

**Reports of
Committees
and
Task Groups**

REPORT OF THE REFORMATION AT 500 COMMITTEE

The mission of Reformation at 500 Committee is to work with the Synod, institutions, congregations and interested persons in the Synod territory to prepare to mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

In the past year, we have maintained a website with information about Luther, and annotated bibliography of resources and links to other organizations that are planning and preparing for 2017 (ELCA, Lutheran World Federation, a number of German websites). In June of 2014, Bishop Burkat and Steve Godsall-Myers led the Synod's 2nd trip to Lutherland. (Martin Lohrmann led a trip in 2013). Karl Krueger and Michael Krentz are leading a trip ("Luther and the Arts") in June 2015 and another trip is planned for 2016 (led by Soenke Schmidt-Lange. One highlight of the 2015 trip was the planting of the SE PA Synod tree in the Luther Garden of Wittenberg (<http://www.luthergarten.de/welcome.html>)

The Committee is connected to the ELCA efforts through Christian Hicks, a member of the ELCA planning group, and Steve Godsall-Myers, a liaison to the ELCA's network under the theme: *Freed and Renewed In Christ: 500 years of God's Grace in Action*. Two members of the Committee will attend the ELCA Worship Jubilee in Atlanta this July: *Called to Be a Living Voice - Vocation, Reformation, Mission*.

The Committee hopes that there will be one or two Synodwide events as we get closer to October 31, 2017. We have some ideas – something with music would be great, something that is ecumenical would be great. Maybe a Reformation bike ride, maybe 95 days of prayer as we approach Reformation Day 2017.

The Ecumenical Institute in Strausbourg has launched a project: "Reading Luther" -- beginning in 2015, a new work of Luther's will be posted each month. The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Commission on Unity have published a wonderful book, *From Conflict to Communion* that could be used locally by Lutheran and Catholic congregations. There will be many possibilities from which to choose!

The Committee is always looking to add members and connectors and to continue networking so that we can learn from and with one another as we move toward October 31, 2017. If your congregation would like any information or even a program, please contact the Committee chair, Steve Godsall-Myers (wittsgm@gmail.com).

We have a website: <http://ministrylink.org/ministries/teams/luther2017> and a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/518118854920866/>. We would love to hear from you.

AFRICAN DESCENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM SEPA SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2015

Project Report

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the SEPA Synod African Descent Strategy is to increase the awareness and relevance of the Lutheran Church in African American/African Descent communities, and to become an asset to these communities through a holistic, proactive ministry that grows spiritually and numerically, while contributing to the total expression of the Body of Christ. During 2014, the African Descent Strategy Implementation Team continued to focus on this mission through a strategic process that is based on four Goals.

Goal I: To Identify Opportunities for Collaborative Ministries. By identifying common areas of strengths and challenges that confront our churches, the Collaboration of Ministries will help to pool resources, and use combined gifts and resources to solve common problems. The **MissionInsite** tool is being used to collect demographic data about the population that resides in communities where SEPA Synod African Descent congregations are located, and to identify common indicators where Collaboration of Ministries may be optimized. The **MissionInsite** project will continue through 2015. Data will be collected and analyzed. A **MissionInsite** project summary will be prepared for each African Descent congregation.

Goal II: To Facilitate Financial Stability. This initiative seeks to help congregations and churches address their current financial burdens by developing a better understanding of congregational and personal financial management, developing a personal commitment to better stewardship, and facilitating collaborative financial leverage. The **Urban Seeds** program was established through a previous series of “Capacity Building for Sustainable Ministry” workshops hosted by the ELCA, in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, SEPA Synod, African Descent Lutheran Association Philadelphia Chapter, seven African Descent Lutheran congregations and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. **Urban Seeds** has developed as a faith-based organization that promotes fiscal responsibility, financial literacy, and wealth building, and makes low interest loans to small business entrepreneurs, to facilitate viability in urban communities. **Urban Seeds**, now registered as a 501c3 entity, conducts a micro-loan program and makes small loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs to help them develop business plans. **Urban Seeds** conducts workshops in financial literacy and capacity building, and savings and investments programs for the community.

Goal III: To Grow Lutheran Witness in the African American/African Descent Community. This work is intended to support the evangelistic efforts of the local church and promote the overall image of Lutheran Witness within the African American/African Descent community. Strategic Planning models, designed to achieve outreach to African American/African Descent communities, were presented. Transformational Ministry and Asset Mapping Models will be incorporated into this process.

Goal IV: To Establish the Church as Part of the Community. The intent of this initiative is to establish linkages for African Descent Lutheran congregations with successful community-based programs that help communities and families develop plans to deal with life issues. Current

congregational programs include an increase of food pantries, support for homeless shelters, sponsor of health promotion festivals, and ELCA hunger grant ministries.

CONCLUSION

As part of the SEPA Synod African Descent Strategy Implementation process, Bishop Claire Burkat will conduct a series of retreats for African Descent pastors during 2015.

Prepared by

Pastor Regina D. Goodrich, Co-Convener

Gloria Crawford Thompson, MPA, Co-Convener

March 23, 2015

SEPA SYNOD AFRICAN DESCENT STRATEGY TAG LINE

“Heeding the Call, Building the Vision”

Habakkuk 2:2 “Then the Lord answered me and said:

Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.”

SEPA SYNOD CANDIDACY COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE 2015 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 10 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. Mukesh Cheedie, Rev. Moses Dennis, Rev. Nathan Krause, Sr. Mary Julia McKenzie, Rev. Matt Ollikainen,, and Rev. Serena Sellers. The following 8 lay members make up the remainder of the committee roster: Mr. Fred Renigar, *Chairperson*, Ms. Jacqui Cannon, Ms. Diane Casey, Mr. Rick Eberts, Mr. Chase Ferguson, Ms. Margie Pendarvis-Wright, Mr. Tom Salber and Ms. Arlette Stansbury.

The committee meets 6 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-four candidates in active pursuit of rostering. Twenty-one 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 2014 class of approved candidates includes Linda Manson, Ordained Ministry; Gerald Tancredi, Ordained Ministry; Katherine Steinly, Ordained Ministry; Ángel Marrero-Ayala, Ordained Ministry; and David Lembo, Ordained Ministry.

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. Thank you also to Rev. Steve Keiser and Rev. Gwen King for their prayerful “Initial Interviews” of applicants to the candidacy process. I extend many thanks to Rev. Susan Lynch and Ms. Bobbie Hoffman for their insightful facilitation of the “LifeKeys” discernment event. 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 nurture each individual to prepare them for the mission of God’s church today.

Respectfully submitted by,
Fred Renigar,
Candidacy Committee Chairperson

COMMITTEE OF DEANS, TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT TEAM AND INTENTIONAL INTERIMS

The Committee of Deans, the Transitional Ministry Development Team and the Intentional Interims work closely together to coordinate and support the transition process in SEPA Synod. All those who serve on these teams are “the face of the synod” and are deeply committed to the congregations and ministry of the synod.

Members of the Committee of Deans are generally elected by the conference (on occasion appointed by the Bishop) and serve three year terms. Deans meet monthly as a committee along with Bishop Burkat, but work on an almost daily basis to support the needs of the pastors and congregations in their conferences. This support includes conducting exit interviews when a pastor retires or takes another call, explaining the basics of the transition time, interviewing candidates interested in serving in SEPA Synod, reviewing Ministry Site Profiles (MSPs), and making recommendations of possible candidates for candidates in the Call Process. In addition, Deans conduct installations in the absence of the bishop, work with congregations in times of conflict and unfortunately also walk with congregations through the steps of closing if they have voted to end their ministry.

Committee of Deans: The Rev. Carlton Rodgers (Central Philadelphia), The Rev. Paul Townsend (Chester), The Rev. Leslie Richard (Delaware), The Rev. Jackson Haas (Lower Bucks), The Rev. Julie DeWerth (Lower Montgomery), The Rev. Ben Krey (NE Phila.), The Rev. Serena Sellers (Upper Bucks), The Rev. William Vanderslice (Upper Montgomery), The Rev. Marcia Bell Dean of Interim Ministry), The Rev. Ellen Meissgeier (Chair and Directory of Mobility) The Rev. Claire Burkat (Bishop), The Rev. Pat Davenport (Director, Evangelical Missions), Mr. William Harp (Coordinator, Vocation and Leadership).

Intentional Interims are experienced pastors who have gone through specific training to walk with congregations through a transition time. Intentional interims are assigned by the Director of Mobility in consultation with the Dean of Interim Ministry and the Bishop. Throughout the transition the interim attends required continuing education consultations, submits quarterly reports and at the end of each transition process the interim pastor is evaluated. This is far more scrutiny than most settled pastors receive. In addition to guiding the congregation through the transition process and the preparation of the Ministry Site Profile, interim pastors are responsible for all of the normal pastoral responsibilities of the church.

Intentional Interims: The Rev. Roy Almquist, The Rev. Paul Beck, The Rev. Marcia Bell (chair), The Rev. Sandra Brown, The Rev. Katherine Cartwright-Knodel, The Rev. Ghislaine Cotnoir, The Rev. George Detweiler, The Rev. Stacie Dougherty, The Rev. Arlene Greenwald, The Rev. Shirley Guider, The Rev. John Kerr, The Rev. Dick Mathisen, The Rev. Christian McMullan, The Rev. David Mueller, The Rev. Daryl Nelson, The Rev. Janet Peterman, the Rev. Kris Peterson, The Rev. Elaine Quincey, The Rev. Jack Saarela, The Rev. Bruce Thorsen, The Rev. Jim Wolford, The Rev. Donna Wright, The Rev. Jeff Ziegler

The Transitional Ministry Development Team (TMDT) is made up of both pastors and lay leaders, most of who have gone through a transition in their congregation. This team reviews the interim Quarterly reports, meets with congregational leaders at the end of a transition for an evaluation, and often attends initial meetings to talk about upcoming transitions as a pastor prepares to leave. This team has authored the Transition Guide used in our Synod provides over all support to the Director of Mobility and Dean of Interim Ministry.

The Transitional Ministry Development Team: Teri Lanan, Barry Stock, John Lewis, The Rev. Marcia Bell, The Rev. Sandra Brown, The Rev. Jeff Ziegler, The Rev. Ellen Meissgeier and until recently Jill Meuser and Irma Kelly.

EVANGELICAL OUTREACH TEAM REPORT

*In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams. (Acts 2:17)*

We continue to provide transformation ministry leadership for churches wishing to do visioning for the future. Our approach is threefold: (1) There is an emphasis on spiritual relationships between individual members and God, with the visioning team and God, and with the congregation and God. (2) We study in depth the church's assets, potentials, and opportunities. (3) There is a strong emphasis on the community where the church is located, focusing on outreach to provide ministries to that community, based on its needs.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)

A new program taken on by the Evangelical Outreach Team began this past autumn. "Visiting Worshippers" are trained by the team and sent out to participating churches to learn how God is active in these congregations. The visitors report back to the Synod, sharing the unique, exciting, and appealing activities they discovered. These comments are then published as "God Sightings" in Ministry Link. Look for these articles monthly!

So with yourselves; since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church. (1 Corinthians 14:12)

The team administers grants of various sizes and types to missions, fast-growth churches, and other non-traditional congregations such as ministry to the deaf and The Welcome Church. Additionally, members of the committee evaluate facility problems as needed.

We continue to search for new ways that we can help congregations within the Synod to grow and expand their horizons. Please contact Pat Davenport if your congregation is interested in transformation ministry, visiting worshippers, or if you would like to join the committee.

Joseph B. Stevens
Committee Chair
March 22, 2015

SEPA SYNOD HUNGER MINISTRY TEAM 2015 REPORT

Initial meetings to explore the possibilities of pulling together a synod hunger ministry team took place in May and June of 2014. Communications went out from the Synod Office informing congregations of efforts to develop a Hunger Ministry Team and inviting anyone involved in congregational ministries dealing with hunger and food insecurity issues to consider becoming a part of the team.

In subsequent months, the Hunger Ministry Team was formed and met in August and September of 2014. The Hunger Ministry Team is comprised of clergy and lay people from across our synodical territory who responded to the invitation to become involved.

Members of the team have taken part in a Hunger 101 event at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Yardley in November, and a benefits training session hosted by Lutheran Settlement House in February. We also had representation from the team at a regional meeting for hunger ministry team leaders held in Allentown, Pennsylvania in October. Two team members represented SE PA Synod at the ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering held in the Bay Area in January of 2015. Training and information gathered at these events have helped to assist and guide our group in determining the direction for our team.

A retreat was held in January of 2015 to develop a mission statement and identify specific goals and objectives to guide our work. The Hunger Ministry Team's mission is *to educate congregations about hunger, initiate, support and enhance hunger ministries, and advocate together for God's promised justice.* To this end, the Hunger Ministry Team plans to conduct hunger simulation workshops, educate and inform congregations about domestic hunger grants, gather and share best practices and resource materials, conduct forums and advocacy trainings during the 2015 Synod Assembly, as well as provide support for advocacy programs and youth events.

*Respectfully submitted,
Annette Sample, Chair*

MINISTRIES OF CHAPLAINCY, PASTORAL CARE, AND CLINICAL EDUCATION (MCPCCE)

Report to Synod Assembly – May 2015

The mission and ministry of the SEPA Synod includes service by approximately twenty rostered leaders who have been 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 (Association of Professional Chaplains) certification
- 2) ELCA endorsement
- 3) Confirmation of employment in a chaplaincy position

Several recent retirements have reduced the number of Chaplains on the Synod roster currently active. Anyone interested in considering specialized ministry may contact Chaplain Linda

Hatcher (Synod liaison) 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

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia is an association of more than [30 member religious communities](#) in the Philadelphia metro area. Its primary roles are to foster “relationships of mutual support, offer a moral and spiritual voice in the region, and identify issues of concern for dialogue and action.” Bishop Burkat is one of the Co-conveners of the Council, along with Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Rabbi David Straus, and Imam Anwar Muhaimin.

I currently sit on the Administrative Group on behalf of Bishop Burkat. The Administrative Group meets at least three times a year, plus a summer retreat, and advises the staff of the Interfaith Center to plan the agendas of the Religious Leaders Council meetings.

Over the past year and a half the Council has invited speakers and heard reports on three important areas in the life of all the religious communities of Philadelphia: Immigration, the state of the public schools, and anti-Muslim ads being placed on SEPTA buses by the American Freedom Defense Initiative.

The statement [“Religiously Diverse, United for Immigration Reform”](#) passed in January 2014 was an important opportunity for the religious communities, all of whom are directly touched by issues of immigration. The statement recognized that each of our “sacred texts insist that each person is made in the image of God and thus possesses dignity worthy of respect, regardless of that person’s status in society,” and that “Our various traditions also are united in teaching that hospitality to strangers is God’s will.” This statement continues to be put before civil legislators as the issue continues to be debated in the government.

At its December 2014 meeting the Council heard a variety of presentations on the status of the public schools in Philadelphia. This provided opportunity for information sharing on some of the realities of the growing economic disparities in the country.

In March 2015 the Council issued its unanimous statement on the [Anti-Islamic Advertising Campaign](#) undertaken by the American Freedom Defense Initiative. This statement, which had been prepared back in the fall of 2014, was part of a larger coalition of religious and secular partners who have responded in creative and positive ways to recognize the rights of free speech, even hate speech, but to model positive engagement and citizenship for the good of the whole

community. A petition, "[Stand With Us in Opposing Anti-Muslim Ads](#)", was developed through this coalition to voice public support against the advertising campaign.

I am truly humbled by the opportunities for public leadership and witness that SEPA has played in this Council with its various religious communities and civic organizations. The members of the ELCA can be proud of our participation in this work in the city. For further information on the work of the Council please see <http://www.interfaithcenterpa.org/cp/rlc/>.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. David D. Grafton, PhD
The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

REPORT OF THE SYNOD STEWARDSHIP TEAM

The synod stewardship team would like to thank the congregations of our synod for their partnership support, and especially for those congregations that are modeling good stewardship to their members by giving at least 10% of their regular giving towards Partnership Support. Half of these offerings are used by the synod for its mission and half are sent by the synod to the ELCA in support of the work of national church. The specific uses of these funds are outlined on annual report covers used by many congregations for their annual meetings.

Your faithful giving provided **an increase in Partnership Support for the second year in a row.** While the amount was modest, it was particularly significant because of the record snowfalls that challenged many congregational budgets.

During the past year the stewardship team has undertaken the following efforts to strengthen congregational stewardship:

- A Resource Table and a workshop at the Synod Assembly
- Three stewardship workshops during the Fall, 2014. One at St. James, Limerick; one at St. Paul, Doylestown, and one at the Synod offices.
- Stewardship team members, along with volunteers from each conference made phone calls to congregational leaders to thank them for partnership support and encourage continued faithfulness in the financial support of the larger church.
- Individual consultations were made available to rostered leaders of the synod at the annual Bishop's Convocation.
- Four congregations have been invited to participate in a pilot program of the ELCA designed to strengthen stewardship in congregations with significant percentages of African descent members. The program, *Re-Kindle the Gift of Giving* is led by the ELCA.
- The synod team has begun to recruit conference sub-teams who would work with conference leaders to determine topics and support that would help to strengthen stewardship in the congregations of the conference. They would then work with the Synod team to plan and implement an event in the conference to meet those needs.

Members of the Synod Stewardship Team are Larry Smoose, Scott Clemens, Bobbi Hoffman, Bob Hensil, and Mike Carlson. We also want to thank our Synod Support staff member, The Rev. Patricia Davenport, along with Bill Harp, Martin Schwab, Bob Fisher, and Cynta Outerbridge.

TANZANIA COMPANIONSHIP TEAM REPORT

April 2014-April 2015

The Tanzania Companionship Team promotes and supports relationships between SEPA Synod and the North-Eastern Diocese (NED) of Tanzania.

Tanzania Month and Synod Assembly 2014

During Lent of 2014, the Tanzania team provided bulletin inserts to SEPA Synod congregations about the various companionships ongoing with Tanzania. These include:

- Synod-to-Diocese Companionship
- Congregation-to-Congregation Companionship
- Mwangaza Partnership for Education, providing training for secondary school teachers and education and empowerment seminars for women.
- SEKOMU—the Lutheran-run University in TZ that trains students to work with people with special needs and welcomes disabled undergraduate and graduate students
- MacPherson Mission—SEPA Synod lay missionaries Susan and Tom MacPherson served the Irente Children’s home for three years from 2011-2014.

At the 2014 Synod Assembly, the Tanzania Companionship Team offered forums to introduce the opportunity of becoming companions to SEPA Synod congregations. The team also sponsored a Wheel of Fortune game at the Mission Center where Assembly attendees tested their knowledge of Tanzania-related topics.

MacPherson Mission

Susan and Tom MacPherson return to the United States on August 23, 2014 after nearly three years of mission work at the Irente Children’s Home in Tanzania. Their colleagues at ICH cherished them and valued highly the tremendous contributions they made to the Children’s Home. For the MacPhersons, it was a spirit-filled and life-changing experience. They continue to advocate for ICH and encourage ELCA, SEPA Synod, congregations, and individuals to consider how we can support ICH in the months and years to come. SEPA Synod sent a contribution of \$2,000 in honor of Susan and Tom MacPherson to the Irente Children’s home, to be used for the construction of a housing facility for older orphans who are not adopted.

Companion Connections

The summer and fall of 2014 were filled with trips in both directions across the Atlantic Ocean that strengthened our ties to Tanzania.

David Neale, Team Leader and Board Member for Mwangaza traveled with a team of teachers to participate in a two-week teacher training session at Mwangaza in Arusha

Susan Pursch, Kenneth and Diane Brown visited SEKOMU

Resurrection Yardley sent a delegation to their companion congregation Irete Lutheran Parish in Irete

St. John's, Mayfair sent a delegation to their companion congregation Kana Lutheran Parish in Tanga

Upper Dublin sent a delegation to their companion congregation Cathedral Lutheran Parish in Lushoto

Mwangaza Partnership Visit: Mwangaza personnel John Kavishe and Salome Lally came to the United States in October, making stops in Chicago, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Philadelphia, and New York on behalf of Mwangaza Partnership in Arusha. During their time in Philadelphia (Oct. 14-17), they provided a presentation at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in King of Prussia and met with educational faculty and students at the University of Pennsylvania and Arcadia University.

NED Church Leaders Visit: NED Bishop Munga and NED General Secretary Pastor Mwinuka joined SEPA Synod for the Bishop's Convocation in November 2014. Other highlights of their visit included seeing Feast of Justice in action at St. John's Mayfair, meeting with the TZ Team and SEKOMU committee, visiting several SEPA Synod congregations, and traveling with Susan Pursch as their guide to NYC and Washington, DC.

Change in team personnel

Asante Sana--many thanks to David Neale, who led the Tanzania Companionship Team for four years. David stepped down at the end of 2014. Current team members include Alice Bell, Joanne Carlson (Synod staff), Sheldon Erb, Sharon Smith, Nancy Shaw (team leader), and Allison Wilcox.



Forward Together in Faith

SEPA SEBASTIAN KOLOWA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY (SEKOMU)

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

2015 Synod Assembly Report

In January 2005 when the SEPA SEKOMU Coordinating Committee had its first meeting there was tremendous energy and momentum as we were invited to join The Rev. Dr. Anneth Munga and representatives from the North East Diocese in Tanzania as they started a new University. Now 10 years later we can only thank God for what has brought about both in SEPA as well as at

the University. What a privilege it has been for our synod to be the first partner in what is now an international community surrounding multiple campuses, over 2,000 current students, and thousands of graduates making a difference in Tanzania with their knowledge of and experience with people with special needs.

The SEPA SEKOMU Coordinating Committee has faithfully met from our first meeting in January 2005 to this day. We know firsthand what the theme for this year's Synod Assembly – "Forward Together in Faith" means. We have faithfully worked Bega kwa Bega (shoulder to shoulder) with our brothers and sisters in Tanzania as well as others in the US and around the world. Below are some of the highlights from this past year.

Our role has changed from an active, fund raising group to a networking group attempting to leverage materials and supplies requested from the Management Team at SEKOMU. We had anticipated a visit from Dr. Edward Bagandanshwa who was to be traveling with Bishop Munga and Pastor Mwinuka during their visit in November. Many networking connections were made for his visit. Some of which were with Judith Heumann from the US Department of State, Ladi Semali from Penn State, Brooke Walker at Temple, others from the Overbrook School for the Blind, representatives from the International Association for Special Educators, Chester County Intermediate Unity and representatives from Howard University. Unfortunately Dr. Bagandanshwa was unable to come due to a soon to be expired passport and not sufficient time to get it renewed. We are hoping to invite him back and continue to leverage the network that is growing.

In August Ken Brown, Diane Espinald and Susan Pursch were invited to visit SEKOMU and meet with the Management Team. This was the first time we had the opportunity to meet with the Team and their colleagues and to learn about what they are doing in each of their departments and the visions not only for their departments but also for the University. This is an impressive group of men and women who are doing incredible work . The priorities defined by the Management Team are:

NETWORK! NETWORK! NETWORK! FOLLOW UP! FOLLOW UP!

1. Collaborations: (a) MoUs with Temple University & Penn State University (b) Revisit network Anneth Munga developed last time she was in SEPA – e.g. Judith Heumann
2. Instructors: (a) PhD faculty in all subjects for at least one semester (employee or volunteer) (b) Field instructors (at least 2 months) (c) Curriculum developers who can collaborate with us to develop new ones but also strengthening the Bachelor of Education Special Needs
3. Library Books (e.g. Special Education, Theology, Natural Sciences (in Braille and on tape, using portable Close Circuit TV – the ones using chargeable batteries)
4. Equipments for Modern Disability Center (e.g. Equipment and software for courses in Autism, Speech disorders and Cognitive disabilities, Braille Machines, Audiometry tools)
5. IT assistance (a) Skills (b) Tools (hard- and software)
6. Hot plates for Science laboratory (and other tools)
7. Funding for research projects for current staff and students and for SEKOMU graduates
8. Dispensary Equipments

9. Seeking opportunities for faculty to expand their credentials
10. Disability Center
11. Marketing SEKOMU's "Kiswahili for Beginners" Course

NETWORK! NETWORK! NETWORK! FOLLOW UP! FOLLOW UP!

Materials that have been requested are:

Equipment needed to support students who have visual challenges:

| S/N | Equipment | Costs in US\$ (per unit) | Quantity needed |
|-----|--|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Advanced Eureka (Braille computer with Braille printer and ordinary printer) | 3,600 | 1 |
| 2. | Dolphin pens | 178 | 6 |
| 3. | Rims of Braille paper | 12 | 100 |
| 4. | Perkins Braille machines | 1,200 | 10 |
| 5. | Digital recorders | 95 | 10 |

Apparatus needed for the Chemistry laboratory:

| S/N | Equipment | Costs in US\$ (per unit) | Quantity needed |
|-----|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | UV-Lamp Handheld | 119 | 1 |
| 2. | Hirsch Funnels | 28 | 10 |
| 3. | Capillary tubes sealed for melting point. | 17 | 2 pct |
| 4. | Capillary tubes opened in both ends | 15 | 2 pct |
| 5. | Melting point apparatus | 1,465 | 1 |
| 6. | Separating funnels 125 mLs | 15 | 20 |
| 7. | Retort stands with accessories | 30 | 20 |
| 8. | Measuring cylinder 10 mL | 3 | 20 |
| 9. | Erlenmeyer Flask with quick fit 125 mLs | 11 | 10 |
| 9. | Erlmeyer Flask with quick fit 50 mLs | 9 | 10 |
| 10. | Vacuum Filtering flask 250 mLs | 15 | 10 |
| 11. | Chemistry molecular models | 32 | 4 |
| 12. | Waste condenser | 30 | 4 |
| 13. | Beaker 125 mLs | 6 | 15 |
| 14. | Hot plate with magnetic stirrer | 15 | 2 |

If anyone in the synod is interested in becoming involved with this effort, or you have the capacity to gather or donate to the purchase of requested items, please contact the synod office.

Thanks to everyone in the synod for your tremendous support of the SEPA SEKOMU Coordinating Committee. We serve at your request and because God created the path between our synod and the North East Diocese and SEKOMU in Tanzania. We know and believe we are moving "Forward Together in Faith."

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 2014 and early 2015:

- † One of the highlights of 2014 was our SEPA Youth Urban Servant Trip to Boston. 52 youth, young adult and adult leaders packed into a bus with our trusty driver, Phil. We served in some of the neediest neighborhoods in Boston, learning about the effects of poverty in an urban setting and how we are able to make a difference through service. The Urban Servant Trip rotates with the



National Youth Gathering and South Dakota Servant Trip,

offering an immersion in service that helps shape and form our hearts and minds. Our synod's Youth Urban Servants have previously served in Chicago, Miami, and Detroit. Special thanks to



our planning team and co-leaders Christine Frye and Pastor Stacey-Kyle Rea.

- † Summer 2014 also included a trip to San Ramon, Costa Rica with an intergenerational group of 33 made our synod's third trip serving with Pura Vida Missions. We were once again blessed by the people of this beautiful country.

- † **New LYO Board members** were elected this winter. Emily Fowler from New Hanover, Gilbertsville was elected SEPA LYO president, Adrienne Narcavage from Immanuel, Norwood the Vice President and Filomena Alves from Holy Communion, Philadelphia 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. In 2014, the Junior Highers and adult leaders experienced Dunked and Stuffed using a baptism and communion theme to learn about the Lutheran sacraments. They enjoyed great learning experiences and fun games. Also raising enough money to support a new well. JYG 2015 will be October 9th-10th and 10th-11th at Refreshing Mountain Camp. Thank you to Kim Malcolm and Beth Way for serving as co-team leaders for JYG 2014 and the awesome team. Shout out to the speakers Naomi and Chandler Carriker for the message they shared with our youth.



- † 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.

- † Our **Senior High Youth Gathering (SHYG)** was held on February 20-22 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in King of Prussia. The theme was "Dig Deep, Build Faith and based on Luke 6: 47-49. Through a combination of offsite



service learning projects, dynamic speakers like Stephen Bouman, and amazing youth leadership in small group sessions, participants learned how to develop a strong faith foundation to build a genuine relationship with Christ. Thank you to every member of the LYO Board, SHYG planning committee, and support staff to allow this event to go off without a hitch! Thank you to team leaders, Kathleen Rosi and Christian Hicks and the planning team for bringing the event to life!

- † **Helping Hands Day 2015** was April 25. Inspired by 1 John 1:3-16, "Let us love by what we do and in truth," participants served at agencies in the city of Philadelphia and then joined for worship and reflection at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion in Philadelphia. This is a great day of faith-in-action involving more than 100 young people and adults.



- † For over a decade the SEPA Synod has provided service trip experiences for high school age youth. As these youth grow up, many have experienced a desire to remain connected and have attended these trips as young adult leaders. During the 2013 South Dakota Servant Trip, several young adults expressed the desire to have a **young adult servant trip**. This will become a reality in May of 2015. In April 2014, a group of young adults gathered for prayer and discernment conversation to see where God is leading them to serve next summer on this trip. It was decided that they were being called to rural ministry with the American Indian population. We decided to go to the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina. This trip is for those post high school through age 30. Registration opened in September 2014 and filled to our original max capacity of 18 in a matter of a few hours. After a little more research and much more prayer, we extended our capacity to 40 and again filled in a just a few hours. We have 39 participants who are eager to serve, learn and grow in faith this spring! In a time of Church's life when it often struggles to keep young adults engaged, we are excited about this ministry opportunity! Thank you to Emily Moser for leading this trip!

- † In about two short months, 500 of SEPA's youth will be traveling to the **National Youth Gathering** in Detroit, Michigan. Youth and chaperones will be "Rise Up" to Proclaim Story, Community, and Justice throughout the gathering. Robin Alderfer (St. Peter, North Wales), Hannah Knauss, and other key volunteers from around SEPA have been meeting to plan and prepare churches for this Churchwide youth event. The final Pre-Event gathering will take place Sunday, May 17th at St. Luke, Devon.



- † Many plans are already underway for the **2015-2016 school year**. They include: our fifth South Dakota Servant Trip next summer, the Junior Youth Gathering discussing vocation, an exciting Senior High Youth Gathering in February iChurch, and much more. Stay tuned to www.sepayouth.org for the full calendar of events and all the details. Check it out soon!

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,
 Doug Parry
 Outgoing LYO Board President

Emily Fowler
 LYO Board President

Carrie Johnston
 Interim Youth Ministry Assistant

Zones of Peace

Zones of Peace is an initiative of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia, seeking to build momentum among people of faith for creating peaceful neighborhoods and reducing violence throughout the region. Zones of Peace recognizes congregations and organizations doing exemplary work to further these goals, helps them network with one another, and provides continuing education to help them in their missions.

Honorees include large and small churches, synagogues, mosques, the National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia's Commission on Human Relations, the No Place for Hate program of the Anti-Defamation League, the Interfaith Walk for Peace and Reconciliation, the Inter-Faith Housing Alliance (Montgomery County), and other organizations working with neighborhood safety, reducing drug traffic, community health, urban farms, conflict resolution, youth development, interfaith understanding, immigration issues, and more.

Three Lutheran congregations were among the 20 founding organizations of Zones of Peace in 2009: St. John's, Ambler; St. John's, Melrose Park; and Grace, Wyndmoor. Since then, three more have been recognized for their efforts to address root causes of violence and build better communities: Prince of Peace, Lawndale; Rhawnhurst Turning Point (co-sponsored by Redemption, Rhawnhurst) and Upper Dublin, Ambler. They are among 23 congregations and organizations who have been honored. No Lutheran churches are among the nine nominees currently in the recognition process.

In the midst of so much violence in our region and around the world, the Religious Leaders Council is impressed with the quality and quantity of peace-making activities spearheaded by people of faith. It is aware that there are many more congregations and organizations deserving recognition as Zones of Peace.

To find out more about Zones of Peace or nominate your congregation or an organization whose work you admire, visit <http://www.interfaithcenterpa.org/si/zop/> or contact Pastor John Hougen, jbh@interfaithcenterpa.org.

Rev. John B. Hougen, PhD
Coordinator: Zones of Peace