

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA
MINUTES OF NATIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2006

LAUREATE'S LANDING, ST NORBERT, MB

PRESENT:

Officers:	National Bishop Raymond Schultz Roger Kingsley, Vice-President	Donald Storch, Secretary Norm Thompson, Treasurer
Council:	Tom Brook Rev. Sonja Free Maaike Froelich Rev. Nolan Gingrich Elizabeth Hachborn Ken Hartviksen Rev. Roger Haugen Heidi Hesselink Judy Kochendorfer	Rev Mark Koenker Rev. Dr. Peter Mikelic Teddy Pope Rev. Doug Reble Carl Sorensen Rev Trish Schmermund
ACC REP	The Very Rev. Peter Wall	
LWF	Kathy Magnus, Lutheran World Federation Regional Officer for North America	
Synod Bishops:	Rev. Cindy Halmarson, SK Synod Rev. Ron Mayan, ABT Synod Rev. Gerhard Preibisch, BC Synod	Rev. Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod Rev Elaine Sauer, MNO Synod
Guests:	Stephen Nelson, ELCA Division for Global Mission The Right Reverend Karl Sigurbjornsson, Bishop of Iceland The Rev Halldor Reynisson The Rev Kristjan Valur Ingolfsson Hildy Thiessen, Executive Director, ELCIC Group Services, Inc. Ruth Vince, Executive Director, Evangelical Lutheran Women (ELW)	
Staff:	Rev Paul Johnson, Assistant to the Bishop, Ecumenical Relations Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop, Synodical Relations Gloria McNabb, Director of Finance and Administration Trina Gallop, Communications Manager Faye Schultz, Executive Assistant to the Office of the Bishop	
Absent:	Robert Schmidt	

THURSDAY, September 14, 2006

1:30 – 5:00 pm ELCIC Committee Meetings

Opening Worship—lead by National Bishop Raymond Schultz and assisted by Rev Trish Schmermund, chaplain for the September NCC meeting.

Call to order and approval of agenda

Council Chair, Roger Kingsley called the meeting to order. A quorum was established. Corrections and additions were made to the agenda.

CC-06-40 MS that the agenda be approved as amended. **Carried.**

Council Chair, Roger Kingsley asked members to introduce themselves to our guests.

Rev Paul Johnson, Assistant to the Office of the Bishop for Ecumenical Relations introduced the guests from the church of Iceland. Greetings were received from The Right Reverend Karl Sigurbjornsson, Bishop of Iceland. An agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was signed to further the exchange of clergy.

Reports of the Synod Bishops were presented verbally.

The meeting was recessed for the evening.

FRIDAY, September 15, 2006

Special Order

Rev Stephen Nelson, Director of International Personnel, ELCA Division for Global Mission addressed the meeting. Rev Nelson spoke to the mission funding within the ELCA, and the ELCA new structure. A joint agreement between ELCIC and the ELCA for placements of missionary personnel has been signed.

Minutes

CC-06-41 MS that the corrected minutes of the March 2006 NCC meeting be approved. **Carried.**

Correspondence

National Bishop Raymond Schultz and members of National Church Council have received a number of letters, most have dealt with the same gender blessing. These will be dealt with at the in-camera session. Council Chair, Roger Kingsley asked about a letter from Bishop Cindy Halmarson concerning our relationship with the United Church of Canada.–response to be given by Bishop Schultz.

A letter regarding the endowment fund with the LWF was presented for information.

A letter from Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission concerning 5th anniversary of the Waterloo Declaration was drawn to the attention of NCC members.

National Bishop's Report

National Bishop Schultz presented his report. He referred to the new governance model and how the reporting to NCC is carried out.

Bishop Schultz announced that Ryan Andersen has been hired for the new position of Assistant to the Bishop for Stewardship in Public Life. He commented on the low salaries in the National Office have made it difficult to attract senior candidates for the positions. Ryan Andersen is a graduate of the seminary, but will not be called, as this is an administrative position.

Bishop Schultz referred to the information about Augusta Victoria Hospital and the need to work with CLWR in making funds available to assist the work being done there.

The Task Force on a Statement for Human Sexuality has met and they will bring forth a recommendation to NCC at this meeting.

An agreement with the Church of Iceland will provide opportunities for the two churches to work together in the area of clergy exchange.

The LWF has asked for our input regarding the role of Diaconal Ministry, an ELCIC staff team will respond.

- CC-06-42** MS that NCC issue a Letter of Call to Special Service to Rev Paul Gehrs as Assistant to the Bishop for Synodical Relations.
MS that NCC issue a Letter of Call to Special Service to Rev Franklin Andrews as a chaplain for Corrections Canada.
MS that NCC issue a Letter of Call to Special Service to Rev Art Lechnitz with the Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. **Carried.**

Bishop Schultz to ensure that appropriate dates are correct for this call.

- CC-06-43** MS that NCC approve the establishment of a Program Committee for Mission in the World and that the Committee be appointed by and accountable to the National Bishop. **Carried**

- CC-06-44** MS that NCC approve the RONA recommendations for celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation. **Carried.**

- CC-06-45** MS that a staff team be authorized to respond to the LWF Global Consultation on diaconal ministry on behalf of the ELCIC. **Carried.**

NCC will receive a copy of the response and the diaconal community will be consulted for their input.

Bishop spoke on ACT development and ELCIC and CLWR will make a joint application for membership.

- CC-06-46** MS that the ELCIC, in partnership with CLWR, apply for membership in Action in Churches Together (ACT) Development. **Carried.**

The minutes record that the statutory declarations have been met and reported to NCC.

Outstanding NCC Actions

CC-06-15 The Church implement a national appeal for leadership and ministry. Waterloo Lutheran Seminary has an appeal addressing their critical financial needs and so feel they can not participate at this time. Tom Brook commented on this appeal and hopes the Church can launch such an appeal in the future. The Committee needs to meet and look at how to proceed with this program.

CC-06-17 That a task force prepare a proposal for the development of a social statement on human sexuality. The task force has met and will be working on the issue.

CC-06-37 The National Bishop draws the Churches attention to the HIV/AIDS issue. The aids conference

in Toronto has been the main focus and the church has not addressed the issue further.

Discussion on topic of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). How is our agreement with other denomination developed? Congregations who leave the ELCIC are liable for their share of the pension debt. Monies owed are to be paid immediately. Should financial obligations be included in the motion? Pastors who are associating would leave the ELCIC. LCMC has a pension plan and personnel benefits for its members. Do we need to amend the recommendation to indicate the synod needs to be notified of the congregation's intent?

Vice Chair, Roger Haugen took the chair, so Roger Kingsley could address the recommendation. He suggested the need to wordsmith under legal advice. He suggested the recommendation be given to the officers for re-wording.

CC-06-47 MS that the recommendation regarding Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ be referred to the Conference of Bishops for re-wording. **Carried.**

Conference of Bishops Report

The Bishops discussed the 5th Anniversary of the Waterloo Declaration. They also discussed the request from the LWF for input regarding Diaconal ministry. Recommendations were covered in the Bishop's Report.

ELCIC Treasurer's Report

Audit Committee Report

CC-06-48 MS that NCC approve the letter of engagement and audit fees for year ending December 31, 2006 with the firm of Ernst and Young. **Carried.**

The Committee had also discussed the areas of risk, mortgage portfolio and the pension plan. The financial statements were delayed this year but hope to improve on this process for next year.

ELW Report

Executive Director, Ruth Vince reported on the present state of ELW membership and the possible future of the organization. She also distributed information for the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Conference.

GSI Report

Executive Director, Hildy Thiessen reported that it has come to GSI's attention that congregations who hire retired clergy are not contributing to the unfunded liability. Ms. Thiessen requested discussion and feedback from NCC to take back to GSI's Board on whether these congregations should be assessed an amount for the liability to create fairness among the congregations.

CC-06-49 MS that NCC encourage the GSI Board to amend the pension plan text in ways to make the administration of the unfunded liability fairer. **Carried.**

Rev Sonja Free abstained from the vote due to conflict as a retired pastor.

LWF RONA Report

Kathy Magnus addressed the meeting. Kathy commented on her time in Canada this summer, then talked about the LWF 60th Anniversary and the planned celebrations. LWF Sunday is the last Sunday in October, Kathy asked members to encourage their congregations to mark LWF Sunday. Other items included the J-Term for seminarians in Geneva, ELW and LWF NA joint event the CSE Conference. Kathy distributed copies of the LWF Annual Report and other promotional materials from the LWF.

CC-06-50 MS that NCC move into an in-camera session. **Carried.**

The open session resumed.

Special Order

Rev. Dr. Dieter Kays from Faith Life Financial addressed the meeting, and talked about the new direction of the organization.

The meeting was recessed for the evening.

SATURDAY, September 16, 2006

The session opened with devotions lead by Rev Trish Schmermund. Devotions were from Used RealLivePreacher.com by Gordon Atkinson ISBN 0-8028-2810-8

CC-06-57 MS that NCC move to an in-camera session. **Carried.**

The open session resumed.

Selection of Convention delegates was discussed. The Corporate Bylaws (Section 29) for the election of lay delegates must be closely adhered to regarding the National Convention.

CC-06-63 MS that NCC recommends to the ELCIC 2007 National Convention that the ELCIC recognizes the blessing of same-gender couples who want to make a life-long commitment to one another in the presence of God and their community of faith is a matter of pastoral discretion. Authorization to perform such blessings shall require the consent of the pastor and the consent of the congregation or calling agency, as expressed in a 2/3 majority vote at a duly called meeting of the congregation or calling agency, and in consultation with the synod bishop. **Carried.**

Discussion on how an educational component can accompany the motion.

The Chair ruled the motion out of order. Ruling was challenged and not upheld. After some discussion, the motion was carried.

It was suggested a day be added to the March 2007 meeting. The dates for the March meeting will be March 14-17, 2007. Responsibility for an agenda left with the officers.

Secretary's Report

Maaïke Froelich presented further changes to the Model Constitution for Congregations on behalf of the

Constitution Committee. Model constitution the congregations, pg 2 bottom of page use Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in full, Pg 7 section 6, item 2 delete (setting retirement age) and then renumber. Change amended date on front page.

CC-06-64 MS that NCC adopt the new Model Constitution for Congregations. **Carried.**

CC-06-65 MS that Bishop Halmarson be added to the Constitution Committee. **Carried.**

Elizabeth Hachborn reported on the Bishop Relationship Review. Committee has developed a questionnaire for NCC members and the Bishop and will report results to the March 2007 meeting.

CC-06-66 MS that NCC instruct the Constitution Committee to propose revisions to the ELCIC Constitution and Administrative Bylaws to have:

- a) the secretary elected from the membership of NCC, and
- b) the position of treasurer be eliminated, and
- c) a position of Chair of Audit Committee be elected from the NCC membership, unless no member of NCC has the skills for that position, then NCC can elect another member of this church to fill the position. **Carried.**

Synod Bishops were asked to consider gender regarding nominations for NCC positions. GSI will also require nominations.

Treasurer Report

CC-06-67 MS that NCC adopt the ELCIC audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2005. **Carried.**

The changes made to the budget were based on lower revenues than initially anticipated.

CC-06-68 MS that NCC approve the revised budget for 2007. **Carried.**

Reporting on motion **CC-06-47** from the Conference of Bishops lead to the following motion:

CC-06-69 MS a congregation, which desires to associate itself with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) shall be advised that this action constitutes severing its relationship with the ELCIC and therefore shall make written application to its synod for a proper release. The synod shall grant such request following the process set out in the administrative bylaws of this church. **Carried.**

The motion came from the Conference of Bishops and refers to ELCIC Constitution Article 6, Section 10.

Carl Sorensen shared with NCC the fact that Rev. Stan Johnson will be installed as the Chaplain General of the Armed Forces of Canada; this is the first time that an ordained Lutheran pastor will be in that position. Will the ELCIC be represented at the installation? Bishop Ray and Bishop Pryse have communicated on this topic, and the ELCIC will be represented. Additional note is that the Head of Corrections is also a Lutheran.

CC-06-70 MS that the National Bishop investigates alternative ways to organize national materials looking at Anglican COGS model in particular. **Carried.**

This system of numbering with a logical format will facilitate organization of materials.

Anglican Church of Canada Representative

Rev Peter Wall brought greetings from Archbishop Hutchison, the Anglican Church and COGS.

In the midst of discussions on the matters of human sexuality, significant happenings of late–(church in US–Episcopal Church)–elected for the first time a female presiding Bishop. ACC preparing for election of the Primate in 2007 (bishops nominate from amongst their clergy, and the laity and clergy elect a primate)–very likely ACC will elect a female primate. ACC will have to deal with a deferred motion from the 2005 convention on a local option for SSB, St Michael report written to advise the church on the doctrinal matter of SSB.

Anglican House of Bishop and the Lutheran Conference of Bishops–feels honoured to be in a place where fully one-third of the ‘house of bishops’ is female. Wishes that Anglican Council had an opportunity to hear from our bishops as you do at NCC–we are impoverished for that.

Rev Wall was impressed with the report from ELW, it showed honesty and candor, really a wonderful thing to hear. He also feels privileged to participate in a Lutheran ordination.

Commented on the deliberations of NCC, discussions were respectful, honest, forthright, and candid. Somehow, we in the church need to remember that the leadership we need to exercise needs to be bigger and more difficult than simply preserving the rules, constitution, bylaws, etc....than what’s right.

Rev Wall felt that perhaps sometimes he should not be part of in-camera sessions. Grateful that NCC allows him to participate, we honour him and we honour his church.

Commented that NCC has a huge amount of work before the next convention; sensed a huge acceptance from those on NCC to accept that challenge.

Rev Wall’s final comment is that the ELCIC relationship is an important part of his life.

Meeting Dates:

March 14-17, 2007

June 19, 2007

June 20-24, 2007–National Convention

September 27-29, 2007

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Schultz