

**MINUTES**  
**Of the 116<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**June 9, 2011**  
**Zion Lutheran Church, Spring City, PA**

Ms. Patricia Robinson, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Sixteenth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:10 p.m.

The Reverend Paul Townsend, Dean, Chester Conference, and Pastor, Zion, Spring City, welcomed Synod Council members and led devotions.

Synod Council members introduced themselves.

**SOCIAL MINISTRY REPORT**

Vice President Robinson welcomed the Reverend Dennis Ritter, Executive Director, Lutheran Congregational Services, and the Reverend Jennifer Ollikainen, Coordinator for Congregational Services, Lutheran Congregational Services.

Pastor Ritter spoke of the developing partnership between Liberty Lutheran Services and Lutheran Congregational Services and introduced Pastor Ollikainen, describing her as “the face in Lutheran Congregational Services in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.”

Describing her initial activities in her new position, Pastor Ollikainen mentioned that she has been “visiting folks around the [Southeastern Pennsylvania] synod” and that, through those visits, has been able to identify opportunities in three areas:

- Serving individuals, specifically by providing support for rostered leaders;
- Serving congregations through program support and the sharing of resources; and
- Serving communities, particularly in partnership with Lutheran Disaster Response.

Pastor Ritter described the historical relationship between congregations and Lutheran Congregational Services as one of “partnership and collaboration.” He invited congregations to offer their input regarding how Lutheran Congregational Services may be able to assist them.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 115<sup>th</sup> meeting as corrected.

## **ELECTION OF SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The Synod Council elected the Reverend Henrik Sonntag (Clergy) and Ms. Sue Massey (Lower Montgomery Conference Representative) to serve as Synod Council members for terms ending 2012. The election of the Upper Montgomery Conference Representative has been postponed until the September meeting, due to the lack of biographical information from the nominees.

## **SETTING OF THE AGENDA**

Vice President Robinson presented the agenda for the 116<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **BISHOP'S REPORT**

### **Welcome to Newly Elected Synod Council Members**

By means of a written report submitted prior to her departure for her sabbatical, the Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, welcomed new Synod Council members.

### **Sabbatical**

Bishop Burkat reviewed plans for synod staffing during her sabbatical, noting that, except for the Churchwide Assembly, August 14-21, 2011, she would be on sabbatical June 1-August 31, 2011. She described the synod staff as remaining “flexible and positive as we live into [the synod’s] new staff and financial reality.” She thanked all “who made this sabbatical possible, even during this time of unprecedented transition.”

### **2011 Synod Assembly**

Bishop Burkat described the 2011 Synod Assembly as “uplifting, inspiring, and engaging.” She noted some of the highlights:

- The keynote presentations by Dr. Rodger Nishioka, Associate Professor of Christian Education, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia;
- The apology by this synod for the Lutheran persecution of Mennonites in the sixteenth century; and
- The presentation and approval of a balanced budget for 2012.

She thanked those who provided leadership and support for the operation of the assembly. She noted the observations of the Reverend Gregory Villalon, the assembly's Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Representative:

- This synod's assembly was "more racially and generationally diverse" than other assemblies;
- The assembly had "a fun and responsive audience;" and
- The assembly was "not afraid to tackle hard issues of the past even as [it is] optimistic about the future."

#### **Retirement of Mr. Richard Reimet as Synod Treasurer**

Bishop Burkat reported that, on May 15, 2011, almost 100 people gathered for a banquet to honor Mr. Richard Reimet for his "32 years of generous and faithful service to the synod as Treasurer." Donors contributed \$4,000 to the Richard Reimet Fund for mission.

#### **Old Zion, Philadelphia**

Bishop Burkat reported that, Old Zion, Philadelphia, sent letters, dated May 22, 2011, to the synod officers stating that:

- The Reverend Daniel Metzger, Old Zion, Philadelphia, has resigned from the clergy roster of the ELCA and joined the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Conference and Ministerium (ELCM).
- Old Zion has re-affirmed its call to the Reverend Daniel Metzger to serve as its pastor.
- Old Zion has voted to become "a member congregation of the ELCM" and expressed their desire to have "dual membership in the ELCM and the ELCA." Their membership in the ELCA would be "only as a totally inactive rostered congregation."
- Both Pastor Metzger and Old Zion indicated their intention "not to discuss or engage in correspondence" with representatives of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding these decisions.

Bishop Burkat invited Synod Council members to discuss the situation.

#### **Action on the Roster**

Vice President Robison presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

**S. C. 11.06.01 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants retirement status to the Reverends Richard Olson and Eric Royer, both effective July 1,**

2011; and *on leave from call* status for a first year to the Reverend Bernard Kelly, effective June 19, 2011, and Mr. Bruce Saylor, AIM, effective June 5, 2011; and for a second year to the Reverend Margaret Ainslie, effective July 1, 2011; the Reverend Timothy Poston, effective July 12, 2011; and the Reverend Bruce Thorsen, effective June 9, 2011.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Robinson reported that the orientation for new Synod Council members had been postponed until September 15, 2011.

She reported that the Reverend Raymond Miller, Secretary, recommended that the Synod Constitution Committee undertake a thorough review of the synod's constitution.

She also reported that the Executive Committee discussed possible chairs for Synod Council committees and the possibility of adding non-Synod Council members to these committees, thus providing additional expertise. She also mentioned that the Executive Committee is considering the possibility of adding committees.

She congratulated Ms. Janine Niwinski, Director of Operations, and the Reverend Lawrence Hand, Assistant to the Bishop, on their recent marriage.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Miller presented the following resolutions, which the Synod Council approved:

**S. C. 11.06.02 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire S. Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Dianne O. Loufman to interim ministry at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Conshohocken, PA, starting July 4, 2011, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Loufman resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S. C. 11.06.03 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire S. Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Jeffrey Ziegler to interim ministry at Ascension Lutheran Church, Washington Crossing, PA, starting July 14, 2011, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Ziegler resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

Secretary Miller requested volunteers to assist with the review of the synod's constitution.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Because of previous commitments, Ms. Janet Huber Neff was unable to attend the meeting and submitted a written report.

She reported that, since her election as Treasurer at the Synod Assembly, she has met with Bishop Burkat; Ms. Judy Koenig, Bookkeeper; Ms. Carol Ann Murray, Mission Support Specialist; and the Reverend Christopher Weidner, Chair, Finance Committee, to discuss expectations, anticipated changes, responsibilities, and concerns. She also met with the auditor, Ms. Karen Vento, Tait, Weller, and Baker, LLP, "to obtain an understanding of the accounting work necessary in the synod office."

She plans to put together a description of the responsibilities of the accounting work to be outsourced, so that she may send out a "request for proposals." She also intends to consider ways to re-do financial presentations based on the synod's priorities.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Pastor Weidner reported that the Finance Committee met once since the Synod Assembly. The committee is considering additional persons to serve as members of the committee and is developing a scheduled framework for working on budget.

Ms. Murray reported that Partnership Support for May 2011 is down by \$8,500, a decrease of 5.9%.

Ms. Kimerly Hinkelman suggested that the Synod Council consider the formation of a stewardship committee.

## **SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

**Administration:** The Reverend Lee Miller, Chair, thanked those who provided leadership and support at the Synod Assembly.

**Congregations:** Ms. Jill Meuser presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

**S. C. 11.06.04 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Centennial Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kimberton, Pennsylvania.**

## **YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT**

Ms. Molly Beck Dean, Assistant to the Bishop and Youth Ministry Specialist, requested prayers for the 65 youth and adults participating in the Detroit Servant Trip and the 19 youth and adults participating in the Costa Rica Servant Trip, both in July of this year.

## **COMPANION SYNOD REPORT**

Ms. Joanne Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop for Global Vision and Events, reported that Mr. Thomas MacPherson and Ms. Susan MacPherson were deeply moved by the Synod Assembly's response to their decision to serve as volunteer missionaries at the Irete Children's Home in the North Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. She noted that financial support for these missionaries is still very much needed.

She reported that the election of a bishop for the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, this synod's former companion synod, is scheduled for October or November of this year. She requested Synod Council members' prayers that the companion synod relationship may be re-established.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Secretary Miller reported that Mr. Christian Hicks, elected in the category of a lay young adult male, has resigned as a voting member from this synod to 2011 Churchwide Assembly. He requested suggestions for a replacement. Pastor Hand suggested one name and offered to obtain contact information. Secretary Miller requested that this matter be resolved no later than June 30. The Synod Council would need to elect a replacement by email vote.

Sister Sally Kerr requested that, at a future date, the Synod Council continue the discussion of the document, *Equipping the Saints and Congregations for the Work of Ministry*, distributed at the Synod Council meeting on January 31, 2011.

Pastor Weidner requested information on the status of the synod's funding for the re-binding of two of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's journals.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Old Zion, Philadelphia**

Secretary Miller reported that, on May 31, 2011, and at Bishop Burkat's request, he sent a letter to Old Zion, Philadelphia:

- Acknowledging the synod's receipt of the letters from Pastor Metzger and Old Zion;
- Indicating that the ELCA does not recognize the dual membership of congregations in the ELCA and another church body;
- Stating that congregations of the former Lutheran Church in America, of which Old Zion is one, require synodical approval before their relationship with the ELCA is terminated

(Section 9.62.g. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

- Reporting that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council would place this matter on its agenda.

*The Synod Council entered executive session.*

Following confidential discussion, the Synod Council expressed a desire to follow its established process of dealing with congregations that seek to join another church body. By consensus, the Synod Council determined that it would seek to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities by sending a letter to Old Zion, inviting Old Zion's representatives to meet with the Synod Council's Executive Committee. At its meeting on September 15, 2011, the Synod Council would then further consider the matter.

### **Election of Executive Committee Members**

The Synod Council elected the following members of the Executive Committee: Pastor Lee Miller, Clergy; Sister Jane Roper, Lay Woman; and Mr. Scott Nugent, Lay Man.

### **Approval of Synod Assembly Minutes**

Vice President Robinson presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

**S. C. 11.06.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the minutes of the 24th Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, May 6-7, 2011, as corrected.**

Correction: *Saturday Afternoon, May 7, 2011, Report of the Synod Council, Last paragraph: "She listed some of the Synod Council's activities over the past year ... Supported a continuing partnership with the North Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, noting, that in December [not September] 2010, SEKUCo graduated its first class."*

### **The Production of the Play *Providence***

Secretary Miller presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

**S. C. 11.06.06 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the production of the play *Providence* as a way of celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and grants approval for Family Stages, a non-profit theatre company, to publicize the production of the play and its performances through the synod's communication channels.**

Mr. Lawrence House distributed copies of PS: The Magazine of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (Special Tercentenary Issue, Volume 93, Number 2), which contains

articles and lists events related to the celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in 2011 and 2012 on the seminary campus.

The Synod Council adjourned at 6:35 p.m. Pastor Davenport offered prayer.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller  
Secretary  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

**Preliminary Not Approved**