

MINUTES
Of the 128th MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
December 12, 2013
Upper Dublin Lutheran Church, Ambler, PA

Vice President Tracey Beasley called to order the One Hundred Twenty-eighth Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:00 p.m.

The Reverend Julie DeWerth, Dean, Lower Montgomery Conference, led devotions and the Reverend Keith Anderson, Pastor, Upper Dublin, Philadelphia, welcomed Synod Council members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 127th meeting of the Synod Council as presented.

SETTING OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley presented the agenda for the 128th meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Change of Date for Synod Council Meeting in June 2014

The Reverend Raymond Miller, Secretary, reported that the Executive Committee changed the date of a meeting of the Synod Council next year from June 26 to June 5, 2014.

Synod Office Requests Copies of Congregational Constitutions

Secretary Miller also reported that, on the recommendation of the synod's Legal Counsel, Mr. John Gordon, the Executive Committee is requesting that congregations send copies of their constitutions to the synod office. He added that this request is supported by ***C6.03.e.** of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Affirmation of Previous Email Votes

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

S. C. 13.12.01 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council affirms its approval of the following resolutions by email vote:

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call status* to the Reverend Mary Konopka, first year, effective August 1, 2013, by electronic vote, subject to review and affirmation at its next regular meeting.

RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges the action of St. Luke, Dublin, to close (also termed “disband,” “dissolve,” and “cease to exist”), effective, January 30, 2011; receives the property of St. Luke, Dublin, 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 authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, the Reverend Claire S. Burkat, or the Bishop’s representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod on a determined date.

Secretary Miller explained the rationale for affirming email votes by noting that, because there is no opportunity for discussion, email votes do not constitute legal meetings and resolutions may only be approved at legal meetings. As an alternative, he suggested that the Synod Council consider resolutions, which may require significant discussion and where a face-to-face meeting may be impractical, at a telephone conference meeting. A telephone conference meeting would be considered a special meeting and called under **S10.07.01** of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA*.

Report of the Church Council

Secretary Miller reported on the actions of the Church Council at its meeting on November 8-10, 2013.

Action on the Roster

Call to Specialized Ministry

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

S. C. 13.12.02 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod approves a call to Sister Jane Roper as Executive-On-Duty/RN at Silver Springs Martin Luther School, Plymouth Meeting, beginning November 18, 2013.

To avoid the appearance of any possible conflict of interest, Sister Jane Roper abstained.

Calls to Interim Ministry

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

S. C. 13.12.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Rev. Jack Saarela to interim ministry at St. Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Perkasio, beginning October 1, 2013, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Saarela resigns this call, whichever comes first.

S. C. 13.12.04 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Rev. Shirley Guider to interim ministry at Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oreland, beginning November 17, 2013, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Guider resigns this call, whichever comes first.

S. C. 13.12.05 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Rev. David E. Mueller to interim ministry at Centennial Lutheran Church, Kimberton, beginning January 1, 2014, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Mueller resigns this call, whichever comes first.

Ms. Susan Pursch raised a concern about the Synod Council taking action to approve a call after the call has officially begun.

On Leave from Call Requests

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

S. C. 13.12.06 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call* status to the Reverends Mary Konopka, 1st year for disability, effective August 10, 2013; Katherine Bender Braun, 1st year, effective October 21, 2013; Jeffrey Ziegler, 1st year, effective November 15, 2013; and John Carlson, 3rd year, effective March 1, 2014.

Retirement Requests

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

S. C. 13.12.07 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement* status to the Reverends Soenke R. Schmidt-Lange, effective November 1, 2013; and Karen Weber, effective January 1, 2014.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer, reviewed the Memorandum from the Treasurer, dated December 11, 2013; the Statement of Financial Position, dated October 31, 2013; the Income and Expense Statement, dated October 31, 2013; and the Congregational Giving Report, dated October 31, 2013. She noted the following:

2013 Income Statement

- Partnership support was below budget by \$14,000 through October 31, 2013, and \$54,000 through November 30, 2013.
- The *It Takes All the Saints* Appeal raised approximately \$30,000.
- Income from Unrestricted Funds was above budget by \$677,937 due to the sale of St. Luke's of \$802,703.
- Expenses were below budget by \$177,999.
- Total unrestricted income was \$2,403,406; total unrestricted expenses were \$1,514,795, leaving the result of income exceeded expenses by \$888,611.
- Temporarily restricted results showed income over expenses by \$144,575. This helps fund our mission priorities.
- Mission results showed expenses over income by \$132,614.
- Permanently restricted results showed expenses over income by \$18,685. There will be transfers from the permanently restricted accounts to fund the expenses.
- Our final surplus is \$881,587.
- Our current liabilities include \$171,238 to the ELCA and \$91,650 to other organizations representing designated giving.

Synod Statement of Financial Position

- As of October 31, 2013, we have unrestricted assets of \$1,980,249, however only \$641,473 is in available cash.
- Our liabilities are \$369,230; however only \$140,133 is a current liability (owed in 1 year or less).
- Our temporarily and permanently restricted funds amount to \$1,325,493.

Synod Occupancy

- A committee was formed to discuss various alternatives and to assess our current location.
- A meeting was held with the seminary discussing concerns.
- The contract with the seminary has been extended to December 31, 2018. This reduces our annual amortization to \$55,701 from our previous annual amortization of \$88,236. This change is effective July 1, 2013.

Business Office

“I am working with Yvonne Curtis and an outside consultant in finalizing the job functions and responsibilities of the accountant/CPA that we plan to employ in the business office. We currently have a full time accountant working for us posting receipts, disbursements and journal entries as well as a part-time accountant preparing financial statements, reconciling bank accounts, and providing guidance.”

BISHOP'S REPORT

Installation of Bishop Eaton and Farewell to Bishop Hanson

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, reported the following:

“On Saturday, October 5, [2013,] the Conference of Bishops, [the bishops’] spouses, and Church Council members, including our own secretary, Pastor Ray Miller, attended the installation of our new presiding bishop, the Reverend Elizabeth Eaton, at the Rockefeller Chapel on the campus of the University of Chicago. It was an inspiring and historic service, which many people across the ELCA viewed via live stream provided by the ELCA communications department. Bishop Jessica Crist gave an outstanding sermon and Bishop Mark Hanson and Vice President Carlos Pena installed Bishop Eaton.”

She added that the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council have invited those interested to contribute to the ELCA’s *Fund for Leaders* in honor of Presiding Bishop Hanson. To the end, she presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 13.12.08 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council celebrates and appreciates the ministry of our former Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson by asking congregations and individuals, if they choose, to contribute to a gift to the ELCA Campaign designated for the Fund for Leaders in his honor;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the accumulation of these monies be collected through the synod business office and announced at the 2014 Synod Assembly where former Bishop Hanson will be the keynote speaker.

Lutheran Charities Future

Bishop Burkat reported that, on December 9, 2013, she attended a meeting which considered the future plan and expansion of the Lutheran Charities Appeal. She will share more specific information at the Synod Council meeting on March 20, 2014.

Bishop’s Convocation: *The Art and Awe of Sharing the Gospel*

Bishop Burkat reported that, from November 13 to 15, 2013, the synod’s rostered leaders and staff gathered in Bethlehem, PA, for the Bishop’s Convocation under the theme *Provocative Insight: The Art and Awe of Sharing the Gospel*.

JCRC Trip to Israel

Bishop Burkat reported that, in February 2014, she would be traveling to Israel as part of an interfaith group sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council. Joining her from this synod are the Reverends Patricia Davenport and Ellen Meissgeier and Dr. Jon Pahl. Available to handle any bishop’s responsibilities during her absence are Bishop Tracie Bartholomew, New Jersey Synod, and Bishop Samuel Zeiser, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Gloria Dei, Huntingdon Valley

Bishop Burkat reported that Gloria Dei, Huntingdon Valley, has called as pastor the Reverend Dr. Sharon Graff, a rostered leader of the United Church of Christ. She noted that, according to her church body's documents, Pastor Graff's call is a four-way call from the United Church of Christ, involving the pastor, the congregation, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, UCC, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA. Bishop Burkat said that, in accordance with those documents, she would receive, not install, Pastor Graff at Gloria Dei on January 26, 2014.

Resolutions to Sell Buildings

At Bishop Burkat's request, Secretary Miller presented the following resolutions, which the Synod Council approved:

St. James, Chalfont

S. C. 13.12.09 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of St. James Lutheran Church, Chalfont, to close, effective February 22, 2009, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of St. James, Chalfont, 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, on this date, December 12, 2013, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls)

S. C. 13.12.10 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls), 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., when it placed the congregation under synodical administration and authorized the Bishop of this synod to appoint trustees for the congregation (S. C. 07.06.01) and, with sadness, closed the congregation, upon the recommendation of the trustees and by action of the Synod Council, on June 10, 2010 (S. C. 10.06.08).

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, on this date, December 12, 2013, authorizes the Bishop of this synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell the property of Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls), on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

This resolution is based on the following previous actions of the Synod Council:

S. C. 07.06.01 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council authorizes the Office of the Bishop to take Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls), under "involuntary synodical administration" in accordance with constitutional provision S13.24. The Office of the Bishop shall appoint a board of trustees to administer the congregation under the above provision. The trustees shall report to the Synod Council by the meeting on November 29, 2007.

S. C. 09.04.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council re-affirms its decision [S. C. 07.06.01] to invoke S13.24, taking charge and control of the property of Redeemer, Philadelphia (East Falls), and to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod.

S. C. 10.06.08 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of the Trustees appointed under the authority of constitutional provision S13.24 by the Synod Council on June 7, 2007, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council takes official action to close Redeemer Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (East Falls), effective June 10, 2010, and directs the Office of the Bishop to report the closing of this congregation to the Office of the Secretary, ELCA.

First, Collingdale

S. C. 13.12.11 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of First Lutheran Church, Collingdale, to close, effective April 11, 2010, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of First, Collingdale, 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, on this date, December 12, 2013, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

150th Anniversary of the Philadelphia Seminary

Bishop Burkat asked for the Synod Council's thoughts on whether the synod should secure a table for ten at a cost of \$10,000 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia's 150th Anniversary Grand Banquet on October 16, 2014. The consensus of the Synod Council was that the synod not secure a table at the banquet.

REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Ms. Jill Meuser, Chair, Constitution Committee, presented the following resolutions, which the Synod Council approved *en bloc*:

S. C. 13.12.12 RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Souderton.

S. C. 13.12.13 RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants full approval to the constitution of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ridge Valley, Sellersville.

S. C. 13.12.14 RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants provisional approval to the constitution of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Melrose Park, with the provision that the 2013 changes to the ELCA Model Constitutions for Congregations be incorporated in accordance with paragraph *C17.04. A list of items will be sent to the congregation.

S. C. 13.12.15 RESOLVED that the Synod Council grants provisional approval to the constitution of Gloria Dei Evangelical Lutheran Church, Huntingdon Valley, with the provision that typographical errors are corrected and the 2013 changes to the ELCA Model Constitutions for Congregations be incorporated in accordance with paragraph *C17.04. A list of items will be sent to the congregation.

She reported that the Constitution Committee received the constitution of Community of Love, Oxford, and that approval of that constitution was pending and awaiting congregational response.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Beasley encouraged Synod Council members to let her know if they are going to be absent in order to better facilitate meal planning.

She invited the Synod Council committees to engage in a process of re-thinking their purpose if necessary. She thanked them for the work that they do behind the scenes.

Synod Capital Campaign

Vice President Beasley opened the floor for questions or comments on the proposed Synod Capital Campaign.

Synod Council members and synod staff, who participated in the process of selecting a consulting firm for the Synod Capital Campaign and/or who had previous experience with Kairos and Associates, noted the ability of the Kairos team to integrate spirituality and fundraising.

Ms. Susan Pursch raised a concern that some may perceive the campaign as a spiritual assessment rather than a fund raiser.

Mr. Robert Hensil noted that Kairos and Associates offers benefits to congregations beyond fund raising.

The Reverend Karl Richard added that, based on his experience with Kairos and Associates, the team is "very clear about raising money."

Mr. Rodman Rothermel requested that the Kairos team provide guidelines for what they intend to produce financially.

The Reverend Paul Sorcek noted that an assessment was necessary before any fund raising goals could be produced.

The Reverend William Rex asked where the money for Kairos and Associates' fee and ancillary expenses would come from.

Ms. Neff answered that the synod would take a loan from the *Fund for Mission* to pay Kairos and Associates' fee and ancillary expenses.

Bishop Burkat added that, as the campaign develops, the leadership of the campaign would be looking for major donors and “not count on congregations to carry the ball” for the campaign.

Mr. Rothermel requested that a financial goal be placed in the resolution.

Bishop Burkat suggested that the synod “let Kairos [and Associates] tell us what the goal is after doing the assessment.”

Sister Mary Julia McKenzie requested that the Synod Council have an opportunity to meet with the Kairos team.

Bishop Burkat said that the Kairos team would welcome such a meeting.

Pastor Sorcek requested that the resolution include a cap on the synod's financial responsibility to Kairos and Associates and state the source of funding for the firm's proposed fee and ancillary expenses. He provided suggested wording for the resolution.

After conferring with Bishop Burkat, Vice President Beasley announced that the Kairos team would be invited to attend the Synod Council meeting on March 20, 2014.

After reaching a consensus on the wording of the resolution, the Synod Council approved the following:

S. C. 13.12.16 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council expresses its sincere and heartfelt support for the synod's Capital Campaign as presented in concept in the Case Statement affirmed by the Synod Council at its meeting on September 19, 2013 (S. C. 13.09.06);

RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council authorizes representatives of this synod to sign a contract with Kairos and Associates for the use of its services in support of the Synod Capital Campaign as presented in the proposal submitted by Kairos and Associates and dated November 2013. The total campaign expenses shall not exceed \$200,000 with such funds coming as a loan from the *Fund for Mission* and shall be re-paid to the *Fund for Mission* from the first contributions received by the campaign.

RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council authorizes a newly appointed development team to revise the campaign components and strategy as necessary during the course of the campaign and will advise the Synod Council of the same;

RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council thanks the congregations of this synod and their individual members for their ongoing stewardship and generosity through regular offerings that support the mission and ministry of this church; and

RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council invites the congregations of this synod and their individual members to participate in the Synod Capital Campaign and to make a contribution over the course of the campaign.

MINISTRY EMPHASIS

Mr. Dan Scharnhorst, Executive Director, Bear Creek Camp, offered highlights of this year's summer camping season. He noted the following:

- Summer camp attendance was 709 in 2013. In 2012, it had been 632.
- Congregations of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod provided 263 of those campers, an increase of 20%.
- Summer camp attendance in 2013 was 53% of capacity.

He encouraged congregations to schedule visits by camp staff to their churches, because "church visits produce campers!" Through these visits and other means, he concluded, Bear Creek Camp is working to "keep the momentum going."

The Synod Council adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The Reverend Regina Goodrich offered prayer.

The 129th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is Thursday, March 20, 2014, 4:00 p.m., New Hanover Lutheran Church, Gilbertsville.

The Reverend Raymond A. Miller
Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod