

MINUTES
Of the 114th MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
March 24, 2011
Upper Dublin Lutheran Church, Ambler, PA

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

The Reverend Ellen Meissgeier, Dean, Lower Montgomery Conference, led devotions.

The Reverend Dyan Lawlor, Co-Pastor, Upper Dublin, Ambler, welcomed Synod Council members.

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 113rd meeting and the special meetings on January 31 and February 24, 2011, as presented.

Vice President Robinson presented the agenda for the 114th meeting.

THE BISHOP'S REPORT

The Retirement of the Treasurer

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, reported that Mr. Richard Reimet would not seek re-election as the synod's Treasurer at the 2011 Synod Assembly. She noted that Mr. Reimet had served five bishops and that "his wealth of knowledge of people and congregations, and his attention to the stewardship of the synod, have been a priceless gift to the Church for over three decades." A dinner celebrating Mr. Reimet's service to the synod has been scheduled for May 15, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.

Bishop Burkat added that she has asked Mr. Reimet to continue his service to the synod as the Director of Property Management, a voluntary and non-stipendiary position. So that he may sign documents on behalf of the synod, she presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.03.01 Whereas, in addition to his duties and responsibilities as the Treasurer of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Mr. Richard Reimet has cared for, maintained, and negotiated the sale of properties owned by this synod;

Whereas Mr. Reimet has served as a steward of these properties with faithfulness, skill, and a deep knowledge of business practice, at the same time being mindful of the greater mission of the church;

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoints Mr. Richard Reimet to serve a three-year term as the Director of Property Management for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, beginning on May 7, 2011, and ending on May 6, 2014. Mr. Reimet may be re-appointed by the Synod Council at the end of the stated term. The position of Director of Property Management is non-stipendiary but may include reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in performing tasks related to the position. To the knowledge of the Synod Council, there is no conflict of interest in Mr. Reimet assuming this position.

Financial Planning Group

Bishop Burkat expressed thanks to the members of the Financial Planning Group, who she appointed “to examine the synod’s finances in order to see how we might readjust our resources to better align [ourselves] with new fiscal realities.” The group consisted of Ms. Tracey Beasley, the Reverend Marcia Bell, Mr. Scott Clemens, Mr. Christian Hicks, Mr. Lawrence House, AIM, and Mr. Rodman Rothermel.

Consultations with Holy Trinity, Abington, and St. James, Philadelphia

Bishop Burkat thanked the Synod Council members who attended the four consultations with the two congregations, Holy Trinity, Abington, and St. James, Philadelphia, which voted to terminate their relationship with the ELCA. “The meetings were difficult for everyone involved,” she noted, “however, your participation and presence demonstrated love for our shared mission and courage in the midst of painful conversations and actions.”

Letter from Bishop Pile

The Reverend Gregory Pile, Bishop, Allegheny Synod, sent a letter to the Synod Council, in which he reported that he made a pastoral visit to the Reverend Luther Gotwald on February 2, 2011, and expressed “grave concerns” about Pastor Gotwald’s “actions and activity in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod,” noting “his unfair attacks on Bishop Burkat and his misuse of the office of pastor as he contacted congregations and rostered leaders” in this synod, regarding matters related to Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls).

Synod Finances

In response to the Synod Council's desire for the synod to "live with a more realistic and balanced budget appropriate to these economic times," Bishop Burkat reported that two synod staff positions have been eliminated, effective April 1, 2011, and that another position would move from full-time to part-time in August or September of this year. In the interest of privacy, the names of those affected would not be announced publicly or electronically.

Sabbatical

Bishop Burkat announced that, except for the Churchwide Assembly on August 14-21, 2011, she would be taking a sabbatical from June 1, 2011, to August 31, 2011. She plans to appoint the Reverend Patricia Davenport, Assistant to the Bishop as "acting bishop," adding that the Reverend Roy Riley, Bishop, New Jersey Synod, and the Reverend Samuel Zeiser, Bishop, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, would be available if needed, and that the Reverend Roy Almquist, former Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, would be available as a resource and a consultant.

Call for the Reverend Jennifer Ollikainen

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

S. C. 11.03.02 RESOLVED THAT that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a call to the Reverend Dr. Jennifer Ollikainen as Coordinator of Congregational Services for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, effective March 21, 2011.

Call for Ms. Kathie Afflerbach

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

S. C. 11.03.03 RESOLVED THAT that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a one-year term, non-stipendiary call to Ms. Kathleen "Kathie" Afflerbach to serve the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia as a Lay Theological Education Coordinator, effective March 24, 2011.

Action on the Roster

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

S. C. 11.03.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves *on leave from call* status to Mr. Rick Frederick, AIM, effective April 1, 2011.

Staff Announcement

The Reverend Dr. Lawrence Hand, Assistant to the Bishop, reported that he has accepted a call to serve as the pastor of Holy Trinity, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, beginning on August 1, 2011.

Ms. Janine Niwinski, Director of Operations, announced that she and Pastor Hand were engaged. Synod Council members expressed their congratulations.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice President Robinson thanked Bishop Burkat “for all you’ve been doing for the synod in this time of re-organization and transition.” She encouraged Bishop Burkat to use her time of sabbatical to renew and revive herself.

Vice President Robinson then invited to Synod Council members to pray for staff members embarking on different phases of their lives. She thanked Synod Council members for their extra work over the past year and their willingness to grapple with difficult issues.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Calls to Interim Ministry

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

S. C. 11.03.05 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Richard Mathisen to interim ministry at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Drexel Hill, PA, starting February 21, 2011, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Mathisen resigns this call, whichever comes first.

One Synod Council member abstained.

S. C. 11.03.06 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Donna M. Wright to interim ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church (Pleasant Valley), Coopersburg, PA, starting March 4, 2011, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Wright resigns this call, whichever comes first.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Reverend Christopher Weidner presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.03.07 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council authorizes the transfer of unrestricted funds from the Fund for Mission in the amount of \$132,721, or the amount of the final audited deficit, to offset the synod's actual year-end deficit.

Pastor Weidner then reviewed the 2011 spending plan.

Ms. Carol Ann Murray, Mission Support Specialist, reported that the synod has received, at this date, 97% of mission support intents from congregations.

Ms. Tracey Beasley questioned whether the 2011 spending plan should include anticipated income from church buildings for sale.

Ms. Kimerly Hinkelman noted the need for transparency in the 2011 spending plan, which would include projected receipts for sold church buildings.

Bishop Burkat added that this is a transition year for the synod in getting to where it wants to go.

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Mik Gregoire, Director of Development, KenCrest, one of the synod's Social Ministry Organizations, reported that KenCrest was coming off a good year, noting that the Philadelphia Inquirer named the organization as "one of the Top Work Places of 2011" in Philadelphia, rating fifth out of the 1,500 large companies (1,000 or more staff) participating in the survey. He continued by stating that the recession has not reduced the needs of those with developmental and intellectual disabilities, adding that KenCrest is serving 8,200 children and adults and their families in over 350 locations across the region. He noted KenCrest's involvement with the Rainbow School at the Irente Children's Home in Lushoto, Tanzania.

Synod Council members recessed for dinner. Bishop Burkat offered prayer.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (Continued)

Pastor Weidner reviewed 2012 proposed budget.

Ms. Molly Beck Dean, Assistant to the Bishop and Youth Ministry Specialist, expressed a concern about reductions of the synod's contributions to other ministries, such as Bear Creek

Camp and Campus Ministry, while the amount for the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, remained unchanged.

Bishop Burkat urged caution about not setting one ministry against another.

Synod Council members raised questions about the accuracy of some figures, notably Line 7200.

Vice President Robinson requested clarification of the figures under question at the Synod Council's meeting on April 13, 2011, so that the Synod Council may consider a resolution to recommend the 2012 proposed budget for approval by the Synod Assembly.

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

S. C. 11.03.08 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council adds \$5,000 to Line 2068 (Bear Creek Camp) of the 2011 Spending Plan and 2012 Proposed Budget, increasing the synod's contribution to Bear Creek Camp to \$13,500 for each year.

REPORTS OF SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Nominating

Ms. Barbara Spencer presented the first draft of the Nominating Committee's report to the 2011 Synod Assembly, noting the continuing need for nominees on certain tickets. She noted that the Synod Council has nominated one person for Treasurer; two nominees are required.

Administration

The Reverend Regina Goodrich reported that the theme of this year's Synod Assembly is the "Once and Future Church." The keynote speaker is Dr. Roger Y. Nishioka, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA, who has researched the attitudes and interests of young adults. At the assembly, Pastor Goodrich promised vibrant worship, the reception of New Life Ministries, a more interactive mission center, and engaging forums. She announced that the Executive Committee would approve the Synod Assembly agenda when it is available.

Bishop Burkat added that the assembly would observe the historic action taken last summer by the Lutheran World Federation, in which Lutherans repented publicly to Mennonites for the persecutions suffered in the sixteenth century as a result of the condemnations of the Anabaptists by Lutheran reformers.

Congregations

Mr. Joshua Kelly presented the following resolutions, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.03.09 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA.

RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Yardley, PA, with the provision that the 2009 changes to the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations be incorporated in accordance with paragraph C17.04. A list of items will be sent to the congregation.

RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Temple Lutheran Church of Brookline, PA, with the provision that the 2009 changes to the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations be incorporated in accordance with paragraph C17.04. A list of items will be sent to the congregation.

REPORT OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Ms. Sara Barber reported that 270 attended the Senior High Youth Gathering in February of this year. The gathering elected board members, who are trying to get as many youth as possible to attend the Synod Assembly.

REPORT OF THE COMPANION SYNOD

The Synod Council approved the following resolution:

S. C. 11.03.10 RESOLVED THAT, at the request of the SEKUCo Coordinating Committee, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the continuation of the SEKUCo Coordinating Committee until such a time when it is no longer needed as determined by the North Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), SEKUCo, or the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Ms. Joanne Carlson reported that the Reverend Stephen Munga, Bishop, North Eastern Diocese, ELCT, having completed his first ten-year term as bishop, was re-elected by a vote of affirmation, receiving 173 yes votes out of 176 votes cast.

She also reported that Mr. Tom and Mrs. Susan MacPherson, members of St. John, Philadelphia, have been accepted by the ELCA as volunteer missionaries for two years at the Irente Children's Home in Lushoto, Tanzania.

She expressed concern about the Tanzanian economy in light of rising inflation and the high cost of electricity, food, and fuel.

She noted that the bishop of this synod's former companion synod, the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, has retired.

There was no **OLD BUSINESS** or **NEW BUSINESS**.

The Synod Council adjourned at 8:35 p.m. Pastor Goodrich offered prayer.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod