

MINUTES
Of the 115th MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
April 14, 2011
St. Michael Lutheran Church (Kensington), Philadelphia, PA
(Corrected and Approved)

Ms. Patricia Robinson, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Fifteenth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:15 p.m.

The Reverend Marjorie Neal, Pastor, Pastor, St. Michael (Kensington), Philadelphia, welcomed Synod Council members. The Reverend Carlton Rodgers, Dean, Central Philadelphia Conference, led devotions.

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 114th meeting as presented.

Vice President Robinson presented the agenda for the 115th meeting.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Approval of Acting Bishop

In fulfillment of **§8.58**, the Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, requested approval of the following resolution. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Reverend Raymond Miller, Secretary, presented the resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.04.01 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council appoints the Reverend Patricia Davenport to serve as the Acting Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod during Bishop Burkat's sabbatical from June through August, 2011, except during the time of the Churchwide Assembly, August 15-19, 2011.

Staff Reductions and Transitions

Bishop Burkat shared with Synod Council members letters that she sent to rostered and other leaders, one in March, describing the synod's financial situation and the decision to eliminate two staff positions, and one in April, describing the short-term staffing plans during her sabbatical and the process for re-imagining synod staffing.

Richard Reimet Appreciation Dinner

Bishop Burkat reported that an appreciation dinner for Mr. Richard Reimet, Treasurer, is planned for Sunday, May, 15, 2011, 6:00 p.m., at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. In addition, a mission fund in Mr. Reimet's honor has been established.

2011 Synod Assembly

"The Once and Future Church" is the theme of the 2011 Synod Assembly, May 6-7, at the Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Action on the Roster

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

S. C. 11.04.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status for a first year to the Reverend Jonathan Suloff, effective May 24, 2011.

Redeemer (East Falls), Philadelphia

Bishop Burkat reviewed the status of *Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA v. Stanley Meena and Judith Gotwald and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer a/k/a Redeemer Lutheran Church and Epic Mortgage and Funding, LLC v. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA.*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Vice President Robinson encouraged Bishop Burkat to "relax, reflect, and rejuvenate [her] soul" during her sabbatical. She then thanked the following Synod Council members, who have served two consecutive terms: Tracey Beasley, Barbara Spencer, and Barry Stock.

The Reverend Patricia Davenport, Assistant to the Bishop, noted that some of this synod's ministries would be highlighted at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, including the Welcome Center, Philadelphia.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Miller reported that the Synod Council positions held by Ms. Wendy Long, Delaware Conference Representative, and the Reverend Diedone Diela Panzo, Clergy, were open. He

added that, at its June meeting, the Synod Council would need to consider candidates to fill these two positions and, assuming that there are no nominees for Lower Montgomery and Upper Montgomery Conference Representative positions at the Synod Assembly, those two as well.

Secretary Miller then, as a Church Council (ELCA) member, reported on the Church Council meeting, held on April 8-10, 2011:

- The Church Council approved a joint mission statement between the ELCA and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.
- The Church Council recommended to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly the approval of the ELCA Malaria Campaign as a major fund-raising initiative with a goal of \$15 million by 2015.
- The Church Council also recommended to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly the approval of the social statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*.
- The Church Council is finalizing recommendations from the *Living Into the Future Together* (LIFT) Task Force for presentation to and approval by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. He noted the following recommendation regarding the relationship between the churchwide organization and synods: “A primary role for the churchwide organization is to support and build the capacity of synods, which are best positioned to work directly with congregations in planning and carrying out God’s mission.”

Secretary Miller concluded by saying that he has been in the unique position of participating in the processes by which both the churchwide organization and the synod have struggled with issues related to declining income. Since the churchwide organization has been about six months ahead of the synod in this process, he reminded Synod Council members that there is “life after death” and “opportunity in crisis.”

TREASURER’S REPORT

The Reverend Christopher Weidner, Chair, Finance Committee, presented the Treasurer’s Report:

- Partnership Support for February and March 2011 was \$396,869, a decrease of \$39,844, or 9.1%, compared to the same period in 2010.
- World Hunger for February and March 2011 was \$21,323, a decrease of \$6,022, or 22%, compared to the same period in 2010.
- Lutheran Charities for February and March 2011 was \$70,272, an increase of \$42,326, or 151.4%, compared to the same period in 2010.

Ms. Carol Ann Murray, Mission Support Specialist, noted that the percentage of decrease in Partnership Support has been reduced from 19% to 9.1%.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Pastor Weidner reviewed the proposed 2012 budget.

Ms. Murray reported that, as of April 12, 2011, the synod has received 113 intents, equaling \$2,081,724.

The Reverend Lee Miller moved the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.04.03 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council approves the 2011 Spending Plan Revision as presented.

Pastor Lee Miller moved the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.04.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council recommends to the Synod Assembly the approval of the proposed 2012 budget in the amount of \$2,557,500, with the synod's Proportionate Share giving to the ELCA being set at 53.5%.

SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Nominating: Ms. Barbara Spencer noted that two tickets in the Nominating Report to the 2011 Synod Assembly have no nominees.

Administration: Pastor Lee Miller reported on the forums planned for the Synod Assembly. Ms. Jill Meuser reported that only one resolution has been submitted to the Reference and Counsel Committee. Ms. Joanne Carlson noted that ushers are still needed at the Synod Assembly. Bishop Burkat reported that the synod will be presenting a gift to Franconia Mennonite Church in recognition of "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."

Synod Council members recessed for dinner. Sister Jane Roper offered prayer.

PRESENTATION BY THE SYNOD'S ANTI-RACISM TEAM

Ms. Linda Manson, Facilitator, Anti-Racism Team, introduced the proposed resolution, "Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Synod Identity as a Practicing Anti-Racist Synod."

The Reverend Gwendolyn King reminded Synod Council members that “racism is a systemic issue, built into our institutions and culture.” She added that “we can be leaders within the church [by recommending for approval and, when approved, implementing this resolution], noting that “racism is clearly a justice issue as we embody the fullness of Christ.”

Ms. Karen Paulus, a team member, expressed a hope that Synod Council members would commit themselves to participating in an anti-racism workshop.

Ms. Irma Blum, another team member, noted that anti-racism workshops have been able to give participants a clear picture of racism in this country and added that “the Lutheran church is one of the best places to have conversations on race.”

Following further discussion, Ms. Spencer moved the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 11.04.05 The Synod Council recommends the following resolution, “Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Synod Identity as a Practicing Anti-Racist Synod,” for approval by the 2011 Synod Assembly:

Whereas as followers of Christ we are given the Biblical imperative to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19), to love one another as Jesus has loved us (John 14:34), and to cultivate unity among ourselves that we may be one (John17:21); and

Whereas we are reminded that we are all inheritors of God’s promises because we know that Christ “has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”(Ephesians 2:14); and

Whereas scripture further states, “I therefore a prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:1-6) ; and

Whereas the ELCA in its Social Statement, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture,” August 1993, defines racism as “Racism - a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice - is sin, a violation of God’s intention for humanity, and the resulting racial, ethnic, and cultural barriers deny the truth that all people are creatures of God and therefore, persons of dignity. Racism fractures and fragments both church and Society;” and

Whereas “racism infects and affects everyone. It deforms relationships between and within racial, ethnic or cultural groups. It undermines the promise of community and exacerbates

prejudice and unhealthy competition among these groups” (ELCA Social Statement-Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture August 1993); and

Whereas racism is a systemic issue; and is found in the culture of the United States and the policies, procedures, and practices of institutions within the United States, including the Church; and

Whereas Women of the ELCA made anti-racism one of its organizational principles and has addressed systemic racism since 1997; and

Whereas anti-racism is not a program, but a way of life that works to dismantle racism; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod shall claim and practice an anti-racist identity and actively seek full participation and shared power in its committees, task forces, policies, procedures, and practices and in its mission and ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod place a high priority on anti-racism education, training, and awareness within the Synod and among its organizations, conferences, congregations, and members; examine its own systems, institutional and cultural practices for racist policies, procedures, and practices and intentionally change those that do not reflect an anti-racist identity, that we may dismantle racism in its various manifestations wherever it may be found; and be it further

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, through its Bishop and other leaders call upon its organizations, conferences, congregations, and members through prayer, education, attitude shifts, and actions to diligently work to be anti-racist in their own practices and lives; and prayerfully and actively support anti-racism education, training, and work as central to its future.

YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

Ms. Sara Barber reported on recently completed and upcoming youth events: Senior High Youth Gathering, February 25-27; Wonderfully Made Camp, April 8-11; Helping Hands Day, April 30; the Detroit Servant Trip, July 1-10; and the Costa Rica Servant Trip, July 17-24.

COMPANION SYNOD REPORT

Ms. Joanne Carlson provided an update on the North East Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

NEW BUSINESS

Sisters Sally Kerr and Jane Roper reported that they would be participating (as walkers) in the Lutheran Charities Appeal Bike-athon on June 25.

The Synod Council adjourned at 7:30 p.m. Bishop Burkat offered prayer.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

06-12-2011 corrected