

**MINUTES**  
**of the 140th MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**June 9, 2016**  
**The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia**

The Reverend Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam led the Council in devotions.

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the meeting to order at 4:24 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 139<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council as presented.

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly as presented.

**SETTING THE AGENDA**

Vice President Beasley presented the agenda for the meeting. She stated that she will include descriptions of the various committees of the Synod Council during her report. The Reverend Jane Marston noted that the Constitution Committee has two congregational constitutions to present for approval.

One of the positions on Synod Council not filled at the Synod Assembly was for Upper Montgomery Lay Female. Ms Cheryl Detweiler of Grace, Pottstown was put before the Synod Council to fill the open seat. The Synod Council unanimously elected Ms Detweiler, who then took her seat for the meeting.

**MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Dr. David Lose, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, shared about the initiative of the new school venture with the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Dr. Lose expanded on what he had shared at the Synod Assembly, and opened the floor for questions from the Council. An energetic conversation ensued. The Synod Council thanked Dr. Lose for his vision and his courage in helping the Seminary respond to the realities we face in this new day. Dr. Lose thanked Bishop Burkat, the Council, and the congregations of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod for their support, and requested our ongoing prayers for the staff of both schools as the process unfolds.

**BISHOP'S REPORT**

**Welcome New Synod Council Members**

Bishop Burkat extended words of welcome to those new to the Synod Council: the Reverend Regina D. Goodrich, Mr. Adam Clark, Ms Cheryl Detweiler, Mr. David Ehret, and Mr. William Graham. The Bishop also acknowledged those who have been re-elected to serve on Synod Council: the Reverend Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, the Reverend Dwight Mason, Mr. Emanuel Alves, and Ms Emily Fowler.

## Synod Assembly Review

Bishop Burkat expressed how glad she is that our Vice President, Tracey A. Beasley is back to health. This was the first time Vice President Beasley was not able to attend the Assembly. It is never the same without her energy and enthusiasm.

The Bishop also shared her great appreciation to Dr. Lose for his presentation at the Assembly.

Comments regarding Assembly, and particularly the use of the phone app:

Pr. Jane Marston: using the app worked well, but there were members of her congregation who did not have access, and so some info wasn't available except through app.

Mr. Adam Clark: I had no problem with the app on my phone, but another person with the same phone had issues. It might be helpful to have emergency hard copies.

Pr. Bryan Penman: Stating the Assembly is paperless very early would be helpful so voting members know, and have the information downloaded early.

Ms Emily Fowler: Perhaps we can post on the door – did you download the app?

## Offering for Flint, Michigan

The offering from the worship service at the Synod Assembly was designated to the Southeast Michigan Synod, our domestic partner synod, to give assistance to the water crisis in the city of Flint. We received \$5,400 at assembly, and the receipts as of this meeting are now over \$22,000! The funds are going to re-plumb Salem Lutheran Church in Flint so that it can be a source of safe drinking water to its neighbors.

## Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWC)

Bishop Burkat put forward two ministries to be considered as Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities. The first was The Well, a ministry extension of the Welcome Church in Philadelphia.

**S.C. 16.06.01 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve The Well as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community effective November 2016 to April 2017.**

Discussion was held about the nature of The Well, what a SAWC is, and how The Well differs, or is separate from, the ministry of the Welcome Church. The Well will be a ministry focused particularly on women in need of shelter, particularly during the winter months, and addressing the needs of these women. It is a venture which is being supported by the Philadelphia Diocese of the Episcopal Church and the Philadelphia Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

**The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.**

The second proposal regarded the Kairos Community. This is a “house church” that has been meeting in the Quakertown area for about 9 years, and is looking to grow into an intentional alternative for those for whom “church” has become foreign or off-putting. Mr. Robert Fisher has been leading this group, and is

in process to be authorized for Word and Sacrament ministry through the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) program.

**S.C. 16.06.02 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve Kairos Community as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community effective September 2016 to August 2017.**

Ms Janet Neff, treasurer, asked what the financial ramifications might be for the Synod in regard to the Kairos Community.

Bishop Burkat responded that there is no financial liability for the Synod at this time. Both the Kairos Community and the Well are receiving some grant money from the ELCA for starting up, but we as a Synod do not have any obligations. We don't know all of what this will be, but we want to give it a try for a year.

**The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.**

#### **Actions on the Roster**

The following actions on the roster were presented, all of which were **unanimously adopted by the Synod Council.**

*Renewal of Specialized Call:*

**S.C. 16.06.03 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve a one-year renewable term call for the Reverend Violet Little as Mission Developer at The Welcome Church effective September 1, 2016 and ending August 31, 2017.**

*Call to Interim Ministry:*

**S.C. 16.06.04 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Donna M. Wright to interim ministry at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Perkasio, PA beginning May 24, 2016, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Wright resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

*On Leave from Call Requests:*

**S.C. 16.06.05 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Ms. Suzanne M. Rigg, Diaconal Minister, on leave from call status, 2nd year, effective June 1, 2016**

**S.C. 16.06.06 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Wende Bleam on leave from call status, 3rd year, effective June 14, 2016**

**S.C. 16.06.07 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Althea M. Tysk on leave from call status, 3rd year, effective July 1, 2016**

**S.C. 16.06.08 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Bruce Thorsen on leave from call status, 3rd year, effective September 15, 2016**

*Retirement Requests:*

**S.C. 16.06.09 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Paul Beck retirement status effective June 1, 2016**

**S.C. 16.06.10 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Kim Guiser retirement status effective September 1, 2016**

Information Not Requiring Action

*Transfers:*

The Reverend Janet Peterman from Delaware-Maryland Synod effective May 19, 2016

The Reverend Peter Naschke to Delaware-Maryland Synod effective May 20, 2016

### **New Bishop Elected**

Bishop Burkat asked the Synod Council to keep the Delaware-Maryland Synod in prayer as they are transitioning to a new Bishop. The Reverend William J. Gohl, Jr. will succeed the Reverend Wolfgang Herz-Lane as Bishop, following a 227 to 225 vote by the Synod Assembly.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley expressed her thanks for the prayers, the fifteen cards and the flowers she received when she was ill during the Synod Assembly.

Bishop Burkat noted that Vice President Beasley will be on the ballot for Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at the Churchwide Assembly this August.

The Vice President passed out a sheet describing the committees of the Synod Council. She then asked the current committee chairs to describe their committees: the Reverend Jane Marston, Constitution Committee; Ms Susan Pursch, Audit Committee; Mr. Rod Rothermel, Investment committee; Ms Sue Massey, Finance Committee. There is not currently a chair of the Nominating Committee, nor of the Administration Committee, as the previous chairpersons' terms on Synod Council have ended.

Vice President Beasley then asked the members of Synod Council to list their top three choices of committees on which they would like to serve. The Bishop and the Vice President will use these preferences in making committee assignments.

### **Question Regarding Committee Terms**

Vice President Beasley shared that two different members of Synod Council, Pr. Tyler Rasmussen of the Executive Committee and Mr. Rod Rothermel of the Audit Committee, had independently raised a similar question about the terms of Synod Council members on committees, and the functioning of committees

between the time of the Synod Assembly and the reorganization of the Synod Council following its first meeting in June. By tradition the committees have ended their work with the Assembly, and then were reconstituted after the new Council has been seated. We now have several new realities: we have more clarity on what the committee responsibilities are, the committees have been more active than they have been in the past, and we now have committees with members that are not on Synod Council. The Executive Committee will discuss how we might revise our process to more effectively empower the service of the committees.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **Open Items for Synod Council from Assembly**

Secretary Richard described the Summary of Actions from the Synod Assembly. At the end of the Assembly there were two open seats on the Council, which fall to the Council to fill. One of the open positions was Upper Montgomery Lay Female, which the Council filled at this meeting by electing Ms Cheryl Detweiler. The second position is Youth Female. Contacts were made with regard to the Youth Female position, but as of this meeting a candidate willing to serve had not been ascertained.

Since the time of the Assembly we learned that Ms Jessica Smith, elected to be Lay Female at Large, is ineligible, as she is not currently an active member of a congregation in the Synod. As a result we need to find a person to fill this seat. The news of the open position of Lay Female at Large came too close to the meeting date to approach possible candidates.

### **Churchwide Assembly Position**

Just prior to this meeting Ms Jill Meuser informed the Synod Office that she will not be able to attend the Churchwide Assembly this August. Discussion ensued on how this position would be filled. A question was raised whether the person who had received the next highest number of votes would be the replacement. Bishop Burkat indicated that this is not always the case. There is no automatic process for filling open positions; the Synod Council is entrusted with the choice of who the replacement might be. After continued discussion without clear resolution, the Reverend Thomas Lang moved that the matter be referred to the Executive Committee for action.

**The Synod Council approved the motion.**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Ms Janet Huber Neff, treasurer, referred the members of the Council to her previously submitted report. She briefly reviewed the categories listed in the budget and reports. These include the Unrestricted, Temporarily Restricted, and Permanently Restricted Funds. Ms Neff described the differences between, and uses of, these various funds. She also noted that there would be the opportunity for new members of the Council to go into deeper detail if desired at an orientation session following the meeting.

Ms Neff noted our receipts from congregations are \$53,000 behind budget, and \$12,000 behind what we had received last year at this time. When compared with the support from 2014, we are experiencing significant decreases in this support each year.

## **Forward Together in Faith Update**

We have received donations of \$114,563, of which \$32,150 comes from pledges. The total amount of pledges received to date is \$166,408. The pledge balance at the current time is \$134,258.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Constitution Committee**

The Reverend Jane Marston, chair, brought forward two congregational constitutions for approval by the Synod Council:

**S. C. 16.06.11 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the Congregational Constitution for Tabernacle Lutheran Church, West Philadelphia, PA.**

**S. C. 16.06.12 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the Congregational Constitution for St. John Lutheran Church, Folcroft, PA.**

**The Synod Council unanimously approved these constitutions.**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms Susan Pursch asked if it would be possible to receive an update on more than just the financial piece of the Forward Together in Faith Campaign. Could a report come from the Team?

Bishop Burkat shared that there are twenty churches asking for ambassadors. The use of Congregational Connectors did not work. This concept of Ambassadors seems to be getting a better response.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation**

Pr. Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam asked if there are any plans for the Synod to mark the 500 anniversary of the Reformation.

Bishop Burkat stated that Conferences are being encouraged to make plans to celebrate with their congregations. We as a Synod are approaching the Philadelphia Diocese to see if we might do a similar service as what will be done in Lund, Sweden with the Pope. We are doing a second Lutherland trip. We may have other speakers such as Dr. Kirsi Stjerna.

Are we doing a big celebration at the Convention Center? Probably not. We don't have the time or the finances.

#### **Election of the Executive Committee**

Clergy nominations:

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, nominated by the Reverend Jane Marston

The Reverend Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, nominated by The Reverend Lyzette Rios-Sanchez

The Reverend Regina D. Goodrich, nominated by Ms Emily Fowler

Lay female nominations:

Ms Joyce Maloney, nominated by Ms Sue Massey

Ms Emily Fowler nominated herself

Ms Susan Pursch, nominated by Mr. Rod Rothermel; declines nomination

Lay male nominations:

Mr. Rod Rothermel, nominated by Ms Susan Pursch

Mr. Adam Clark, nominated by Ms Emily Fowler

Mr. Robert Hensil, nominated by the Reverend Jane Marston

The following persons were elected to the Executive Committee:

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, Ms Joyce Maloney, and Mr. Robert Hensil

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

The 141<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be September 22, 2016, 4:00 PM

The Reverend Karl M. Richard,

Secretary

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

*Approved by Synod Council September 22, 2016*