

MINUTES
Of the 123rd MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
December 6, 2012
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Woodlyn, PA

The Reverend Nancy Brown, Pastor, St. Matthew, Woodlyn, welcomed Synod Council members and the Reverend Gordon Simmons, Dean, Delaware Conference, led devotions.

Vice President Patricia Robinson called to order the One Hundred Twenty-third Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:25 p.m.

ELECTION OF SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Synod Council elected the following Synod Council members: Mr. Henry Boyd, Central Philadelphia Conference Representative, for a term ending 2013; the Reverend William Rex, Clergy Member, for a term ending 2013; and Mr. John Ungerman, Upper Montgomery Conference Representative, for a term ending 2013.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 122nd meeting as amended. Mr. Rodman Rothermel, Chair, Audit Committee, requested a correction to the *Report of the Audit Committee* on page 6 of the minutes. The Reverend Raymond Miller, Secretary, offered the following amendment, which the Synod Council approved:

“Mr. Rodman Rothermel, Chair, reported that it seemed imprudent to consider changing auditing firms for the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2012, since the synod elected a new treasurer and was installing new financial software, adding that it now seems appropriate to consider another firm as well as Tait, Weller & Baker. Mr. Rothermel asked that any suggestions be given to him.”

SETTING OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Robinson presented the agenda for the 123rd meeting.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mr. Fred Reniger, chair, Personnel Committee, reviewed the updates to the synod document *Personnel Policy Guidelines* provided by the committee. Mr. Rothermel requested that the committee consider further revisions to the following sections: “Welcome and Preface,” 5.4, and 16.1. The Synod Council voted to refer the guidelines back to the committee for consideration and requested that the committee report back to the Synod Council at its meeting on February 21, 2013.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Regular Appointment of Ms. Yvonne Curtis as Director of Operations

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, announced that, after consultation with the Executive Committee, she has appointed Ms. Yvonne Curtis to serve as the synod's Director of Operations, managing the day-to-day operations of the synod office. Ms. Curtis has served in this capacity for the past fifteen months. Bishop Burkat noted that the synod has been blessed by Ms. Curtis' skills, gifts, and presence.

Hurricane Sandy

Bishop Burkat reported that, on October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy did significant damage to the roofs of Augustus, Trappe, and St. John, Spinnerstown. Both congregations have received assistance from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

She added that, following the storm, Lutheran Disaster Response – Eastern Pennsylvania was in continuous touch with national Lutheran Disaster Response officials, Lutheran Congregational Services of Liberty Lutheran Services, and local volunteer agencies, such as the Red Cross, to ensure that long-term assistance would be available. Opportunities to make contributions or to volunteer have been publicized through various communication channels.

Even though the building had no electric power, she noted that she visited Evangelical, Durham, and preached at the congregation's 200th anniversary service. Following that service, she visited St. Luke, Ferndale, whose pastor and members fed 200 people daily for more than a week at the Red Cross Shelter set up at Palisades High School.

Fall Gatherings

This year's Fall Gatherings for congregational leaders were held on October 21, 2012, at Trinity, Lansdale, and November 18, 2012, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Using the metaphor of popcorn, the events were designed to encourage congregations to be intentional about mission planning, to give permission to leaders to take risks for the sake of outreach, to keep trying new ideas, and to keep "popping" even when some kernels (ideas) don't.

Conference Gatherings

Bishop Burkat reported that she participated in five conference gatherings from April through October of this year. The events provided opportunities for Bishop Burkat and Mr. Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Interpretation and Communications, to offer reflections and insights and to be available for open-floor discussion.

Bishop's Convocation

Bishop Burkat reported that this year's Bishop's Convocation was held on November 7-9, 2012, at the Hotel Bethlehem. Under the theme *The Parish and the Public Square*, rostered leaders

gathered to listen, learn, and discuss how, in the midst of this current polarizing political environment, they can faithfully support engagement in the public arena from a Lutheran faith perspective.

It Takes All the Saints Annual Appeal

Noting that those serving on boards are often expected to make financial contributions to the organization which the board oversees, Bishop Burkat encouraged Synod Council members to make a generous gift, either by mail or online, to the synod's *It Takes All the Saints* appeal.

Partnership Support Intent Form Online

Bishop Burkat reported that congregations may now submit Partnership Support Intent Forms online. She added that a new stewardship team has been formed and is working to educate congregations and their leaders and to make sure that partnership response from congregations is "healthy and timely." She noted that more than 30 congregations were represented at the financial workshop in September 2012.

Journey of Renewal 2013

Bishop Burkat reported that she will join 17 other bishops in participating in Portico Benefit Services' *Journal of Renewal* program, a wellness opportunity for ELCA bishops, beginning in February 2013 and concluding in January 2014. The program involves two three-day retreats and a series of small group coached conference calls.

Conference of Bishops

Bishop Burkat reported that the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops approved *on leave from call* extensions for the Reverend Priscila Curet, one year, effective October 1, 2012, and the Reverend Gwendolyn King, two years, effective October 1, 2012, as requested by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council.

Merging of Congregations

Bishop Burkat reported that Emmaus Road, Fairless Hills, and Resurrection, Levittown, approved a plan to merge, effective September 13, 2012.

Approval of a New Mission Field

Bishop Burkat presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.12.01 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire S. Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoints Ms. Linda Manson as Mission Developer at Living Gospel Ministries, Philadelphia, a church without walls, for a two year period, beginning September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2014.

Pastor Manson plans to begin a ministry to formerly incarcerated persons.

Action on the Roster

Calls to Interim Ministry

Bishop Burkat presented the following resolutions, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.12.02 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire S. Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Dr. Laurie J. Andersen to interim ministry as a part-time interim consultant at St. John's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (Mayfair), PA, starting December 2, 2012, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Andersen resigns this call, whichever comes first.

RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Shirley Guider to interim ministry at Upper Tincum Lutheran Church, Upper Black Eddy, PA., starting October 22, 2012, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Guider resigns this call, whichever comes first.

RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Janet Peterman to interim ministry at St. James Lutheran Church, Pottstown, PA, starting November 15, 2012, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Peterman resigns this call, whichever comes first.

Retirement

Bishop Burkat presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.12.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement* status to the Reverend William Welther, effective January 1, 2013, and Ms. Linda Furia, AIM, effective February 1, 2013.

On Leave from Call Requests

Bishop Burkat presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.12.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status to the Reverends Stacie Dougherty, 1st year, effective January 1, 2012; Margaret (Maggie) Ainslie, 3rd year, effective July 1, 2012; Peter Hutchinson, 1st year, effective November 1, 2012; Jay Wiesner, 1st year, effective December 31, 2012; Karen Weber, 3rd year, effective January 2, 2013; Ghislaine Cotnoir, 1st year *for graduate study*, effective June 20, 2012; Sozinho Alves, 2nd year *for graduate study*, effective January 2, 2013; Christian McMullan, 5th year *for graduate study*, effective January 5, 2013; and Sister Margaret Thorne, 3rd year, effective September 16, 2012.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Robinson reported that the Executive Committee has requested that the Synod Council designate March 2013 as the month for a synod-wide SEKOMU fund-raising appeal.

The Synod Council approved the following resolution:

S. C. 12.12.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council designates March 2013 as the month for a synod-wide SEKOMU fund-raising appeal.

The Reverend Christopher Weidner asked if there was a fund-raising goal for the appeal and whether the synod office would be responsible for oversight and management.

Ms. Susan Pursch answered that there was no specific goal for the appeal and that the Companion Synod Committee would work through synod channels.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Miller noted that, because of the elections held at the beginning of this meeting, all 32 Synod Council positions are now filled. He thanked the Reverend Sandra Brown, Chair, and the Nominating Committee, for seeking nominees for these positions.

Secretary Miller, a member of the Church Council, ELCA, provided an overview of the ELCA Church Council meeting on November 9-11, 2012.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

On behalf of the Constitution Committee, Secretary Miller reviewed the document *Constitutional Review: Phase Two*, containing the recommended bylaw amendments that the committee plans to present to the 2013 Synod Assembly.

At the request of the Constitution Committee, the Synod Council approved the following resolutions by the required two-thirds vote at one meeting:

S. C. 12.12.06 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council amends by deletion the following continuing resolutions, which make provision for the following program committees:

**Christian Education (S11.01.C98),
Worship (S11.01.D98),
Lutheran Social Ministry (S11.01.E98),
Communication (S11.01.F98),
Financial Support (S11.01.G98), and
Evangelism (S11.01.H98).**

The rationale for this action is that these committees are no longer operating, that the Synod Council may form committees with similar functions at a future date, and that it is not necessary for such committees to be listed in continuing resolutions.

S. C. 12.12.07 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council amends by deletion the following continuing resolution:

S14.90A87 *This synod shall accept as official guidelines “The Handbook on Compensation, Benefits and Professional Expense Reimbursements for Pastors and Lay Professionals” approved by the June 1985 convention of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, LCA, and as amended by the April 1987 convention of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, LCA, until amended or replaced by action of the Synod Assembly.*

The rationale for the action is that the document cited in the continuing resolution is outdated.

S. C. 12.12.08 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council amends by deletion the following continuing resolution:

S19.00A87.b.

b. Resolved, that the following rules shall apply in the continued administration of the trust held by the synod known as the Church Extension Fund: 1) Upon recommendation of the (Board of Home Missions) and after authorization of the Executive Board, a short-term loan may be made from the fund to a mission to assist in the purchase or improvement of real estate, upon the following conditions: a) The amount of the short-term loan outstanding to the mission at one time be limited to \$25,000; b) That each such loan be secured by a judgment note or real estate mortgage maturing in not more than five years c) That the terms as to interest, if any, and schedule of principal repayment be determined by the Executive Board; 2) For the purpose of this resolution status as a mission shall be determined by the (Board of Home Missions) with the concurrence of the Executive Board. 3) Any part of the fund not invested in loans as above provided shall be productively invested in such items as are proper for trusts under Pennsylvania law, and any income produced by the fund shall be capitalized annually. (1962)

The rationale for the action is that the Church Extension Fund has become a part of the *Fund for Mission* and is governed by its documents.

The Constitution Committee also recommended that the Synod Council develop a process for reviewing and revising the descriptions of the following committees:

**Ministry [Candidacy] (S11.01.B98),
Youth Ministry (S11.01.I98), and
Global Missions (S11.01.J98).**

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Report of the Treasurer

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, reviewed the Income and Expense Statement, Budget vs. Actuals, as of October 31, 2012, noting that this report includes activity through the third quarter. She reported that actual congregational partnership support for the past nine months was \$1,467,681.94, compared to a nine-month budget expectation of \$1,687,500.00. Total nine-month income was \$1,487,300.88. Expenses for the same period were \$1,388,299.78. She noted that, because of a cash flow issue, ELCA Partnership Support has not yet been fully paid, adding that she anticipated that the synod would experience an actual deficit of \$50,000 for this fiscal year.

Mr. Rothermel raised a concern about the size of the anticipated deficit.

Ms. Carol Ann Murray, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Support and Development, noted that the synod's expenses so far this year have been lower than anticipated.

Ms. Neff added that reduced expenses may make a surplus possible.

Mr. Rothermel suggested that the Treasurer make available to Synod Council members a balance sheet on a monthly basis.

Stating her desire for the synod to live within its means, Ms. Neff reiterated her commitment not to use reserve funds to cover the synod's deficit.

Saying that she was "tired of begging," Bishop Burkat expressed an interest in finding ways to challenge congregations in their responsibilities for mission support.

Report of the Finance Committee

Pastor Weidner reported that, on October 9, 2012, Mr. Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Interpretation and Communications, presented to the committee opportunities to use the synod website to provide financial updates and to make available online resources for congregational use. At its meeting on November 15, 2012, the committee considered a number of stewardship issues affecting congregations and rostered leaders and began a discussion on the 2014-2015 budget.

Report of the Audit Committee

Mr. Rothermel reported that he has received no suggestions of other audit firms.

SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Nominating

Pastor Sandra Brown, Chair, reported that the committee is now seeking nominees for the elections at the 2013 Synod Assembly.

Constitution

The Reverend Paul Beck, Chair, presented the following resolutions, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.12.09 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Schwenksville;

RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Audubon; and

RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Philadelphia.

Old Business

Pastor Weidner reported that Bear Creek Camp is now looking for additional board members from this synod.

Ms. Joanne Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop for Global Vision and Events, reported that Ms. Susan MacPherson and Mr. Tom MacPherson, ELCA missionaries from this synod to Tanzania, were grateful for the reception that they received in the United States during their recent visit. They are returning to Tanzania tomorrow.

The Synod Council adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Bishop Burkat offered prayer.

The 124th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2013, 4:00 p.m., at a location to be announced.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod