

Reports of Committees and Task Groups

SEPA SYNOD
AFRICAN DESCENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM
Project Report 2014 Annual Session

INTRODUCTION

During 2013, the African Decent Strategy Implementation Team focused its work on implementing **Goal I. To Identify Opportunities for Collaborative Ministries**. The Collaboration of Ministries will help African Descent Lutheran congregations to pool resources, and use combined gifts to solve common problems without taking away from the plan and direction of the individual church. The first Objective is to obtain demographic data of the population who reside in communities where SEPA Synod African American/African Descent congregations are located. Common demographic factors will identify where Collaboration of Ministries may be optimized to meet congregation and community needs. MissionInsite is the research tool that will be used to gather demographic data, identify physical boundaries and characteristics of the target communities.

MISSIONINSITE PROJECT

Following meetings of Co-Conveners of the African Descent Strategy Implementation Team and leadership of Philadelphia's African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA), it was agreed that ADLA will solicit volunteers from its membership to participate in the MissionInsite Project and attend MissionInsite training, which was conducted by Pastor Janet Peterman. Pastor Peterman provided the participants with an introduction to MissionInsite, discussed the rationale for embarking upon the training process and led the group through the MissionInsite Registration Process. The group accessed several data screens.

At the end of the MissionInsite Training, the following Action Items were identified:

- (1) Each ADLA volunteer was asked to meet with the Pastor and Council President of designated congregations and introduce the MissionInsite Project. It is important to secure a "buy-in."
- (2) Request one person in the congregation to serve as the MissionInsite Project Representative and conduct/coordinate the MissionInsite Project. It is possible for as many people as the Pastor and Council authorize to become users of the MissionInsite system.
- (3) The congregation MissionInsite Project Representative will be asked to:
 - a. Register the congregation
 - b. Define the service area
 - c. Print Pre-defined Reports
 - d. Save the MissionInsite Reports to a PDF file.
 - e. Forward the MissionInsite Report to the AD Strategy Team Co-Convener.

CONCLUSION

The MissionInsite Project will continue through 2014 until all MissionInsite Reports are received. The Reports will be analyzed and relevant data will be collected. A Project Summary will be prepared.

Prepared by
Pastor Regina D. Goodrich, Co-Convener
Gloria Crawford Thompson, MPA, Co-Convener
March 25, 2014

SEPA SYNOD CANDIDACY COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 2014 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Those called to be rostered leaders of our church begin their journey in local congregations where fellow members and the called leaders of the congregation nurture them. These future leaders then formally enter the Candidacy Process through the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Synod. Guided by seminary faculty and staff, as well as, the Candidacy Committee and with the input of Field Education Supervisors, Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisors and internship congregations, a candidate comes to serve as an Associate in Ministry (A.I. M.) a Diaconal Minister, a Deaconess or an Ordained Pastor.

The Candidacy Committee serves at the pleasure of Bishop Claire Schenot Burkat. Our Bishop appoints the members of the committee, so we represent her and our synod in the candidacy process. It is the intention of the ELCA that candidacy has a uniformity of the practice across all synods. To that end, the three major steps of candidacy – Entrance, Endorsement and Approval are prescribed by the wider church.

At the present time, there are nice rostered leaders on the committee: this includes: Rev. Nancy B. Brown, *Director*, Rev. Dr. Bob Robinson, *LTSP representative*, Rev. Peggy Wuertele, *Region 7 and Churchwide Representative*, Rev. Kay Braun, Rev. Moses Dennis, Sr. Mary Julia McKenzie, Rev. Paul Neff, Rev. Matt Ollikainen and Rev. Serena Sellers. The following nine lay members make up the committee roster. Mr. Fred Renigar, *Chairperson*, Ms. Jacqui Cannon, Diane Casey Mr. Rick Eberts, Mr. Chase Ferguson, Ms. Iris Hernandez, Margie Pendarvis-Wright, Tom Salber and Ms. Arlette Stansbury. The committee meets six times annually, including a Candidacy Retreat and a Fall Gathering Workshop with the candidates. Committee members are also assigned to contact teams made up of a rostered leader and a lay member. Each contact team relates to a maximum of five candidates and is in conversation with each of these individuals on a regular basis to provide support and guidance.

We give a thank you to all members of the committee for the work they do on behalf of SEPA.

At present, we have a total of twenty-two candidates in active pursuit of rostering. Nineteen are on the Ordained Ministry track, two are on the Associate in Ministry (A.I. M.) track and one is on the Diaconal Ministry track. The 2013 class of approved candidates includes Ashley Rossi, Ordained Ministry; Laura Tancredi, Ordained Ministry and Alison Wilcox, A.I.M.

I would like to thank Bishop Burkat for her support of the work we have been called to do and for her appointment of dedicated and discerning members to the committee. I would also like to thank The Rev. Jane Marston for her compassionate service as *Chaplain* to the candidates and the committee. A very special thank you to Bill Harp for his energy and commitment to detail and communication that makes the work of the committee more efficient. He is an integral part of the Synod Staff as support to the work of the candidacy committee.

It is a time of change and challenge for those who are moving toward rostered leadership in the life of the ELCA. Congregational life is changing and God requires that the leaders of the Christian community change as well. Our committee, working together with our seminaries, congregations, and candidates seeks to nature each individual to prepare them for the mission of God's church today.

Respectfully submitted by,
Fred Renigar
Candidacy Committee Chairperson

MCPCCE - Ministries of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Care, and Clinical Education

Report to 2014 Synod Assembly

The mission and ministry of the SEPA Synod includes service by approximately twenty rostered leaders who are engaged in a variety of specialized Ministries of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Care, and Clinical Education (MCPCCE) representing the Synod in unique and demanding contexts wherein the presence of the Gospel addresses God's people in the face of difficult and extraordinary circumstances.

Members of MCPCCE currently provide pastoral care in diverse venues including hospitals, rehab centers, retirement communities, nursing homes, hospice facilities, counseling services, prisons, veteran centers, mental health facilities, spiritual guidance programs, et al. across the territory of the Synod. Those so engaged meet several times throughout the year (including an annual breakfast with the Bishop) for fellowship, light repast, and the sharing of challenges, concerns, rewards, frustrations, and joys of such a calling.

ELCA policy currently provides three criteria for anyone seeking a call from Synod Council to specialized ministry:

- 1) APC certification
- 2) ELCA endorsement
- 3) Confirmation of employment in a chaplaincy position

Anyone interested in specialized ministry may contact Sr. Jane Roper (Synodical liaison with the ELCA) or Chaplain Ed Neiderhiser (local convener) for information regarding the required procedures.

Congregations seeking adult forum or other topical programs are encouraged to invite a MCPCCE member as a helpful and informative resource.

Respectfully submitted,
Chaplain Edward A. Neiderhiser
MCPCCE convener

Youth Ministry of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

The Spirit is working overtime with Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's Youth Ministry. Relationships, programs, service and knowledge continue to grow. Here are the highlights from 2013 and early 2014:

† A synod **youth ministry e-news** is being published every two weeks and sent to the Youth Ministry Contact and rostered leaders in congregations. Anyone and everyone should "like" us on Facebook – search for SEPA Youth. Our web site, www.sepayouth.org continues to be the hub of information. Check it out soon!

† A highlight of 2013 was our servant trip in July to **the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota**. This was our synod's fourth trip to the reservation. We continue to serve in South Dakota because we have so much to learn from our Lakota brothers and sisters, the need is great and the youth have asked to return. In total, 112 servants from our synod journeyed to South Dakota last summer, including 20 young adults. A huge thanks to our planning team and co-leaders, Tammy Lemuell and Karin Alexanderson.



† **New LYO Board members** were elected this winter. Doug Parry from Trinity, Lansdale was elected SEPA LYO president, Amanda French from Peace, Perkasio the Vice President and Cassie Singh-Hueter from St. Paul, Lionville is the Secretary. For a complete list of new LYO Board members go to our web site, <http://www.sepayouth.org/lyo-board/>.

† Our synod's annual **Junior High Youth Gathering (JYG)** continues to occur each fall. Junior highers and their adult leaders experienced "Mission 1517: Reformation Then & Now", using a secret agent theme to learn about Lutheran theology and history and challenge our young people to continue to be reformers in their Church and world. JYG 2014 will be October 10 & 11, 11 & 12 at Refreshing Mountain Camp. Thank you to Suzanne Rigg and Kim Malcolm who serve as team leaders for JYG and to our awesome team! Also a thank you shout out to "Agent K" (Pr Karl Krueger) for bringing Lutheran history to life in a way that totally engaged junior highers!



† We continue to lift up the **SEPA Synod Youth Ministry Network**. Spending time with other youth ministers is an invaluable support in our work with young people. Youth workers from our synod gather monthly for a time of fellowship, food, networking, prayer, learning, conversation and renewal. Go to www.sepayouth.org for the dates, locations and learning topics.

BEAUTIFULLY BROKEN

† Our **Senior High Youth Gathering (SHYG)** was February 21-23, 2014 in King of Prussia and the theme was "Beautifully Broken". Through offsite service projects, awesome speakers and small group conversation we explored how we are all beautifully broken and used to further God's kingdom. Thank you to team leaders, Kathleen Rosi and Christian Hicks and the planning team for bringing the event to life!



† Another highlight of the 2013-14 school year was our **Practice Discipleship Initiative**. More than 75 adults and youth were trained in this ELCA wide curriculum which centered around *Faith Formation in a Missional Age*. Practice Discipleship will continue next school year and will explore biblical, theological and practical frames that can give intentionality to how we prioritize our ministries and respond to the gospel in our daily lives.

† **Helping Hands Day 2014** was April 26. Inspired by Nelson Mandela's quote that "the time is always ripe to do right", participants served at and agencies in the city of Philadelphia and in Montgomery County and then joining together for reflection and worship at St. Peter's in Lafayette Hill. This is an awesome day of service involving more than 250 young people and adults.



† In June 2014, our tradition of an urban servant trip continues as 50 youth and adults will travel to **Boston** for service, learning and fellowship. A group of 33 youth, young adults and adults will travel to **Costa Rica** in late July of 2014. This will be a time of service, cultural immersion and learning. We will be hosted by an organization called Pura Vida Missions who welcomed our synod on our two previous trips to the country. It is exciting to be returning to this amazing country and her beautiful people. Please pray for these servants!

† Youth ministry leaders have been the driving force behind our synod's participation in the **ELCA Malaria Campaign**. In the last year, trained duos of youth and adult educators visited congregations to share about the campaign. We set a fundraising goal of \$100,000 for last year and surpassed it! The campaign continues for another year, so it's not too late to get involved!

† Although it may feel far way, preparations are already under way for the **National Youth Gathering** in July of 2015. Detroit will host the event next summer. Robin Alderfer (St. Peter, North Wales) and Daria Waite (St. Peter's, Philadelphia) are serving as our synod coordinators for the Gathering. There are several adult leader informational meetings set for later in May 2014. Check out the web site for all the details!



We are so grateful to all of you who have supported, lifted up and encouraged the youth ministers of our synod! We ask that you pray for them and for this ministry.

In God's Service,

Molly Beck Dean

Assistant to the Bishop - Youth Ministry Specialist

Hannah Shade

Outgoing LYO Board President

Doug Parry

LYO Board President

Tanzania Companionship Team Report/ SEKOMU Coordinating Committee Report

The Tanzania Companionship Team continues to try to foster synodical/diocesan communication between SEPA and the North Eastern Diocese. The team consists of Alice Bell, Nancy Shaw, Sharon Smith, David Neale, and Joanne Carlson.

In 2013 the team continued to work regularly with Tom and Susan MacPherson, our missionaries at Irete Children's Home in Tanzania. We have continued to communicate with them regularly and work to be a voice for them in the synod. We pray for them and share their stories with anyone who will listen, and we trust that their time in Tanzania will continue to strengthen the relationship between those of us in Pennsylvania and those in the North Eastern Diocese. We celebrate the fact that our communication with those in Tanzania is a manifestation of God's love for all humanity.

Much of our work centered around preparations for Tanzania Month in early 2014. The team supports five relationships within the synod: SEKUMO, the MacPherson Mission, the Malaria campaign, Mwangaza, and congregational partnerships. Rather than highlighting each connection separately, we scheduled Tanzania Month to emphasize all of these relationships concurrently.

Additionally, the team continued to distribute a handbook to be used by current and prospective companion congregations. This handbook offers advice for developing and fostering companionships with Tanzanian parishes. We also worked on continuing our ongoing goals, which include promoting and supporting our 16 congregational/parish partnerships, communicating with Tanzanian diocesan staff and missionaries, advocating for needs in Tanzania, providing information for interested synodical parties, and fostering the parish/congregation partnerships between churches in SEPA and NED.

Additionally, the team works with the SEKOMU Coordinating Committee to continue that particular partnership in Tanzania. Below is an update from Susan Pursch, the chair of the SEKOMU committee:

What a privilege it has been to be a part of God's work both in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, in the North East Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and with the staff, management, faculty and students of SEKOMU these past 7 years. Our synod committee meets as often as there is business for us to catch up on or when decisions need to be made. All reports are provided in advance of the meetings. We are grateful for the involvement of the synod staff as collaborators, fund processing and bookkeeping. We are grateful for the support of Joanne Carlson and Bishop Burkat.

Members of the committee are: Bruce and Janet Waechter, John and Marcia Hougen, Ken Brown, Carol Ficken, Barbara Spencer, David Neale, Susan Pursch, chairperson, Joanne Carlson – synod representative.

We have seen an abandoned campus be transformed from a shell to a full-fledged University; from 138 students to over 1,500 students; from no internet to fiber optics; and from trees in the forest to desks and chairs, cabinets and bed frames. From SEPA being the only invited partner to the global community coming together in the mountains of Tanzania to provide quality education for all those who are accepted to study. It has been a 7 year journey in which our Tanzanian brothers and sisters are in charge and we serve at their request and the approval of the SEPA Synod Council and Bishop Burkat. We are completely confident in our partnership and implicitly know our donations are put to good use. We have learned how people with a calling from God and a vision of what could be, actually can raise the status of people of all ages with special needs in the country of Tanzania. The synod is a cherished partner in our efforts. For this our committee is grateful. We have seen first hand over the years what a difference can be made when truly believe it is **God's Work – Our Hands** that have literally built and now maintain, sustain and expand SEKOMU.

It has been a full year that Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University has existed as a fully accredited university. What an amazing accomplishment in a very short period of time.

The Vision Statement for SEKOMU is to be a leading African institution of higher learning that fully recognizes and actively professes the human value and dignity of all society members, including people with disabilities, and whereby everyone is able to learn and live in harmony with God, fellow human beings and all creation. As the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod SEKOMU Coordinating Committee we are amazed at what God continues to do here and there.

Over the past 7 years through congregations and individual donations in the SEPA Synod over **\$450,000** has been raised. This is an amazing and generous response. We thank God for your partnership.

Highlights from this past year:

Our committee joined with the others in the synod who have programs associated with Tanzania for the March emphasis on Tanzanian mission opportunities. One of the opportunities congregations have during the month of March is to pay attention and contribute with the designation of SEKOMU.

We are aware that our attention spans these days are short, so for a committee of the synod to be engaged as long as we have been is quite amazing. We continue to pray that God will touch people in a new way as this incredible university continues to provide quality education and competent graduates who are truly making a difference in Tanzania.

Ken Brown and Susan Pursch from the SEKOMU Coordinating Committee were invited by The Rev. Dr. Anneth Munga for a working meeting in August. This will be a planning and implementing meeting with the Management Team, faculty and staff. Continue to pray for the students, faculty and administration of SEKOMU.

Continue to pray that God will:

call teachers to be on site for at least a semester,

touch generous people encouraging them to share their financial gifts for this effort,

bless the students, faculty and administration of SEKOMU as they teach, learn and make a difference in the lives of those who are powerful and poor, able bodied and having different abilities, the political and just struggling to get through each day.

Thank you for your ongoing support of SEKOMU. May you be blessed and filled with the Spirit.

Thanks to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod for supporting the efforts of the SEPA SEKOMU Coordinating Committee. Thanks be to God for showing us that what might look like an obstacle can be turned into an opportunity and even a miracle.

As we continue to grow and pursue new opportunities, we pray that we will continue to be blessed by so many congregations in our synod whose love for Tanzania keeps them actively involved in the companionship. In 2014, we look forward to welcoming the MacPhersons back home and supporting them as they re-acclimate to life here. Also, we hope to continue to foster new connections between congregations here and parishes in Tanzania so that our companionship can grow. We look forward to sharing our love of Tanzania throughout the synod.

Respectfully submitted,

David Neale

Chair, Tanzania Companionship Team