

**Addendum
to the Report of the
Synod Council**



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL
ASSEMBLY
OF THE SOUTHEASTERN
PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA**

**Forward Together in Faith
Still Reforming...**

May 6-7, 2016

**Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse
Telford, Pennsylvania**

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Forward Together in Faith

Still Reforming...

May 6-7, 2016

**Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse
Telford, Pennsylvania**

Friday Morning, May 6, 2016

Service of Holy Communion

The Service of Holy Communion began at 9:30 a.m. The Reverend Claire Burkat, Bishop, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, was the Presiding Minister and Preacher; Ms. Tracey Beasley, Vice President, was ill and unable to attend the Assembly, and so the Reverend Martin Seltz, Publisher for Worship, Music and Congregational Life resources at Augsburg Fortress Publishing and a presenter for the Assembly, filled the role of Assisting Minister; Mr. Clarence Smith and Ms Courtney Smith were the Readers, and the Reverend Linnea Clark and Ms Yvonne Lembo were musicians for the service.

The Lessons for the day were Leviticus 1:1-2, 15-18 and 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8. The Gospel for the day was Matthew 22:34-40.

Following the sermon, Bishop Burkat installed the following Rostered Leaders Called to Specialized Ministries: the Reverend Bradley Burke, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult Ministry and Spiritual Formation; the Reverend Ann Confer Martens, Associate Chaplain at the Hill School, Pottstown, PA; the Reverend Patricia Neale, Executive Director of Feast of Justice, Northeast Philadelphia; and the Reverend William Rex, Deployed Port Chaplain in Philadelphia for Seafarers International House.

At the time of the Prayers of Intercession the Assembly commemorated the Synod's Faithful Departed since the last assembly: the Reverend James A. Daniels, the Reverend Ernest G. Schmidt, and the Reverend Edward Treichel.

As part of the worship celebration the choir from Silver Springs – Martin Luther School presented "Every Praise" by Hezekiah Walker.

Bishop Burkat's Sermon

Loving God, Opening Doors *(excerpts from the Bishop's sermon)*

"Red doors mean a lot to us as Lutherans. Like Worship, *our* worship, sacraments, sanctuary, an oasis of spirituality in the midst of this crazy world. But when we're in church on Sunday morning or Saturday night, on the other side of that door is FEAR.

I have never heard such disrespectful, insulting and hate mongering rhetoric in my life. I know our founding fathers and mothers had their hateful moments in which juicy betrayals led to loathing and even murder.

The difference between this moment in American history and previous times of conflict is this: between 24 hour news blasts, social media and constant smart phone updates, you don't have to be in the center of the political ring to get bruised by hate and slimed by venom. No one is untouched - we're all affected. The way public rhetoric is escalating, especially in a presidential election year, 2016 may prove to be *the Year of Fear*.

From what I understand the percentage of Americans saying that they are afraid for the future of the country is way up. Large portions of the population are extremely vulnerable to fear-based messaging - people of color, Muslims, the LGBTQ community, Immigrants, refugees, and women are all targets of misplaced fear.

We are gathered today as people of faith belonging to the Lutheran tribe of the Christian tradition, and together we represent thousands and thousands of people of faith who long to hear a word of hope and constructive action. Once again we are called to be a REFORMING People.

Now more than ever, and this year in particular, we are called to respond to the commandment by our Lord to Love God and also Love our neighbor. This is critical to our desire to love God with all our hearts, souls and minds in order to through HIM bless, heal and reconcile the world. This is the Reformation so needed today. Luther himself insisted that Christ's command to love God and neighbor places demands on me to serve my neighbor in need. Whether I feel like it or not. I have to go outside this door.

A kind of war has come to our door, to our neighborhoods, to our schools and work places. People are in danger of being killed just for being who God made them to be.

We live in a culture and a world where what was done to Jesus can be done to any human being - including an Iraqi citizen, or an American citizen; a 17-year-old black boy wearing a hoodie, or a 3-year-old Syrian boy washed up on the shores of Turkey; an undocumented hotel maid or a young woman killed riding her bike in Northern Liberties; a criminal terrorist or an innocent man.

Reforming the Church also means reforming neighborhoods and relationships. It means getting out of our comfort zones to love our neighbor in the kind of way that makes a difference to the whole community. Just like we are teaching our children to stand up to bullying, we must find our voices and our backbones to stand up to racial, gender, religious, and economic bullying and hateful talk.

So our task is to answer the prophetic call to justice, and to love and protect our neighbors, *even as they also will love and protect us...* While there is fear on the other side of this door, there is *also* a long line of faithful people who take their religions and traditions outside their houses of worship and out into the world, and are ready to meet us on *the other side of this door*, helping to create on the outside what we preach on the inside.

Keep your eyes on these doors, today, tonight, tomorrow and in your own church. Watch what God is doing with these doors, with your doors.

In the meantime attend to your ministry and to your vocation as Christians with confidence, good humor, perseverance, fierce advocacy for justice, and great joy knowing that you are surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses to support and encourage you in Loving God and Loving your neighbor as yourself."

Order for the Opening of the Assembly

At 11:02 a.m. Bishop Burkat led the Order for the Opening of the 29th annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Mr. Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Interpretation and Communications, was asked to play a video showing interviews with various people describing what it is to be the Synod and the Church together.

Welcome and Introductions

Bishop Burkat welcomed voting members and visitors to the Synod Assembly, and especially those for whom this is their first time attending a Synod Assembly.

The Bishop thanked those who led, and will lead worship over the course of the Assembly: Pastor Jennifer Ollikainen, Chairperson, and members of the Assembly Worship Team: Pastor Linnéa Clark, Pastor Linda Manson, and Pastor Bryan Penman.

Thank you to the musicians who are leading us throughout these days: Pastor Linnéa Clark, Ms. Yvonne Lembo and Pastor Tyler Rasmussen.

Thank you to the choir of Silver Springs – Martin Luther School.

Thank you to our prayer pause leaders: Pastor Mukesh Cheedie, Pastor Lynette Chapman, Seminarian Lenny Duncan, Pastor Carlton Rodgers, Mr. Henry Strobel and Pastor Daniel Spigelmyer.

Thank you to our prayer station leaders: Pastor Fritz Fowler, Pastor Stephen Keiser, Pastor Regina Goodrich, Pastor Linda Manson, Pastor Dwight Mason, Pastor Patricia Davenport, Pastor Christopher Weidner, Pastor David Oppold and Pastor Erika Strobel-Wesch

And thank you to all 81+ people, who are serving as worship assistants at various times throughout the Assembly.

Bishop Burkat introduced the presenters for the Assembly, our keynote presenter, the Reverend Dr. Kirsi Stjerna, Professor at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, here to share the ways the major reforms of the 16th Century affect our lives together as Lutherans in the 21st Century, and the Rev. Martin Seltz, Publisher for Worship, Music and Congregational Life at Augsburg Fortress Publishers, here to outline resources to help congregations celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation next year.

Bishop Burkat then introduced the ELCA Churchwide Representative, the Reverend Dr. Albert Starr, Jr., Director, Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries Program Director, African Descent Ministries, and Mr. Clarence Smith, a member of the ELCA Church Council; the Parliamentarian, the Reverend Dr. Larry Smoose; the Regional Representative of Portico Benefit Services, Ms. Barbara Debski; the Mission Investment Fund Representative, Mr. Gerry Lauro; Synod Officers and Synod Council members; and the Committee of Deans.

The Bishop expressed her thanks on behalf of the Synod to the Reverend Ellen Meissgeier for her service as the Director of Mobility. Pastor Meissgeier has stepped aside from serving in this role. The Bishop also thanked the Reverend Marcia Bell for agreeing to serve in this important position for the Synod. She expressed her thanks to Mr. Bill Harp for his work in the Synod office on these important and confidential matters, and thanked the Reverend Donna Wright for agreeing to serve as the Chairperson of the Transitional Ministry Team.

She invited rostered leaders, new to the synod since the last assembly, to introduce themselves.

Report of the Registrar

Ms Cynta Outterbridge, Registrar, reported that the total number of voting members was 467, the total number of voting members registered was 401, and the number of voting members needed for a quorum was 234. Bishop Burkat declared a quorum.

Report of the Secretary

The Reverend Karl Richard, Secretary, presented, and the assembly approved, the proposed program as printed in *The Bulletin of Reports*. He then presented as information the Rules of Procedure as printed in *The Bulletin of Reports*. By common consent, the assembly approved the following rule: "The Synod Assembly shall limit each speaker from the floor to two minutes, alternating *for* and *against* whenever possible, and allowing someone who has not spoken on a particular issue from the floor to speak before someone speaks a second or additional time."

He reported that the Synod Council approved the minutes of the 28th annual assembly on June 9, 2015.

He presented as information the reports of the various committees, task forces, organizations, and institutions of the synod.

Secretary Richard then presented, on behalf of the Synod Council, a proposal to amend the Constitution, By-Laws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA by deletion of the by-law regarding the Dean of Interim Ministry:

- S12.01.12.** The interim pastors rostered in this synod in assembly shall elect a dean, who shall be an interim pastor under call by the Synod Council, or actively seeking placement for an interim call, serving within the territory of this synod. The term of the Dean of Interim Ministry shall be the same as specified in 12.01.13. It is understood that the Dean of Interim Ministry advises, assists, and confers with the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod as specified in S12.01.14 and relates to, consults with, and convenes the Interim Ministry gatherings of this synod. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Dean of Interim Ministry, the interim pastors rostered in this synod in assembly shall elect a dean for a new three-year term.

S. A. 16.05.01 Whereas the number of trained Interim Pastors has decreased over the past decade, and

Whereas the way in which we are approaching the Interim process has changed, utilizing more part-time persons, including lay persons, as consultants in the process, and

Whereas the Synodical Staff position which oversaw personnel aspects of the Interim Pastors no longer exists, and

Whereas the Bishop of this Synod needs the ability to have oversight of the personnel issues related to Interim Pastors and flexibility over how to best receive the insights of Interims in the Mobility process, and

Whereas this may be more effectively accomplished through an appointed person as Director of Interim Ministry rather than in the current configuration of a Dean of Interim Ministry,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in Assembly amend the Constitution, By-Laws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA by deletion of by-law S12.01.12.

The Reverend Serena Sellers, pastor of Peace, Tohickon asked if this would remove all reference to representation of Interim Ministry at the Dean's meeting from the Synod Constitution.

Secretary Richard responded that it would remove reference to such representation from the constitution and by-laws, but that it is the intention that the Director of Interim Ministry would be present at the Committee of Deans as was the Dean of Interim Ministry.

The Reverend Donna Wright, Interim Pastor at Holy Trinity, Wallingford, spoke in favor of the resolution, expressing her appreciation for the give and take that occurs between the Interim Pastors and the Bishop, and the way in which the Bishop takes the concerns of interim ministry seriously.

An affirmative vote of two-thirds vote is needed to amend the constitution and by-laws.

The Synod Assembly adopted the resolution

Report of the Nominating Committee

Ms. Joyce Brown Adams, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the report. She stated that nominations may be made from the floor for all positions being considered at the Assembly.

TICKET 1 – Consultation Committee – clergy (one to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The committee nominated the Reverend Sandra Brown, Peace, Bensalem.

The Reverend Leslie Richard, Grace, Broomall nominated the Reverend Raymond A. Miller, St. John, Quakertown.

With no other nominations, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 1 closed.

TICKET 2, Synod Council – clergy (Three to be elected for terms ending 2019)

The committee nominated the Reverends Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, Grace, Drexel Hill; Regina D. Goodrich, Mediator Lutheran; David Charles Lutcher, Grace, Hatfield, and Dwight Mason, Good Shepherd, Philadelphia.

There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 2 closed.

TICKET 3, Synod Council – Delaware Conference Representative (Lay, Man) (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The committee nominated Mr. David Ehret, Grace, Broomall.

There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Ehret elected.

TICKET 4, Synod Council – Northeast Philadelphia Conference Representative (Lay, Man) (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The committee nominated Mr. Adam Clark, Zion, Olney.

Mr. Thomas Salber, Prince of Peace, Philadelphia nominated Mr. William Graham of Prince of Peace Lutheran, Philadelphia.

With no other nominations, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 4 closed.

TICKET 5, Synod Council – Upper Montgomery Conference Representative (Lay, Woman) (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

There were no nominations brought forward.

There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat stated that this ticket will be referred to Synod Council, which will fill the position.

TICKET 6, Synod Council – Lay Man at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The committee nominated Mr. Amos Garsaynee, St. John, Folcroft, and Mr. John Ungerman, St. James, Pottstown. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 6 closed.

TICKET 7, Synod Council – Lay Woman at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The committee nominated Ms Joyce Brown Adams, Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne; Ms Julie Funk, Living God, Honey Brook; Ms Doreen Kinzler, St. John, Philadelphia; and Ms Sandra Zimmerman, St. John, Phoenixville.

There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 7 closed.

TICKET 8, Synod Council – Young Adult Lay Woman (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The committee nominated Ms Jessica Smith, St. John, Center Square.

Ms Emily Fowler, St. Luke, Devon, nominated herself.

With no other nominations, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 8 closed.

TICKET 9, Synod Council – Young Adult, Lay Man (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The committee nominated Mr. Emanuel Alves, Holy Communion, Philadelphia.

There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Alves elected.

TICKET 10, Youth Representative, Lay Woman (One to be elected for a term ending 2018)

There were no nominations brought forward.

There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat stated that this ticket will be referred to Synod Council, which will fill the position.

Forward Together in Faith Campaign Report

The Reverend Brian Penman, St. Mark, Conshohocken, spoke about the Forward Together in Faith Campaign, and why we need to think differently.

He pointed out how over the years we have changed the ways we try to grow the Church. In the 16th century, we tried to grow the church through indulgences. In the 17th and 18th centuries we tried colonization and deploying missionaries. In the 20th century we relied on Sunday schools and denominational loyalty. What do we do in the 21st century? These are challenging times to be church, at least the way we have been used to doing church. But the Spirit is still moving among us, using us, and calling us into the future. We are being called Forward Together in Faith to witness to the gospel in new ways - called to connect, innovate, communicate and equip.

Pastor Penman shared how last year we gave gifts to begin this process. In the area of communicating, Faith Philadelphia won the gift of a communications audit. They started learning how to use social media to get word out to the community about their ministry.

In the area of connections, St. Philip and Christ the King deaf Church began a ministry to refugees. A check was presented by Pr. Penman for their ongoing work in this area.

The Mission Assessment Profile, a successor to the Church Assessment Tool, now has Navigators available to assist congregations as they develop their missional plan. University Lutheran shared how the MAP process has had an impact on their ministry. It assisted them in the call of their new pastor, their council learned of a desire to pair with other congregations, and the council now alternates council meetings from business one month to visioning the next. Pr. Penman then introduced several new grants which congregations can enter a drawing to win. There is a \$1,000 networking grant for a training of your congregation's choice, another \$1,000 grant innovation grant to try something new, a free communications audit, or a free Ministry Assessment Profile for your congregation.

The goal is to help congregations do ministry in this century. It is not a great time to *do* church, it is a great time to *be* church, as God is moving us Forward Together in Faith.

Keynote Presentation

Bishop Bukat welcomed the Reverend Dr. Kirsi Stjerna as our Keynote presenter.

The Rev. Dr. Kirsi Stjerna is a native of Finland, and an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. She currently serves on the faculty at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University in an endowed chair for the First Lutheran, Los Angeles/Southwest California Synod Professor of Lutheran History and Theology.

Dr. Stjerna previously served at the Lutheran Theological seminary at Gettysburg as Professor of Reformation Church History and Director of the Institute for Luther Studies and Luther Colloquy. Dr. Stjerna will continue in her appointment as Docent in the Theological Faculty at the University of Helsinki. Dr. Stjerna received her Ph.D. degree in Religious and Theological Studies in 1995 from Boston University.

Dr. Stjerna said she is happy to be here. It was difficult to leave Gettysburg to move to California, but she is glad to be invited back home to Pennsylvania. She shared greetings from the students and faculty of Berkley; from Gettysburg, where here family is (her husband and their dog) and from Finland.

Dr. Stjerna has many connections to Philadelphia. She had her first teaching position at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, her daughter is a student at Temple, and two years ago, Dr. Stjerna became citizen of the United States right here in Philadelphia.

Dr. Stjerna then began her reflections on the Reformation.

We are Reformation People. Martin Luther and Katarina von Bora, men and women of faith, were and are about reformation.

The Reformation was a Word Event.

Proclamation of the Word was central. You need to come to worship. You need to see worship as a vibrant part of your life. We need to HEAR the word, not just see the liturgy.

Placing the Word of God, the Bible, in the hands of people was critical. While Luther and the reformers had the printing press and other means to reproduce the Bible, it was illegal for many years. By contrast, we have many bibles we do not open or use, when they were seen as a **gift** in Luther's day!

The Bible needs to be in language that people can understand. Luther felt a need to use his schools as a translator to make sure the people could understand the Word. We need to keep teaching with fresh interpretation.

Reformation as a Word event led to Education – a reformer who studied with Luther and Melancthon felt the need to bring the Bible to Finland, but there was no written Finnish language at that time. So he created a written version of the heretofore only spoken language and taught it so that people could read the Bible.

Reformation as a Word event calls for the Eradication of poverty – “There should be no beggars among us.” A woman picked up on the idea of hymns as a way to convey the word of God, so she wrote songs to make connection between faith and life, writing hymns about childbirth and death.

The Reformation led to Spirituality being reformed.

Recognizing we are justified by grace, that we are all “*simul justus et peccator*” allows us to see the grace that comes to us through the Word. It leads us to see the holiness of all aspects of life. Luther would say that when a wife cares for her baby, this is a holy thing, and a father washing diapers not an effeminate fool, but God smiles because he does so in Christian love.

A living and present sense of the holy in all life led to the renaming of God's Real presence. It meant equality and empowerment of all people. This awareness of our common humanity and equality before God is why Luther insisted that all receive bread *and* wine.

This equality called for the teaching of all – girls and boys, peasants and wealthy. There became a need for an educated ministry so that the Word is honored and well taught. The Bishop's role was for the unity of church, and the teaching of the faith. The Catechisms were handbooks for spirituality – both the Small and the Large for quick and in depth study. The catechism is meant for daily use. Luther used this to give us building blocks to continue to build in faith. Luther was a very spiritually enlightened man.

The Reformation redefined Sexuality and Marriage

Luther and the reformers held an appreciation of life as “imago Dei.” This led to an appreciation of sexuality as God's gift. There was recognition of holiness in human relations. All should have right to marry, not be forced to choose between family and faith. Marriage is not a sacrament, but a human contract. If not sacrament, what is church's role? To bless and to pray.

The Reformation occurred because of Biblical Interpretation

The Reformer's bottom line: “I want to instruct and console consciences, and advise them as much as I can.” To do this Luther had to read his bible differently, listen to people, read the Bible again, see new things, and interpret for the people. This process of Biblical interpretation caused Luther to start reading with new eyes. It leads to constantly retranslating the text in light of the current circumstance. It leads to challenging tradition, and at times challenging leaders. It led to the awareness that grace is free, and in that grace, Christians are free. And as people freed by Christ, they are to free others.

Bishop Burkat thanked Dr. Stjerna for her presentation, and then called on the Reverend Mukesh Cheedie, pastor of Emmanuel, Souderton, to lead the Assembly in prayer, after which the Assembly recessed for lunch until 2:00 p.m.

Friday Afternoon, May 8, 2015

Prayer

The Reverend Lynette Chapman, pastor of Trinity Quakertown, led the Assembly in prayer.

Balloting

The Reverend Rebecca Eisenhart, Chairperson of the Committee on Elections, explained the balloting procedure. The assembly then cast votes for Ticket 1, Ballot 1; Ticket 2, Ballot 1; Ticket 4 Ballot 1; and Ticket 8, Ballot 1.

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

Bishop Burkat introduced the Reverend Dr. David Lose, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia to speak about the new venture with the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

President Lose began his remarks with a short video, “Behold I am doing a NEW THING.”

There are five things I want to share:

First of all, thanks. Thank you from the students, the staff and the faculty of both schools, but especially the seminary in Philadelphia. Thank you for your support, for your gifts, and for your prayers. It is both a disruptive and exciting time. We covet your prayers as we move into a future that is hopeful, but not yet determined.

Second, the work thus far is going very well. We have eight working groups with a Steering committee overseeing it. We are on track with our creditors and have had encouraging words from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. We are on track to open this new venture by next summer. Both boards voted unanimously to continue the work that has been begun.

Third, why are we doing this? We are working to respond to the need to develop new leaders for the Church. Across the Church there are 600 unfilled pastoral calls. This number represents just the ordained positions, and not the other leadership needs of the Church. We anticipate this number to be 1,000 by the end of the decade. We have never needed trained leaders more. But we cannot afford to train leaders in the way in which we have been. The way in which we are currently configured is financially unsustainable.

Fourth, the hope for this venture is to train leaders to respond to the new reality of this century. We are looking to create leaders that are responsive to the world, and do so in a way that is fiscally viable. We are trying to make the process more accessible and affordable through co-op programs where students will serve in a congregation for a half week and be in full-time study the other half, distributive learning programs that allow people to remain where they are while studying for ministry, full scholarships for all ELCA candidates, and matching contributions made for students of other denominations.

Fifth, we ask for your support. We ask for your prayers and encouragement, but we especially need your financial support. We can't just sponsor "our" students; we need to support leaders for the whole Church. We need to identify and encourage people to enter leadership in the Church. If each congregation could give \$20 a week from their offerings it would make a huge difference in making leadership development possible.

Thank you, and thank God for what God is doing through you.

Reformation 500

Bishop Burkat invited the Reverend Stephen Godsall-Myers to share an update from the Reformation 500 committee.

Pr. Godsall-Myers said we are still looking for 95 likes on Facebook page! The committee encourages people and congregations to share with others what they are doing to celebrate the Reformation. One of the things we are doing as a Synod is coordinating another trip to Germany. He invited the Reverend Soenke Schmidt-Lange, coordinator of the trip, to come forward and describe it.

Pr. Schmidt-Lange shared there is a group of 21 from 8 congregations who have signed up to go to "Lutherland." There is still space available. This will be a well-organized tour with fine accommodations, and it is quite economical. You will get to see Leipzig, Erfurt, Halle (the home of Muhlenberg) and Wittenberg. The tour will be led by Pr. Schmidt-Lange and his wife Ann, so

you will be able to understand everything that is said. We will be celebrating the past, but learning how to meet the culture of our time with a sense of reformation.

If you would like more information, have an idea, want to be a part of our team, or wish to share what you are doing, contact Pr. Godsall-Myers at wittsgm@gmail.com.

Recognition of Distinguished Alum

Bishop Burkat noted that this year at the seminary our former Bishop, the Reverend Roy Almquist, was recognized as a distinguished alum of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. The Assembly expressed its appreciation with applause.

Report of the Treasurer

Ms Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer, highlighted portions of the *Financial Statements and Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants*, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2016.

At the end of our fiscal year we have total cash and investments of \$1,874,774. Our total net assets are 2,890,610. These are distributed among the three funds we have to operate the Synod: unrestricted, \$1,772,697; temporarily restricted, \$414,998; and permanently restricted funds, \$702,915.

The Unrestricted Fund includes the operating fund, the Fund for Mission, real estate, and miscellaneous ministries. The Temporarily Restricted Fund is basically “in and out” as we receive money for a particular purpose and expend it as the event comes along. The Permanently Restricted Fund includes money we receive from interest on Trusts, designated for particular purposes.

Receipts:

The amounts we received over the fiscal year include Mission Support from congregations of \$1,970,306, which is down from last year. Other Contributions of \$452,193 from some trusts, the All Saints appeal, grants and miscellaneous receipts. Registration Fees of \$189,055 for the Assembly, the Bishop’s Convocation, and various Youth events. Investment Income of (\$8,110), a negative this year as the value of our assets has declined. Receipts from the Sale of Properties of \$188,000.

For your information, we have sold the property of the former Redeemer, East Falls for a net revenue of \$435,000 and we just sold the property of the former Messiah, Newtown Square for a net revenue of \$788,000. 15% will go to the operating fund. The remainder, after clearing expenses related to the properties we have, will go to the Fund for Mission. This will be reflected in the revised budget for 2016.

Our mission support from congregations has decreased from \$2,347,772 in 2010 to \$1,970,306 in 2015. As we have experienced a decrease in mission support from congregations we have not budgeted any increase for the coming year, and only a modest increase for the following year. This does not mean you are not welcome to give more!

Out of 119 congregations which submitted their financial information, 22 have given 10% or more of their regular giving by members, 42 have given between 5% and 9.9%, 38 have given between .1 and 4.9%, and 17 have given no support. 76 congregations have maintained or increased their support for the coming year.

Expenses:

Operating Expenses of \$1,346,299

ELCA Proportionate Share (50% of what we receive from congregational mission support) \$985,153

Property management (expenses for properties of closed congregations) \$127,828

Distributions to other agencies \$194,449

Mission Expense \$326,819

Grants to Congregations \$35,283

Total expenses of \$3,018,831

Where does the money go?

Partnerships of \$1,251,357. We are an interdependent church. We support the ELCA with 50% of congregations partnership support. We also support ministries such as the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Bear Creek Camp, Lutheran Disaster Response, and Lutheran Advocacy and other ministries.

Mission of \$326,819. We added staff in the person of Pr. Brad Burke, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult Ministry and Spiritual formation. This includes money for the Welcome Church, Living Gospel Ministries, Junior Youth Gatherings and Senior High Youth Gatherings. Some of these ministries will never pay for themselves, but they are what we are being called to do. This part of the budget will always have a deficit, which is why we are working to build up funds for mission.

Office of the Bishop \$999,621. This is not what we call the Synod Office. It includes the Committee of Deans, Communications, Finance and Development, and the Forward Together in Faith Campaign.

Administraton \$352,660. This is what it costs to run the office: office supplies, computers, websites, etc.

Leadership \$88,374. This is expenses for candidacy and mobility.

Ms Neff presented the following resolution:

S. A. 16.05.02 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly receives as information the report of the auditors of the synod's financial statements for the fiscal year ending 2015.

The assembly adopted the resolution.

Report of the Finance Committee

Ms Sue Massey, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the proposed 2017 budget. She stated “Most people think of budgets as boring, but as a numbers person, I like to see how the numbers fit into the puzzle of our ministry and see how the Holy Spirit will lead us. The Synod encourages YOU to be one of the pieces and encourages your congregations to support the Synod in the various missions in which we are involved. And as stewards of the resources that God has provided, we are called to respond.

She highlighted the following points: because partnership support is down, we budgeted in line with 2015 actual receipts. We will see some revenue from the sale of properties, some of which will go to the operating budget, the rest of which will go to the Fund for Mission. We are committed to keeping our partnership with the ELCA at 50% of congregational mission support.

Ms Massey invited comments or questions from the floor.

Mr. Peter Quigley, Little Zion, Telford said “we have had to deal with shortfalls over the years. With the revenues down since 2010, where are we cutting spending?”

Ms Neff said we have made significant cuts since 2010, but she does not have that specific detail with her. She will research some of the details and share that later.

Mr. Robert Werner, Good Shepherd, Southampton said I see there is \$500,000 in the budget from closed churches, is this a realistic number?

Ms Neff stated that we have sold the properties of the former Redeemer and the former Messiah, 15% of which will go to the operating expenses of the Synod.

Mr. Everett Wick, St. Andrew, Perkasio, asked if we are being asked to adopt a balanced budget.

Ms Neff responded yes, we are proposing a balanced budget, and are hoping for a small surplus.

Ms Massey presented the following resolution:

S. A. 16.05.03 RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the 2017 budget as presented.

The assembly adopted the resolution.

Bishop Burkat thanked Treasurer Janet Neff, Ms Sue Massey, chairperson, the members of the Finance Committee, and Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant, for their hard work, many meetings, phone and email conversations in preparation of the proposed budget.

Recognition of Anniversary Celebrants

The following persons were recognized for significant anniversaries of ordination:
Celebrating his 60th anniversary: The Rev. Ray Nyce

Celebrating their 40th anniversary:

The Rev. James E. Munz
The Rev. James H. Wolford
The Rev. Paul M. Sorcek
The Rev. Dr. Philip D W Krey

Celebrating their 25th anniversary:

The Rev. Brian D Cox
The Rev. Joyce E Nelson
The Rev. Julie B Bergdahl
The Rev. Julie K DeWerth

Pastor Berghdal, who had never received her certificate of ordination, was presented with a framed one at this time in addition to her anniversary certificate.

Recognition of Congregational Anniversaries

Congregations celebrating a special anniversary 100 years and above in 25 year increments were recognized:

150th Emanuel Lutheran Church, Philadelphia
150th St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Perkasio
125th Trinity Lutheran Church, Quakertown
100th Temple Lutheran Church, Havertown

Keynote Presentation, Part 2

Dr. Kirsi Stjerna shared the second part of her presentation.

In the first part of her address she looked at history. Now how do we move into a new day? The theme of this Assembly is “Still reforming...”

We inherited a tradition that respects equality, spiritual health, education, and caregiving. Why be a Lutheran today? What unites us? Who will be with us? Who will lead?

There are urgencies for still reforming: racism, sexism, poverty, violence, and respect of life; eco justice and earth care; relations with other faiths; God talk and respectful engagement with science and realities; respect of bodies and our sex/gender; expressions of love and responsibilities in the world. All of these need our efforts to bring new understandings of God’s grace. We need to do this by extending hospitality with the sacraments, and by allowing our Biblical interpretation to constantly evolve.

Building on our tradition of freedom theology:

A Lutheran Response:

No tolerance for intolerance, no compassion for injustice. We have to keep a “Not in my church” attitude with regard to these issues that oppress others and keep them down. We need to adopt a “Not in my company” attitude when dealing with these issues personally. It takes courage.

Luther showed how to invite, engage, and encounter others with the Gospel. A basic Lutheran demand: freedom for all and in all ways. We see the Bible as source of freedom, which then fights against racism and xenophobia. We need to constantly be reviewing what is important about marriage and sexuality. We need to see the world as Luther did – with a sense of Spirituality in all things, and equality among all people.

Bishop Burkat thanked Dr. Stjerna for being present with us, and leading us in these reflections on the Reformation and what it means for us to be Still Reforming.

Address by The Rev. Claire S. Burkat, Bishop

“Still Reforming... Forward Together in Faith”

When Martin Luther seized the changes made possible by the newly invented printing press, he could not have begun to imagine our always on/ multi-taking/partial- attention/ Internet Age.

While the world in the last 500 years since the Reformation has always experienced change...the RATE of change is speeding up exponentially. For many people this is stressing us out, bombarding us with choices, challenges and changes from every direction - and now even the world comes through our devices.

This accelerating change has put a strain on people, families and communities. The need to constantly change leads to a kind of hyper vigilance that can lead to depression, despair and disengagement.

This applies not only to individuals, but also to systems like denominations and congregations.

Yet it is Jesus- the Crucified and Resurrected One- who reminds us that we are His Easter people, we are claimed, gathered, nourished, equipped and sent for His great purpose of resurrection in this life and the next. *“Go make disciples of all nations, teach, preach, baptize, heal, forgive, reconcile, do all these things that I taught you...And remember I will not abandon you. I will be with you in every age, through every age, until the end of all the ages.”*

That is why this *Forward Together in Faith Campaign* is so critical, so essential, and so urgent for our Lutheran witness in the five-county area. We have a window or should I say a DOOR of three years to gather the will, the ways, the resources, and the leaders to reimagine what God is calling us to be and do, in order to finance our efforts with money and people.

Why 3 years? In 2 years you will be electing a new bishop. There is a steep learning curve to becoming bishop. Please do not saddle the new bishop, future synod leadership, and lay and clergy leaders across our synod by delaying an initiative we need to do **now**.

Forward Together in Faith is our best attempt at resourcing the future by equipping pastors, lay leaders and congregations now with resources to be Church for new generations of congregations and leaders. We hope you and your congregation will make your gift or pledge in 2016 as you decide how to launch this campaign in your congregation. How great to have \$2.5 million or more by 2019!

We have already made some significant progress you are learning about at this Assembly, in ways that we pray will continue to multiply and revitalize the Lutheran Witness in the five county region for decades to come.

In other words...we are **synod**, we are **together** in faith not because we **have to be** constitutional or denominationally, but because we WANT to be Ambassadors for Christ in the world today, making Christ's appeal through us. No longer are congregations able thrive alone and apart from the connectedness to the whole body of Christ

A necessary, immediate and urgent look at demographics is a good place to start. The future is not so difficult to discern. There are markers and signposts all over the place.

In preparing for this Synod assembly, I checked on the age demographics of our five counties. What I found MOST surprising is the percentage in all our counties of those under the age of 44. Two thirds of people in our communities are under 44!! This is a mission field like we have never seen. More than a third of millennials have never had a faith community. These people are not hostile to the church. They are disengaged from it.

One thing that will come from this campaign will be demographic assessments, but then also Navigators to help congregations discover ways to engage their community. Assessments are electronic. Results are back in 3 weeks, not 6 months.

There are six generations living at this time who need to hear and be engaged by the gospel. The newest generation finally has a name – the Plurals, ages 1-17
Why plurals? They are being called that because of the attraction and rise of pluralism... People get to do what they want without the huge societal constraints of the 20th century. Diversity is valued, and authority structures are distrusted. The characteristics of this generation will be ministry game changers.

Another thing to note is that this generation is the tale end of a Caucasian majority in the US. The US is becoming so plural there will be no racial majority by the year 2030.

There is Good news: many of the plurals are in our congregations already! They are in our Preschools, Vacation Bible Schools, and children's choirs. Let's welcome them and their parents. We don't need to change the core of our message, but the way we engage them.

Here are some Do's and Don't's

We **do** need to become more resilient, take risks, get out of our buildings, meet people where they are, listen to them, love them, learn from them, invite them into community, engage their and our stories and spirituality.

We **don't** need to be afraid to fail; we **don't** need to be afraid to share our faith, even as we respectfully learn what others believe and what they seek. We **don't** need to accommodate the people in our congregations who are not open to inviting all generations.

We **do** need to be concerned about all the people in our communities, not just those we know or like, or who resemble us. We do need to get outside our buildings. We **do** need to see ourselves primarily as Ambassadors for Christ, not Acolytes of the Temple.

We **don't** need every congregation to do everything. BUT we **do** need to understand that some incredibly important and innovative ministries are being initiated on a synodical level so that we ALL can contribute to and share in the work being done through the Holy Spirit for this age and this place.

We cannot do this alone. We can only do this together.

The Assembly was shown a video about Living Gospel Ministry

Bishop Burkat shared the story of "The Well"

The Well is an overnight winter initiative started by the Welcome Church in partnership with others offering a place of rest, refreshment, and safety for women who would otherwise be sleeping in the street.

The Well is also the place where Jesus, meeting a woman who had fallen on hard times, loved her into new possibilities. When the call was put forth for folks to provide a nightly home cooked meal for the women of The Well on a gloomy winter Sunday, **15 of the members of the small church St John's Ambler** volunteered- providing dinner every Tuesday evening since.

Volunteers from Kairos a small faith community in Bucks County also volunteered and now make meals for the women at the WELL.

Jerusalem Sellersville and St Michael's Sellersville Food Pantry Garden

Like many of our congregations and ecumenical partners- Jerusalem Lutheran in West Rockville and St Michael's Lutheran in Sellersville were two congregations supporting the Pennridge FISH and Keystone Opportunity Center food pantries.

Paula Wiley a member at Jerusalem said she first raised the idea of planting a garden for fresh food to donate to the community pantry, two years ago at a Jerusalem meeting. It was unanimously approved, but the congregation was in a state of transition and the garden didn't get started. Then St. Michael's stepped in to help. "We have the land here at Jerusalem," Paula said. "St. Michael's has the people."

You'll have to excuse the enthusiasm," she said to a reporter from the Montgomery News. "I've been talking about this for two years and it's finally happening." "Neither one of us could do the project alone," St Michael's Pastor Julie Bergdahl said. "We work together and here we are." "The churches were looking for ways to partner for the benefit of the wider community, and the garden is a great way to build relationships while serving others. With the new guidelines on food stamps recently taking place, we expect a greater need for food to serve people who are dropped from food assistance programs."

There is some disturbing news about future leadership – 29-39% of congregations are without pastoral leadership. The pastors we do have are aging, and we are not calling young people into service.

The Good News – we are not experiencing shortages like other areas. We are an attractive area, we are a metropolitan center, we have 2 seminaries nearby.

We in Southeast Pennsylvania have a larger percentage of pastors between 24 and 34 than anywhere else in the ELCA. But we also have a larger number of retirements in next 5-10 years than others in the ELCA.

My friends, it is very likely that we are on the verge of yet another theological and ecclesial breakthrough. The conditions of our global society mirror Luther's time in uncanny ways. Five hundred years ago, and today, there were and are new discoveries being made in the realms of science, technology, communication, medicine, education, and economics. At the same time, then as now, there is extreme poverty, lack of access to the basic resources of life for millions of people, and fear of Muslims and all those who are deemed "outsiders."

It is into this bubbling mash-up that the church is lifting up new leaders, new kinds of faith communities like Living Gospel, and new kinds of partnerships like the community garden of St. Michael's and Jerusalem church, and small faith communities like St John Ambler and Kairos community partnering with the Women's Well.

So despite all the "bad news" seething around us, I am choosing to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ's ever-renewing resurrection in our midst. And I am inviting you, encouraging you, exhorting you to do the same. Do not lose heart. Let us go Forward Together in Faith. ***And just watch what RED DOORS the Lord is still opening up for us!***

Prayer

Mr. Lenny Duncan, seminarian at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, led the assembly in prayer.

The assembly recessed to participate in forums, to visit the Mission Center, and for dinner.

Friday Evening, May 6, 2016

Prayer

The Assembly reconvened with prayer led by the Reverend Carlton Rogers, pastor of Tabernacle, Philadelphia, and Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference.

Portico Benefit Services –

Ms Barbara Debski, Regional Representative of Portico Benefit Services, brought greetings and an update on the health assessment rostered leaders are encouraged to complete. We did reach the 65% goal across the ELCA! Because of this there is savings on health costs across the Church. Our synod reaps \$18,000 in savings, and \$1 million will be saved across the ELCA. Ms Debski shared that Portico President, the Reverend Jeffrey Thiemann, is calling for a wellness reformation. This is critically important so we can be strengthened and empowered for ministry together.

ELCA Church Council Greeting –

Mr. Clarence Smith, Liaison Churchwide Church Council Member

Greetings on behalf of the 35 members of the E.L.C.A. Church Council.

The upcoming Churchwide Assembly will take place in New Orleans. This will be the 14th Churchwide Assembly. Topics will include the 500th anniversary of Reformation and consideration of a reworking of the Word and Service Roster, in which the three different rosters – Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers, would be unified into one roster, probably using the title “Deacon.”

You may participate in the Churchwide Assembly by live stream, or you may attend as a non-voting member.

Mr. Smith expressed thanks on behalf of the Church Council for our Synod’s holding the line and continuing to send 50% of our congregational support on to the ELCA as partnership support. It allows us, as Bishop Eaton says, to be church together for the sake of the world.

Report of the Committee on Elections and Balloting

The Reverend Rebecca Eisenhart reported on the results for Ticket 1, Ballot 1; Ticket 2, Ballot 1; Ticket 4 Ballot 1; and Ticket 8, Ballot 1.

TICKET 1 – Consultation Committee – clergy (one to be elected for a term ending 2020)

365 ballots cast; 0 invalid ballots; needed to elect: 183

The Reverend Raymond Miller – 204

The Reverend Sandra Brown – 161

Bishop Burkat declared the Reverend Raymond Miller elected

TICKET 2 – Synod Council – clergy – (three to be elected to terms ending 2019)

365 ballots cast; 0 invalid ballots; needed to elect: 183

The Reverend Regina Goodrich – 287

The Reverend Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam – 253

The Reverend Dwight Mason – 241

The Reverend David Lutcher – 231

Bishop Burkat declared the Reverends Regina Goodrich, Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, and Dwight Mason elected.

TICKET 4, Synod Council – Northeast Philadelphia Conference Representative (Lay, Man) (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

356 ballots cast; 0 invalid ballots; needed to elect: 179

Mr. Adam Clark – 186

Mr. William Graham – 170

Bishop Bukat declared Mr. Adam Clark elected.

Pr. Eisenhart stated that Mr. William Graham moved forward to Ticket 6, Synod Council, Lay Man at Large.

TICKET 8, Synod Council – Young Adult Lay Woman (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

359 ballots cast; 0 invalid ballots; needed to elect: 180

Ms Emily Fowler – 189

Ms Jessica Smith – 170

Bishop Burkat declared Ms Emily Fowler elected.

Pr. Eisenhart stated that Ms Jessica Smith moved forward to Ticket 7, Synod Council, Lay Woman at Large.

Ballots were then distributed for the remaining two tickets.

TICKET 6, Synod Council – Lay Man at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019) and

TICKET 7, Synod Council – Lay Woman at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

First Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel

Bishop Burkat called upon the Reverend Ray Miller, Chairperson of the Committee, to present the report. She also thanked the former chairperson Jill Meuser for her many years of faithful and dedicated service.

Pastor Miller put before the Assembly Resolution 1 regarding Lutheran Charities for consideration. The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends its adoption.

Lutheran Charities Resolution 2016

S. A. 16.05.04 Whereas the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America believe that in response to God's love for us, we are called to love and serve our neighbors. (II Corinthians 5:14)

Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod have a rich, invested heritage of fervent love in action;

Whereas as early as the 1800, the first Lutheran deaconesses came to the United States, helped to found, and worked in many hospitals, schools and orphanages across America and in this Synod.

Whereas Lutheran congregations and Lutheran Laity provided partnership, support, and funding needed to begin Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations in Southeastern Pennsylvania;

Whereas the Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod continue this tradition today serving thousands of people each day, and,

Whereas this synod wishes to demonstrate its strong support for the combined social ministry effort known as Lutheran Charities, a 501(c)3 organization which raises awareness and financial support for LSA affiliated Social Ministry Organizations.

Therefore be it RESOLVED that the congregations of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod declare each October as, “Lutheran Charities Support Month” using the month to support, raise awareness and designate donations to Lutheran Charities; and

Be it further RESOLVED that rostered and congregational leadership be urged to support and affirm the vital supports provided by the social ministry agencies serving in this synod through prayer and affirmation; and

Be it further RESOLVED that congregations disseminate and make available the information social ministry agencies provide to their communities.

The Reverend Dr. Jennifer Phelps Ollikainen, Chair of the Board of Lutheran Charities, spoke in favor of the resolution. In Pennsylvania, 1 in 49 are served by Lutheran Social Ministry organizations. All of their histories began in congregations. This resolution is intended to strengthen the relationship between congregations who have a word and worship and sacrament ministry, and Social Service organizations who have a social service function on behalf of the Church.

Mr. Kenneth Brown, St. Paul, Glenside asked if this is displacing anything else in October.

Bishop Burkat replied No, but if October is busy for you, you can do this in November or some other time.

The Assembly adopted the resolution.

Pastor Miller shared that there is a Resolution 2 which was received after the deadline for submission. In order to be considered the Assembly would have to vote to allow this resolution to come to the floor. This would need to be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. Pastor Miller read the original motion.

African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter Resolution for 2016

Resolved, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorializes the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to include as part of its observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation’s International Decade of People of African Descent the following:

1. Request the Church Council to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” similar to the “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)” acknowledging the Lutheran church’s complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. The Council will bring this “Declaration” to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this

Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;

2. Request the Church Council to require the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,

3. Request the Church Council to require the Congregational and Synodical Missions Unit of the ELCA, to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do likewise.

Pr. Miller then shared as a point of information that if the Assembly wishes to consider this Resolution, the Committee on Reference and Counsel will be submitting a substitute Resolution. The Assembly voted to allow the motion to come to the floor.

As the motion was not ready to be presented on the screens, the substitute resolution will be presented at the second report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Introduction of Candidates for Roster Status

After introducing the members of the committee, the Reverend Nancy Brown, Director of Candidacy, and Mr. Fred Renigar, Chair, Candidacy Committee, presented the following candidates approved for ordination and originating in this synod: Mr. Thomas Richter (assigned to Alaska Synod, awaiting call), Mr. Dominic Smyth (assigned to New England Synod, awaiting call), Ms Hayley Bang (assigned to the New Jersey Synod, awaiting call), Ms Lisa Jester (assigned to this Synod, awaiting call), and Ms Alexa Kvande (assigned to this Synod, awaiting call).

Bishop Burkat shared that when a call is extended Bishop Shelley Wickstrom will be flying in from Alaska to ordain Tommy Richter here, because the people who know him and love him cannot travel to Alaska.

Evening Prayer

The Reverend Linnea Clarke, pastor of St, John, Melrose Park and Ms Yvonne Lembo led the Assembly in evening prayer.

The assembly recessed for the night.

Saturday Morning, May 7, 2016

Worship

The Reverend Dr. Albert Starr, Jr. led worship and preached.

ONE Campaign

Bishop Burkat recognized the Reverend Matt Staniz, St. Luke, Devon for a moment of personal privilege to speak about the ONE campaign, a way to continue reformation by eradicating poverty.

The ONE campaign was started by Bono, and now reaches 7 million people. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been a faith partner since the day the ONE campaign began. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod is also a faith partner.

We experienced a miracle this past year. Congress acted to provide electricity to Africa. Due to the efforts of many who advocated through the ONE campaign, members of both parties voted to authorize funds to assist with the effort to bring electricity to people who desperately needed it. The current effort we are supporting is malnutrition. Please join me in writing letters to our representatives. There are sample letters available in the hallway. We will help you draft a letter if you need. Your voices can make a difference. When we say no mother should die, no child should die because of malnutrition, we are being the church together.

Budget question answered

Bishop Burkat recognized Ms Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer.

Ms Neff came to the microphone to answer a question raised yesterday at budget process. Mr. Peter Quigley from Little Zion, Telford had asked if there was a report of how much had been cut from the budget to offset the decrease in income since 2010. Ms Neff reported that she did not have that information at hand yesterday, but last evening she went back to the audit reports and was able to find the answer. Since 2010 partnership support has decreased by 16 %, and expenses were decreased by 25%. In real numbers this means in 2010 had expenses of \$3,972,000, and in 2015 expenses had gone down to \$2,985,000. This is important for people to know so they realize we are always looking for ways to be faithful with the resources we have. She noted that she will add this to her report next year, sharing decrease in expense as well as decrease in income. Questions are always welcome. I may not have the answer immediately, but she will always get back to you.

Second Report of the Committee on Elections and Balloting

The Reverend Rebecca Eisenhart, share the results of the previous balloting.

TICKET 6, Synod Council – Lay Man at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

221 Ballots cast; 0 invalid; needed to elect 111

Mr. William Graham – 102 – forward

Mr. Amos Garsaynee – 63 – forward

Mr. John Ungerman – 56

Bishop Burkat declared there was no election, and that Mr. William Graham and Mr. Amos Garsaynee would move forward.

TICKET 7, Synod Council – Lay Woman at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

223 ballots cast; 0 invalid ballots; needed to elect 112
Ms Jessica Smith – 77 – forward
Ms Joyce Adams – 48 – forward
Ms Doreen Kinzler – 41
Ms Sandra Zimmerman – 35
Julie Funk – 22

Bishop Burkat declared there was no election, and that Ms Jessica Smith and Ms Joyce Adams would move forward.

The second ballot for Tickets 6 and 7 were then distributed.

Report of Vice President

Bishop Burkat reminded the Assembly that Vice President Tracey A. Beasley was not able to be present because of illness, and so she will present the vice President's report. Please sign one of the get well cards for her so we can send them to her. Let us pray for our sister now.

At this time our Vice President often reports on where she has been. I do not have her report at this time, but I do want to thank those congregations that have hosted the Synod Council this past year. We thank St. David's, Philadelphia; St. Mark, Conshohocken; Good Shepherd, King of Prussia; Trinity, Lansdale; and St. Paul's, Ardmore. Thank you also to the Conferences which have hosted the Synod Council. Those Conferences were Northeast Philadelphia, Lower Montgomery and Delaware. She would also want me to thank you for being a part of the Synod and the work of the Church in a broader way.

You have heard a lot about we are doing in the Church. Please report back to your congregations because you make a difference when you share what we are doing as the Church together. Check for the summary of the Assembly on the Synod Website. Thank you to our communications team.

A video of "Dan on the Street at Synod Assembly" was shown.

Water for Flint

Bishop Burkat reported that the offering from yesterday's worship which is designated for Flint Michigan was \$5,274. Thanks be to God!

The Reverend Dr. Albert Starr, Jr., Director of Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries for the E.L.C.A.

Bishop Burkat welcomed Dr. Starr who brings us greetings

I come as Churchwide Representative to say thank you for what you do, for your support, for your hospitality. The hospitality is pervasive, not just the staff, but in each congregation I visit.

We are connected in ways we cannot imagine. My son was on his way to Marshalltown Community College in Marshalltown IA. He was in an accident in Brush, CO. From where I was in Los Angeles I could only pray. I was then led to call an E.L.C.A. pastor in Brush, CO, and told him what had happened, and at what mile marker my son was. He went out

immediately and ministered to my son. I got a text from my son, which said “Dad. Your guy came.” We do not know how we are connected.

Another example of hospitality. I was invited to preach at Mediator, Philadelphia. I invited nephew who was studying at Temple to come. We visited Mediator Lutheran and he was welcomed by young adults, who surrounded him. I let Pr. Goodrich know that if this continued, this would likely bring his mother, and then his grandmother. And that’s exactly what happened. He loved that congregation because of how well he was received there.

Recognition of those connected with ELCA – Pr. Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission, Pr. Jennifer Ollikainen, Ms Yvonne Lembo and her work as Regional Gift Planner with the ELCA Foundation.

Video from Bishop Eaton – We are Church for the Sake of the World

Dr. Starr spoke of the various ways in which the offerings of members of our congregations across the Church are used. Out of \$1.8 billion received by our congregations in 2015 2.7% goes to the Churchwide organization. This does not include money given to World Hunger, Disaster Response, other ministries or the ELCA Appeal. With this money we have started 62 congregations in the United States, and have mission starts all around the world. These starts happen because of the connections we make and the hospitality we share.

Please remember “Freed and Renewed in Christ – 500 years of God’s Grace in Action.” Join in the program running alongside the Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans this August, either by live streaming or by going to the Grace Gathering. Other work we do together includes AMMPARO – means protection – is an initiative to work with migrants and their families, and justice issues related to immigration. ELCA Votes is working to make a just and accessible system for all to register their voice.

Through our 3 expressions of our church we are able to seek justice and walk humbly with our God, being Church for the sake of the world. Thank you for what you do to support this work we do together for the sake of the world.

Still Reforming Resources –

The Rev. Martin Seltz Publisher, Worship, Music, Congregational Life for Augsburg Fortress

As you ponder how to incorporate this occasion into the life of your congregation think about this question: Why celebrate the 500th anniversary? Because we need to reflect on where we have been, and to thank the God who has led us this far on our way. How do we observe this anniversary? By still reforming! We can observe the reformation by doing reformation!

How can we lift this up with an eye to how the world is seeing us, and how the world will look on us in the midst of this celebration? Our instinct is to have a big party. But we need to recognize we are broader than our old ethnic heritage. We are Swedish, but also Swahili. So we engage in thanksgiving, but with lament. We have recognize of our view on history, but hold in tension the way our “exceptionalism” can continue to divide.

No one is giving anyone a blueprint as to how we should, or even if we should, celebrate this anniversary. But ELCA500.org will have many options and resources to bring to your congregations. The Reformation 500 Sourcebook will be available June 15th, 2016. Together by Grace: Introducing the Lutherans will be available August 1, 2016. There are also other resources, such as Papa Luther: a Graphic Novel. There are Ecumenical Resources, Confirmation and adult study resources. There will be many ways for us to commemorate this Anniversary, as we are still reforming.

Tanzania Companionship Team

Pr. Brad Burke is the staff person who is now overseeing this work. He introduced Ms Nancy Shaw, Chair of the Team and Ms Susan MacPherson, who was our missionary to Tanzania until last year.

Ms Macpherson shared about the Erente school, which is a school for the blind in Tanzania. It is not exclusively a Lutheran School, but the children sing in the local Lutheran church. It is known throughout the country. The Government pays for the teachers, but everything else falls on the school.

A video showing the work of the school was played. This past Lent, \$2,900 was raised in Lenten offering for purchasing brailers for the school! Please consider becoming a partner with us in this ministry

Moving forward Young Adults

Pr. Burke is also the staff person who coordinates our work with Young Adults in this Synod. He spoke of the ELCA program for Young Adult in Global Mission, and introduced Ms Courtney Step who will be serving in Africa for a year as a part of YAGM.

This is one of the things we are doing. In addition we are starting new programs. We assembled personal care kits for homeless kits, and then on “God’s Work Our Hands” day we distributed over 2,000 kits.

We have been working with Rick Melheim to start a new experimental approach for cross-generational faith formation. We held a Young Adult Happy Hour at St. Mark Conshohocken, and we are coordinating a whitewater rafting trip. Encourage young adults to join our Facebook group, and subscribe to our new e-newsletter.

The South Dakota Servant trip is coming up. It is called the “Faith on the Frontier” servant trip. Lutheran Night at the Phillies will support this trip. And the Phillies are winning! There will be prizes; the 1st place prize: throw out the first pitch! That night’s 50/50 will go to support this trip.

Ms Step shared about the trip. “We go to South Dakota every three years, and work with members of the Native American tribe on their reservation, painting and fixing things around their community.”

Second report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel

The Reverend Ray Miller brought Resolution 2 to the floor for consideration, and as indicated the Committee proposes a Substitute resolution. It contains some friendly tweaks. It is a resolution that is being considered in other synods as well.

Memorial to Churchwide Assembly regarding the African Descent Community

S. A. 16.05.05 Resolved, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorializes the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to include as part of its observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation’s International Decade of People of African Descent the following:

1. Request the ~~Church Council~~ Churchwide Assembly to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” similar to the “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)” acknowledging the Lutheran church’s complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. ~~The Council will bring this “Declaration”~~ This Declaration shall be brought to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;

2. Request the ~~Church Council~~ Churchwide Assembly to require the ~~Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC)~~ those who provide oversight and support for theological education in the ELCA in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,

3. Request the ~~Church Council~~ Churchwide Assembly to require the ~~Congregational and Synodical~~ Domestic Missions Unit of the ELCA, to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do likewise.

The changes recognize that the Synod Assembly speaks to the Churchwide Assembly. The Synod Council would speak to the Church Council. This is to make the document more consistent in who addresses whom. The reason the Theological Education Advisory Council has been struck is because this Council existed when this resolution was written, but it has now disbanded, and we ask the Churchwide staff to forward this to the appropriate group. A note that section 3 is essentially a reiteration of what is in our governing documents.

Bishop Burkat noted while we are making changes, the Unit listed in section 3 has changed. The new name is Domestic Missions Unit, not Congregational and Synodical Missions Unit. Can we by consensus make that change, too? The Assembly concurred.

On behalf of the Committee I move this Substitute.

Bishop Burkat noted we do not need a second, and so the Substitute resolution is on the floor.

Ms Meredith Harris, St. Matthew, Springfield. There is a reference in the first section to a Declaration for the Jewish community. Can we hear a bit of what this was?

Bishop Burkat replied that this is a response to the Jewish community regarding comments from Luther that were disparaging to the Jewish community and helped to justify the Holocaust. At the Holocaust museum in DC there is a copy of the declaration, and a letter of apology.

Mr. Peter Quigley, Little Zion, Telford asked if the ELCA is then assuming historical corporate guilt for issues that are well older than the ELCA is.

Pr. Miller does not have enough information. Perhaps there are those from the group that is presenting the resolution that can speak to this.

Bishop Burkat asked if it is the African Descent Lutheran Association.

Pr. Miller stated Joyce Brown Adams is listed as the sponsor.

Ms Joyce Adams said that the African Descent Lutheran Association is a sponsor of this resolution. We know the ELCA is only 30 years old, but it is the current body of the predecessor bodies.

Bishop Burkat pointed out we are the successor body to and the oldest synod in the United States, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, dating back to Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and the colonial days of the nation. If one subscribes to culpability for predecessor bodies then it is fair to assume historical guilt. If not, one could disagree with this.

Ms Karen Rosenberger, Holy Communion, Philadelphia. The document on the screen says 400 years in the first section. I think you read 500. Is it 400 or 500 years?

Pr. Miller replied it is 400 years, actually 400 plus.

Mr. Quigley commented that the first section states “the ELCA has perpetuated racism.” This feels like it contains a lot of sentiment, but it should be filled out with specific examples so it isn’t just sentiment.

Pr. Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission – You do NOT want me to give examples. I was at the Churchwide offices three weeks ago when an African American woman named Venus Williams who came to present about Alice’s garden. She did not wear a badge. She had walked down a corridor of the offices in the ELCA, and she was in an elevator where people were discussing and challenging why these Pastors of color needed to meet on their own. Are they going to give us minutes of their meeting? They were talking about people of color in front of a person of color as if they aren’t even there. How big is an elevator?! This is what happens with institutional racism. There is a social blindness where persons of color are not even seen as being there! When I was a child I was sent to the suburbs to be exposed to the

broader Church. I stayed with a white family for a week, and when I went to the swimming pool, the pool emptied out when I went in the water. And this is what I have experienced as part of the Church!

Mr. Quigley – I think examples like these should be added. I think they strengthen the argument.

Bishop Burkat – we cannot ask others to add to their stories. And we can't just add to other's resolutions.

Pr. Davenport – Let me clarify where this is coming from. It is coming from the African Descent Lutheran Association in the Churchwide expression. It is not just from this chapter.

Bishop Burkat – Yes, this is bigger than just this Synod's resolution.

Ms Queen Sutton from St. Peter's Lutheran Philadelphia I have a word for all of us: think! Look at your heart and realize we have to bridge this gap. Think about how we bridge this gap. This is America. We need to bridge blacks from the post slavery syndrome in their thinking. This pain goes on and we have to be what the Church is all about.

Pr. Susan Lynch – speaking in favor of resolution – I am serving my 5th congregation and I have seen racism present in each of the congregations I have served, including a current staff member who was asked what they were doing in the building after dark.

Joe Mckeeon from Redeemer Jamison – Can I get a written copy? I can't get it on the app.

Mr. Robert Masser, Upper Dublin – I am in favor of resolution, but is the date correct? Are we asking for something before we submit it?

Pr. Miller – we would send this to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, requesting a response be made by 2019.

Ms Sandra Zimmerman – I want to say a word about guilt, and if the ELCA is too young to accept guilt. Jesus Christ accepted our guilt from before we were even born. I think we need to do the same.

Pr. Karen Sease, Grace Pottstown – In Matthew Jesus said if you have a gift but realize you have a grievance against brother leave gift and go. We cannot wait. I have wronged my brothers and sisters. We must act now before we offer our gifts at the altar.

Pr. Nathan Krause, Redeemer Jamison – last night my son asked me “What is a synod assembly?” I said “It is people getting together to decide how we should do ministry together.” I think this is an example of this. We need to figure out how we walk together. And forgiveness is a big part of this. I will vote in favor and hope I can stand side by side with my sisters and brothers in the Church.

Pr. Serena Sellers, Peace, Tohickon – this is not about guilt, but about responsibility. This calls us as the whole Church to become aware and think of things about which we are not even aware,

so that we can make change. We need to become aware of how others are living and experiencing life. I served as an intern at Lord God of Sabaoth, St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands where blacks have been Lutheran for as long as those of us in PA. While we have a past, we also have a present, and a future. This is about the future of how we love God's people together.

Pr. Matt Ollikainen, Christ, Barto – I did not hear the gentleman from Telford as speaking against, but looking for clarification and deeper meaning. Are there whereas's in the original that could give further background and elucidation?

Pr. Miller – the original resolution did come with whereas's. I do not know if they are available.

Bishop Burkat –I don't think there are enough whereas's to cover all the questions. The people before us are the whereas's.

Joe McKeon, Redeemer Jamison – Which aspects of Black Liberation theology do you wish to include? Some are rather controversial.

Pr. David Deal, Evangelical Durham – At the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago we learned that in Black Liberation theology none of us are free until all of us are free.

Pr. Rosa Key – I call the question

Bishop Burkat clarified to the Assembly that we will need a two-thirds vote to close debate, after which we proceed immediately to voting on the resolution. The Assembly voted to close debate.

Bishop Burkat moved straight to the vote on the resolution before the house.
The Assembly adopted the resolution.

Pr. Miller informed the Committee on Reference and Counsel that they will not to meet.

Prayer

Mr. Henry Strobel closed this session with prayer

The assembly recessed for lunch, to reconvene at 2:00.

Saturday Afternoon, May 7, 2016

Pr. Daniel Spigelmyer led the Assembly in prayer.

Recognition of 50th Anniversary Celebrant

The Reverend Paul A. Hagedorn

My father was a pastor, and I remember being at his fiftieth anniversary of ordination. I remember his theme: "Is everybody in?" I think that is still a good theme for us today as well. As we gather and discuss the things which have been before us, we need to ask the question "Is everybody in?"

The Church is at a crossroads, and I take seriously that word *crossroads*. We need to continually be sure we are proclaiming the cross and what it means. I am reminded of the Small Catechism and its call to not just avoid the don'ts, but focus on what we are to do. As the other evangelicals point out the negative, we need to point out the positive of what we are to do.

Fellow members of the cloth, we need to remember this collar is not a symbol of authority, but of service. We need to remember this as we go about our ministry. We tend to focus on the problems in our church. We focus on the problems to the point where we don't see the mission anymore. The cross on the door reminds us as we go in the door and as we go out, that it is the cross that is our focus and our mission. We need to be there when people are crying out for help. A good name for a church would be Christ the servant, to keep this before us. Thank you for the privilege of serving.

Forward Together in Faith Campaign Update **Video – 9 reasons to support the Forward Together in Faith Campaign**

Bishop Burkat's "Big Ask"

We have been talking for a year now about the Forward Together in Faith Campaign. We have talked about a bold \$2.5 million goal. It is bold, but it is doable.

How?

This doesn't happen because we hope for it. It happens because TOGETHER we act on it.

Together we can make this happen. As our Vice President Tracey A. Beasley says, "We Got This!"

I am inviting all of you TOGETHER to prayerfully consider stepping in and being a part of making this bold \$2.5 million goal happen

First, be informed. Know what this vision is about and why it is so important.

Second, be prayerful. Don't just grab a card and fill it out. This is important, faithful stuff. Allow your faith story to guide how you respond.

Third, let this gift take your breath away. Imagine doing something for this campaign that you never thought possible.

Believe it can happen. For this goal to be realized we will need everyone to step in and for everyone to stretch their abilities.

One of our pastors asked me, but Bishop, when are you going to ASK US? This is it. This is the BIG ASK. I'm asking you now.

I am asking individuals and congregations to give. I am asking all rostered leaders to give.

100% of our Deans, our Synod Staff and Synod Council have made a gift.

We need \$10 and \$100 gifts, \$10,000 and \$100,000 gifts and everything in between. So far we have almost a quarter of a million dollars pledged from early supporters.

As you embrace this invitation remember –
The Holy Spirit is at work here,
Christ is at the center of this vision.
God believes in us.

We Got This, People.
AND TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN!

Final Report of the Committee on Elections and Balloting

The Reverend Rebecca Eisenhart presented the last of the balloting results.

TICKET 6, Synod Council – Lay Man at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)
309 Ballots cast; 0 invalid; needed to elect 155
Mr. William Graham – 165
Mr. Amos Garsaynee – 144

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. William Graham elected.

TICKET 7, Synod Council – Lay Woman at Large (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)
313 ballots cast; 0 invalid ballots; needed to elect 157
Ms Jessica Smith – 182
Ms Joyce Adams – 131

Bishop Burkat declared Ms Jessica Smith elected.

Pr. Eisenhart thanked the members of the Elections committee, the pages and the Synod Staff.

Drawing for the Give Aways!

Pr. Tim Johansen, Temple, Havertown and Pr. Skyle Rea from St. John's Phoenixville

Resurrection Yardley won a free MAP survey, the interpretation, and a navigator for three sessions.

Mediator, Philadelphia won \$1,000 networking grant to attend any training event of your choosing.

Peace Tohickon won the Communications Audit.

Faith, Woodhaven Rd, Philadelphia won a \$1,000 grant to begin a new ministry that would be considered innovative, the second year in row they won.

Pr. Ray Miller of the Committee on Reference and Counsel presented the following resolution, which the Assembly approved by acclamation:

S. A. 16.05.06 Whereas it is right at all times and in all places to give thanks for God's grace and mercy, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit which bless the people of God to do God's work with our hands, and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we offer our appreciation and thankful applause:

To our keynote speaker, the Reverend Dr. Kirsi Stjerna;

To our ELCA representative, the Reverend Albert Starr, Jr.;

To the Reverend Martin Seltz for outlining resources for celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation;

To the Franconia Mennonite Church for their unfailing hospitality;

To all participants from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who offered their energy, skills, and time to prepare for, plan, arrange, and attend this assembly;

Let us express our gratitude.

Recognition, Installation, and Blessing

Bishop Burkat recognized the Synod Council members whose terms were ending at this assembly and installed the Synod Council members elected at this assembly, installed those members who will be going as Voting Members to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans, and blessing Sister Mary-Julia McKenzie as she moves to her new call in the Churchwide offices in Chicago.

Final Report of the Registrar

Ms. Outterbridge presented the final report of the Registrar:

Total voting membership, 481 ; total number of pastors under call, 171; total number of retired pastors voting, 24; total number of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers under call, 5; total number of retired associates in ministry and deaconesses voting, 3; total number of lay voting members certified, including council members, youth, and young adults, 278; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in the previous total, 81; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 17%; number of female lay voting members, 139; number of male lay voting members, 106; number of youth/young adults members, 16.

Total registered (actually in attendance) voting membership, 459; number of pastors under call registered, 150; number of retired voting pastors registered, 23; number of associates in ministry and deaconesses under call registered, 5; number of retired associates in ministry and deaconesses registered, 3; number of lay voting members registered, including council members, youth, and young adults, 243; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in previous total, 81; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 18%; total number of visitors and guests registered, 88.

Order for the Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Burkat and Secretary Richard led the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The twenty-ninth annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

The Reverend Karl M. Richard

Secretary

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Approved by Synod Council June 9, 2016