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MINUTES
of the 113th Meeting
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
December 2, 2010
St. John's Lutheran Church, Phoenixville, PA

Ms. Patricia Robinson, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Thirteenth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:05 p.m.

The Reverend Cynthia Krommes, Pastor, St. John, Phoenixville, welcomed Synod Council members. The Reverend Paul Townsend, Dean, Chester Conference, led devotions.

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 112th meeting as presented and the minutes of the special meeting on September 22, 2010, as corrected. (Note: Tenth paragraph under **Open Discussion** should read “saddened but not surprised” rather than “surprised but not saddened.”)

The Synod Council approved the agenda for the 113th meeting.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Taste and See

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, reported that 102 congregations were represented at the three *Taste and See* events, taking place in October 2010 and featuring “delicious food, lively music and worship, and helpful ways to enliven ... congregational ministries.” She requested feedback. The Reverend Karl Richard suggested that at least one event next year not be held on a Sunday afternoon. The Reverend Christopher Weidner questioned why congregations were not given information on mission support.

Bishop's Convocation

Bishop Burkat reported that this year's Bishop's Convocation focused on the changes and challenges facing the church today. The speakers were Dr. Phyllis Tickle, author of The Great Emergence and The Reverend Dr. Stephen Boumann, Executive Director, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, ELCA.

Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls)

Bishop Burkat reviewed the status of the litigation facing the synod regarding Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls).

Holy Trinity, Abington

Bishop Burkat reported that Holy Trinity, Abington, has joined the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and been removed from the ELCA's Roster of Congregations. She also reported that The Reverends Amanda Grimmer and Michael Tavella have been removed the ELCA's Roster of Ordained Ministers.

Bishop Burkat reported that she held consultations with St. James, Philadelphia, on September 12, 2010, and November 7, 2010, adding that the congregation has scheduled a second vote for the consideration of terminating its relationship to the ELCA on December 12, 2010. St. James has stated its intention to join the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). She thanked the synod representatives who attended in the consultations.

Action on the Roster

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

S. C. 10.12.01 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod grants *retirement* status to:

The Reverends Charles Eiss, William Erat, Edward Oswald, and H. Frank Sayford, all effective January 1, 2011,

and *on leave from call* status to:

**The Rev. Paul Beck, first year, effective November 29, 2010;
The Rev. William Bixby, first year, effective January 24, 2011;
The Rev. Diedone Panzo Diela, first year, effective January 1, 2011;
The Rev. Diana Vidlak, first year, effective October 6, 2010;
The Rev. Christian McMullan, third year for continuing education, effective January 5, 2011;
The Rev. Jennifer Ollikainen, first year, effective January 14, 2011;
The Rev. Bruce Thorsen, first year, effective June 14, 2010; and
Ms. Linda Furia, AIM, second year, effective January 31, 2011.**

Staff Design

Bishop Burkat distributed and reviewed a document, "Equipping the Saints and Congregations for the Work of Ministry: Rationale for Proposed Synod Staff Alignments." The document outlined challenges and opportunities currently facing the synod and offered a proposed "working purpose statement" for the synod. Bishop Burkat noted that synod staff re-alignment would take the form of teams. At the bishop's request, Synod Council members offered feedback. Because the Deans had not yet seen the document, discussion of the document was considered confidential.

Synod Council members recessed for dinner. Pastor Weidner offered prayer.

REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL PLANNING GROUP

Ms. Tracey Beasley reported that the Financial Planning Group requested the opportunity to present its report at a special Synod Council meeting. Bishop Burkat and Vice President Robinson called for a special Synod Council to be held on January 31, 2011, at 5:00 p.m. At that meeting, the Synod Council would consider the action of St. James, Philadelphia, to terminate its relationship with the ELCA, along with the Financial Planning Group's report.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Vice President Robinson reported that consideration of the transfer of the Bear Creek Camp property from the synod to the Eastern Pennsylvania Camp Corporation would be deferred to the Synod Council meeting on February 24, 2011. The matter is currently undergoing legal review.

Vice President Robinson thanked Synod Council members for their attendance at the special meeting on September 22, 2010.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

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

S. C. 10.12.02 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Rev Janet Peterman to interim ministry at Immanuel, Philadelphia (Burholme), starting December 1, 2010 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Peterman resigns this call, whichever comes first.

As a member of the Church Council of the ELCA, Secretary Miller reported on the actions of the Church Council on November 12-14, 2010, noting the recommendation to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly that it approve various amendments to the ELCA constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, pertaining to the redesign of the churchwide organization and implementing the LIFT proposals.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Ms. Peggy Cameron, Business Manager, reported that Partnership Support for February-October 2010 was \$1,700,445, a decrease of \$44,724, or 2.5%, for the same period in 2009; World Hunger for February-October 2010 was \$101,338, a decrease of \$16,350, or 13.8%, for the same period in 2009; and Lutheran Charities for February-October 2010 was \$111,499, an increase of \$13,852, or 14.1%, for the same period in 2009.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Pastor Weidner reported that the Finance Committee had further defined its purpose by developing a job description.

Ms. Cameron reported that, because of additional income, the synod's anticipated operating deficit for fiscal year 2010 had been reduced to \$119,000.

Ms. Carol Ann Murray, Mission Support Specialist, noted that some congregations had sent extra gifts to the synod.

REPORTS OF SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Administration: The Reverend Sandra Brown reported that the theme of the 2011 Synod Assembly would focus on young adults.

Congregations: Ms. Jill Meuser presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved: 4

S. C. 10.12.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of St. Luke, Devon.

Nominating: Ms. Barbara Spencer reported that the Nominating Committee has begun the process of seeking Synod Council nominees for consideration at the 2011 Synod Assembly.

REPORT OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Ms. Sara Barber reported on plans for the *Responding to Bullying* Event on January 9, 2011, at Gloria Dei, Huntingdon Valley, and the Senior High Youth Gathering on February 25-27, 2011.

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

Vice President Robinson invited Synod Council members and their congregations to consider donating some of the items on the Wish List provided by the Social Ministry Organizations.

COMPANION SYNOD REPORT

Ms. Joanne Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop for Global Vision and Events, reported that, on December 4, 2010, SEKUCo would hold its first graduation. She noted that these degrees would be the first in special education granted in Tanzania.

OLD BUSINESS

Bishop Burkat noted that, at a future date, the Synod Council would need to re-visit the Protocol for the Closing of Congregations.

NEW BUSINESS

In support of the Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Diary Restoration Project, the Synod Council approved the following resolutions:

S. C. 10.12.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council authorizes the expenditure of \$6,000 from the Hunsberger bequest to pay the cost of re-binding one volume of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's diaries.

S. C. 10.12.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council authorizes the expenditure of \$2,000 from the Hunsberger bequest to challenge other donors to provide \$4,000 for paying the cost of re-binding another volume of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's diaries.

The Synod Council adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Bishop Burkat offered prayer.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary