

**MINUTES**  
**Of the 118<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**December 8, 2011**  
**St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (Germantown), PA**

Ms. Patricia Robinson, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Eighteenth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:00 p.m.

The Reverend Andrena Ingram, Pastor, St. Michael, Philadelphia (Germantown), welcomed Synod Council members and the Reverend Lamont Wells, Dean, Northwest Philadelphia/Olney Conference, led devotions.

**SOCIAL MINISTRY REPORT**

Ms. Ruth Bartelt, President, Silver Springs-Martin Luther School, Plymouth Meeting, introduced a video presentation, which highlighted the ministry of Silver Springs, relying on “sound bites” from residents and staff. Noting that it is one of the oldest Lutheran social ministry organizations in the United States, the narrator of the video described the mission of Silver Springs as serving children, who have suffered trauma, loss, and neglect, by providing residential treatment, community based programs, and family resource services in a nurturing, supportive, and loving environment.

Ms. Bartelt added that Silver Springs does most of its work with younger children from Philadelphia and served 1,314 people last year.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 117<sup>th</sup> meeting as presented.

**SETTING OF THE AGENDA**

Vice President Robinson presented the agenda for the 118<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**OLD ZION, PHILADELPHIA**

The Synod Council went into executive session for the discussion of Old Zion, Philadelphia.

The Synod Council approved the following resolution:

**S. C. 11.12.01 Whereas Old Zion Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, sent a letter, dated May 22, 2011, to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, stating that it had called a pastor who had resigned from the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;**

**Whereas, in the same letter, Old Zion voted to become a member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Conference and Ministerium, while at the same time expressing its intention to become an inactive rostered congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and**

**Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does not recognize the dual rostering of congregations (or of ordained ministers and other rostered leaders);**

**RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council, with sadness and regret and in accordance with 9.23. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* terminates the relationship of Old Zion Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective December 8, 2011.**

## **BISHOP'S REPORT**

Noting that the termination of the relationship of Old Zion, Philadelphia, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is "like a divorce," the Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, expressed her personal sadness and regret over the previous action. Citing a case at the time of the Reverend Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in which a congregation left the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and then returned, she raised a hope that Old Zion would return to the ELCA.

### **Fall Conference Gatherings**

Bishop Burkat reported that the three Fall Conference Gatherings and the Candidacy Luncheon Event, held in September, October, and November of this year, were very well received by all participants. The theme of the gatherings was "ecclesiastical house cleaning" and focused on encouraging congregations to clear out clutter so that they can see what God has in store.

Because of poor attendance at the gathering hosted by St. Luke, Devon, Bishop Burkat raised the possibility of doing only three events, two Conference Gatherings and the Candidacy Luncheon, next year. Another possibility would be scheduling nine evening meetings in each conference with the bishop over the course of an entire year.

At the bishop's request, Synod Council members offered feedback.

## **Bishop's Convocation**

Pleased by the Reverend Dr. Peter Steinke's presentation on congregational systems, and by the Reverend Dr. Karl Krueger's presentation on the many challenges and opportunities faced by Dr. Muhlenberg, Bishop Burkat noted the lower than usual participation by rostered leaders at the Bishop's Convocation, November 9-11, 2011.

Ms. Joanne Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop, reported that 117 rostered leaders attended the Bishop's Convocation this year, down from an average over recent years of 140. She noted that most of those attending were repeat participants.

## **2012 Synod Assembly**

Bishop Burkat reported that the theme for the 2012 Synod Assembly is *Ecclesia Plantanda (The Church Must Be Planted)*. Dr. Karl Krueger will be the keynote speaker, and the Reverend Sherman Hicks, the ELCA Representative.

## **Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls)**

Bishop Burkat reported that, on November 14, 2011, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, denied the appeal filed by Mr. Stanley Meena, Ms. Judith Gotwald, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls), thereby bringing to an end "the matter of who has the right to own the title to the [former Redeemer] building." She thanked the synod's attorney, Mr. John Gordon, and the Redeemer trustees, the Reverends Lee Miller and Raymond Miller, Ms. Tracey Beasley, and Mr. Lawrence House, "for their stamina and faithful resolve for over four years of litigation." She added that the Reverend Patricia Davenport, Assistant to the Bishop, has been meeting with East Falls community leaders, along with synod leaders, to develop a plan of action and ministry for the former Redeemer building.

Not yet finished is the lawsuit filed by the Epic Mortgage Company against the synod, seeking to place a lien on the former Redeemer property, in order to recover the funds granted for a loan that persons, acting on behalf of Redeemer, had no authority to secure.

Also not yet finished is the bankruptcy suit filed by one of the Redeemer representatives, seeking relief of responsibility for the loan that the person secured.

## **Action on the Roster**

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

**S. C. 11.12.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement* status to the Reverends Peter D. S. Krey, effective January 1, 2012.**

**S. C. 11.12.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status to the Reverend Regina Goodrich, 3rd year, effective August 12, 2011; the Reverend Shirley Guider, 4th year, effective August 22, 2011; the Reverend James T. Heckman, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective November 11, 2011; the Reverend Gwendolyn King, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, effective October 1, 2011; the Reverend Richard A. Mathisen, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective August 1, 2011; the Reverend David Mueller, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, effective August 31, 2011; and Ms. Rebecca Kolowe, Diaconal Minister, 2nd year, effective August 22, 2011.**

### **Calls to Interim Ministry**

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

**S. C. 11.12.04 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend L. George Detweiler to interim ministry at Upper Dublin Lutheran Church, Ambler, PA, starting October 17, 2011, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Detweiler resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S. C. 11.12.05 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Jack Saarela to interim ministry at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Conshohocken, PA, starting January 17, 2012, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Saarela resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S. C. 11.12.06 RESOLVED THAT, in conjunction with its previous action (S. C. 11.09.04), in which it granted a *special* call to the Reverend Dr. John Berntsen, as Interim Chaplain, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA, effective October 1 to December 31, 2011, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extends this call to Pastor Berntsen, effective January 1, 2012, to February 12, 2012.**

*The Synod Council recessed for dinner. Bishop Burkat offered prayer.*

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Vice President Robinson reported that the Executive Committee is in the process of forming personnel and investment committees. She thanked Synod Council members for attending the fall conference gatherings.

The Reverend Karl Richard requested that the Executive Committee provide job descriptions for committees.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Pastor Raymond Miller, Secretary, reported that he Office of the Secretary, ELCA, and the ELCA Archives have created the Synodical Online Digital Archive (SODA) where synods can upload copies of their synod assembly minutes and reports, synod council minutes, and synod constitutions.

## **TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, presented a "Profit & Loss, Budget vs. Actual, February through October 2011" report and a "Balance Sheet as of October 31, 2011." She explained the line items of the new report, noting that "total income" includes both budget and non-budget income. For February through October 2011, the synod had a total income of \$2,484,958 and a total expense of \$1,933,605.

Bishop Burkat indicated that the plan is to develop a narrative budget.

Pastor Richard presented the report of the Finance Committee, stating that the committee is seeking to clarify the committee's role and to prepare schedule of activities. He added that the synod has purchased a new accounting system, The Financial Edge.

Mr. Rodman Rothermel presented the Audit Report, noting that he has followed up with the synod's auditors, Tait, Weller & Baker LLP, Certified Public Accountants, Philadelphia, and requested a "management letter" which had not been part of the auditors' report this year or in previous years.

## **SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

### **Nominating**

On behalf of the Reverend Carol Ficken, Chair of the Nominating Committee, Pastor Raymond Miller reported that information requesting nominees for the Synod Council, Churchwide Assembly, and Committee on Discipline is being distributed this year by means of electronic communication only – synod website, email, and social media. The information was distributed in November 2011; a follow-up communication is planned for January 2012. He requested that Synod Council members encourage rostered leaders, congregations, and conferences to make nominations by the February 15, 2012, deadline.

Ms. Carlson noted that the nominating form is available at the synod website and that nominations may be made online.

## **Congregational Relations**

Mr. Lawrence House reported that the Congregational Relations Committee is still in its formation stage, defining and setting initial goals. He noted that the committee will focus initially on reviewing congregational demographic materials, including membership, attendance, and financial trends, as it seeks to identify the benchmarks of congregational health. He added that the committee would also seek to facilitate the development of congregational mission plans, in conjunction with recommendations from the ELCA's LIFT (Living into the Future Together) report.

Ms. Kimerly Hinkelman reiterated her suggestion that the synod form a stewardship committee.

## **Constitution**

Pastor Raymond Miller reported that the Constitution Committee is in the process of being formed. He anticipated that the committee would undertake a major review of the synod constitution over the next two or three years, making recommendations to the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly at various points over that time period. As part of that review, the committee would be considering non-required provisions, clarifications, corrections, and updates to the synod constitution. He added that, while the committee is available to prepare constitutional language, any possible re-visioning of conferences and synod program committees would need to be part of a larger process. He noted that the committee plans to meet in January 2012 and offer preliminary recommendations on some items to the Synod Council at its meeting in February 2012.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Anti-Racism Team Report**

Pastor Davenport reported that the Anti-Racism Team is doing phenomenal work. On September 23, 2011, the team made an eight-hour presentation to incoming students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and, on October 2, 2011, to the Northeast Philadelphia Conference Future Strategy Group's Executive Committee. The team also made a first presentation to an adult class at Trinity, Lansdale, on October 24, 2011, and has been invited to make a second presentation at a future date.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Carlson reported that synod-supported missionaries, Ms. Susan MacPherson and Mr. Tom MacPherson, arrived in Tanzania on November 3, 2011, and are have begun service at Irete. She thanked all of those who have provided financial and prayer support.

She noted that each synod has been asked to develop a plan in support of the ELCA's Malaria Campaign, which seeks to raise \$15,000,000 by 2015 for eradication of malaria in Africa.

The Synod Council adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Bishop Burkat offered prayer.

The 119<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2012, 4:00 p.m., at a location to be announced.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller  
Secretary  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod