

MINUTES
Of the 133rd MEETING
Of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
Of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
February 19, 2015
St. John's Lutheran Church, Phoenixville, PA

The Reverend Cynthia Krommes, Pastor, St. John, Phoenixville, welcomed Synod Council members and the Reverend Paul Townsend, Dean, Chester Conference, led worship.

Ms. Tracey Beasley, Vice President, called to order the One Hundred Thirty-third Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council at 4:42 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Synod Council as presented.

SETTING OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley presented the agenda for the 133rd meeting.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Ordinations

The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, reported that two pastors were ordained in 2015, bringing the total number of ordinations since September 2014 to six. The two pastors ordained in 2015 were the Reverend Philip Waselik, Emmanuel, Pottstown, January 24, 2015, and the Reverend Gerald Tancredi, Centennial, Kimberton, February 14, 2015.

Announcements

Bishop Burkat announced that the Reverend Raymond Miller, Secretary, had spoken to her before the Synod Council meeting on December 11, 2014, and indicated that he would not be seeking election to a fifth term as Secretary of this synod at the 2015 Synod Assembly. She expressed thanks to Pastor Miller for his sixteen years of service as Secretary. An event to celebrate Pastor Miller's service to the synod has been planned for May 15, 2015.

She also announced the retirement of Ms. Joanne Carlson as the Assistant to the Bishop for Global Vision and Events. An event to celebrate her service to the synod has been planned for Friday, June 19, 2015.

Bishop Burkat noted that twenty-five congregations are currently in mobility, an unusually large number. She thanked the deans for their hard work in providing support for congregations in transition.

Forward Together in Faith

Bishop Burkat noted that Ms. Ellen Daneke would report on the *Forward Together in Faith* campaign during the *Mission Moment* scheduled for later in the meeting.

New Pennsylvania Child Protection Law

Bishop Burkat continued: “Recently twenty-three pieces of legislation were enacted in Pennsylvania changing how Pennsylvania responds to child abuse. These changes affect all of our churches regarding the protection of our children. The law went into effect on December 31, 2014.

“Pennsylvania law now broadens the definition of who is a ‘mandated reporter’ to include the clergy, all paid church staff, and volunteers who work with children and youth in any capacity. The mandated reporter will be required to make reports of suspected abuse directly, rather than report it to a supervisor. Willful failure to report suspected child abuse can result in misdemeanor or felony charges, depending on the severity of the alleged abuse.

“Pennsylvania now requires *all* employees of the church and volunteers that work with children and youth (18 and under) to have background checks every 36 months. A letter to all rostered leaders was sent by Dr. Dolores Littleton, my Fitness for Ministry Advisor last week. The letter, which gives helpful information regarding the requirements of the law, has been uploaded to SharePoint. Also included is the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services fact sheet to help you to understand the law that has been enacted to protect our children. Another excellent resource for you and the members of your church can be found at: <http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/>. In addition, according to Act 31, all licensed professionals, employees who have direct contact with children and foster parents are also required to receive additional training on recognizing and reporting child abuse.

“Dr. Littleton and I strongly recommend that all pastors and rostered leaders whose daily work brings them into contact with children, and all church staff and volunteers working with children, complete a FREE three-hour online training conducted by the University of Pittsburgh at www.ReportAbusePa.Pitt.edu.”

Synod Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Officers Gathering

Bishop Burkat added that the annual congregational presidents, vice presidents, and officers gathering will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2015, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Jeff Kjellberg will join me to answer questions and to discuss the components of the *Forward Together in Faith* campaign and how congregational ministry and leadership will be equipped and supported through this new initiative.

Action on the Roster

Conference of Bishops Extension Requests

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

S. C. 15.02.01 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council requests an *On Leave from Call* extension for the Reverend Anita E. London from the ELCA Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops effective June 1, 2015.

S. C. 15.02.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council requests a *Family on Leave from Call* extension for the Reverend Gwendolyn S. King from the ELCA Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops effective October 1, 2015.

Transfer Requiring Synod Council Approval

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

S. C. 15.02.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the transfer of the Reverend Dr. David Lose to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, effective August 25, 2014.

Calls to Interim Ministry

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

S. C. 15.02.04 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire S. Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Rev. Katherine Cartwright Knodel to interim ministry at St. John Lutheran Church, Richlandtown, PA, starting February 1, 2015, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Cartwright Knodel resigns this call, whichever comes first.

S. C. 15.02.05 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire S. Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council calls the Rev. Jeffery B. Ziegler to interim ministry at Resurrection Lutheran Church, Yardley, PA, starting February 16, 2015, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Ziegler resigns this call, whichever comes first.

S. C. 15.02.06 RESOLVED THAT, upon the recommendation of Bishop Claire Burkat, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council Calls the Rev. Daryl Nelson to interim ministry at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Telford, PA, starting February 22, 2015, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Nelson resigns this call, whichever comes first.

Retirement Request

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

S. C. 15.02.07 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *retirement status to the Reverend Gordon E. Simmons, effective March 1, 2015.*

Bishop Burkat requested prayers for Pastor Simmons who is hospitalized.

On Leave from Call Request

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

S. C. 15.02.08 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants *on leave from call status to the Reverend Susan Kay Folks, 1st year, effective January 7, 2015.*

Information Not Requiring Action: Transfer

Bishop Burkat reported that the Reverend David Hinkelman transferred to the North Carolina Synod, effective January 6, 2015; the Reverend Timothy Taylor, to the North Carolina Synod, effective January 6, 2015; and the Reverend Marcia Thompson, to the Florida-Bahamas Synod, effective February 11, 2015.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Beasley referred Synod Council members to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee on January 22, 2015.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Miller expressed thanks to the Synod Council for the opportunity to serve as the Secretary of this synod for the past sixteen years. Bishop Burkat reviewed the process as outlined in the synod's constitution for electing a Secretary.

Appointment of the Treasurer

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Secretary Miller presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 15.02.09 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoints Ms. Janet Huber Neff as the Treasurer of this synod for a term ending 2019.

Bishop Burkat expressed appreciation for Ms. Neff's service as Treasurer of this synod.

Assignment of NWP/O Congregations to New Conferences

Secretary Miller thanked Vice President Beasley for her efforts in obtaining the preferences of the congregations of the former Northwest Philadelphia/Olney Conference for assignment to new conferences. He presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 15.02.10 RESOLVED THAT, in fulfilment of S12.01.04. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA*, the Synod Council approves the assignment of the congregations of the Northwest Philadelphia/Olney Conference, dissolved by action [S. C. 14.12.06] of the Synod Council at its meeting on December 11, 2014, to the following conferences: Lower Montgomery (Bethany, Roxborough; Christ Ascension, Chestnut Hill; and St. Michael, Germantown); Central Philadelphia (Living Gospel Ministries; St. Peter, West Oak Lane; and Trinity, Germantown); and Northeast Philadelphia (Reformation, West Oak Lane; St. Mark, North Broad; St. Paul, Olney; Tabor, Feltonville; and Zion, Olney).

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Report of the Treasurer

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

2014 Financial Results

Partnership Support was above budget by \$48,000. The stewardship team made phone calls inviting congregations to meet their intent or their previous year's giving.

Unrestricted fund results showed a net surplus for the year of \$647,959, mostly due to the sale of the property of St. James, Chalfont. The balance of the surplus came from some unrestricted gifts and a savings on expenses of \$115,000.

Temporarily restricted results showed expenses over income by \$75,174. Of this, \$40,000 was transferred from the Frank Clark Trust.

Mission results showed expenses over income by \$254,857. This includes a bequest of \$50,000 from the Hauenschild Trust.

Permanently restricted results showed expense over income by \$3,679.

The final fund surplus from all funds was \$314,249.

Balance Sheet

Ms. Neff noted the following: (1) Unrestricted cash and investments minus liabilities are \$754,995, and (2) the ELCA Liability is \$176,377. The balance that the synod owed from the prior year to the ELCA is paid off and this number represents the liability from January.

Revised Budget for 2015

The synod is anticipating the sale of a church in the amount of \$350,000.

Individual salaries have increased an average of 4%; however, due to change in personnel, the total salaries have decreased by 1%. The anticipated changes are that Ms. Joanne Carlson, Assistant to the Bishop for Global Vision and Events, will retire on July 1, 2015, and that an administrative assistant for youth and mission will be hired on a full time basis, from a ¾ time basis.

There is no budget for income or expense for ELCA ministries. It is assumed that congregations will be sending contributions directly.

Proposed Budget 2016

Since mission support in 2013 was over budget by \$38,000 and, in 2014, over budget by \$48,000, the synod is increasing mission support in 2016 by \$25,000.

The synod is again anticipating a church sale of \$350,000. The synod would receive 15% of the sale, which would be \$52,500, and the expected reimbursement for closed churches from the sale would be \$111,500.

The salary increase is minimal; it is expected to be 0.7%. The salary and benefits are expected to increase only \$309 from 2015. The reason for that is that the former Assistant to the Bishop for Global Mission and Events is being replaced by independent contractors who will be paid on a per diem basis with no benefits.

In 2016 the synod expects to replace the server at a cost of \$6,000.

Report of the Finance Committee

Consideration of the Proposed Budget for 2016

The Reverend Karl Richard, Chair, Finance Committee, presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 15.02.11 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council recommends that the 2015 Synod Assembly approve the 2016 proposed mission budget, with expenditures of \$2,340,649 and the synod's Proportionate Share to the ELCA being set at 50 percent.

Pastor thanked Mr. Guenter Wesch, who is concluding service as a committee member.

Consideration of the Guidelines for the Fund for Mission

Pastor Richard presented the final version of the Guidelines for the *Fund for Mission* for approval. He noted that the purpose of the *Fund for Mission* is to “serve as a vehicle for providing financial support for specific initiatives and strategies of the Synod, in its efforts to equip the saints and congregations for the work of ministry for building up of the body of Christ.” He noted that it is the understanding of the *Fund*’s Board of Trustees that distributions from the *Fund* in support of the synod budget would be used for the mission portions of the synod budget only.

Mr. Rod Rothermel moved to amend the following section under the subtitle **Distributions:**

“The Board of Trustees is authorized to distribute in any given fiscal year up to ~~10%~~ 5% of the monies present in the **Fund** as of February 1st without additional approval.”

Mr. Rothermel recommended the lower percentage, noting that distributions at the higher percentage could quickly diminish the *Fund* based on fluctuations in stock market returns.

The Synod Council approved the motion to amend the resolution by changing the percentage from “ten” to “five” and then approved the following resolution:

S. C. 15.02.12 RESOLVED THAT the Synod Council approves the Guidelines for the *Fund for Mission* as amended.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Reverend Regina Goodrich reported that the committee has received only two nominations, one for Synod Council and one for Churchwide Assembly. She noted that the deadline for nominations has been extended to March 31, 2015, and that the call for nominations would be re-posted on the synod website.

MISSION MOMENT

Bishop Burkat introduced Ms. Ellen Daneke, Chair of the *Forward Together in Faith* Campaign Committee. Ms. Daneke reported that each of the campaign’s teams has “a nice blend of lay and clergy.” She then reviewed the work of the six teams: Leadership, Communication, CAT/Strategy, Communications/Marketing, Lead Gift/Donor Development, and Congregational Phase/Ambassadors. In addition to these six teams, there are 27 Congregational Assessment Teams (CAT). Several of the campaign’s teams, she said, would present their materials and insights at the 2015 Synod Assembly.

She concluded by thanking Bishop Burkat and Synod Council members for their vision and foresight.

Bishop Burkat said, “It’s going to be fun at the Synod Assembly this year and full of high energy.”

NEW BUSINESS

Administration Committee

Ms. Doreen Kinzler, Chair, Administration Committee, presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 15.02.13 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the proposed agenda for the 2015 Synod Assembly as presented.

Ms. Kinzler noted that volunteers to serve as pages are needed at this year's assembly.

Constitution Committee

On behalf of the committee, the Reverend Jane Marston presented the following resolution, which the Synod Council approved:

S. C. 15.02.14 RESOLVED that the Synod Council approves the amendments to the constitution of St. Luke, Gilbertsville.

Ms. Susan Pursch expressed a desire for a strong Lutheran presence during Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia later this year. Bishop Burkat said that she would be in conversation with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia about Lutheran participation in the pope's visit.

Mr. Donald Gleiter offered prayer. The Synod Council adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

The 134th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is Thursday, April 16, 2015, 4:00 p.m., at a location to be announced.

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