

MINUTES
Of the 131st MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
September 25, 2014
Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion, Philadelphia, PA

The Reverends Kari Hart and Stephen Keiser, Pastors, Holy Communion, Philadelphia, welcomed Synod Council members and the Reverend Carlton Rodgers, Dean, Central Philadelphia Conference, led worship.

Ms. Tracey Beasley, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Thirty-first Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:25 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 130th meeting of the Synod Council as presented.

SETTING OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley presented the agenda for the 131st meeting.

ELECTION OF A NEW SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBER

The Synod Council elected the Reverend Tyler Rasmussen to serve as a clergy member of the Synod Council for a term ending 2015.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Mission Advancement Campaign

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, reported, "Several people have been working all summer in various ways on our synod campaign. We have settled on a campaign theme, *Forward Together in Faith*... Last week I set aside three full days with our Kairos consultant, Jeff Kjellberg, to meet one-on-one with synod donors and a few interested congregations. In three days we spent an hour each with 25 people to review the emerging case and to make adjustments based on our conversations. [Mr. Kjellberg] believes \$2.5 million is an achievable goal for a three-year appeal." She noted that ten percent of the contributions to the *Forward Together in Faith* campaign would be given to the ELCA's *Always Being Made New* campaign.

She then offered some highlights of the case narrative:

- *Forward Together as Networks*: Building from existing networks, such as youth workers, communicators, presidents, and vice presidents, we will form new networks that will connect and empower participants in a variety of congregational ministries.

- *Forward Together as Equippers:* We will coordinate training and coaching for leaders through an institute that will be focused on equipping leaders and congregations to work together to support each other and to take action.
- *Forward Together as Innovators:* As the Spirit leads us and lifts up appropriate leaders and sites, we will start three new innovative faith communities to connect the gospel with underserved and underrepresented populations, such as people living in poverty, millennials, immigrant communities, and those who identify as “spiritual but not religious.”
- *Forward Together as Communicators:* Our vision is to advance the technology that expands communications in order to engage and equip our congregations and leaders to build relationships in our communities with those who are unaware of our life together in Lutheran witness.

She identified the steps over the next five months:

- Identify and invite 30 congregations to participate in Holy Cow Assessment.
- Meet with pastors and congregation councils to affirm participation.
- Design a campaign brochure with graphics and logo.
- With Jeff Kjellberg, train liaison visiting teams that will visit congregations on behalf of the synod.
- Start working on a *Forward Together in Faith* video.
- Create a *Forward Together in Faith* development team.
- The bishop will host three or four donor events in 2015 and make appointments for individual donor visits.

Ebola Crisis in West Africa

Bishop Burkat reported on plans for a synod-wide prayer service on October 19, 2014, 4:00 p.m., at St. Matthew, Springfield, in support of those in the Liberian and other West African communities who suffer from fear and anxiety over the Ebola pandemic affecting their home countries. Also underdevelopment are plans to collect medical supplies.

Lutheran Charities

Bishop Burkat reported that, after a year of developing a new organization, the newly formed Board of Directors of *Lutheran Charities* requests that the Synod Council approve a call for its Executive Director, the Reverend Bradley Burke.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Luther Land Trip

Bishop Burkat offered brief reflections on the Luther Land Trip that she and others from this synod took on June 15-25, 2014.

LTSP's 150th Anniversary Banquet

Bishop Burkat invited Synod Council members to attend the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia's 150th Anniversary Banquet on October 16, 2014, in the Ballroom at the Ben, Philadelphia.

Inauguration of LTSP's President

Bishop Burkat also invited Synod Council members to attend the inauguration of the Reverend Dr. David Lose as the Philadelphia Seminary's president at a Service of Installation on December 7, 2014, 4:00 p.m., at Holy Communion, Philadelphia.

Bear Creek Camp Recommendation

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

S. C. 14.09.01 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council authorizes the sale of the Bear Creek Camp property at 3166 Bear Creek Boulevard, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, both the house and the lot, as requested by the Board of Directors of Bear Creek Camp, subject to review by this synod's legal counsel and the approval of this synod's Executive Committee.

Action on the Roster

Term Call: Pastor Brian Cox

Bishop Burkat presented the following resolution:

S. C. 14.09.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a one-year term call for the Reverend Brian Cox as Chaplain at Wesley Enhanced Living in Pennypack Park, effective November 1, 2014.

The Synod Council discussed this resolution in executive session and then, in open session, approved the resolution.

Term Call: Pastor Sozinho Alves

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

S. C. 14.09.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a one-year renewable, non-stipendiary term call for the Reverend Sozinho Alves as a Workplace Pastor, effective September 25, 2014.

In order to avoid any actual conflict of interest or any appearance of a conflict of interest, Mr. Emmanuel Alves abstained.

Term Call: Ms. Linda Manson

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

S. C. 14.09.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a call for Ms. Linda Manson as Pastor/Mission Developer at Living Gospel Ministries effective, November 22, 2014, which would be her ordination date.

Call to Interim Ministry

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

S. C. 14. 09.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Daryl Nelson to interim ministry at Zion Lutheran Church, Flourtown, PA, beginning October 1, 2014, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Nelson resigns this call, whichever comes first.

Call of Executive Director, Lutheran Charities

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

S. C. 14.09.06 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, and at the request of the Board of Directors of *Lutheran Charities*, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Bradley Burke to serve as the Executive Director of *Lutheran Charities*, starting October 1, 2014.

Call to Sister Jane Roper as Hospice Chaplain

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

S. C. 14.09.07 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a call for Sister Jane Roper as Hospice Chaplain at Lutheran Hospice, effective September 25, 2014.

In order to avoid any actual conflict of interest or any appearance of a conflict of interest, Sister Jane Roper abstained.

Conference of Bishops Extension Request

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

S. C. 14.09.08 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod requests that the Roster Committee of the ELCA Conference of Bishops grant the Reverend Stacie Dougherty her first two-year extension of *on leave from call* status, effective September 22, 2014.

Retirement Requests

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

S. C. 14.09.09 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement* status to Ms. Patsy Polilli, Associate in Ministry, effective September 1, 2014; and to the Reverends John Carlson, effective March 1, 2015; Arthur Gilbert, effective September 1, 2014; and Susan Sosnin, effective October 1, 2014.

On Leave from Call Requests

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

S. C. 14.09.10 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status to the Reverend Wende Bleam, 1st year, effective June 14, 2014, and the Reverend Althea M. Tysk, 1st year, effective July 1, 2014; and to the Reverend Gwen King, from “*general*” *on leave from call* to “*family*” *on leave from call*, effective October 1, 2014.

Transfer Requiring Synod Council Approval

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

S. C. 14.09.11 RESOLVED THAT, upon the required approval of Bishop Claire Burkat, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and Bishop Jeff Barrow, Greater Milwaukee Synod, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod approves the transfer of the Reverend Dr. Martin Lohrmann from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod to the Greater Milwaukee Synod, effective July 1, 2014. Pastor Lohrmann has been called by the ELCA Church Council as the Assistant Professor of Lutheran Confessions and Heritage at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Vice President Beasley reported that a meeting, involving Bishop Burkat and the Reverend Patricia Davenport, Assistant to the Bishop, would be scheduled with the Northwest Philadelphia/Olney Conference in order to discuss the conference’s organizational future.

She also reviewed committee assignments and indicated that the Executive Committee is interested in preparing a photo directory of Synod Council members.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

Affirmation of the Call to Interim Ministry for Pastor Sandra Brown

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

S. C. 14.09.12 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council affirms its approval of the following resolution by email vote:

RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Reverend Sandra Brown to interim ministry at Peace Lutheran Church, Bensalem, PA, starting August 1, 2014, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Brown resigns this call, whichever comes first.

Closing of St. Paul English, Philadelphia

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

S. C. 14.09.13 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of St. Paul English Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, to close, effective June 15, 2008, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of St. Paul English, Philadelphia, in accordance with the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, specifically 9.71.b., +S13.23., and *C7.01.; and, retroactively to the date of the closing, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell any property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Report of the Treasurer

Ms. Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer, presented the following report:

Business Office

We are quite pleased with Senior Accountant, Martin Schwab. He is performing his tasks quite well and is an important part of the Synod's team of professionals.

2013 Financial Results

- Partnership support was under budget by \$120,157. This is normal for the summer months. Please look at the report of congregational giving and you will see that many congregations have not given anything and others are trying very hard to increase partnership support.
- We also have a decrease in expenses for the second quarter, which brings our net deficit for unrestricted to \$26,285. Our auditors are requiring us to record the expenses of the closed churches as a current expense. This amounted to \$79,459. This is the reason for the year-to-date deficit.
- Temporarily restricted results showed income over expenses by \$4,826.
- Mission results showed expenses over income by \$98,516.
- Permanently restricted results showed expense over income by \$4,594.
- The final fund deficit from all funds for the last six months is \$128,115. As mentioned above, \$79,459 of the deficit is a result of expenses for closed churches. The balance is a net deficit of \$48,656, which is being spent on mission.

Balance Sheet

- Unrestricted cash and investments minus liabilities is \$294,143.
- ELCA liability is \$449,666. This is the balance of amount owed from the prior year, which is being reduced at \$50,000 per month.
- Temporarily restricted net assets were shown in detail at our last meeting. The balances have also been shared with the Finance Committee. Martin Schwab is working on a two line description of each restricted account. We will then work on reducing the temporarily restricted accounts and transfer the funds for the designated purpose. This is currently being done for the Candidacy restricted funds.

Investment Committee

The Executive Committee is currently working on the formation of an Investment Committee. This committee will be a committee of the Synod Council and will develop investment policies and procedures. We will report with further developments at the December meeting.

Fund for Mission

The committee is meeting quarterly and is currently in the process of developing the charter and guidelines for the use of the funds within *Fund for Mission*. We will report further developments at the December meeting.

In reference to the report titled *2014 Congregational Giving from February 1, 2014, to August 31, 2014*, Ms. Susan Pursch asked, "What is the synod's strategy for meeting its income goal from congregations by the end of the year?"

Mr. Robert Hensil reported that the Stewardship Committee plans to make contact this fall with congregations that appear to be falling behind in their intent for mission support.

Report of the Finance Committee

The Reverend Karl Richard presented the following resolution, amending **S. C. 14.03.12**:

S. C. 14.09.14 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council amends its previous resolution, S. C. 14.03.12, by substituting the words "net proceeds" for "safe price." Thus the amended resolution would read as follows:

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~~ net proceeds 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~~ net proceeds 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*.

The Synod Council approved the resolution.

MISSION MOMENT

Mr. Dan Scharnhorst, Executive Director, Bear Creek Camp, reported the following:

- The core purposes of Bear Creek Camp are (1) sharing faith, (2) having fun, (3) building character, (4) embracing adventure, and (5) cultivating community.
- The summer of 2014 marked Bear Creek Camp's 40th year of ministry.
- Attendance has risen 28% since 2012. The number of campers from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has increased 21% in each of the last two summers.
- Campers tell us that #1 thing they love about Bear Creek Camp is the counselors.
- St. Andrew, Audubon, donated \$5,000 in 2013 and 2014 to help us replace over 80 windows. Calvary, West Chester, donated \$3,500 to help us update the basketball court.
- We partnered with eight churches over the summer to host day camp programs in local communities.
- We continue to work hard to improve our facilities, programs, and relationships. We are grateful to supporters like you who assist us in this process.
- We don't deny any camper the opportunity to come to Bear Creek Camp because of financial restraints. In 2014 we supplied over \$45,000 in camperships.
- We welcome the opportunity to present summer camp information at your congregation or conference meeting.
- We have facilities for rent for your next meeting or retreat.

He thanked the synod for its support, noting that Bear Creek Camp is striving to get better and to become an outdoor ministry of which this synod is proud and in which it has confidence.

NEW BUSINESS

Report of the Constitution Committee

Ms. Lucille Hall presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 14.09.15 RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Pottstown.

The Synod Council adjourned at 6:15 p.m. The Reverend Paul Sorcek offered prayer.

The 132nd meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is Thursday, December 11, 2014, 4:00 p.m., at a location to be announced.

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