

MINUTES
of the 142nd MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

December 8, 2016

Living Word Lutheran Church, Roslyn, PA

Welcome from the Reverend Daniel Spigelmyer, pastor of Living Word; devotions by the Reverend Julie DeWerth, Dean of Lower Montgomery Conference

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the meeting to order at 4:28 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Synod Council approved the minutes of the 141st meeting of the Synod Council as presented.

SETTING THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley brought forward the Agenda, which was adopted as presented.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Burkat highlighted the following items from her report:

Bishop's Convocation

The annual Bishop's Convocation was very timely. The topic, "Crossing Bridges: Interfaith Relationships in a Pluralistic World," was decided prior to the recently held national election, but turned out to be highly relevant in light of the tenor of the political discourse at this time. The Bishop emphasized how it is important to build relationships before negative incidents occur. Knowing each other, and about each other, is critical for how we live in community with each other in a bitterly divided nation. Two of our presenters, Imam Anwar Muhaimin, Rabbi David Straus, along with Bishop Burkat and some other denomination leaders are planning a day to bring our clergy together to learn how to pastor our congregations in this partisan post-election environment. The conversation is planned to be held in February. The intention is to meet in the Brossman center at LTSP.

Bishop Burkat is being honored (on Christmas Eve) by our Muslim neighbors for her work in interfaith efforts.

2017 Synod Assembly

The topic for the 2017 Synod Assembly has been set: "For Such a Time as This." We will be in deep conversation on issues of racial justice. Included in the discussion will be issues of concern to the Native American population. Our Racial Justice team will be working on this with our keynote presenter, Ms Judith Roberts, ELCA Program Director, Racial Justice Ministries.

We will be conducting Anti-Racism training across the Synod. This is in response to actions by the August 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Training will be held for the Synod Staff, Deans, and Synod Council, and will also be offered in various ways across the synod for rostered leaders and lay persons.

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Bishop Burkat shared her excitement over the Joint Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund, Sweden, which included Pope Francis and the President of the Lutheran World Federation. Bishop Burkat had hoped to use this as a model for a joint celebration in our area. Archbishop Charles Chaput of the Philadelphia Archdiocese does not seem ready to pursue such an event at this time.

We have the opportunity locally to build bridges and make conversation as we are able, and we are encouraged to do so.

We as a Synod will not have a large event; we will join with and emphasize what is growing up from the Conferences.

First African American Lutheran Pastor

The Reverend Jehu Jones, who, in 1834, was the first African American Lutheran pastor in the United States, was recognized as a new marker was placed where the first African American congregation was established in 1834 in Philadelphia. The placing of this marker brings attention to a significant person in the life of the Church, and in the formation of the country.

SEKOMU Update

As of the date of this meeting, \$14,000 has been raised to help rebuild the school. Bishop Burkat stated her belief that we can do better than this. The University needs to build a gate and a fence, and rebuild the dorms. In this day and age we need to protect this school as they train people to protect the most vulnerable citizens.

United Lutheran Seminary

Bishop Burkat is on the board of the new United Lutheran Seminary, which has now posted the position description for the president of the new school. President David Lose is stepping down, and is taking a call as Senior Pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, MN. We are on schedule with the transition, and we have 25 more candidates exploring seminary as a result of the new venture and the offer of free tuition for ELCA candidates.

Ms Susan Pursch thanked the bishop for her sharing, and asked about whether there can be a regular “state of the synod” report; an overview of what is going on in the Synod, good or bad, so that we can stay informed and involved.

Actions on the Roster

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

Specialized Ministry

S.C.16.12.01 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one year renewable call to Specialized Ministry to Ms. Rachel Bailey as part-

time Chaplain at Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care of Pennsylvania in King of Prussia effective December 8, 2016 and extending for one year from the date of her consecration.

On Leave from Call Requests

S.C. 16.12.02 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Kristine Peterson on leave from call status, 3rd year, effective July 14, 2016

S.C. 16.12.03 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Christopher Weidner on leave from call status, 2nd year, effective December 7, 2016

Retirement Requests

S.C. 16.12.04 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Dee Emmert retirement status effective September 1, 2016

S.C. 16.12.05 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Sister Margaret Thorne retirement status effective December 8, 2016

S.C. 16.12.06 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend William Rex retirement status effective January 1, 2017

S.C. 16.12.07 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Linda Hatcher retirement status effective March 1, 2017

Information Not Requiring Action

Transfers:

The Rev. Christopher McKinstry from New England Synod July 5, 2016
The Rev. Matthew Finney from Allegheny Synod August 1, 2016

Deaths:

Mrs. Mary Ann (Pat) Hand – November 10, 2016 (wife of former Bishop Lawrence Hand, Sr.)
The Rev. Donald Rea – October 2, 2016
The Rev Daniel A. Shook – November 5, 2016

VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Change of date

The June 2017 meeting of the Synod Council is changed to June 8. Please make a note of this.

Consideration of creating a Ministry Profile

Three pastors from our interim ministry network suggested that there be a process for creating a Synod ministry profile prior to the election of a bishop next year. A proposal to create such a profile was submitted to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee decided the discussion would benefit from insight of what has been used in other Synods. To this end, the Executive Committee has invited the Secretary of the E.L.C.A., the Reverend Wm Chris Boerger, to come to our Synod on January 31. The Executive Committee will meet with him at 11:00 a.m. and the Synod Council will meet with him from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Pr. Jane Marston would like the conversation to emphasize the character of persons who might serve as well as the needs we have for the Synod.

Bishop Burkat said that there is no bishop sitting among you; you elect a pastor, and the Bishop grows.

Pr. Patricia Davenport, Assistant to the Bishop pointed out that we need to consider diversity across the whole church as we consider leadership for our Synod. There are many people in our Synod who are persons of color, many who are millennials, and we need to consider these as we choose our leaders. But we also need to be aware that there are few leaders of diversity in the broader expression of the Church. This is a broader issue than just what we do in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Regarding diversity across the Church and in congregational life, Vice President Beasley shared that she was recently in Chicago for a meeting of the multicultural team. She was able to attend the first meeting of the Church Council at which our new Vice President was present. She noted that having a person of color in that seat is significant for us as a Church as we strive to be a more inclusive expression of the Body of Christ.

Vice President Beasley encouraged members of the Council to be aware of how we welcome others. She shared that if you are looking to increase your awareness of what to do when you have people attend your congregation who do not look like you, realize that there are resources on the E.L.C.A. web site. You can search there to find strategies and plans for how to incorporate diverse persons into your congregation.

MISSION MOMENT

Mr. Peter Smith, Associate Director of Bear Creek Camp, made a presentation.

Thank you SEPA Synod for your support and participation. The camp has had its highest summer enrollment in many years. There have been four years of growth, following seven years of declining attendance.

The hope is that our campers will continue to live out their faith in their lives. Henry Strobel, member of Synod Council, is a great example of this: an active camper who is active in the Church.

The Camp has a goal for scholarships: we want to be sure any kid who wants to go to camp, can go. There has been a great response from people to make this possible. Project Connect has been very helpful in allowing inner city youth to attend at a discounted rate. It is now called “Philly Connect.”

We are excited to have new cabins instead of tents! We will keep some tent platforms, but we are thrilled to have increased capacity and safety for the campers. We hope to be able to us these, and our new

activity building, for rental to churches and groups at other times in the year. By summer we should have 16 new cabins. Each sleeps 10 people: 8 youth and two counselors.

Family Camp is Memorial Day and Labor Day. We are adding a Family Camp over the 4th of July week when enrollment is lower.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Revisions to the Synod Constitution

Updates to the Synod Constitution are continuing to be prepared. The team that is working on these will have proposals for the Synod Council at the February 23rd meeting.

United Lutheran Seminary

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has the role to appoint a person to a seat on the Seminary Board. The name of Christopher Mondics has been brought forward for the Council's consideration.

S.C. 16.12.08 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoints Christopher Mondics to the board of directors of the United Lutheran Seminary.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms Janet Neff, treasurer, highlighted the following from her written report:

We currently have a surplus, but this is because of the sale of the properties of the former Redeemer, East Falls, and Messiah, Newtown Square. Per our policy, fifteen percent of these sales went to the General unrestricted funds

Mission support is down \$37,700 compared to last year.

The Stewardship Committee is working on encouraging congregational partnership support.

Expenses for properties of former congregations continue: the former First, Collingdale has an offer in process; the former St. John's, Pottstown has an offer in process; Chalfont's cemetery continues to need support for perpetual care; St. Michael's, Germantown is being assessed for how it might be re-purposed, but the costs may be too high. The desire is to make it a social ministry center. Among the concerns that we have been addressing so far are sewer repairs, cleaning, landscaping, water leaks, and fencing the property. So far more than \$35,000 has been spent. Much more will need to be invested before the property will be suitable for re-use. Expenses for the former St. Michael's also include large expenses

associated with the cemetery. This will be an ongoing expense for the Synod as there is not a sizable enough fund for perpetual care associated with the cemetery.

Ms Neff encouraged members to check that you know where your deeds are, and what property you have. Cemeteries and day cares are a source of difficulty if or when congregations close.

Ms Susan Pursch asked how many congregations are in imminent danger of closing. Bishop Bukat replied there may be two. Several congregations are looking at going to part time calls.

Forward Together in Faith

Ms Neff had an update on the Campaign in her written report. At this meeting she highlighted the following uses of money from this campaign for the goals of the effort: \$13,800 has been used for Ministry Assessment Profiles; a \$10,000 grant has been made to Living Gospel Ministry; \$1,439 has been used for scholarships to the Bishop's Convocation.

Mr. Rod Rothermel expressed his concern about congregational giving, stating that from 2014 to 2015 it went down \$200,000 and from 2015 to 2016 it went down again. He requested a report from the Stewardship Committee to see just what efforts are being made to increase the resources and close the gap. Not only would this let the Synod Council see what is being tried, but we may be able to take some of these ideas to use in our congregations.

Pr. Patricia Davenport said the committee is doing several workshops and events on giving patterns, strategies for increasing giving, and other related topics.

Vice President Beasley asked Pr. Davenport to ask Pr. Larry Smoose, chair of the Stewardship Committee, to attend the next meeting of the Synod Council.

Ms Susan Pursch stated that with one quarter to go, she is concerned, and does not know who has the responsibility to deal with the gap so that we end the year with some fiscal integrity.

Pr. Davenport said Pr. Smoose is working to have calls made to congregations that are behind.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee

Chairperson Susan Pursch stated we will use Tait Weller again for the audit.

Nominating Committee

Chairperson Pr. Regina D. Goodrich referenced her written report submitted at the meeting.

Administration Committee

Chairperson Pr. Bryan Penman presented agenda for Assembly.

S.C. 16.12.09 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the Agenda for the 2017 Synod Assembly.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Forward Together in Faith

Pr. Bryan Penman referenced the report he passed out at the meeting. To date we have \$484,000 in gifts and pledges, nearly all from individuals.

Support from Synod Leadership: 86% have pledged or given. Vice President Beasley has pledge cards available at the meeting for those who need one. Support from the Staff is 100%, as is support from the Deans at 100%. The Synod Council is asked to also come to 100% of its membership support the Campaign.

A team has been started to cultivate major donors. There are thirty people on the list already.

Eleven congregations are currently in MAP process at one phase or another.

Ambassadors are now going out to congregations. Six congregations have requested an ambassador, and three have had an ambassador.

Resources continue to be added to the website for use in congregations.

We are discovering a large number of congregations are also in capital campaigns. We need to realize that we are not trying to “rob Peter to pay Paul.” This is a campaign to invest in the future of all our congregations.

Constitution Committee

Chairperson Pr. Jane Marston brought forward two constitutions for approval.

S.C. 16.12.10 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregational constitution for Augustus Lutheran Church, Trappe.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

S.C. 16.12.11 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregational constitution for Resurrection Lutheran Church, Yardley

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Investment Committee

Chairperson Rod Rothermel reviewed choices for investment. He noted that one of the firms in which the Committee suggests investing, T. Rowe Price, needs approval by the governing board of the organization to engage in such a financial relationship. The Committee made the following motion:

S.C. 16.12.12 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council authorizes the investment of funds in T Rowe Price.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted this resolution.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms Susan Purcsh requested the Forward Together in Faith report be posted.

NEW BUSINESS

None

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

A special meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held January 31, 2017, 4:00 p.m. at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be February 23, 2017, 4:00 p.m. at University Lutheran, Philadelphia

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Approved by Synod Council February 23, 2017