

MINUTES
Of the 129th MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
March 20, 2014
New Hanover Lutheran Church, Gilbertsville, PA

Ms. Tracey Beasley, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Twenty-ninth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:15 p.m.

The Reverend Thomas Lang, Pastor, New Hanover, Gilbertsville, welcomed Synod Council members and the Reverend William Vanderslice, Dean, Upper Montgomery Conference, led devotions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 128th meeting of the Synod Council as presented.

SETTING OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley presented the agenda for the 129th meeting.

BISHOP'S REPORT

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, welcomed new staff members: the Reverend Susan Lang, Assistant Events Planner, and Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant. She expressed thanks to the Synod Council members who are completing terms this year.

Synod Capital Campaign

Bishop Burkat began by reporting that “our partnership with Kairos has begun,” noting that:

- Synod Council members, staff, and deans met with Kairos representatives on February 1, 2014.
- Landscape Surveys have been distributed to the synod’s key lay and rostered leaders; approximately 350 have been completed.
- Key leaders from many of the synod’s teams have been invited to a Bishop’s Summit on March 26 or March 27, 2014.

She presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 14.03.01 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the following resolution for presentation to the 2014 Synod Assembly and recommends

approval by the assembly, pending a favorable report from Kairos on the feasibility of a capital campaign:

In order to equip, strengthen, and grow the congregations and leaders of this territory, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, enter a capital funding campaign by which to clarify and communicate a compelling vision, engage congregations in a process of discovery and growth, and develop resources necessary to achieve the mission to which we believe God is calling us.

Sabbatical Team

Bishop Burkat reported that, in response to **S. A. 12.05.15**, she has appointed an *ad hoc* committee to report to the 2014 Synod Assembly on sabbatical guidelines for rostered leaders, adding that the Reverend Julie Bergdahl has agreed to serve as chair.

Lutheran Charities Future

Bishop Burkat gave an update on the activity of the Lutheran Charities Future Committee, which has been working to craft a new Lutheran Charities Appeal. The appeal will serve the Lutheran social ministry organizations, related to the synod, and their constituents by addressing their marketing and development needs.

JCRC Trip to Israel

In February of this year, Bishop Burkat reported that she, the Reverends Patricia Davenport and Ellen Meissgeier, and Dr. Jon Paul joined a group of seventeen religious leaders on an interfaith trip to Israel and Palestine, sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of Philadelphia (JCRC). The group visited many Jewish and Christian holy sites, and Israeli historical sites and had the opportunity to dialogue with various persons at these sites.

Conference of Bishops

On March 3, 2014, Bishop Burkat reported, the ELCA Conference of Bishops approved the extension of *on leave from call* status for the Reverends Sozinho Alves, J. Christian McMullan, and David Oppold as requested by the Synod Council.

Action on the Roster

Calls to Specialized Ministry

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

S. C. 14.03.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a one-year term non-stipendiary call to Ms. Kathie Afflerbach to serve the Lutheran

Theological Seminary at Philadelphia as Coordinator for Non-Credit Education, effective June 7, 2014, renewable on an annual basis.

S. C. 14.03.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves, in accord with bylaw 7.41.15., in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a call to serve in Unusual Circumstances to the Reverend Leslie M. Richard for a period of one year effective June 1, 2014, and ending May 31, 2015, renewable on an annual basis.

On Leave from Call Requests

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

S. C. 14.03.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status to Sister Maggie Thorne, 1st year, effective January 11, 2014, and the Reverend Harold Evans, first year, effective April 1, 2014.

Retirement Requests

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

S. C. 14.03.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement* status to the Reverends George M. Harpel, effective February 1, 2014; Peter C. Hutchinson, effective March 1, 2014; David L. Stickley, effective March 1, 2014; and Danny Bodine, effective May 1, 2014.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Beasley reported that, at its meeting on March 6, 2014, the Executive Committee discussed at length the financial proposals which will come before the Synod Council later in this meeting. She also noted that the Reverend Karl Richard has been appointed the Chair of the Finance Committee.

She also indicated that, in the Vice President's report to the Synod Assembly, she would highlight "what is going on in the synod," rather than offer a review of Synod Council actions.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Affirmation of Previous Email Votes

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

S. C. 14.03.06 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council affirms its approval of the following resolutions by email vote:

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council requests that the ELCA Conference of Bishops approve a first two-year extension of *on leave from call for graduate study* status for the Reverend Christian McMullan, effective January 5, 2014.

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council requests that the ELCA Conference of Bishops approve a one-year extension of *on leave from call* status for the Reverend Sozinho Alves, effective January 1, 2014.

Bishop Burkat noted that the Office of Secretary of the ELCA recommended that the Reverend Sozinho Alves apply for a non-stipendiary call to be issued by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council.

Approval of the LSMS of Philadelphia (LSH) Bylaws

Secretary Miller reported that the Lutheran Social Mission Society of Philadelphia (Lutheran Settlement House) updated its bylaws in 2012 and requests that, in accordance of Section 11 of those bylaws, the synod approve them. He noted that the society's attorney has reviewed the updated bylaws and that the updated bylaws would also need to be approved by the ELCA's Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. He presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 14.03.07 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the *Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Lutheran Social Mission Society of Philadelphia* as adopted by the society's Board of Directors in 2012.

Rule Governing Committee on Discipline Elections at the 2014 Synod Assembly

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

S. C. 14.03.08 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council establishes the following rule at the 2014 Synod Assembly for the election of members of the Committee of Discipline:

After the presiding officer declares the two clergy, one lay man, and one lay woman elected for terms ending 2020, the next runners-up shall be declared elected to the available positions; the total number of votes received by the nominees determining their length of term. As such, the clergy receiving the third and fourth most votes shall be declared elected to terms ending 2018, the clergy receiving the fifth most votes shall be declared elected to a term ending 2016, the lay man receiving the second most votes shall be declared elected to a term ending 2018, the lay man receiving the third most votes shall be declared elected to a term ending 2016; and the lay woman receiving the second most votes shall be declared elected to a term ending 2016. If a nominee declines election, the nominee with the next most votes on that particular ticket shall be declared elected for the stated term.

Report of the Constitution Committee to the 2014 Synod Assembly

Secretary Miller reviewed the report of the Constitution Committee to the 2014 Synod Assembly, noting that the assembly would be asked to consider amendments to S.7.23. and S7.26., both recommended for approval by action of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly, and S12.01.02., an amendment in which the number of conferences in the synod would no longer be specified.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Finance Committee

Finance Committee Duties and Functions

Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, Pastor Richard, Chair, Finance Committee, presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved as a continuing resolution by the required two-thirds vote:

S. C. 14.03.09 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves by two-thirds vote the following document *Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Finance Committee Duties and Functions* as a continuing resolution of this synod:

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Finance Committee Duties and Functions

Organization and Purpose

The Finance Committee of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Synod) is established by the Synod Council as a committee of Synod Council to work with the Office of the Bishop, the Synod Business Office, the Synod Treasurer, and the Synod Council to offer recommendations for the financial management of the Synod to ensure that the Synod is able to work on its core mission, as amended from time to time, of *equipping the saints and congregations for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ*. The Finance Committee shall have primary responsibility for presenting a comprehensive budget to the Synod Council for its consideration.

Goals

1. To provide for the Synod's financial management
2. To periodically review the Synod's financial policies and procedures for necessary changes. (The Office of the Bishop has established the procedures consistent with ELCA procedures and Auditor recommendations.)
3. To assure the reliability of systems, processes and people to support the financial reporting needs of the Synod.
4. To provide for financial transparency.
5. To study and communicate the greater economic and financial environment in order to forecast trends that can significantly influence financial decisions.
6. To ensure that the Synod Council receives accurate and complete information.

Responsibilities

The SEPA Finance Committee shall:

1. Provide oversight of the development of the annual budget and presentation to the Synod Council.
2. Review adherence to the budget.
3. Provide recommendations to the Office of the Bishop and Synod Council as needed to review the budget for variations.
4. Oversee and offer recommendations for improvement of processes and procedures for the financial management of the Synod.
5. Cooperate with the Audit, Stewardship, Investment Committee, and other Committees of the Synod Council.
6. Present the following year's budget for consideration by the Synod Council.
7. Meet no less than quarterly
8. Provide Synod Council with reports and recommendations at its regular meetings.
9. The Chair of the committee will serve on the Fund for Mission committee with the Bishop, Treasurer, and the Bishop's Appointee, to discuss and decide appropriate disbursements from the Fund to Synod ministries.

The Office of the Bishop shall:

1. Present a Budget for review by the committee with ample time for recommendations.
2. Provide monthly reports on the investable assets including receipts, disbursements, and gains/losses.
3. Provide monthly reports by [date to be determined] of each month:
 - a. Congregational Pledges
 - b. Congregational Receipts
 - c. Income Statement
 - d. Balance Sheet
 - e. Income/Expense compared to Budget by line item

Membership

The committee shall consist of at least five members and not more than eight in addition to the Bishop and Treasurer. Members of the committee will be appointed by the Bishop and Vice President of the Synod. The membership of the Committee shall include:

1. A Chairperson appointed by the Bishop and the Vice President, who shall be a member of Synod Council.
2. At least 3 members of Synod Council
3. Voting members from SEPA Synod congregations who have accounting and/or financial management skills and experience
4. The Bishop and the Treasurer are Ex-Officio members of the committee
5. The term of the non-Synod Council members shall be three years. The non-Synod Council members may serve two consecutive terms. The terms of the non-Synod Council members shall be staggered in a manner determined by the Synod Council Executive Committee.

A representative(s) of the Business Office shall attend Finance Committee meetings.

Conflict of Interest: Any possible conflict of interest on the part of any member shall be disclosed, in writing, to the committee annually.

- a. Any member having a possible conflict of interest in any transaction being considered at a committee meeting shall not be counted in determining the quorum for the meeting and shall not vote or use personal influence to affect the vote concerning such transaction.
- b. All new members shall be advised promptly of the requirements of this section.

Resolution Concerning Support of Lutheran Charities, Agencies and Ministries

Pastor Richard presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 14.03.10 Whereas there have been questions raised as to how congregational offerings might best be submitted to various Lutheran benevolent causes, and

Whereas there has been a practice by some congregations to send such offerings through the Synod treasurer, while other congregations send them directly to the recipient, and

Whereas the benefit to the recipient is delayed with the extra step of routing gifts through the Synod treasurer, and

Whereas the added time for processing these “pass through” funds takes extra time for a now reduced Synod staff,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council requests that congregations be encouraged to submit Lutheran benevolent gifts, except Synod Mission Support and/or ELCA Partnership Support, directly to the Charity, Agency or Ministry to which they are directed, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Synod office develop and publish a plan for how congregations may make such direct contributions.

Allocation of Proceeds from the Sale of Closed Congregation Properties

Pastor Richard presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved by the required two-thirds vote:

S. C. 14.03.11 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council rescinds all of its previous resolutions regarding the allocation of proceeds from the sale of closed congregation buildings, including but not limited to S. C. 04.02.08.

Pastor Richard presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved by the required majority vote:

S. C. 14.03.12 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council establishes as the policy of this synod that, when this synod sells the property of a closed congregation, fifteen percent of the sale price of that property shall be placed in the synod’s operating account;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, after fifteen percent of the sale price of that property has been deducted for the synod’s operating account, an amount equal to the synod’s expenses related to the properties the synod has under management shall be deducted from the net balance to reimburse the synod for those expenses;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, after an amount equal to the synod's expenses related to the properties the synod has under management have been deducted, the remaining balance of proceeds shall be placed in the synod's *Fund for Mission*.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, reported that, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2014, congregational support exceeded the amount budgeted by \$38,677 and that total expenses were below budget by \$14,129.

Recommendation for Synod Assembly Approval of the 2015 Proposed Mission Budget

Ms. Neff presented the 2015 proposed mission budget:

S. C. 14.03.13 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council recommends the 2015 proposed mission budget, with expenditures of \$2,222,200 and the synod's Proportionate Share to the ELCA being set at 50 percent, for presentation to and approval by the 2014 Synod Assembly.

Both Mr. Rod Rothermel and Ms. Susan Pursch expressed concern about the anticipated \$289,100 deficit in the mission section of the proposed budget.

Bishop Burkat responded that the deficit is "why we are having capital campaign."

Ms. Joyce Brown Adams expressed gratitude to the synod for the use of mission funds to support her congregation, Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne.

The Reverend Charles Leonard noted that the dilemma facing the Synod Council at this time is that "we want fiscal prudence and ministry at the same time." He said that, in this tension, "ministry comes first," adding that "we must move forward and trust that the Holy Spirit will be there."

The Synod Council approved the resolution.

Requesting a moment of personal privilege, the Reverend Christopher Weidner, former Chair, Finance Committee thanked Synod Council members for their immense support on the loss of his beloved wife Jane, noting that "I am healing."

REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Reverend Larry Smoose reported that the Stewardship Committee is trying to model good stewardship at all levels, synod for congregations and congregations for members. In that regard, he added that, if the committee is able to offer a consistent message, that message will allow more money for mission.

He asked Synod Council members to assist in identifying people in each conference who would want to be a part of the synod's stewardship efforts. Committee members would train these people to do stewardship workshops on the territory of each conference.

REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Ms. Jill Meuser, Chair, Constitution Committee, presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 14.03.14 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Morrisville, PA.

She reported that the constitutions of Gloria Dei, Huntingdon Valley; Community of Love, Oxford; and Good Shepherd, Southampton, are still pending.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Reverend Sandra Brown, Chair, Nominating Committee, reported that, at this date, almost all of the election tickets for presentation to the 2014 Synod Assembly have a sufficient number of nominees. She then reviewed the list of nominees. The deadline for the submission of the Nominating Report is March 28, 2014.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice President Beasley reported that the Executive Committee is asking Synod Council members to help with registration at the Synod Assembly.

She presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 14.03.15 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the proposed agenda for the 2014 Synod Assembly as presented.

The Reverend Regina Goodrich reported that Saturday, March 22, is Vice President Beasley's birthday. Synod Council members responded by singing *Happy Birthday*.

Ms. Joanne Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop for Global Mission and Events, reported that Mr. Tom McPherson, one of the synod's missionaries, contracted malaria and is recovering.

The Synod Council adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The Reverend William Vanderslice offered prayer.

The 130th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is Thursday, June 5, 2014, 4:00 p.m., at a location to be determined.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

