

MINUTES
Of the 120th MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
April 19, 2012
St. John's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (Mayfair), PA

Ms. Patricia Robinson, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Twentieth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:20 p.m.

The Reverends Lee Miller and Patricia Neale, Pastors, St. John, Philadelphia (Mayfair), welcomed Synod Council members and the Reverend Kevin Hilgendorf, Dean, Northeast Philadelphia Conference, led devotions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 119th meeting and the special meeting on March 15, 2012, as presented.

SETTING OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Robinson presented the agenda for the 120th meeting.

BISHOP'S REPORT

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, reported that several area newspapers reported on "the miracle of the bells" this past week at Grace, Wyndmoor. The Reverend Carol Ficken, Pastor, Grace, Wyndmoor, added that a substantial amount of the funding for the replacement of the congregation's chimes came from community members.

Congregation Presidents/Vice Presidents/Officers Meeting

Bishop Burkat reported that she meet with more than 100 congregation presidents, vice presidents, and other officers, representing 45 congregations, on March 10, 2012, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. She said, "There was a genuine excitement about the enormous networking possibilities among our congregations and leaders, and energy from the group to continue exploring ways to collaborate on missional activities."

30th Anniversary Celebration for Ms. Judy Koenig

Bishop Burkat reported that, on April 2, 2012, synod and seminary staff; family members; former bishops, the Reverends Michael Merkel and Roy Almquist; former Finance Committee chair, Mr. Everett Wick; and former Treasurer, Mr. Richard Reimet (via Skype), celebrated at a “surprise” lunch Ms. Judy Koenig’s 30 years of service as the synod’s bookkeeper. The gathering recognized “Judy’s gifts of empathy, responsibility, organization, remembrance and acknowledgement of staff anniversaries, and emergency response leadership.”

Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls)

Bishop Burkat reviewed “where we are presently on the current litigation regarding the former Redeemer Church in East Falls [Philadelphia].”

2012 Visits to Conferences

Bishop Burkat reported that, on April 12, 2012, she met with lay and rostered leaders of the Lower Bucks Conference, the first of her visits to conferences this year in order to engage “in conversation in an informal setting.” She added that a pastor later described the event as “very positive” and “helpful.”

2012 Synod Assembly

Bishop Burkat reported that the theme of this year’s Synod Assembly, May 4-5, 2012, at Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse, Telford, would be *Ecclesia Plantanda: The Church Must Be Planted*, and that the Reverend Dr. Karl Krueger would be the keynote speaker, and the Reverend Sherman Hicks, the ELCA Representative. Mr. Robert Hensil has agreed to chair the Bishop’s Election Committee.

Action on the Roster

Renewal of Specialized Calls

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

S. C. 12.04.01 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves, in accord with bylaw 7.41.15., of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, a call to serve in Unusual Circumstances to the Rev. Leslie M. Richard for a period of one year effective June 1, 2012, and ending May 31, 2013 renewable on an annual basis.

S. C. 12.04.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a call to the Reverend Moses Suah Dennis as Mission Developer at Faith Worship Center, East Lansdowne, for a term of two years beginning October 1, 2011, and ending September 30, 2013.

S. C. 12.04.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a call to the Reverend Violet Little as Mission Developer at The Welcome Church, Philadelphia, for a term of three years beginning January 1, 2012, and ending December 31, 2014.

Retirement

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

S. C. 12.04.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement* status to the Reverend Shongchai Hang, effective March 1, 2012; the Reverend James Heckman, effective April 1, 2012; and the Reverend Edward Kane, effective June 1, 2012.

On Leave from Call Requests

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

S. C. 12.04.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status to the Reverend Karen Weber, 2nd year, effective January 2, 2012; the Reverend Katherine Cartwright Knodel, 1st year, effective April 1, 2012; the Reverend Sozinho Alves, 1st year for Graduate Studies, effective January 2, 2012; the Reverend David Oppold, 1st year for Graduate Studies, effective March 1, 2012; and the Reverend Brian Cox, 1st year for Graduate Studies, effective April 1, 2012.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Robinson thanked Pastor Lee Miller, Ms. Sara Barber, and Ms. Gayle King, who are completing Synod Council terms and are either ineligible for re-election or have decided not to seek another term.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

As this synod's ELCA Church Council liaison, the Reverend Raymond Miller, Secretary, shared and commented on the *Summary of Actions* for the Church Council meeting on April 13-15, 2012.

On the basis of **S10.06.01**, Secretary Miller reported that Ms. Rachel Bingaman and Mr. Brandon Starnes have lost Synod Council membership because of their absence from Synod Council meetings from June 2011 through April 2012.

On the recommendation of Ms. Molly Beck Dean, Assistant to the Bishop/Youth Ministry Specialist, Secretary Miller presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.04.06 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council elects Ms. Adrienne Nash Melendez and Mr. Alex Rafuse as young adult members of the Synod Council for terms ending 2013.

Ms. Melendez is a member of Good Shepherd, Coatesville, and age 29. Mr. Rafuse is a member of St. James, Limerick, and age 18.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Report of the Treasurer

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, reported that, at this time in the fiscal year, the synod's budgeted income matches its actual income. She added that the synod's financial software is in the process of being updated and that the proposed 2013 budget would be soon available at the synod website.

There was no **Report of the Finance Committee.**

Report of the Audit Committee

Mr. Rodman Rothermel, Chair, reported that the management letter from the synod's auditors would soon be available at Fisher's Net and encouraged Synod Council members to read it. He recommended that the Treasurer prepare a summary page of her reports to the Synod Council. He also expressed thanks to Bishop Burkat and Ms. Neff for their work in addressing the synod's financial position.

SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Nominating

The Reverend Sandra Brown reported that she would "cover" the committee's work at the request of the Nominating Committee chair, Pastor Carol Ficken,. Pastor Brown then reviewed the Nominating Committee's Report to the Synod Assembly, updating the list of nominees.

Administration

Pastor Lee Miller reported that the Executive Committee approved the agenda for the Synod Assembly.

Ms. Joanne Carlson reported that additional pages are needed for the Synod Assembly and that the assembly reports are now available online.

Constitution

On behalf of the Constitution Committee, Secretary Miller presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.04.07 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Jerusalem, Schwenksville, and Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne.

OLD BUSINESS

African Descent Strategy

The Reverend Charles Leonard presented an overview of the African Descent Strategy, which seeks “to increase the awareness and relevance of the Lutheran Church in the communities of African descendants ... through a holistic proactive ministry that grows spiritually and numerically while contributing to the total expression of the Body of Christ.” He stated that the strategy is “for the whole synod” and requested that the Synod Council approve the strategy for presentation to the Synod Assembly.

Pastor Leonard presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 12.04.08 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the African Descent Strategy for presentation to and consideration by the 2012 Synod Assembly.

Bryson/LGBTQ Task Force

Vice President Robinson reported that Bryson/LGBTQ Task Force is seeking input from the Synod Council regarding its future direction. She postponed such discussion until the meeting of the Synod Council on June 7, 2012.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Dean reported that 540 persons from this synod have registered for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, July 18-22, 2012. She added that the Mission Investment Fund has provided a grant to assist with registration costs.

The Reverend Henrik Sonntag asked about the synod’s plans in support of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Ms. Carlson reported that the ELCA Malaria Campaign in this synod would be “kicked off” at the Synod Assembly. She noted that the ELCA Malaria Campaign and the Lutheran Malaria Initiative are different campaigns.

The Synod Council adjourned at 6:20 p.m. Pr. Lee Miller offered prayer. St. John, Philadelphia (Mayfair), provided dinner for Synod Council members.

The 121st meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 7, 2012, 4:00 p.m., at God's Love, Newtown.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod