORDS AND DEEDS, AND WEAVES THEM INTO THE QUILT OF GOD'S NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH.

WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

I'M AMAZED AT HOW COMMON THE LANGUAGE OF FATALISM CREEPS INTO OUR THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE.

TAKE JUSTICE ISSUES OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

COMMONLY THOUGHT, IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHAT WE DO REGARDING THESE MATTERS.

THE FUTURE IS IN GOD'S HANDS, THAT GOD'S GOT THE FUTURE ALL MAPPED OUT, AND WHAT HUMAN BEINGS DO IS FINALLY IRRELEVANT.

I SUBMIT THAT TO LEAVE THE FUTURE SIMPLY IN GOD'S HANDS IS TO DENIGRATE HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND TO TEMPT GOD.

TO DO SUCH A THING WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THE DEVIL'S TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

"JUMP OFF THE TOP OF THE TEMPLE, JESUS.

GOD WILL SEND HIS ANGELS TO SAVE YOU FROM THE ROCKS BELOW."

AND JESUS REPLIED, "THAT WOULD TEMPT GOD."

A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY DIED OF COLON CANCER MUCH EARLIER THAN HE SHOULD HAVE.

HE DECIDED NOT TO SEE THE DOCTOR, EVEN WITH ALL THE SYMPTOMS PRESENT.

HE SAID: I'M GOING TO LEAVE EVERYTHING IN GOD'S HANDS.

WE CAN CERTAINLY LEAVE THE FUTURE ULTIMATELY IN GOD'S HANDS, BUT GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH US IS SUCH THAT WE'RE GIVEN A GREAT DEAL TO SAY ABOUT THE SHAPE OF OUR OWN FUTURE, AND THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE OF THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN WE ARE.

THE FUTURE IS PARTLY SETTLED AND PARTLY UNSETTLED.

SETTLED, PARTLY?

THERE WILL BE A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.

GOD WILL RAISE YOU FROM THE GRAVE.

BUT THE FUTURE'S ALSO UNSETTLED.

YOUR WORDS AND DEEDS, WITH RESPECT TO THE LESS FORTUNATE IN YOUR MIDST, FOR EXAMPLE, WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH REGARD TO THE SHAPE OF THEIR FUTURE AND YOURS.

IF, THEN THIS.

IF NOT, THEN THIS.

FROM ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK THAT THE EARTH IS IN ITS LAST MINUTES OF EXISTENCE, THAT GOD IS ABOUT TO WRAP UP THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN OUR LIFETIME, AND SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CLUED INTO THE FINAL STAGES OF THINGS.

WE'RE NOT AMONG THEM, MOSTLY.

AND SO GIVEN THIS SHORT TIME FRAME, YOU DON'T NEED TO TAKE ANY SPECIAL CARE FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE.

HEAVEN'S GOING TO BE THERE SOON ANYWAY.

DON'T BOTHER TO CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT.

IT'S GOING TO BE DESTROYED SOON ANYWAY.

ONE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF SUCH THINKING IS THAT PEOPLE WILL GET SO CAUGHT UP INTO THINKING ABOUT THE NEXT WORLD, THAT

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS WORLD IS DIMINISHED.

AS ONE LAYPERSON TOLD ME ONCE, EVER SINCE I DISCOVERED ALL THIS ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD, I QUIT MAKING MY WEEKLY VISITS TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS HOME, AND I SPENT THAT TIME READING MY BIBLE AND PRAYING.

LET'S PUT THE POINT SQUARELY HERE IN TERMS OF THE TOPIC: HOW YOU THINK AND SPEAK AND ACT ABOUT THE FUTURE CAN HAVE A MASSIVE EFFECT ON HOW YOU AND OTHERS THINK ABOUT THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN YOU, AND ON YOUR PRACTICE OF JUSTICE MORE GENERALLY.

A SECOND UNDERSTANDING OF PROPHET IS THAT THE PROPHETS ARE SOCIAL REFORMERS, INSTRUMENTS OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORM, HENCE COMMONLY THE WORD "PROPHETIC."

THE PROPHETS ARE VERY WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE ISSUES -- THESE ISSUES AND THEY SEEK TO DISCERN HOW GOD IS AT WORK IN THE RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERES OF THEIR OWN TIMES.

THAT PROPHETS ABSOLUTELY REFUSE THIS IS HARD FOR US TO HEAR, I THINK, ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO SEPARATE FAITH AND POLITICS, OR FAITH AND SOCIAL ISSUES, NOT LEASTLY BECAUSE THEY KNOW VERY WELL THAT HOW PEOPLE DO THEIR POLITICS CAN DEEPLY AFFECT HOW THE LESS FORTUNATE ARE TREATED.

IF THE PROPHETS WERE TO RETURN TO SPEAK TODAY, THEY WOULD

SPEAK NOT SIMPLY IN CHURCH, OR TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

THEY WOULD SPEAK TO SOCIAL LEADERS AND POLITICAL LEADERS,  
AND TO ISSUES SUCH AS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND  
STATE.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO SAY THAT THE PROPHETS ARE NOT SATISFIED  
SIMPLY TO ENGAGE IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS.

THEY PLACE THE SOCIETAL ABUSES THAT THEY SEE IN FRONT OF THEM  
IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, ESPECIALLY TENDING TO ISSUES OF  
FAITHFULNESS AND UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD.

FOR THEM, INJUSTICE REVEALS INFIDELITY.

INJUSTICE REVEALS INFIDELITY, THAT THE PEOPLE'S MISTREATMENT  
OF THE POOR WAS THE SIGN THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD WAS  
NOT WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE.

AND, IN EFFECT, THEY'RE SAYING: IF YOU'RE NOT TAKING GOOD  
CARE OF THE LESS FORTUNATE IN YOUR MIDST, YOUR RELATIONSHIP  
WITH GOD IS NOT HEALTHY, HOWEVER GOOD YOU MIGHT FEEL ABOUT  
THAT RELATIONSHIP, HOWEVER WELL YOUR CONGREGATION SEEMS  
TO BE DOING.

SO WHEN IT COMES TO STATING HOW CHANGE IS TO BE INTRODUCED,  
THE MOST BASIC CALL FROM THE PROPHETS IN THE FACE OF SUCH  
MATTERS IS: REPENT.

CHANGE WHAT YOU'RE DOING, CHANGE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

THEY CALL FOR REPENTANCE, BUT THEY ALSO CALL FOR ACTION ON THE FAR SIDE OF REPENTANCE.

FOR IT IS REMARKABLE, ISN'T IT, HOW EVEN THOSE WHO REPENT CAN CONTINUE ABUSIVE PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR TOWARD OTHERS.

LISTEN TO ISAIAH 1.

"WASH YOURSELVES, MAKE YOURSELVES CLEAN, REMOVE THE EVIL OF YOUR DOINGS FROM BEFORE MY EYES.

CEASE TO DO EVIL.

LEARN TO DO GOOD.

SEEK JUSTICE.

RESCUE THE OPPRESSED.

DEFEND THE ORPHAN.

PLEAD FOR THE WIDOW."

A PROPHET, THEN, IS A MAN OR A WOMAN -- AND WE HEAR OF SEVERAL FEMALE PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THAT'S

HELPFUL -- DISPATCHED BY GOD WITH A WORD OF JUDGMENT,

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER, OR A WORD OF SALVATION, SPEAKING

HOPE TO THOSE WHO HAVE LITTLE OR NO HOPE, DOING THIS AT A

CRITICAL POINT IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THIS WORK WAS EMBODIED IN THE

PROPHETS' OWN LIFE, AND NOT SIMPLY ANNOUNCED BY THE WORDS

THAT THE PROPHETS SPOKE.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE PROPHETS SOUGHT TO BRING A WORD FROM GOD, NOT ONLY IN AND THROUGH THE WORDS THAT THEY SPOKE, BUT IN THE LIFE THAT THEY LIVED, IN THE ACTIONS THAT THEY PURSUED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

A KEY QUESTION ARISES: WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF THIS PROPHETIC CONCERN FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE, FOR ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE?

THE PROPHETIC WORD IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH LIBERAL CAUSES. IT'S ALMOST SOMETIMES I GET THE IMAGE THAT THE PROPHETS WERE FREE-FLOATING RADICALS FROM THE '60s, AND HAS LIVED OUT AND ABOUT SOME.

BUT IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PROPHETS, A KEY POINT FOR ME, THE PROPHETS WERE FUNDAMENTALLY CONSERVATIVE IN THEIR APPROACH TO THESE ISSUES.

THEY DREW HEAVILY UPON THE COMMITMENTS AND THE TRADITIONS THAT HAD BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS IN WHICH THEY'D INHERITED FROM THE PAST.

FOR THEM, THE CONCERN FOR MATTERS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE, THE NEEDY, THIS WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT THE PROPHETS INVENTED.

RATHER, THEY DISCERNED THAT SOCIAL JUSTICE WAS A DEEPLY TRADITIONAL VALUE WHICH WAS EMBEDDED IN THE TRADITIONS THAT

THEY HAD INHERITED, BUT THEY'D OFTEN BEEN NEGLECTED OR MISINTERPRETED.

IT'S NOT THAT THE PROPHETS HAD NOTHING NEW TO SAY.

BUT THE RADICALITY OF THE PROPHETS CONSISTS NOT SO MUCH IN THEIR WORDS, EVEN THEIR IDEAS, AS IN THE WAY THEY SPOKE THOSE IDEAS, THEIR RHETORICAL STRATEGY, IF YOU WILL, OF GETTING UNDER YOUR SKIN, OF PUTTING IT RIGHT IN YOUR FACE WITH RESPECT TO LONGSTANDING COMMUNAL COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE LESS FORTUNATE.

LET ME -- THE MANY TEXTS WE COULD READ FROM EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY, LET ME JUST PUT ONE TEXT FROM DEUTERONOMY 15 BEFORE YOU, BEGINNING AT VERSE 7.

NEVER READ IN CHURCH, AS FAR AS I KNOW.

YOU HEAR IT AND YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHY, PERHAPS.

"IF THERE IS AMONG YOU ANYONE IN NEED, A MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY IN ANY OF YOUR TOWNS WITHIN THE LAND THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS GIVEN YOU, DO NOT BE HARD-HEARTED OR TIGHT-FISTED TOWARD YOUR NEEDY NEIGHBOR.

YOU SHOULD RATHER OPEN YOUR HAND, WILLINGLY LENDING ENOUGH TO MEET THE NEED, WHATEVER IT MAY BE.

BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DON'T ENTERTAIN A MEAN THOUGHT, SAYING, THE 7th YEAR, THE YEAR OF REMISSION IS NEAR, THE YEAR OF

REMITTING OF ALL DEATHS AND THEREFORE VIEW YOUR NEEDY  
NEIGHBOR WITH HOSTILITY AND GIVE NOTHING.

YOUR NEIGHBOR MIGHT CRY TO THE LORD AGAINST YOU, AND YOU  
WOULD INCUR GUILT.

GIVE LIBERALLY, AND BE UNGRUDGING WHEN YOU DO SO.

FOR ON THIS ACCOUNT, THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BLESS YOU IN ALL  
YOUR WORK AND IN ALL THAT YOU UNDERTAKE."

WITH THIS CONCLUDING COMMENT IN THIS TEXT: "SINCE THERE WILL  
NEVER CEASE TO BE SOME IN NEED ON THE EARTH, I, GOD,  
THEREFORE COMMAND YOU, OPEN YOUR HAND TO THE POOR AND THE  
NEEDY NEIGHBOR IN YOUR LAND ."

WHY DON'T WE READ THAT TEXT REGULARLY IN CHURCH?

THE PROPHETS HERE ARE SPEAKING INTO A CONTEXT USING TEXTS  
LIKE THAT FROM DEUTERONOMY THAT'S ENDANGERED BY A RELIGIOUS  
CRISIS, A MISTREATMENT OF THE POOR AND THE NEEDY, WITH ALL OF  
THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS.

IF WE WERE TO TRANSPOSE THOSE PROPHETIC CONCERNS INTO  
TODAY'S WORLD, WE MUST SAY -- I KNOW THIS IS STRONG -- THAT  
ANYONE WHO DOESN'T ATTEND CAREFULLY TO THESE PROPHETIC  
CONCERNS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE BETRAYS THE CAUSE OF  
CONSERVATISM.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE TRADITION, AND THE

PROPHETS GATHER UP THESE CONCERNS AND ADDRESS THEM ANEW INTO THE LIFE OF ISRAEL, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR WAS GROWING EVER GREATER IN ANCIENT ISRAEL.

THIS CONCERN FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE BECOMES THAT -- THIS CONCERN BECOMES EMBODIED IN THE WORD GIVEN TO MOSES, THAT ANCIENT TRADITION, SHOULD SPEAK VOLUMES TO US.

THIS IS NOT A CONCERN THAT'S BASED ON GENERAL GOOD SENSE OR WISE SOCIAL PLANNING OR FAMILY VALUES, HOWEVER MUCH THOSE MATTERS MAY BE TRUE.

THEY DON'T PROVIDE SUFFICIENT EXPLANATION FOR ISRAEL'S CONCERN FOR THE DISADVANTAGED.

FOR ISRAEL, CARING FOR THESE NEEDY ONES IS A RELIGIOUS MATTER. IN OTHER WORDS, SOCIAL LEGISLATION HAS TO DO WITH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

AND THE AUTHORITY BEHIND ISRAEL'S SOCIAL LEGISLATION IS THE AUTHORITY OF GOD, WHO GAVE THESE LAWS OF CONCERN FOR THE NEEDY.

WE LIVE IN MORE MODERN CULTURES CAN SO EASILY ESCAPE FROM THE FORCE OF SUCH LEGISLATION, SOCIAL LEGISLATION, BECAUSE, WELL, IT'S GENERATED BY LEGISLATORS.

THE JUDICIARY, SOCIAL AGENCIES OF VARIOUS KINDS.

AND GOD IS NOT EXPLICITLY IDENTIFIED WITH THEIR AUTHORS.

SOMEHOW, SOMEHOW, WE NEED TO HELP MAKE PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR SOCIAL POLICIES, OUR SOCIAL LEGISLATION, AND THE WORK OF GOD, WHO WORKS THROUGH SUCH AGENTS TO DEVELOP SUCH LAWS AND SUCH POLICIES.

AND SO WE NEED TO BE CONCERNED THAT WE SHAPE SUCH POLICIES AND LEGISLATION SO THAT THEY CONFORM TO GOD'S CONCERN FOR THE NEEDY.

AND WE'RE CALLED TO BE WATCHDOGS OVER THAT LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, BECAUSE THE HUMAN AGENTS, IN AND THROUGH WHICH GOD WORKS, OFTEN MAKE MISTAKES, SOME OF THEM HUGE.

WE NEED SOMEHOW, I THINK, TO RECOVER A SENSE OF WHAT THIS EMPHASIS IN THE PROPHETS IS, AND THE CONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD OF ALL THAT THEY CENTERED THEIR WORDS AND LIVES ON.

TO CONCLUDE: HUMAN HISTORY IS LIKE A RIVER.

AND ALL OF US ARE IN ONE RAFT OR ANOTHER ON THAT RIVER.

OFTENTIMES, THE PEOPLE ARE AT LEAST IN PARTIAL CONTROL OF THEIR RAFT.

BUT FOR THE PROPHETS, THE RAFT HAS OFTEN GOTTEN TO THE POINT IN THE RIVER THAT'S RIGHT ABOVE THE WATERFALL, WHERE THE WATER IS VERY CALM AND QUIET, AND THE PEOPLE ARE HAVING SUCH A FUN TIME ON THE BOAT THAT THEY CAN'T HEAR THE CRASHING OF

THE FALLS.

AND SO COMMONLY, FOR THE PROPHETS, THE PEOPLE OF GOD MAY THINK THINGS LOOK GOOD AND FEEL GREAT, PERHAPS NOT AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT, BUT THAT CAN BE VERY DECEIVING, AS PERHAPS RECENT EVENTS MIGHT HELP US SEE, THAT OPTIMISM MAY AT ONE POINT FILL THE AIR, BUT A TRIP OVER THE FALLS BECOMES SOON INEVITABLE.

AND THEIR ONLY HOPE IS A HOPE IN GOD FOR THE OTHER SIDE OF DISASTER.

THE ONLY FUTURE THAT THEY CAN ANTICIPATE WITH CERTAINTY IS THAT GOD WILL PICK UP THOSE WHO SURVIVE ON THE ROCKS BELOW THE FALLS, AND SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY DOWN THE RIVER AGAIN.

AND MY QUESTION TO YOU: AT WHAT POINT IN THE RIVER ARE WE TODAY?

WHAT MIGHT THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT WAYS THAT WE TREAT OUR NEIGHBORS?

NOT LEAST, THE LESS FORTUNATE.

OR GIVEN THE INCREASING GAP BETWEEN THE MORE FORTUNATE AND LESS FORTUNATE AMONG US WHICH CONTINUES, OUR DEEP MISTREATMENT AND NEGLECT OF THE DISADVANTAGED, INCLUDING MILLIONS, MILLIONS, OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY IN THIS COUNTRY, WITHOUT ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THESE REALITIES COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNS THAT THINGS ARE GOING TO GET WORSE, NOT BETTER.

HAVE WE GOTTEN TO THAT QUIET POINT ABOVE THE FALLS IN THIS SOCIETY?

IS IT ALREADY TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE FUTURE, PERHAPS?

WHATEVER REPLY WE MAY GIVE TO SUCH QUESTIONS, WE'RE CALLED TO SPEAK AND TO ACT AS IF IT WERE NOT TOO LATE.

AND WHO WILL SPEAK FOR GOD TODAY REGARDING THE DEEP AND PERVADING CRISES RELATING TO THE DISADVANTAGED, THE NEEDY, THE POOR IN OUR CULTURE?

WHO WILL SPEAK FOR GOD?

WHO WILL LISTEN?

AND THE CHILDREN, WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> THANK YOU, DR. FRETHEIM.

THAT'S NOT THE END.

HE WILL BE BACK TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY FOR US TOMORROW.

HE'S ALSO PRESENTING A WORKSHOP DURING THE WORKSHOP -- LET ME START THAT ONE OVER.

HE'S PRESENTING A WORKSHOP DURING THE SESSION TOMORROW

AFTERNOON AT 1:30 IN THE FULTON ROOM.

YOU CAN SEE A LIST OF ALL THE WORKSHOPS FOR TOMORROW ON PAGE A-9 IN YOUR MATERIALS.

AND WE HAVE GREAT WORKSHOPS THIS YEAR, SOME REALLY GOOD ONES, AND LOTS OF THEM, SO TAKE YOUR CHOICE.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT YOU CAN.

WE ARE BEHIND IN THE -- A LITTLE BIT BEHIND IN OUR AGENDA, AND WE'RE GOING TO CATCH UP A LITTLE BIT AS WE PROCEED, BUT WE NEED TO HEAR NOW THE REPORT OF THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE.

PASTOR RANDY JONES, MESSIAH, IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, HAS THE REPORT OF THAT COMMITTEE, AND HE'LL TALK TO US ABOUT THE NUMBER AND NATURE OF THE RESOLUTIONS THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THIS ASSEMBLY.

PASTOR JONES.

>> THANK YOU, BISHOP.

YOUR REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE THIS YEAR CONSISTED OF SIX FOLKS.

FIRST, MYSELF AS THE CHAIR, MR. BERT BLOOD, PASTOR AMY FIGG, MS. MARCIA GOERSS, MS. MARLYN KELM, AND MR. LEE SMITH, AND I WANT TO THANK ALL OF THEM FOR THEIR HARD WORK THIS YEAR.

WE THOUGHT OUR WORK WOULD BE MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE, BUT IT

TURNS OUT YOU GUYS WERE NICE TO US AND WE ONLY HAVE 8 RESOLUTIONS THIS YEAR INSTEAD OF THE 16 WE HAD IN 2005. THIS WAS A SIGNIFICANTLY LESS NUMBER THAN I EXPECTED. I WAS CHAIR OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL IN 2005, AND IF ANY OF YOU WERE HERE DURING THAT SYNOD ASSEMBLY, IT WAS AN INTERESTING AND ARDUOUS TASK TO WORK OUR WAY THROUGH THOSE 16. I'M HAPPY TO SAY, HOWEVER, THERE ARE ONLY TWO RESOLUTIONS THIS YEAR CONCERNING THE ISSUE OF SEXUALITY, THAT DIRECTLY DEAL WITH THE ISSUES OF SEXUALITY, AND THAT'S NUMBER 4 AND NUMBER 7. THERE'S ONE IN FAVOR OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TASK FORCE AND ONE THAT IS AGAINST THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TASK FORCE. NUMBER 4 SUPPORTS, AND NUMBER 7 IS AGAINST. THERE'S ALSO A THIRD RESOLUTION, NUMBER 6, THAT REQUESTS THAT THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY BE AMENDED TO REQUIRE A 2/3 MAJORITY VOTE ON ANY ISSUES PERTAINING TO ORDINATION PRACTICES IN OUR CHURCH. OF THE 5 REMAINING RESOLUTIONS, TWO DEAL WITH SUICIDE PREVENTION, ONE WITH SAFE SCHOOLS, ONE WITH HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION, AND ONE WITH A CELEBRATION OF APPALACHIAN HERITAGE MONTH.

SO YOU CAN FIND THESE 8 RESOLUTIONS IN THEIR ENTIRETY BEHIND TAB G IN YOUR MATERIALS.

I'D ENCOURAGE YOU TO READ THOSE CAREFULLY BEFORE WE GET TO THEM SO YOU'LL KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THEM, BUT LET ME HIGHLIGHT THEM FOR YOU.

NUMBER ONE IS AN ELCA MEMORIAL TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE SUICIDE PREVENTION AND ACTION ON THE CHURCHWIDE LEVEL WITHIN OUR CHURCH.

THAT HAS BEEN OFFERED BY THE SYNOD COUNCIL, AND THEREFORE WILL NEED NO SECOND TO GET TO THE FLOOR.

WE'LL CONSIDER IT AS IT IS.

THERE'S A RESOLUTION NUMBER 2 ON SAFE SCHOOLS.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 3 ENDORSES STATE HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION AND ENCOURAGES OUR SYNOD TO WORK WITH THE FOUR STATES AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO PASS COMPLETE HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION.

NUMBER 4, AS I SAID EARLIER, IS A MEMORIAL CONCERNING THE HUMAN SEXUALITY FROM SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD, AND THIS RESOLUTION SUPPORTS A RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE FOR ELCA STUDIES ON SEXUALITY.

NUMBER 5 IS A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE CELEBRATION OF APPALACHIAN HERITAGE MONTH.

JUST A NOTE CONCERNING THIS RESOLUTION: IN 2000, THE SYNOD

ASSEMBLY PASSED A RESOLUTION SETTING ASIDE ONE WEEKEND IN OCTOBER FOR THE CELEBRATION OF APPALACHIAN HERITAGE MONTH -- CELEBRATIONS, BUT WHAT THIS RESOLUTION IS ASKING FOR IS THE ENTIRE MONTH OF OCTOBER.

SO IT IS ASKING FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

NUMBER 06 IS MEMORIALIZED THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY TO CHANGE ITS RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE TO REQUIRE A 2/3 MAJORITY VOTE CONCERNING ANYTHING THAT HAS TO DO WITH ORDINATION PRACTICES AND POLICY IN OUR CHURCH.

NUMBER 7 IS A RESOLUTION TO MEMORIALIZE A CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, AS WELL, BUT IT IS AGAINST THE RECOMMENDATIONS. AND WANTS TO AFFIRM OUR CURRENT ELCA POLICIES.

AND FINALLY, NUMBER 8, IS A RESOLUTION FOR EDUCATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HERE IN OUR SYNOD.

IT'S A RESOLUTION THAT DEALS WITH OUR SYNOD ALONE.

AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, OUR COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED THE RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING SEXUALITY FOR CONSIDERATION ONLY.

THAT MEANS THAT IT WILL REQUIRE A MOTION AND A SECOND TO GET THEM TO THE FLOOR.

AND WE DO THIS BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO HAVE ANY POSITION CONCERNING SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT AS A SEXUALITY ISSUE IN OUR CHURCH.

WE'RE REMAINING COMPLETELY WITHOUT AN OPINION.

AND FINALLY, I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT TWO PROCEDURAL ISSUES THAT WILL HAVE TO DO WITH THESE RESOLUTIONS.

FIRST, TO MAINTAIN THE NONPARTISAN NATURE OF OUR COMMITTEE, WE WILL AGAIN AS WE DID IN 2005, DRAW FROM THE HAT THE ORDER IN WHICH THE RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING SEXUALITY WILL BE DEALT WITH BY THIS ASSEMBLY.

THAT'S RESOLUTION NUMBER 4 AND RESOLUTION NUMBER 7.

I HAVE HERE IN MY HOT LITTLE HANDS A PIECE OF PAPER WITH NUMBER 7, AND A PIECE OF PAPER WITH NUMBER 4 ON THEM.

AND I WANT TO DO THAT RIGHT NOW, IF YOU WILL INDULGE ME FOR A MOMENT.

DO WE HAVE SOMETHING WE CAN PUT THESE INTO?

I WILL LET OUR PARLIAMENTARIAN MS. ROWSER DO THE PICKING.

>> MICROPHONE NUMBER 1.

>> LAURA SENEKER JONES FROM ASCENSION IN CHATTANOOGA.

MY QUESTION IS: LAST YEAR I ASKED IF WE COULD CHANGE THE ORDER OF SOME OF THE THINGS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

AND SHE WAS TELLING ME THAT WE COULDN'T SKIP THOSE AND CHANGE THE ORDER.

SO IS THIS VALID MOVE THAT WE CAN TAKE THAT WAS DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE RESOLUTIONS?

>> I DON'T THINK WE'VE ACTUALLY ESTABLISHED AN ORDER YET.  
I THINK THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING AT THE TIME.

>> THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING RIGHT NOW.

THE ORDER THAT THEY SHOW UP IN YOUR TAB G IS MERELY THE  
ORDER IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN -- WE FINISH WITH THEM AND MOVE  
THEM ON TO ELAINE FOR PUBLICATION.

>> SO YOU PICKED THEM FROM THE HAT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY LAST  
YEAR?

>> NO, NOT LAST YEAR.

BUT IN 2005, WHEN WE HAD 16 RESOLUTIONS THAT DEALT WITH  
SEXUALITY, TO REMAIN FAIR AND NONPARTISAN, WE DID THIS.

SO THIS IS SOMETHING THAT'S MERELY --

>> OKAY.

>> -- TO MAKE SURE NO ONE CAN SAY THERE'S ANY PARTIALITY BEING  
SHOWN AT ALL WITH THE RESOLUTIONS THAT DEAL WITH SEXUALITY  
ALONE.

>> OKAY, THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU.

>> MS. ROWSER HAS CHOSEN NUMBER 7.

AND SO WE WILL DEAL FIRST OF ALL WITH RESOLUTION NUMBER 7.

THAT WILL BE OUR FIRST RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE FLOOR.

IF RESOLUTION NUMBER 7 DOES NOT PASS, THEN WE WILL DEAL WITH

RESOLUTION NUMBER 4.

AFTER THAT, WE HAVE AGREED THAT WE WILL PRESENT THE RESOLUTIONS IN THE ORDER THAT THEY ARE NUMBERED FROM THAT POINT ON.

AND WE'RE DOING THIS TO GET THE ISSUES OF SEXUALITY IN FRONT OF EVERYONE BEFORE EVERYBODY STARTS LEAVING FOR SUNDAY.

>> YOU'VE JUST BROKEN THE HEARTS OF LOTS OF PEOPLE.

>> I KNOW I HAVE.

>> THANK YOU.

>> THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE BEFORE US.

>> YES, IT IS.

>> SO LET ME REPEAT THAT, SO THERE'S NO QUESTION.

WE WILL DEAL WITH RESOLUTION NUMBER 7 FIRST.

THAT WILL BE THE FIRST THE RESOLUTION BROUGHT TO THE SESSION.

IF IT PASSES, RESOLUTION NUMBER 4 WILL NOT BE DEALT WITH.

IF NUMBER 7 DOES NOT PASS, THEN RESOLUTION NUMBER 4 WILL COME BEFORE YOU.

NOW, THE REASON FOR THAT IS, IF 7 PASSES, NUMBER 4, WHICH IS IN OPPOSITION TO NUMBER 7, IS A MOOT POINT, SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU'LL HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED YOUR POSITION ON THIS.

NOW, IT MAY BE THAT NEITHER PASSES, WHICH IS ALSO MAKING A STATEMENT BY THIS ASSEMBLY.

FROM THAT POINT ON, WE WILL DEAL WITH THE RESOLUTIONS IN ORDER, STARTING WITH NUMBER 1.

SECOND, I WANT TO MAKE THIS CLEAR, AS WELL.

I JUST SAID IT, BUT I WANT TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR: IF 7 DOES NOT PASS, WE WILL DEAL WITH NUMBER 4.

IF 7 DOES PASS, WE WILL NOT EVEN CAN CONSIDER NUMBER 4.

IT BECOMES A MOOT POINT.

BISHOP GORDY?

>> YES, SIR.

>> I COMMEND IT TO YOU.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU, PASTOR JONES, FOR YOUR REPORT.

THAT WILL BE COMING UP LATER IN THE ASSEMBLY.

THERE'S SOME MATERIAL AND OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS THIS IN COMMITTEES AND QUASI COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE BEFORE IT COMES UP, AND WE'LL EXPLAIN THAT LATER.

THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS I LEFT OUT EARLIER SO WE CAN GET ALL OF TONIGHT'S AGENDA IN.

SO I HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE TO INTRODUCE, AND BECAUSE WE ARE BEHIND, I'M GOING TO INTRODUCE ONLY A VERY FEW OF THOSE, AND WE MAY HAVE TIME AT THE END OF THIS SESSION TO INTRODUCE THEM.

IF NOT, WE'LL BEGIN SOME OF THE OTHER SESSIONS WITH INTRODUCTIONS.

WE'VE ALREADY MET OUR OUTSTANDING BIBLE STUDY LEADER, DR. TERRY FRETHEIM FROM LUTHER SEMINARY.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER THIS YEAR IS ONE OF OUR OWN, I THINK. HE ACTUALLY WAS BORN IN ETHIOPIA, BUT HE GOT HERE AS FAST AS HE COULD.

THE REVEREND DR. GEMECHIS BUBA, OR AS HE WAS KNOWN IN THE SYNOD FOR YEARS, DR. BUBA.

CURRENTLY SERVING AS THE DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN NATIONAL MINISTRIES IN THE ELCA.

PASTOR BUBA'S BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE FRONT OF YOUR ASSEMBLY MATERIALS ON PAGE VI.

WE WELCOME YOU AND LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU IN A MINUTE.

THE 2009 ELCA CHURCHWIDE REPRESENTATIVE TO OUR ASSEMBLY THIS YEAR IS REVEREND DONALD McCOID.

IS HE IN THE ROOM?

YES, HE'S WAY BACK IN THE BACK THERE.

HE'S THE EXECUTIVE FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS FOR THE ELCA, WHICH I THINK ARGUABLY MAKES HIM THE

MOST FAMOUS LUTHERAN IN THE WORLD IN ECUMENICAL CIRCLES.

HE'S ALWAYS THERE WHENEVER THERE ARE ECUMENICAL  
DISCUSSIONS GOING ON IN WHICH THIS CHURCH IS A PART.

HE'S ALSO FORMER BISHOP OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
SYNOD.

PASTOR McCOID'S INFORMATION IS IN THE FRONT OF THE ASSEMBLY  
MATERIALS, VII.

AND WE'RE VERY GRATEFUL THAT YOU COULD BE WITH US AND LOOK  
FORWARD TO YOUR REPORT FROM ELCA CHURCHWIDE.

WE HAVE TWO OTHER SPECIAL GUESTS WHO ARE WITH US FOR THIS  
ASSEMBLY.

ONE IS DR. EVERETT FLANIGAN.

WHERE ARE YOU, SIR?

THERE HE IS ON THE OTHER SIDE.

THE CHURCHWIDE PEOPLE SIT AS FAR FROM EACH OTHER AS  
POSSIBLE IN THE ASSEMBLY.

DR. FLANIGAN IS A NATIVE OF EAST POINT, IS THAT RIGHT, EVERETT?

YES, HE'S A NATIVE OF METRO ATLANTA.

HE'S THE DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN BLACK OUTREACH AND  
LEADERSHIP IN THE ELCA.

GLAD TO HAVE HIM HERE.

AND THEN FINALLY, I WANT TO INTRODUCE ONE OF OUR WORKSHOP

LEADERS, ALSO A PROFESSOR AT LUTHER SEMINARY, BUT A PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT.

WE WANTED TO DO BOTH THIS YEAR.

ACTUALLY INVITED BY OUR WELCOMING TASK FORCE THAT WAS SET UP LAST YEAR TO LEAD ONE OF OUR WORKSHOPS, DR. DAVID FREDERICKSON.

IS HE IN THE -- HE'S ALSO SITTING BACK THERE IN THE BACK.

WELCOME, DR. FREDERICKSON.

HAD THE PLEASURE OF BEING WITH HIM IN CHICAGO LAST WEEK FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE MEETING.

WE HAVE LOTS OF OTHER PEOPLE TO INTRODUCE, BUT I'LL SAVE THOSE, AS I SAID, UNTIL A BIT LATER, AND TURN NOW TO OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER WHO'S RARING TO GO ON THE FRONT PEW UP HERE.

DR. BUBA IS HERE TO SHARE WITH US SOME WORDS ABOUT MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY AS AN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE OF CONGREGATIONAL MISSION AND HERE HE IS, THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD'S OWN

DR. GEMECHIS BUBA.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> IT'S VERY GOOD TO BE BACK HOME.

AS BISHOP GORDY SAID, I'M GOING TO SPEAK ABOUT THE TOPIC OF MISSION AND HOSPITALITY, BUT I'D LIKE TO EXTEND MY GRATITUDE TO -- FOR BISHOP AND TO THE SYNOD COUNCIL AND TO ALL

PARTICIPANTS OF THIS CONFERENCE AND ASSEMBLY FOR THE INVITATION.

IT HAS BEEN SUCH AN HONOR FOR ME TO BE HERE AND TO SHARE MY MINISTRY GIFT WITH YOU.

BISHOP GORDY, I TURNED TO HIM AND SAID: EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT GETTING READY TO COME AND SPEAK TO THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY, I ALWAYS GET A QUAKING EXPERIENCE.

IT REALLY SCARES ME.

AND I WAS HOPING THAT HE WOULD TURN TO ME AND SAY: NO, YOU'RE JUST SPEAKING TO AN ASSEMBLY.

BUT HE SAID: GEMECHIS, THAT FEAR IS GOOD FOR YOU.

I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT, BECAUSE WHEN I DECIDED TO GO TO SEMINARY, MY FATHER, WHO WAS ALSO A BISHOP IN ETHIOPIA, TOLD ME THE SAME THING.

ALL OF A SUDDEN AS AN 11th GRADE STUDENT, I DECIDED I WANTED TO GO TO SEMINARY FOR MINISTRY TRAINING.

AND HE ASKED ME: WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO SEMINARY?

I SAID I WANTED TO BE A PREACHER.

HE SAID: YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO SEMINARY TO BE A PREACHER, BECAUSE THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO WENT TO SEMINARY AND CAN'T PREACH.

[ APPLAUSE ]

JUST TO UNDERLINE, NONE OF THEM ARE IN THIS ROOM.

[ LAUGHTER ]

I WANT TO BE INVITED BACK, THAT'S WHY I SAY THIS.

AND AT THE SAME TIME, THIS SYNOD HAS BEEN SO GRACIOUS, SO OPEN, SO WELCOMING TO ME THROUGH MANY, MANY OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN HELPING ME AND GUIDING ME AND MENTORING ME, PEOPLE LIKE PASTOR ART LEWIS, WHO WENT TO MY WIFE'S FAMILY'S HOUSE TO NEGOTIATE FOR OUR MARRIAGE.

HE WAS MY AMERICAN FATHER, AND TO GET -- TO LOWER THE DOWERY FOR ME.

AND PASTOR GARY DOESN'T BELIEVE I STILL PAID IN FULL.

I MARRIED HER IN LAY-AWAY.

SO I FORGIVE PASTOR GARY FOR THAT.

AND I ALSO REMEMBER PEOPLE LIKE PASTOR KATIE PASCH, PASTOR BILL FUNK AND HIS WIFE WHO WERE MY PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING, PEOPLE WHO WERE ADVISING ME, SO COMING BACK HERE IS LIKE COMING BACK TO A FAMILY REUNION.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THIS INVITATION.

I AM HERE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME POINTS ABOUT MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY, ABOUT INVITING AND BEING OPEN, BEING OPEN FOR THE SAKE OF MINISTRY, AND INVITING PEOPLE INTO THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, IN THE FORM OF MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY.

SINCE WE'VE BEEN SITTING A LITTLE LONGER, I'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO STAND AS I READ THE GOSPEL TEXT, AND I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU TO PRAY WITH ME.

I WILL BE READING A TEXT FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, CHAPTER 22.

"JESUS SPOKE TO THEM AGAIN IN PARABLES, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A KING WHO PREPARES A WAITING BANQUET FOR HIS SON.

HE SENT HIS SERVANTS TO THOSE WHO HAD BEEN INVITED TO THE BANQUET, TO TELL THEM TO COME, BUT THEY REFUSED TO COME."

THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

>> AND ALSO WITH YOU.

>> LET US PRAY.

GRACIOUS, LOVING, WELCOMING, FORGIVING, GRACIOUS FATHER, WE COME BEFORE YOU AS AN ASSEMBLY, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN MINISTRY, AS PEOPLE IN COMMUNION WITH EACH OTHER.

I PRAY THAT YOU BLESS THIS TIME, BLESS THIS MOMENT, AND BLESS THIS OPPORTUNITY AS WE REFLECT ON THIS TEXT.

PREPARE OUR HEARTS, OUR MINDS, AND OUR SPIRITS.

I PRAY THAT YOU USE MY MIND AND SPEAK THROUGH MY VOCAL CORDS.

NONE OF ME, BUT ALL OF YOU IN THIS PLACE.

HOLY SPIRIT, HAVE YOUR WAY.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, AMEN.

>> AMEN.

>> YOU MAY BE SEATED.

MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY IS BECOMING A KEY SUBJECT FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, A CHURCH THAT IS COMMITTED, A CHURCH THAT IS DETERMINED, TO BE OPEN, TO BE WELCOMING TO THE STRANGERS, TO THE ALIEN, TO THE IMMIGRANT, TO ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, TO SHARE OUR MINISTRY AND OUR JOYFUL SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AS CHRISTIANS.

WHAT IS THIS MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY?

LET ME TRY JUST TO BRIEFLY SPEAK ABOUT THESE TWO WORDS.

MISSIONAL COMES FROM MISSIO, TO BE SENT.

THAT IS OUR ENTITY, THAT'S WHO WE ARE.

WE ARE A COMMUNITY THAT IS SENT.

WE ARE TOLD, IT IS ALMOST 2,000 YEARS AGO SINCE GOD SAID: GO.

THAT WORD HAS BEEN ECHOING AND PASSING THROUGH ALL

GENERATIONS, THROUGH ALL EMPIRES, THROUGH ALL HISTORICAL

SEGMENTS OF HUMANITY, AND TODAY AGAIN WE ARE HEARING: GO.

THAT IS OUR IDENTITY.

THAT'S OUR PURPOSE.

THAT IS OUR MISSION.

THAT IS OUR ACTION.

MISSIONAL.

IT'S BEEN INTERESTING FOR ME TO STUDY THE WORD HOSPITALITY, COMING FROM THE WORD HOSPICE IN LATIN, WHICH EVOLVED INTO HOSTICE, A STRANGER, OR EVEN HOSTILE, AN ENEMY.

SO HOSPITALITY IS TRANSFORMING THAT ENEMY OR THAT STRANGER INTO A PERSON THAT YOU CAN COMPASSIONATELY CARE AND SERVE IN THE FORM OF HOSPITALITY.

IN THIS SESSION, IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 22, JESUS TRIES TO CAPTURE A VERY LARGE, A VERY DIVINE, ETERNAL, HEAVENLY CONCEPT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN A SHORT DESCRIPTIVE WAY BY SAYING: THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A WEDDING BANQUET PREPARED BY THE KING FOR HIS SON.

THAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR UNDERSTANDING.

IT IS LIKE A KING WHO PREPARED A WEDDING BANQUET FOR HIS SON.

THIS FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATION NEEDS TO BE CAPTURED AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, THAT KINGDOM IS HEAVENLY, DOESN'T BELONG TO ANY EARTHLY POWER.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE, THE GREEK EMPIRE, THE BRITISH EMPIRE, THE WESTERN EMPIRE, THE EASTERN EMPIRE, THIS KINGDOM DOES NOT BELONG TO ANY HUMAN EMPIRE.

ABSOLUTELY IT BELONGS TO GOD.

THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THE CHURCH.

IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 16, JESUS MADE IT CLEAR, HE SAID, "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH."

HE IS THE BUILDER.

HE IS THE OWNER.

NOBODY CAN CLAIM THE CHURCH AS THEIR OWN.

THE CHURCH BELONGS TO CHRIST SQUARELY AND CLEARLY.

IT IS DIVINE.

IT'S NOT HUMAN.

IT IS A SPIRITUAL.

IT'S NOT CARNAL.

IT IS HEAVENLY, IT'S NOT EARTHLY.

IT IS ETERNAL, AND IT'S NOT TEMPORAL.

THAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

NOW, INTO THAT KINGDOM, WE COME IN.

JESUS WAS TRYING TO CONTEXTUALIZE THAT FAR-FETCHED DIVINE ETERNAL SPIRITUAL HEAVENLY MESSAGE.

HE'S TRYING TO CONTEXTUALIZE IT, NORMALIZE IT, HUMANIZE IT, AND ALSO, HE WANTED TO INDIGENIZE IT, BY SAYING THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE.

I KNOW WE CAN'T CAPTURE IT, SO HE'S TRYING TO USE AN IMAGE,

UNDERLINE THE WORD "LIKE," IT IS LIKE A WEDDING BANQUET  
PREPARED BY A KING, GOD THE FATHER.

WHO PREPARED THAT BANQUET?

THE BANQUET THAT WE WELCOME OR SHUN PEOPLE OUT IS NOT OUR  
BANQUET.

IT BELONGS TO GOD.

HE PREPARED IT.

THE BANQUET OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS A FAMILY BUSINESS TO GOD,  
JUST LIKE YOUR WEDDING HAS BEEN A PERSONAL FAMILY BUSINESS  
FOR YOU.

IT IS A BANQUET OF HIS OWN SON, A WEDDING, A PLACE OF  
COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP.

IT WAS A BANQUET, IT WAS A FESTIVE EVENT.

THAT IS WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES IN, TO MAKE THAT FESTIVITY  
ALIVE.

AND FOR HIS SON, JESUS, IS AT THE CENTER.

I WENT TO OSLO, NORWAY, ONE TIME, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, ONE  
SATURDAY, THE CITY WAS IN TOTAL FREEZE.

I LOOKED DOWN THE WINDOW OF WHERE I WAS STAYING, AND  
NOTHING WAS MOVING.

I WAS NOT INFORMED.

I DIDN'T KNOW WHY.

NOBODY WAS MOVING.

THE CITY WAS AT A STANDSTILL.

I ASKED THE HOTEL ATTENDANTS: WHAT'S GOING ON?

THEY TOLD ME: THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING IS GETTING MARRIED.

IT IS JESUS' BUSINESS.

IT IS JESUS' WEDDING.

THE VISIBILITY OF JESUS IN THE CHURCH TRUMPS EVERY PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH.

THE CHURCH EXISTS ON THE PLANET EARTH TO MAKE JESUS KNOWN.

MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY ENGAGES THE CHURCH TO PARTICIPATE IN THAT WEDDING BANQUET.

IT STARTED WITH INVITATION.

THE FATHER PREPARED THIS BANQUET, AND WENT TO HIS SERVANTS, AND HE SAID: GO, TELL THE INVITED TO COME.

MY ROLE, YOUR ROLE, WHETHER LAY OR CLERGY, A PROPHET OR AN APOSTLE, EVANGELIST OR A TEACHER, A BISHOP OR A POPE, MY ROLE AND YOUR ROLE IS TO GO AND INVITE PEOPLE TO THE WEDDING BANQUET OF JESUS.

BUT THERE IS VERY INTERESTING THINGS THAT WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION IN THE TEXT.

WHEN IT COMES TO THE TIME OF INVITING, HE DID NOT GO TO THE CROWD.

HE WENT TO HIS SERVANTS, HIS SERVANTS, THE SERVANTS THAT HAS BEEN DISCIPLES.

LET ME MAKE ONE STATEMENT: DISCIPLESHIP IS THE BACKBONE OF MISSION.

DISCIPLESHIP IS THE BACKBONE OF MISSION.

WHERE THERE IS NO DISCIPLESHIP, THERE IS NO MISSION.

HE SENT HIS SERVANTS TO GO AND INVITE.

AND SECONDLY, IT WAS NOT ONLY INVITATION.

THAT INVITATION WAS EXTENDED 3 TIMES.

SAY THAT WITH ME.

>> 3 TIMES.

>> YES, I'M CHECKING WHETHER YOU'RE ALIVE OR NOT.

HE SENT 3 TIMES DIFFERENT AUDIENCE, MAYBE DIFFERENT MESSENGERS, BUT THE SAME MESSAGE.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS THE SAME.

HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY, BUT THAT IS THE SAME.

EMPIRES WILL PASS AWAY, BUT THE WORD STAYS THE SAME, CONSISTENT.

NO ADDITION, NO SUBTRACTION, COMPLETE FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD.

CONSISTENT, THE SAME MESSAGE IN AFRICA, THE SAME MESSAGE IN ASIA, THE SAME MESSAGE IN LATIN AMERICA, THE SAME MESSAGE IN

THE DAYS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, GREEK EMPIRE, BRITISH EMPIRE,  
EMPIRES WILL COME AND GO.

BUT THE MESSAGE STAYS CONSISTENT.

IT IS SIMPLE, IT IS CLEAR.

ARGUABLY, I WOULD ARGUE THAT THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN AMERICA IS ONE OF THE RICHEST CHURCHES THAT THE  
PLANET EARTH HAS EVER WITNESSED.

IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY, IN THE EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT  
TRADITION, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A CHURCH THAT HAS TRAINED,  
EDUCATED, DEGREED, INSTITUTIONALIZED, CONSTITUTIONALIZED,  
WITH RESOLUTIONS, ASSEMBLIES, SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTIONS,  
FINANCIAL RESOURCES, I'M NOT TALKING MILLIONS, I'M TALKING  
BILLIONS.

THE RICHEST CHURCH EVER WITH MORE THAN 16,000 DEGREED  
CLERGY.

BUT THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLE AND CLEAR: JESUS AT THE CENTER OF  
THE BANQUET.

TELL THAT STORY OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

IN THIS WEDDING BANQUET, HE WAS PERSISTENT.

HE WOULD NOT BUDGE.

HE SENT HIS MESSENGERS ONE TIME.

PEOPLE REFUSED TO COME.

HE DID NOT STOP.

AGAIN HE SENT MORE SERVANTS.

NOW HE DIVERSIFIED HIS AUDIENCE.

HE SAID: GO TO THE BUSINESSPEOPLE, GO TO THE FARMERS, GO TO THE MILITARY, GO TO THE POLITICIANS, GO TO THE EDUCATED, GO TO THE UNEDUCATED.

HE SAID: GO, AND INVITE DIVERSIFY YOUR AUDIENCE.

LUTHERANS SPEAK TO NON-LUTHERANS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

DIVERSIFY YOUR AUDIENCE, SPEAK, SPEAK TO UNCHURCHED.

AND HE ALSO SENT MORE SERVANTS.

HE WAS PERSISTENT.

HE WAS NOT GIVING UP.

THEY WERE TRAINED TO HANDLE REJECTION.

THEY WERE NOT GIVING UP.

THEY WERE PERSISTENT.

STAY AT IT FOR YEARS UNTIL YOU SEE EVANGELICAL BREAKTHROUGH.

THE OTHER THING IN THIS TEXT THAT WE SEE IS INVITATION IS SACRIFICIAL.

IT WILL COST YOU SOMETHING.

THE QUESTION IS: WHAT DOES IT COST ME?

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST ME?

THE ANSWER CAN BE ANSWERED JUST IN ONE WORD: EVERYTHING.

I HAVE A PASTOR FRIEND IN PHILADELPHIA, TIM POSTON, MEDIATOR LUTHERAN CHURCH.

SIMPLE CONFESSION IN HIS CHURCH EVERY IS SUNDAY THAT HIS DISCIPLES, HIS CONGREGATION MEMBERS SAY, THEY SAY, "WELCOME TO MEDIATOR LUTHERAN CHURCH, WHERE SALVATION IS FREE, BUT DISCIPLESHIP WILL COST YOU EVERYTHING."

TIME, TALENT, TREASURE, THAT IS THE LANGUAGE OF STEWARDSHIP. MISSION WILL COST YOU YOUR OWN LIFE.

IT WILL COST YOU YOUR TRADITION.

IT WILL EVEN COST YOU, BISHOP, FORGIVE ME, EVEN YOUR LITURGICAL STRUCTURE.

IT WILL COST YOU YOUR HERITAGE.

IT WILL COST YOU YOUR STRUCTURE, YOUR PRIVILEGE, YOUR PRIDE.

AS LONG AS JESUS IS KEPT AT THE CENTER, NOTHING WILL TRUMP THE VISIBILITY OF JESUS.

ANYTHING THAT SHADOWS JESUS, THAT CASTS ITS APPEARANCE OVER JESUS, SHOULD GO.

IN THIS TEXT, THAT INVITATION WAS CREATIVE, IT WAS IMAGINATIVE.

HE WAS SOMETIMES TWEAKING THE APPEARANCE, SOMETIMES CHANGING THE MESSENGERS, SOMETIMES PACKAGING THE MESSAGE DIFFERENTLY.

THAT IS POSSIBLE.

VARIOUS WAYS, FLEXIBILITY.

WE SEE THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT HERE, FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
HERE.

BUT SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO BE LOOSE ENOUGH TO BE MOVED BY THE  
POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

TOO MUCH STIFFNESS ENGRAINED IN 1,000 YEARS OF TRADITION.

IN 15th CENTURY, THERE WAS A CHURCH THAT MISSED A GOLDEN  
OPPORTUNITY WHEN A CERTAIN MONK STOOD UP, MOVED BY THE  
HOLY SPIRIT, SPOKE PROPHETICALLY, AND STARTED TO COMMUNICATE  
THE SIMPLICITY AND CLARITY OF THE GOSPEL.

THAT CHURCH MISSED THAT OPPORTUNITY OF TRANSFORMATION AND  
REFORMATION BECAUSE OF TRADITIONAL STIFFNESS, BECAUSE OF  
SOME KIND OF BONDAGE THAT THEY'D BEEN HELD IN.

BE LOOSE TO BE USED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BE STEEPED IN THE WATER OF BAPTISM.

WATER IS NOT STIFF.

BAPTISM DOES NOT MAKE YOU STIFF.

BAPTISM MAKES YOU LOOSE.

IF YOU AGREE, SAY AMEN.

>> AMEN!

>> IT FLOWS IN OUR BONES.

IT FLOWS THROUGH OUR TRADITION.

IT FLOODS THROUGH OUR DRY BONES TO MAKE US LOOSE AND READY FOR THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

FINALLY IN THIS INVITATION, THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE, THEY WERE RESPONDING TO THE FATHERS.

THESE MESSENGERS WERE GOING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE WORLD, THE FATHER AND THE MESSAGE, THE FATHER AND THE AUDIENCE, RESPONSIVENESS.

HAVING A LIVING, VIBRANT, PRAYERFUL RELATIONSHIP.

IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, I WAS SENT BY BISHOP RON WARREN.

BISHOP RON WARREN, WHEN HE WAS A BISHOP HERE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA SENT HIM A LETTER AND SAID: I WANT TO INVITE GEMECHIS TO COME AND SPEAK HERE IN AUSTRALIA.

DO YOU TRUST HIS THEOLOGICAL --

AND BISHOP RON WARREN SENT HIM A BEAUTIFUL LETTER.

HE SAID: I TRUST HIM.

YOU'LL NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEM.

I WENT FOR FIVE WEEKS, PREACHED IN 21 CITIES ALL OVER HIS CHURCH.

AND WHEN I GOT TO MELBOURNE, THEY SENT FOUR OR FIVE PASTORS TO THE AIRPORT.

THEY TOOK ME TO A SECLUDED ROOM AND SAID: PASTOR, WE WANT

YOU TO PREACH, BUT WE DON'T WANT YOU TO PRAY.

I SAID: WHY?

BECAUSE EVERYWHERE YOU HAVE BEEN PRAYING, SOMETHING HAPPENS, AND WE DON'T WANT THAT THING TO HAPPEN.

I THOUGHT: WE PRAY SO THAT SOMETHING HAPPEN.

BUT I SAID: OKAY, I OBEY.

BUT WHEN I WENT THERE, THE PEOPLE WERE SO HUNGRY, THEY SAID: WE WANT MORE PRAYER.

THEY STAYED FOR MORE PRAYER.

WE PRAYED.

THEN WHEN I GOT BACK, THAT PRESIDENT WROTE A LETTER TO BISHOP WARREN.

I WAS CALLED TO THE BISHOP'S OFFICE ON THE 16th FLOOR DOWN HERE AT EDGEWOOD.

AS SOON AS I GOT TO BISHOP'S OFFICE, HE SHOWED ME THE LETTER.

IT SAYS, "YOUR PASTOR THAT YOU SENT FROM ATLANTA RAISED A LOT OF DUST ALL OVER AUSTRALIA."

SO BISHOP WARREN SAID: WHAT KIND OF DUST DID YOU RAISE?

I SAID: I DON'T KNOW.

BUT HE SAID: CAN YOU GO AROUND THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD AND RAISE SOME DUST FOR ME?

[ APPLAUSE ]

A CHURCH THAT IS MISSIONAL IS A CHURCH THAT PRAYS.

AND WHEN THEY PRAY, IT'S NOT JUST THAT BEAUTIFUL

THEOLOGICALLY SOUND WELL-LETTERED PRAYERS, BUT SOMETIMES

PRAYING FROM THE GUT, PRAYING FROM OUR HEART, PRAYING FROM

OUR SOUL, PRAYING FROM OUR SPIRIT, PRAYING FROM OUR MIND,

PRAYING FROM OUR ENTIRE BEING.

LET ME INVITE YOU, ENGAGE THIS LAVISH GOD THAT WE WORSHIP.

HE IS HUNGRY TO RELATE WITH US.

LET US RELATE WITH GOD IN PRAYER, RESPONSIBLE INVITATION.

ONCE THAT INVITATION WAS EXTENDED, THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE GOT  
ON A MISSIONAL BREAKTHROUGH, AND THE PEOPLE WERE GATHERED.

NOW IT'S TIME TO HOST.

IT IS TIME TO HOST.

SAY THAT WITH ME: IT IS TIME TO HOST.

WHEN IT IS TIME TO HOST, THE PEOPLE ARE GATHERED.

I LIKE THAT WORD, GATHERED.

BUT THERE IS ONE DESCRIPTION THAT I REALLY ENJOY.

IT SAYS: THEY WENT AND GATHERED THE GOOD AND THE BAD.

IT WAS A COMMON SPACE FOR ALL FALLEN HUMAN BEINGS.

IT WAS NOT A PLACE OF JUDGMENT.

IT WAS NOT A PLACE OF DISCRIMINATION.

IT WAS A PLACE WHERE EVERYBODY WAS GATHERED AROUND ONE

PERSON.

MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, MY GOODNESS, HIS GOODNESS, WAS NOT A POINT OF ATTENTION IN THIS PLACE.

THEY WERE ALL GATHERED AROUND ONE KING, AND HIS NAME IS JESUS.

THEY WERE GATHERED IN A BANQUET HALL.

I BELIEVE HERE IN SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD, THERE ARE MORE THAN 170 CONGREGATIONS.

I'D LIKE TO SEE THEM AS BANQUET HALLS.

THIS TEXT NAMES US.

WE ARE BANQUET HALLS, BANQUET HALLS WHERE MUSIC IS PLAYED.

BANQUET HALLS WHERE PRAYER IS PRAYED AND THE WORD IS READ.

BANQUET HALLS WHERE PEOPLE WASH THEIR HAND, THEIR FEET,

THEIR FACE TO COME TO THE BANQUET.

BANQUET HALLS WHERE BREAD AND WINE IS BROKEN.

BANQUET HALLS WHERE RELATIONSHIP AND CELEBRATION AND

DANCING TAKES PLACE.

MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY LOOKS AT US AS BANQUET HALLS.

THESE BANQUET HALLS WERE FILLED, FILLED WITH GUESTS.

MY BELOVED HOME CONGREGATION HERE IN SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD,

THE MISSION IN ST. STEPHEN, SOME OF MY FRIENDS, SOME OF MY

BELOVED CONGREGANTS ARE HERE TONIGHT.

WHEN I WAS HERE AT ST. STEPHEN, I USED TO TELL THEM AND I USED TO BEG THEM: FRIENDS, I HATE TO PREACH TO EMPTY PEWS. PLEASE INVITE, EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN'T BRING ANYONE, DRAG SOMEONE.

FILL THESE PEWS JUST FOR THE SAKE OF HAVING ME PREACH EVERY SUNDAY.

IT WAS FILLED.

BUT THE PROBLEM HERE IN THIS TEXT IS IT'S FILLED WITH GUESTS, NOT WITH THE USUAL PEOPLE, NOT PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE CREED OR THE FATHER'S PRAYER.

NOT PEOPLE WHO WERE CONFIRMED, GUESTS, STRANGERS, UNUSUAL PEOPLE, STRANGERS, ALIENS, FOREIGNERS.

AS A COMMUNITY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT, THEY COME.

WHEN THEY COME, THEY START WITH THE WASHING OF HANDS AND FEET AND FACE.

THAT IS BAPTISM.

THEY COME TO EXPERIENCE THAT BAPTISMAL INDUCTION INTO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM, INTO THE ETERNAL COVENANT.

THAT BAPTISM EQUALIZES US ALL.

AND THEN THEY GATHER TO PRAY, AND THEN THEY EAT AND DRINK COMMUNION.

THEY SING AND DANCE, WORSHIP.

THEY BRING GIFTS TO THE KING.

THAT IS THEIR OFFERING.

THEY FELLOWSHIP WITH EACH OTHER.

THAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

BUT THE ICING ON THE CAKE, BUT THE EXPERIENCE IS THAT AT THE  
END OF THAT BANQUET CELEBRATION, EVERYBODY WALKS UP TO  
SHAKE THE HAND OF THE KING.

ONE TOUCH OF JESUS, ONE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS, WILL MAKE US  
TOTALLY DIFFERENT.

ONCE YOU HAVE SHAKEN HIS HANDS, IT IS TIME TO GO.  
TO GO BACK.

THERE IS A SAYING IN OUR LANGUAGE, THEY SAY --

WHEN THE TIME -- WHEN IT IS TIME TO GO, HOW BEAUTIFUL IS A GUEST  
WHO KNOWS WHEN TO GO.

[ LAUGHTER ]

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS A GUEST WHO KNOWS WHEN TO LEAVE.

SOMETIMES WE BECOME UGLY GUESTS BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW  
WHEN TO GO.

WE'VE EATEN, WE'VE WASHED, WE'RE BAPTIZED, WE'RE RENEWED, IT IS  
TIME TO GO.

GO IN PEACE AND SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS.

THAT IS THE GREAT COMMISSION.

BUT AS I FINISH, LET ME WARN YOU: JESUS IN MATTHEW 28 SAID: GO.  
BUT IN ACTS, CHAPTER 1, HE WAITED FOR THEM AND HE SAID: DO NOT  
LEAVE JERUSALEM.

BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WORD "GO"?

HE SAID: YES, GO, BUT WAIT, WAIT UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THAT FIRE,  
UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THAT SPIRIT.

GO, BUT DON'T HURRY.

WAIT.

WAIT, AND FORM AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY.

120 BROKEN, SINFUL PEOPLE, APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY.

120 INVITED PEOPLE FROM STREETS, FROM NAZARETH, FROM JUDEA,  
FROM BETHANY, FROM BETHSAIDA, PEOPLE GATHERED, MALE AND  
FEMALE, OLD AND YOUNG, EDUCATED AND UNEDUCATED, RICH AND  
POOR, PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

ALL FRIGHTENED, ALL BROKEN, ALL SCARED.

ALL WAITING.

WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT.

WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME PLACE.

WHEN THAT SPIRIT CAME, BISHOP BEAUTIFULLY ARTICULATED IN HIS  
SERMON, THEY BECAME DIFFERENT.

BISHOP WARREN ONCE PREACHED, WE ARE PENTECOSTAL

LUTHERANS.

WE ARE LUTHERANS WHO ARE STAUNCHLY ANCHORED IN THAT FLOOD,  
IN THAT POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY, IS THIS UNSTOPPABLE CYCLE OF INVITING  
AND HOSTING AND SENDING.

INVITING AND HOSTING AND SENDING.

IN THAT SENDING, THESE PEOPLE WENT ALL OVER THE WORLD.

TODAY, WE ARE THEIR FRUITS.

THAT SPIRIT THAT CAME ON THAT DAY OF PENTECOST STILL FLOWS IN  
THE CHURCH, NONSTOP.

IT FLOWS.

NOTHING WILL STOP IT, NOTHING WILL THWART IT, NOTHING WILL  
STIFLE IT, NOTHING WILL DESTROY IT, NOTHING WILL DAMAGE IT.

HAVE NO FEAR, YOU, LITTLE FLOCK, FOR THE KINGDOM IS YOURS.

GO, BUT ALWAYS IN YOUR GOING, WAIT.

MAY GOD BLESS THIS ASSEMBLY.

THANK YOU.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> THANK YOU, PASTOR BUBA.

TWO IMAGES ARE FLOATING IN MY MIND.

ONE IS THE IMAGE OF THIS SYNOD AS 170 BANQUET HALLS FULL OF ALL  
KIND OF PEOPLE.

AND THE OTHER ONE IS WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE TO SEE PASTOR

BUBA IF HE WEREN'T NERVOUS.

I DON'T KNOW THAT WE COULD STAND THAT HERE YET.

MAYBE AFTER A WHILE.

A LITTLE BIT OF BAD NEWS.

IT MAY NOT BE BAD NEWS, BUT DR. BUBA WAS SCHEDULED TO LEAD ANOTHER WORKSHOP TOMORROW, AND HE HAS TO LEAVE, BUT DR. EVERETT FLANIGAN -- THAT'S WHY I SAY IT MAY NOT BE BAD NEWS -- IS GOING TO LEAD THE WORKSHOP INSTEAD ON MISSIONAL HOSPITALITY.

YOU'LL HEAR MORE OF THAT IN THE SYNOD, I HOPE, AS TIME GOES ON. A WONDERFUL WAY TO LOOK AT WHAT WE TRY TO DO IN THE CHURCH. OKAY, HEY, WE'VE GOT A LITTLE TIME HERE, SO I'M GOING TO BACK UP AND INTRODUCE SOME MORE FOLKS.

MICROPHONE 1, YES.

>> THIS IS PASTOR TERRY FUGATE FROM ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE.

AND I WOULD NEVER HAVE DREAMED THAT I WOULD HAVE COME FORWARD TO EVEN SAY IN A SYNOD ASSEMBLY, BUT I WANT TO THANK PASTOR FOR HIS REMARKABLE SPEECH, FOR THE REMARKABLE FORCE AND INSIGHT THAT HE DISPLAYED, AND WHEN HE SPOKE OF WELCOMING, OBVIOUSLY PASTOR KIEFERT SPOKE.

WELCOMING A STRANGER IS I THINK PLAYED INTO WHAT HE WAS

TRYING TO SAY.

AND I'VE GOT A STORY ABOUT WHEN I WAS IN A LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SLOVAKIA, BUT I WON'T BOTHER ALL OF YOU WITH THAT.

I ALSO APPRECIATED HIS REFERENCES TO BONHOEFFER, AND MY QUESTION WOULD BE: WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS THAT HE SEES FOR THE LUTHERAN CHURCH BEING MORE INCLUSIVE?

WHICH OBVIOUSLY IS AN OBJECTIVE THAT WE ALL SHARE.

AND WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS, AND WHAT DOES HE BELIEVE THAT COULD LOOK LIKE?

AND THAT'S --

>> THANKS.

HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO BE HERE, PASTOR?

HE'LL BE HERE UNTIL TOMORROW AT 10:00, PASTOR.

I THINK WE CAN PIGEONHOLE HIM AND FIND OUT SOME OF THAT.

THAT WOULD BE GOOD.

THANK YOU.

>> CLEARLY, THIS IS A GOAL FOR ALL OF US.

I FELT VERY COMPELLED TO TRY TO CONSULT YOUR KNOWLEDGE, AND TO SEE HOW WE COULD FURTHER THE PROCESS THAT OBVIOUSLY NEEDS TO HAPPEN, AND THAT'S WHERE I WAS HEADING.

>> TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIM WHILE HE'S HERE.

>> GOD BLESS YOU.

>> I WANT TO CALL ON ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP AND OUR STEWARDSHIP SPECIALIST IN THE SYNOD, PASTOR DARREL PETERSON, WHO IS GOING TO LET US KNOW, MAYBE PARTLY IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION, PASTOR FUGATE, HOW WE CAN SHARE OUR MINISTRY STORIES HERE AT THIS ASSEMBLY.

I HOPE I'M NOT CALLING ON PASTOR PETERSON WHO'S NOT HERE. THERE HE IS.

OKAY.

HE'S A MINNESOTAN.

THEY'RE USUALLY ON TIME, UNLIKE SOME OF US FROM THE DEEPER SOUTH.

>> THANK YOU.

THE FIRST THING I'D LIKE TO SAY IS THAT GEMECHIS IS GOING TO SPEAK AT THE GLOBAL MISSION BREAKFAST TOMORROW MORNING, AND MANY OF YOU HAVE TICKETS FOR THAT.

THERE'S NO COST FOR THE TICKETS, BUT WE DO HAVE -- WE ARE ASKING FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.

WE DO HAVE ABOUT 15 TICKETS REMAINING FOR TOMORROW MORNING, AND AT THE END OF THIS SESSION, IF YOU WANT TO CHECK WITH LARRY SCHULTZ AT THE GLOBAL MISSION DISPLAY, HE'LL BE HAPPY TO PROVIDE YOU WITH SOME TICKETS, AS FAR AS THEY GO.

>> WE HAVE 3.

>> WE'RE DOWN TO 3.

[ LAUGHTER ]

I'M HERE TO SAY JUST A FEW WORDS ABOUT STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION INTERPRETATION.

YESTERDAY, THE SYNOD COUNCIL MET, AND PASTOR MEGAN JONES WAS THERE TO SPEAK ABOUT HER MINISTRY AT GEORGIA TECH, WITH CAMPUS MINISTRY.

AND AS SHE IS LEAVING TO TAKE A NEW CALL IN CHICAGO, SHE SHARED SOME OF THE STORIES OF WORKING WITH STUDENTS AT GEORGIA TECH.

AND SHE SAID: NOTHING IS MORE POWERFUL THAN SHARING OUR STORIES.

NOW, PRIOR TO PASTOR MEGAN'S PRESENTATION, THE SYNOD COUNCIL HAD BEEN DELIBERATING ABOUT FINANCIAL SHORTAGES, ABOUT THE REALITIES OF MINISTRIES THAT MAY HAVE TO BE CURTAILED OR CUT BACK.

NOW, I KNOW THAT THERE ARE CLOUDS OF CONCERN IN OUR MIDST ABOUT MINISTRIES AND PERSONAL LIVELIHOODS.

WE DO LIVE IN DIFFICULT TIMES.

BUT I WANT TO REMIND YOU: WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE STORIES.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD'S STORIES OF HOPE.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE STORY OF JESUS AND HIS LOVE.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE STORIES OF GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER.

WE DO EXPERIENCE RICH AND BOUNTIFUL STORIES OF MINISTRY IN OUR CONGREGATIONS AND THROUGHOUT THE CHURCH.

WE MIGHT BE FACING LESS THAN WHAT WE ARE USED TO, BUT WE NEED NOT SUCCUMB TO ANGST AND DESPAIR.

GOD'S GRACE AND PROVISION WILL ALWAYS BE ENOUGH.

NOW IS THE TIME TO BE FAITHFUL WITH WHAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

IT IS THE TIME IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES TO EDUCATE ABOUT STEWARDSHIP.

IT'S A TIME TO FORM GOOD HABITS, BECAUSE A LOT OF OUR HABITS HAVE GOTTEN SLOPPY IN THE GOOD TIMES.

IT IS THE TIME, IT IS ALWAYS THE TIME, TO SHARE OUR STORIES OF GOD'S LOVE AND OF MINISTRY.

MISSION INTERPRETATION IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY, AND I WANT TO EMPOWER OUR PASTORS AND ROSTERED LEADERS, OUR LAY LEADERS, TO TELL THE STORIES.

YOU KNOW THE STORIES.

TELL THEM.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD'S STORY.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF MINISTRY STORIES IN ALL 3 EXPRESSIONS OF THE CHURCH.

DON'T JUST LIMIT YOUR STORY TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR

CONGREGATION, BUT TELL THE STORIES ABOUT THE SYNODS.

TELL THE STORIES ABOUT CHURCHWIDE.

SO OFTEN, WE HEAR WHEN WE GO OUT INTO THE CONGREGATIONS: I

DIDN'T KNOW OUR CHURCH DID THAT.

YOU KNOW WHAT OUR CHURCH DOES.

TELL THE STORIES.

NOW WE HAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR DOING MISSION

INTERPRETATION, AND I WANT TO FOCUS ON OUR NEW SYNOD

WEBSITE.

HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN TO OUR NEW SYNOD WEBSITE IN THE

LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS?

HANDS.

THAT'S GREAT.

WE'RE GOING TO CONTINUE TO BUILD THIS.

WE'RE IN A TIME OF COMMUNICATING THROUGH OUR WEBSITE.

NOW, ON THAT WEBSITE, WHICH YOU ARE SEEING NOW, THERE IS A

PLACE WHERE YOU CAN SHARE YOUR STORY.

THERE IT IS.

NOW, YOU MIGHT THINK THERE'S ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT YOU CAN

GET INTO THAT BOX, BUT I'M TOLD THAT IT WILL TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU

WANT TO PUT IN THERE.

HERE IS A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN SHARE YOUR STORY, YOUR

CONGREGATION'S STORY.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

AND WE WILL SEEK TO MAKE THIS THEN EVIDENT TO OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY.

ANOTHER PART OF OUR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION IS eNEWS.

AND I KNOW THAT WE'VE BEEN IN A TRANSITION FROM THE PAPER VERSION TO THE eNEWS VERSION.

HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE THE eNEWS, ARE SIGNED UP FOR eNEWS?

OKAY, I BELIEVE WE'RE SORT OF BETWEEN 800 AND 900 PEOPLE THAT ARE SIGNED UP FOR eNEWS.

IF YOU AREN'T SIGNED UP FOR eNEWS, YOU CAN DO IT ONLINE, OR YOU CAN UTILIZE THE CARD THAT IS IN FRONT OF YOU ON THE TABLE, AND AS YOU LEAVE, THERE'S A BASKET, OR WHERE CAN THEY PUT THESE?

>> IT'S IN THE BACK RIGHT CORNER, THERE'S A BOX THAT YOU PLACE IT IN.

AND WE'LL HAVE DRAWINGS THIS WEEKEND FOR PRIZES.

>> MS. MOBLEY HOPE, AND SHE IS OUR COMMUNICATOR, WORKS WITH OUR WEBSITE.

AND YOU CAN SIGN UP, AND THERE WILL BE SOME PRIZES THAT WILL BE DRAWN FROM THE PEOPLE WHO SIGN UP FOR THE eNEWS.

SO THANK YOU FOR YOUR STEWARDSHIP.

THANK YOU FOR COMMUNICATING, AND LET'S TURN UP ON MISSION

INTERPRETATION.

THANK YOU.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> THANK YOU, PASTOR PETERSON.

AND IF YOU ARE THE PERSON WHO'S THE KEEPER OF THE GATE IN YOUR CONGREGATION, PLEASE LET OTHER PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY CAN SIGN UP FOR THE SYNOD eNEWS AND THEY CAN FIND OUT SOME OF THE MARVELOUS STORIES OF THINGS THAT ARE BEING DONE IN THE NAME OF JESUS IN THIS SYNOD AND IN THIS CHURCH AND IN THE CONGREGATIONS OF THIS SYNOD.

WE'RE GOING TO MAKE SOME RECOGNITIONS NOW, SPEAKING OF PEOPLE WHO ARE FAITHFUL.

THESE ARE FOLKS WHO HAVE FAITHFULLY SERVED THIS CHURCH FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.

WE'LL BE RECOGNIZING ROSTERED PERSONS ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATIONS AND COMMISSIONS AND SO FORTH.

AND THESE ARE DONE IN -- SORT OF DONE IN FIVE-YEAR INCREMENTS.

IT'S A LITTLE CONFUSING, FRANKLY.

I'VE NEVER QUITE FIGURED IT OUT, BUT THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHETHER YOUR ANNIVERSARY WILL BE RECOGNIZED THIS YEAR, CHECK TAB B, PAGE B-12A, IN YOUR

ASSEMBLY MATERIALS.

AND IF YOU FIND OUT, OH, I'M CELEBRATING AN ANNIVERSARY, PLEASE GO AHEAD AND GET READY TO MOVE TO THE FRONT SO THAT WE CAN RECOGNIZE PEOPLE, BUT NOT UNDULY TAKE EVERYBODY'S TIME.

POINT TO YOUR LEFT.

ELAINE WILL WAVE.

SHE'S WAVING.

THIS IS ALL WRITTEN DOWN RIGHT HERE.

SHE WILL HELP TO ORGANIZE FOLKS SO THAT WE CAN MOVE THROUGH THE RECOGNITIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER.

IF YOU KNOW ELAINE, YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT.

AND I THINK PASTOR NANCY CHRISTENSEN IS ACTUALLY GOING TO CALL THE NAMES IN A GROUP AT ONE TIME.

THEY'LL COME UP HERE AS A GROUP, WALK UP TO THE DAIS, IF YOU WILL.

WE HAVE PASTOR CHILTON HERE, PASTOR PETERSON HERE.

FOLKS WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOU GET HERE.

THEN ONCE EVERYBODY IN THAT CLASS HAS COME UP, WE'LL PAUSE FOR A MOMENT FOR A GROUP PHOTO.

IF YOU ARE A BELOVED FRIEND OR LOVED ONE OF SOMEONE IN THE PHOTO AND YOU WANT TO TAKE THEIR PICTURE BRING YOURSELF UP WHEN THEY COME UP AND STAND UP HERE AND MAKE THEIR PICTURE.

THEN WE'LL MOVE ON TO THE NEXT GROUP.

AND ELAINE TELLS ME I HAVE TO SAY THIS: IF ANYBODY REALLY WANTS AN INDIVIDUAL PHOTO WITH ME, AND I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY ANYBODY WOULD, BUT I WILL BE GLAD TO HANG AROUND AFTERWARDS AND YOU CAN TAKE THOSE SHOTS UP HERE IN THE DAIS.

IN ADDITION TO THE RECOGNITIONS, THOSE FOLKS WHO ARE CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OR MORE WILL RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE.

AND PASTOR DELMER CHILTON HAS THOSE, I BELIEVE.

JUST OVER HERE TO MY RIGHT.

SO IF YOU HAVE 5 YEARS OR MORE, BE SURE TO PICK UP YOUR CERTIFICATE AFTER THE GROUP PHOTO IS TAKEN.

AND IF YOU'RE NOT ABLE TO COME FORWARD WAVE YOUR GREEN CARD, AND SOMEBODY WILL BE WATCHING.

WHO WILL BE WATCHING?

>> I WILL BE WATCHING.

>> NANCY CHRISTENSEN WILL BE WATCHING FOR THAT.

AND SHE WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CERTIFICATE GETS TAKEN TO YOU.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, AGAIN IF YOU'RE HAVING AN ANNIVERSARY OR NOT, TAB B, PAGE B-12A, IN THE ASSEMBLY MATERIALS.

NOW, ONE OTHER THING.

I KNOW THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE HONORING FOR THEIR SERVICE IN THIS CHURCH ALSO WERE

ORDAINED IN ANOTHER TRADITION OR WERE COMMISSIONED IN ANOTHER TRADITION, AND SERVED IN THAT TRADITION EARLIER, BUT WE'RE JUST TALKING ABOUT SERVICE TO THE ELCA OR ITS PREDECESSOR BODIES HERE TODAY.

WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR SERVICE FOR OTHER CHURCHES, AS WELL, AND GLAD YOU CAME OVER.

PASTOR CHRISTENSEN?

>> IN RECOGNITION OF FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE THE REVEREND ANN M. BASSETT, MS. SANDRA L. BRASH, DIACONAL MINISTER.

THE REVEREND JASON A. PETERSON, AND THE REVEREND ANDREA L. WINDSOR-PETERSON.

5 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

FOR 10 YEARS OF SERVICE, THE REVEREND ROWENA M. HENRY.

THE REVEREND RANDY T. JONES.

THE REVEREND LANDA L. LARSON.

THE REVEREND JANET S. VOLK.

AND THE REVEREND BEVERLY R. WALLACE.

[ APPLAUSE ]

FOR 15 YEARS OF SERVICE, AND THERE IS A MISPRINT.

THAT'S KIND OF WONDERFUL.

THE REVEREND RICKY A. MASON.

IT'S NOT A MISPRINT.

RICKY, COME ON UP.

THE REVEREND SHERRY A. MORRISON.

THE REVEREND MARY C. PETERS.

AND THE REVEREND STEVEN P. SCHULTE.

15 YEARS OF SERVICE.

[ APPLAUSE ]

OKAY, THANK YOU.

>> ELAINE TELLS ME TO TELL YOU IF YOU KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO BE  
COMING UP HERE, GO AHEAD AND START.

>> FOR 20 YEARS OF SERVICE, THE REVEREND ROBERT C. BARGER.

THE REVEREND THEODORE H. COLEMAN, JR.

THE REVEREND ELIZABETH H. DeVAN.

MS. MARY S. GOLNITZ, ASSOCIATE IN MINISTRY.

AND THE REVEREND LESTER A. WHITE.

20 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

25 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE REVEREND DELMER L. CHILTON.

THE REVEREND PAUL M. FERRARONE.

THE REVEREND DAVID B. HUNTER.

THE REVEREND DAVID P. KOPPEL.

THE REVEREND MICHAEL W. LEMKE.

THE REVEREND LARRY A. MAY.

THE REVEREND ROBERT C. MITCHELL.

THE REVEREND A. BENJAMIN MORAVITZ.

AND THE REVEREND DEBORAH SAMUELSON.

25 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

FOR 30 YEARS, THE REVEREND NOEL R. ANDERSON.

THE REVEREND KIRK P. BRIDGERS.

THE REVEREND GARY C. CHRISTENSEN, THE CUTEST OF THE BUNCH.

[ LAUGHTER ]

THE REVEREND DARRYL KIEHL.

THE REVEREND ROBERT D. KYSAR.

THE REVEREND LARRY V. MOORE.

THE REVEREND J. MICHAEL McCORMACK.

THE REVEREND JOHN-DAVID SIMPSON.

AND THE REVEREND JAMES E. THALACKER.

30 YEARS OF SERVICE.

[ APPLAUSE ]

35 YEARS.

THE REVEREND ROBERT L. BEAR.

THE REVEREND DENNIS R. FAKES.

THE REVEREND THOMAS L. QUICKEL, JR.

THE REVEREND EARL R. SCHAFER.

THE REVEREND LESLIE F. WEBER, JR.

THE REVEREND THEODORE I. ZIMMERMAN.

35 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

FOR 40 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE REVEREND J. HOWARD METTEE.

THE REVEREND JOSEPH N. NILSEN.

THE REVEREND ERIC C. PEARSON.

THE REVEREND JAMES M. PEPER.

THE REVEREND DONALD D. REIDER.

AND THE REVEREND LARRY W. WARREN.

40 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

45 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE REVEREND EDWARD A. BECKSTROM.

>> HE'S PRETTY CUTE, TOO.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> THE REVEREND BRYN A. CARLSON.

THE REVEREND JOHN H. ECKHARDT.

THE REVEREND WILLIAM F. FUNK III.

THE REVEREND FREDERICK C. OHSIEK, II.

THE REVEREND MICHAEL SHAHAN.

THE REVEREND A. JACKSON ZIPPERER, JR.

45 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

50 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE FIRST IS, WE WILL CELEBRATE POSTHUMOUSLY -- I NEVER CAN SAY  
THAT WORD -- THE REVEREND J. DONALD ELAM.

THE REVEREND J. RICHARD GANTT.

THE REVEREND PAUL F. REYELTS.

THE REVEREND DAVID R. RICHIE.

THE REVEREND CHARLES P. SIGEL.

THE REVEREND SANFORD L. SPANGLER JR.

AND THE REVEREND WILLIAM J. THURBER.

50 YEARS OF SERVICE.

[ APPLAUSE ]

55 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE REVEREND THEODORE K. BUNDENTHAL.

THE REVEREND LELAND M. CAULDER.

THE REVEREND EUGENE L. EPTING, JR.

THE REVEREND PAUL R. HAFFLY.

THE REVEREND RONALD M. TALSNESS.

THE REVEREND LAWRENCE E. HOLST.

THE REVEREND HARRY J. LORENZ, JR.

AND THE REVEREND HAROLD C. SKILLRUD.

55 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

60 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THE REVEREND HOWARD W. PALM.

AND AWARDED POSTHUMOUSLY, THE REVEREND BILLY F. RUTROUGH.

60 YEARS OF SERVICE.

[ APPLAUSE ]

AND WE HAVE TWO PASTORS IN OUR SYNOD CELEBRATING 65 YEARS  
OF MINISTRY.

THE REVEREND RUFUS B. CUTHBERTSON.

AND THE REVEREND FRANK O. KLEIN.

65 YEARS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> I THINK I NEED TO SAY THAT NOT ONLY DOES PASTOR KLEIN HAVE 65  
YEARS OF ORDAINED MINISTRY, HE'S STILL ON THE STAFF AT CHRIST  
OUR SHEPHERD IN PEACHTREE CITY.

THEY STILL PAY HIM.

[ APPLAUSE ]

MAN!

I THINK THIS GOES BACK TO -- WHERE THE HECK IS THIS?

OH, YES.

I THINK THIS GOES WAY BACK TO BISHOP SKILLRUD, WHO ALWAYS  
TOTALED UP THE YEARS.

IF YOU TOTAL UP THE YEARS OF ROSTERED MINISTRY IN THE ELCA AND  
ITS PREDECESSORS, IT TOTALS 2,520 YEARS, ALL BACK TO BEFORE  
CHRIST.

[ LAUGHTER ]

WE WANT TO RECOGNIZE THOSE NOW WHO HAVE RETIRED FROM  
ACTIVE MINISTRY SINCE THE LAST ASSEMBLY, AND IF YOU WOULD JUST  
STAND WHERE YOU ARE AND RECEIVE OUR APPLAUSE AFTER THE  
NAMES HAVE BEEN MENTIONED.

WE HAVE LOTS OF FOLKS RETIRE THIS YEAR IN THIS SYNOD, PEOPLE  
WHO HAVE SERVED IT FOR MANY, MANY YEARS.

SO PLEASE STAND, AND IF YOU'VE GOT YOUR GREEN CARD, YOU  
COULD WAVE THAT AND PEOPLE COULD SEE YOU.

NOEL R. ANDERSON.

JAMES A. CLARK.

THEODORE H. COLEMAN.

DAVID L. HART.

LANDA LARSON.

PAUL MILLS.

ELEANOR RUSSEY, WHO'S UP IN THE UPPER PENINSULA TODAY.

JERRY TROUTMAN, FORMER BISHOP OF THE ELCA OF THIS SYNOD WHO  
ORDAINED ME.

HACO VAN HACK.

BACK IN THE BACK.

JOHN WEBER.

JOHN WEBER WHO'S HAD WHAT, A ONE-DAY RETIREMENT?

OR WAS IT TWO?

WE'RE STILL ARGUING ABOUT THAT.

HE SAYS IT WAS ONLY ONE.

I SAY IT WAS TWO.

GERALD WEEKS.

ALL OF THOSE RETIRED THIS YEAR.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

MANY OF THEM ARE RETIRED IN NAME ONLY, AND ARE STILL SERVING  
THE CHURCH IN OTHER CAPACITIES BEING TRANSITION PASTORS AND  
SO FORTH AND SERVING ON COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND  
COMMISSIONS, SO THANKS A LOT.

WE WANT TO GREET THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE NEW TO THIS SYNOD  
SINCE LAST YEAR.

THERE'S A LONG LIST OF THESE.

WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND, AND WE'LL OFFER OUR APPLAUSE AT THE

END.

THESE ARE FOLKS WHO ARE NEW TO THE SYNOD.

PASTOR PATRICIA AXEL.

PASTOR ROBERT BARGER.

RONALD BONNER, WHO IS ONE OF OUR ECUMENICAL PARTNERS.

HE'S ORDAINED IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, AND SERVING A  
TRANSITION AT ATONEMENT IN ATLANTA.

I'M NOT SURE IF HE'S HERE YET.

IS HE HERE?

HE'S GOING TO BE HERE.

MARK BORSETH.

OVER THERE.

ALLEN BREEDLOVE.

LEON DUDYCHA.

JOEL EMERSON.

WILLIAM FLIPPIN, JR.

DEBORAH HALTER.

NATHAN HILKERT.

FRANK KLEIN.

THAT WAS THE 65-YEAR, MOVED HERE TO BE ON THE STAFF OF CHRIST  
OUR SHEPHERD.

BARBARA KOCH.

ROBERT MAIER.

KERRY MAURER.

AND ANOTHER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST PASTOR SERVING A  
TRANSITION, PASTOR MARVIN MORGAN.

IS PASTOR MORGAN HERE?

I THINK HE WON'T BE HERE UNTIL THE MORNING.

YOU MAY, OR MAY NOT KNOW, THAT PASTOR MORGAN IS SERVING A  
TRANSITION AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN DECATUR.

HE'S ALSO THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

THAT'S LIKE THE PRESIDING BISHOP OF THAT CHURCH, SERVING ONE  
OF OUR CONGREGATIONS, WHICH I KEEP TELLING HIM IS A STEP UP IN  
THE WORLD.

[ LAUGHTER ]

THAT WOULD BE A TACKY ECUMENICAL THING TO SAY, SO DON'T  
QUOTE THAT.

GARY NAYLOR.

SANDRA NIILER.

FREDERICK OHSIEK, WHO IS ACTUALLY RETURNING TO THIS SYNOD.

JAMES THOMAS.

DAVID THORESON.

JANET VOLK.

SORRY.

JENNIFER WEETMAN.

I'VE NEVER HAD ELAINE TELL ME TO SLOW DOWN AT AN ASSEMBLY BEFORE.

THE WORLD IS LOOKING DIFFERENT NOW.

JENNIFER WEETMAN.

AND JACK WILDER, WHO IS ALSO RETURNING TO THE SYNOD.

WHEN HE LEFT HERE, HE HAD JUST BEEN ORDAINED, AND NOW AFTER MANY YEARS IN THE FROZEN NORTH IN THE UPSTATE NEW YORK SYNOD, HE'S BACK.

I WANT TO ALSO INTRODUCE THREE PEOPLE WHO WERE ASSIGNED TO OUR SYNOD, THREE NEW SEMINARY GRADUATES, AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH.

I'LL INTRODUCE THEIR SPOUSE, AS WELL, IF THEY HAPPEN TO BE HERE. THEY COULD STAND, AS WELL.

JOHN BARICHIVICH.

JOHN IS MARRIED TO JULIE.

IS JULIE HERE, JOHN?

>> SHE'S UPSTAIRS.

>> SHE'S UPSTAIRS WHERE SPOUSES SHOULD BE.

>> OH!

>> DID THAT EVER COME OUT WRONG!

I MEAN, IF I DIDN'T HAVE -- NEVER MIND.

THAT WAS JUST -- IS MORGAN HERE?

I HOPE SHE'S OUT HAVING COFFEE.

AND YOU'LL BE KIND.

WHAT I -- NEVER MIND.

I CAN'T -- WHAT I MEANT WAS NOT SITTING HERE WHILE ALL THIS IS GOING ON.

PAULINE PEZZINO.

PAULINE'S HUSBAND IS JOHN.

I'M NOT GOING TO ASK WHERE JOHN IS.

HARRY TEDROW IS HERE.

I SAW HIM EARLIER.

THERE HE IS RIGHT IN THE FRONT AND BARBARA.

>> SHE'S NOT UPSTAIRS.

>> SHE'S NOT UPSTAIRS.

DANG!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

WE'RE VERY GLAD THAT YOU ARE HERE IN THIS SYNOD, AND WE'RE WORKING HARD TO FIND YOU PLACES TO SERVE THE LORD.

[ APPLAUSE ]

NOW ONE FINAL AND SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CELEBRATION.

ONE OF OUR CONGREGATIONS, THIS WAS MENTIONED EARLIER BY

JEANETTE, ONE OF THE CONGREGATIONS OF THIS SYNOD IS CELEBRATING ITS 275<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, JERUSALEM CHURCH IN RINCON, GEORGIA.

JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH WAS ORGANIZED IN AUGSBURG IN 1733 WITH THE REVEREND JOHN MARTIN BOLZIUS AND THE REVEREND ISRAEL CHRISTIAN GRONAU AS THE PASTORS.

THESE FOLKS HAD BEEN EXILED FROM THEIR HOMES IN SALZBURG, AUSTRIA, AND WERE LOOKING FOR PLACES TO LIVE AND WORSHIP. AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE SPONSORED THEIR PASSAGE TO THE NEW WORLD WHERE THEY WERE WELCOMED BY JOHN OGLETHORPE.

THE FIRST SHIP ARRIVED IN SAVANNAH ON MARCH THE 12<sup>th</sup> IN 1734. THE SETTLERS FOUNDED A TOWN CALLED EBENEZER ON EBENEZER CREEK, IN WHAT IS NOW EFFINGHAM COUNTY.

WHEN THAT BECAME NEARLY UNLIVABLE BECAUSE OF THE BUGS IN THE SWAMP, THEY MOVED TO NEW EBENEZER, ON THE SAVANNAH RIVER.

JERUSALEM CHURCH IS STILL -- IT IS NOT A MUSEUM.

IT'S AN ACTIVE CONGREGATION IN THIS SYNOD, PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND KINDS.

HISTORICALLY, IT IS THE OLDEST CONTINUING LUTHERAN CONGREGATION IN AMERICA, WORSHIPPING IN A BUILDING THAT WAS

FINISHED IN 1767.

IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN THERE, YOU SHOULD GO.

IT'S A SIGHT TO SEE.

ON THE CUPOLA, THERE'S A SWAN A SYMBOL OF MARTIN LUTHER WITH A MUSKET BALL HOLE IN IT FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

AND THERE'S AT LEAST ONE CANNONBALL HOLE FROM THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES.

OUR SYNOD IS 22 YEARS OLD, I GUESS, OFFICIALLY, BUT IF YOU COUNT ALL THE ANTECEDENT GROUPS, YOU COULD SAY THAT THIS IS OUR 275th ANNIVERSARY, AS WELL, BECAUSE OUR CONGREGATION, THOSE FIRST SALZBURGERS, LANDED IN SAVANNAH IN 1734.

I WENT DOWN THERE TO HELP CELEBRATE, AND THEY GAVE ME A BOOK.

IT'S JOURNALS OF PASTOR BOLZIUS, AND I GOT VOLUME 3, WHICH IS HIS JOURNALS FOR THE THIRD YEAR HE WAS THERE, JANUARY THE 1st IN 1736.

HIS ENTRY FOR THE DAY SAYS, "LAST YEAR, WE BAPTIZED 11 CHILDREN IN THIS PARISH.

4 OF THEM, 2 BOYS AND 2 GIRLS, ARE STILL LIVING ."

THE NEXT DAY, HE WRITES, ON A FRIDAY, "THE UNMARRIED MEN CAME TO VISIT ME IN MY ROOMS, WHERE WE PRAYED AND PREPARED FOR PENANCE TOMORROW."

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THEY ALSO ASKED IF THEY COULD BE -- AND THE OTHER 41 MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION COULD BE EXCUSED FROM CARRYING GOODS FROM THE SAVANNAH RIVER THROUGH THE SWAMP 3 MILES ON SATURDAY SO THAT THEY COULD BE REFRESHED FOR THE ARDUOUS DUTIES OF PENANCE.

FOLKS, THEY DID CHURCH TOUGH IN THOSE DAYS.

[ LAUGHTER ]

WE HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT HERE.

SOMEONE FROM ASCENSION IN SAVANNAH NEEDS TO GO TO THE OFFICE AS SOON AS --

>> CHATTANOOGA.

>> -- ASCENSION IN CHATTANOOGA.

EXCUSE ME, SAVANNAH.

WOULD YOU GO TO THE OFFICE RIGHT AWAY.

THE FOLKS ARE RAISING THEIR HANDS BACK IN THE BACK THERE.

THANK YOU.

WHERE WAS I?

YES, JERUSALEM CHURCH.

WOULD THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE HERE FROM JERUSALEM CHURCH, PLEASE STAND, AND JUST KEEP STANDING FOR A BIT.

NOW, WHILE YOU'RE STANDING, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE THOSE DESCENDANTS OF THOSE SALZBURGERS IN THE CONGREGATION TO

PLEASE STAND.

I KNOW THERE ARE SOME OF THOSE.

THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE STANDING.

ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF JERUSALEM CHURCH,

WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND JOIN THEM.

AND HAPPY 275th TO YOU ALL.

[ APPLAUSE ]

IF YOU'LL TURN YOUR ATTENTIONS TO THE SCREENS, WE HAVE A

LITTLE, A SHORT VIDEO ABOUT JERUSALEM CHURCH, HE SAID

HOPEFULLY.

[ VIDEO SHOWN ]

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> GOD BLESS YOU.

THAT'S GREAT.

LAST, WELL, MAYBE NOT LAST.

WE MIGHT GO BACK AND HAVE INTRODUCTIONS LATER.

WE'LL SEE HOW THINGS GO.

BUT NEARLY LAST, AND NEVER LEAST, WE WANT TO SPEND JUST A

MINUTE AND TAKE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAY THANKS TO OUTGOING

MISSION DIRECTOR GARY CHRISTENSEN, THE CUTEST OF THE BUNCH.

[ LAUGHTER ]

SO I WOULD LIKE, TO DO THIS, I WANT TO ASK PASTOR CHRISTENSEN

AND PASTORS DAVID SMEDLEY, MATT HENNING, ANDREA WINDSOR-PETERSON, AND ANN BASSETT TO COME FORWARD.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'D COME IF I WERE YOU, GARY.

>> THAT WAS A MISTAKE.

WE WEREN'T TRYING TO PRACTICE ANYTHING.

COME OVER HERE, GARY.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> RIGHT ON THE X.

>> HE IS PRETTY CUTE, ISN'T HE?

[ LAUGHTER ]

BEING A PASTOR DEVELOPER IS SUCH A LONELY THING.

AND IT WAS ALWAYS SUCH A TREAT TO GET CALLS FROM GARY AND VISITS FROM GARY.

HE'S BEEN OUR MISSION DIRECTOR IN THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD THESE LAST 6 YEARS.

HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MILES HAVE YOU TRAVELED?

>> GOODNESS.

NOT THAT MANY.

>> AT LEAST A COUPLE OR 300, DON'T YOU THINK?

>> JUST KEEP GOING.

>> OH, I'M SORRY.

YOU'VE TOUCHED THE LIVES OF 30 OR 40 OR MORE CONGREGATIONS  
IN THESE LAST 6 YEARS.

AND OF COURSE, BEING AROUND FOR 30 YEARS, YOU'VE TOUCHED  
EVEN MORE LIVES THAN THAT.

SO, GARY, IT'S WONDERFUL TO HAVE YOU UP HERE, HE'S LISTED AS  
THE OUTGOING MISSION DIRECTOR.

IF YOU FOLLOW PASTOR BUBA'S DEFINITION OF "OUTGOING," YOU'VE  
CERTAINLY BEEN OUTGOING IN THAT SAME KIND OF A MISSIONAL WAY.  
AND YOU'RE ALSO VERY OUTGOING, AND YOU'RE ALSO GOING OUT  
FROM THIS POSITION.

[ LAUGHTER ]

I GET CONFUSED SOMETIMES.

>> ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE A MISSION  
DIRECTOR, ESPECIALLY HERE IN OUR SYNOD, WHICH IS SO HUGE  
GEOGRAPHICALLY, AND ESPECIALLY IN OUR SYNOD, WHICH HAS MORE  
MISSION CONGREGATIONS AND MORE REDEVELOPING  
CONGREGATIONS THAN ANY SYNOD HERE IN THE ELCA, IS THAT YOU'RE  
OFTEN IN THE ROLE OF RESCUING.

YOU OFTEN RESCUE CONGREGATIONS THAT ARE ON DEATH'S DOOR,  
AND YOU SAY: THIS CHURCH HAS POTENTIAL.

THERE'S NEW LIFE HERE.

WE CAN BREATHE SOMETHING INTO THIS, AND WE CAN CREATE

SOMETHING REALLY WONDERFUL HERE.

ALSO, YOU'RE IN THE POSITION OF RESCUING PEOPLE, FINDING FINANCES FOR THEM, FINDING A BUILDING FOR THEM, FINDING PASTORS FOR THEM, ENCOURAGING THEM, AND TELLING THEM THAT THERE IS HOPE.

AND SO, GARY, YOU HAVE BEEN OUR GREAT RESCUER IN SO MANY WAYS.

AND SO WE WANT TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR GOLF GAME, AND WE HAVE A GOLF CLUB HERE THAT I'M TOLD CAN RESCUE YOUR SCORE.

>> GARY, WE TRULY PRAISE GOD FOR YOU AND THE MINISTRY THAT YOU HAVE DONE IN JESUS' NAME.

AND TRULY, WE HAVE ALL BEEN BLESSED BY YOU, AND I PERSONALLY LOVE YOU SO VERY MUCH.

AT THIS TIME, WE'D LIKE TO ASK THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY GOD THROUGH GARY CHRISTENSEN'S MINISTRY DURING HIS 6 YEARS AS MISSION DIRECTOR, IF YOU WOULD PLEASE STAND, AND LET HIM SEE YOU.

AND NOW, IF WE WOULD ALSO ASK THAT THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY GARY THROUGH HIS 30 YEARS OF MINISTRY, EVEN IN THE SLIGHTEST OF WAYS, PLEASE STAND.

GARY, WE DO PRAISE GOD FOR YOU, AND AT THIS TIME, WE GIVE YOU A PERSONAL ACCOLADE.

THANK YOU.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> I WAS TOLD THAT GARY WAS GOING TO BE ON THE STAGE AND THERE WAS GOING TO BE A CLUB.

THAT'S ALL I HAD.

IT'S AN HONOR TO BE HERE, AND A PLEASURE TO HONOR YOU.

BUT WE WANT TO DO MORE.

THERE'S A LOT OF TIMES IN GARY'S MINISTRY WHERE HE WOULD GO OUT TO A CONGREGATION AND THERE WOULD BE SOMETHING THAT THE CONGREGATION NEEDED AND THEY NEED IT IN A QUICK WAY.

AND THE FRUSTRATING THING WAS HE OFTEN WOULD HAVE TO FIND FUNDS IN WAYS THAT WERE DIFFICULT.

HE'D HAVE TO FILL OUT LOTS OF PAPERWORK AND THINGS.

SO WHAT WE DECIDED TO DO WAS TO CREATE A FUND FOR THE PERSON THAT'S COMING AFTER GARY IN GARY'S NAME.

WHAT THIS FUND WOULD BE WAS A FUND THAT THEY COULD USE TO DO THINGS THAT WERE IMMEDIATE, THAT WERE NECESSARY, FOR THE MISSION AND FOR THE LIFE OF THE MISSIONS THAT THEY ENCOUNTERED.

OFTEN GARY WOULD WRITE CHECKS OUT OF HIS OWN ACCOUNT FOR CONGREGATIONS THAT HE SERVED.

I KNOW HE DID THAT FOR COMMUNITY OF GRACE AND MANY OTHER

CHURCHES, AND I THINK WE NEED TO DO MORE.

SO WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO IS AT THE "CATCH THE SPIRIT"

TABLE -- CATCHTHESPIRITLUTHERAN.ORG, WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT  
LATER -- WE'LL BE TAKING UP AN OFFERING.

WRITE CHECKS TO THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD AND PUT "GARY'S  
FUND" ON IT, ON THE MEMO.

AND WE'RE GOING TO CREATE A FUND FOR THE NEXT MISSION  
DEVELOPER LEADER, AND I KNOW WHAT ALL THE DEVELOPERS IN THE  
ROOM ARE THINKING.

THEY'RE THINKING: HOW DO I GET THAT MONEY?

WELL, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A WAY FOR YOU TO GET THAT MONEY.

THE FIRST DEVELOPER FROM -- IT IS NOW 5:40 AND 4 SECONDS -- TO  
CANVASS 500 HOMES WILL GET \$1,000.

AND YOU'RE GOING TO CALL MY CELL PHONE, AND WE WILL WRITE YOU  
THAT CHECK, OR ACTUALLY WRITE YOUR CHURCH THE CHECK.

>> BILL FUNK DOESN'T COUNT.

>> YEAH, NO FUNK.

AND IT'S STARTING NOW.

SO THE FIRST DEVELOPER TO REACH THAT GOAL WILL GET THAT.

NOW, ONCE I GET THAT CALL AND I GET THAT DEVELOPER, I'M GOING  
TO FIND OUT FROM THE REST OF THEM WHO HAD THE LEAST AMOUNT  
OF CALLS, AND THAT PERSON IS GOING TO GET A BEDTIME STORY

FROM PASTOR SMEDLEY.

HE'S GOING TO READ LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM TO THEM ALL NIGHT FOR A WEEK, I GUESS.

I GUESS THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO TO THEM.

SO AGAIN, GARY, THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.

AND YOU MAY BE THINKING: I CAN GIVE \$10 OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

WHAT WE'RE REALLY LOOKING FOR ARE 40 LEADERS WHO WILL GIVE \$100 TO THIS FUND, AND THAT A VERY EASY GOAL TO ACHIEVE.

SO WE NEED 40 CHECKS FOR \$100 AT THE END OF THIS WEEKEND.

YOU GUYS ARE THE PREMIERE LEADERS OF THIS SYNOD, AND WE CAN GET THIS DONE, AND WE NEED TO MOVE FORWARD IN OUR MISSION.

SO PLEASE SEE ME, AND AGAIN, IN THE MEMO, PUT "GARY'S FUND,"

AND, GARY, THANK YOU FOR YOUR STEWARDSHIP, YOUR CARE, AND YOUR WORK IN THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK OUT IN THE FIELD.

BLESSINGS.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> LET ME PULL THIS DOWN FOR YOU.

>> IT SOUNDS LIKE WE'RE HAVING A TELETHON, AND YOU'RE KNOWN AS "GARY'S KIDS."

IT'S BEEN AN INCREDIBLE -- IT'S ACTUALLY BEEN 7 YEARS, NOT 6 YEARS.

IT'S BEEN A REAL JOY TO SERVE OUR SYNOD.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, YOUR AFFIRMATION, YOUR LOVE,  
YOUR FELLOWSHIP, YOUR HUGS, AND ESPECIALLY YOUR PATIENCE  
AND I HOPE YOU WILL BESTOW THOSE SAME GIFTS ON WHOEVER  
FOLLOWS ME.

AGAIN, THANK YOU.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> PERSONALLY, I THINK HE LOOKS LIKE YASSER ARAFAT, MYSELF.

[ LAUGHTER ]

THERE'S A STORY BEHIND THAT.

OKAY, I THINK WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO -- THANK YOU.

THAT'S WHERE I WAS GOING.

WE ARE A LITTLE BIT EARLY, BUT WE KNOW THAT DINNER TIME IS VERY  
SHORT, SO WE'RE GOING TO GO AHEAD, AND I'LL COME BACK AND DO  
THE REST OF THE INTRODUCTIONS LATER, MAYBE SOME AT THE  
BEGINNING OF THE NEXT SESSION, WHICH STARTS AT 7:00.

SO WE ARE GOING TO MOVE NOW TO ANNOUNCEMENTS, I BELIEVE.

VICE PRESIDENT WESLEY CRENSHAW FROM SAVANNAH, GEORGIA,  
HOLY SPIRIT LUTHERAN CHURCH, WILL MAKE OUR ANNOUNCEMENTS.

>> GOOD AFTERNOON, EVERYONE.

ANYONE INVOLVED IN ANY WAY WITH THE SATURDAY MORNING

WORSHIP SHOULD MEET BY THE PIANO HERE AT 10:15 TOMORROW.  
THAT'S 10:15 TOMORROW IF YOU'RE INVOLVED WITH THE WORSHIP  
SERVICE.

THE WEEKEND CHAPLAIN, MR. MICHAEL LIPPARD, IS AVAILABLE DURING  
THE WEEKEND IF YOU'RE IN NEED OF PASTORAL CARE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS, PLEASE PUT THEM IN THE BOX  
FOUND IN THE CHAPEL.

THAT BOX IS LOCATED IN THE WAVERLY ROOM.

LET ME SEE HERE.

WANT TO BE THE COOLEST LUTHERAN ON THE BLOCK?

WELL, IF YOU'RE THE ONLY LUTHERAN ON THE BLOCK, THAT DOESN'T  
MATTER.

BUT ANYWAY, THEY'RE ASKING YOU TO SIGN UP FOR THE  
SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD eNEWS, AND ON THE YOUTH MINISTRY  
NETWORK.

THESE REGULARLY SCHEDULED EMAIL UPDATES WILL GIVE YOU WHAT,  
WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHY OF EVERYTHING GOING ON IN OUR FOUR  
STATES AND THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE CHURCH.

THE CARDS ARE ON YOUR TABLES.

IF YOU SIGN UP PRIOR TO THE WEEKEND, PUT YOUR NAME ON THE  
CARD, TOO.

ON THE WAY OUT, THERE'S A BOX IN THE BACK HERE, AND WE ASK

THAT YOU PUT THOSE CARDS IN THERE.

YOU'LL AUTOMATICALLY BE ENTERED IN OUR DAILY DRAWING FOR A SPECIAL PRIZE.

OUR FIRST DRAWING WILL BE TONIGHT.

THERE'S ALSO A MESSAGE BOARD FOR YOUR USE LOCATED IN THE INFORMATION BOOTH.

DINNER TONIGHT, IF YOU WANT IT, WILL BE ON YOUR OWN.

AND I'LL GIVE YOU A LISTING OF SOME OF THE PLACES WE'VE CHOSEN FOR YOU.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS FOR YOU TO CHOOSE FROM.

THERE'S A RESTAURANT HERE IN THE HOTEL.

IT'S DIRECTLY ACROSS COBB PARKWAY FROM THE GALLERIA CENTER.

CUMBERLAND MALL HAS MANY FINE RESTAURANTS AND EATERIES.

THERE'S A PEDESTRIAN SKY BRIDGE, OR YOU CAN, OF COURSE, TAKE YOUR CAR ACROSS.

IN THE CUMBERLAND MALL, THERE'S CHICK-FIL-A, JASON'S DELI, MAGGIANO'S LITTLE ITALY, P.F. CHANG'S CHINA BISTRO, STONEY RIVER LEGENDARY STEAKS, TED'S MONTANA GRILL, THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY, AND OF COURSE, MY FAVORITE PLACE, THE MALL FOOD COURT.

ALSO, THE COBB COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU HAVE PROVIDED THE LITTLE BAGS YOU ALL SEEM TO HAVE, OR IF YOU DON'T

HAVE IT, YOU NEED TO PICK IT UP.

IN THERE, THERE ARE SOME MAPS AND COUPONS YOU CAN USE AT SOME OF THE RESTAURANTS.

REMEMBER THIS, WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE FOR DINNER, BE SURE TO BE BACK HERE BY 7:00 P.M.

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS SESSION 2.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SESSION, AND AMONG OTHER THINGS, WE'LL BE DISCUSSING A PLAN FOR RESTRUCTURING OF THE SYNOD, SO PLEASE BE BACK ON TIME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>> WHEN YOU COME BACK AT 7:00, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND A QUASI COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WILL BE EXPLAINED.

I NOW CALL ON OUR ASSEMBLY CHAPLAIN, PASTOR MICHAEL LIPPARD.

>> THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

>> AND ALSO WITH YOU.

>> LET US PRAY.

GRACIOUS GOD, WE GIVE YOU THANKS FOR ALL WHO SERVE AS ROSTERED LEADERS IN YOUR CHURCH, FOR THOSE CELEBRATING THEIR ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES, FOR OTHERS WHO ARE RETIRING, AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE MAKING NEW BEGINNINGS IN SERVICE TO CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.

WE THANK YOU, TOO, FOR CONGREGATIONS WHO HAVE NURTURED  
OUR LEADERS' FAITH FORMATION AND THEIR SENSE OF VOCATION  
ESPECIALLY JERUSALEM CHURCH, CELEBRATING 275th ANNIVERSARY  
THIS YEAR.

TO YOUR NAME, WITH THE CHURCH ON EARTH AND THE CHURCH IN  
HEAVEN, WE ASCRIBE ALL HONOR AND GLORY, NOW AND FOREVER,  
AMEN.

>> AMEN.

>> THE ASSEMBLY IS IN RECESS UNTIL 7:00 TONIGHT.

[ END OF PLENARY ONE ]

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