

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

*For Such a Time as This:  
Reforming Hearts through Racial Justice*  
**May 5-6, 2017**  
**Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse**  
**Telford, Pennsylvania**

**Friday Morning, May 5, 2017**

**Service of Holy Communion**

Worship began at 9:35 am, and featured a hymn, “Now is the Time,” which was written especially for this Assembly by Mr. Paul Friesen-Carper. The hymn was inspired by the Assembly theme “For Such a Time as This: Reforming Hearts through Racial Justice” and the Christian imperative to stop racism.

In her sermon Bishop Claire S. Burkat clearly stated that this is not an easy topic, but a critical one for people of faith to engage. When the topic for the Assembly was announced she said,

“Some white folks raised their eyebrows because they knew this would be a risky conversation. This is not a feel-good topic. Their raised eyebrows meant: Really? You’re going to make us talk about this? Now? Are we ready for this?”

Some Black folks and other folks of color raised their eyebrows, too, but for different reasons. Their raised eyebrows meant: Really? Can we *trust* this process? Or will this burden us once again with having to tutor white folks? Or, worse, gloss over the painful truths of our experience? Are we ready for this?”

And so Bishop Burkat addressed the Assembly, “Are we ready for this? I have no doubt that we are.”

Bishop Burkat declared “The work of racial reconciliation cannot wait. And now is the acceptable time to take on this issue.”

“We are on this Emmaus road together, even when the sinfulness of our hearts and our society makes us stumble. We are on this road together to disrupt the system of evil by having the courage to address the complexities of race, class, and ethnicity. We are on this road together to proclaim that Christ changes everything. We are on this road together to make it plain: resurrection is borne out of cross-shaped pain that is transformed by God into new life. There *is* hope. We *can* change. God *can* make a way where there is no way.”

Within the service was the Installation of Deacon Rachel M. Bailey as Chaplain at Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care of Pennsylvania, and a Welcome to the Roster for twenty-nine additional members of the three former lay rosters as they were admitted to the new roster of Ministers of Word and Service. They are now conferred the title of “Deacon.”

**Order for the Opening of the Assembly**

At 11:06 a.m. Bishop Burkat and Vice President Tracey A. Beasley led the Order for the Opening of the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Bishop Burkat welcomed all those attending the Assembly, both Voting Members and visitors.

The Bishop expressed thanks to those who served as members of the worship team and those who prepared for this Assembly, namely: The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Ollikainen, Chairperson, and members of the Assembly Worship Team: The Rev. Bryan Penman, the Rev. Linnea Clark, Mr. Andrew Long, and the Rev. Linda Manson; Musicians: The Rev. Linnea Clark, Mr. Drew Long, and Ms Yvonne Lembo; Prayer pause leaders: The Rev. Dr. Charles Leonard, Deacon Rachel Bailey, the Rev. Marcia Bell, Ms. Raine Bedeaux, Ms Joy Grace, the Rev. Christopher McKinstry; Saturday morning worship leaders: the Rev. Carlton Rodgers and the Rev. Erika Strobel; more than 50 people who are serving as worship assistants at various times throughout the Assembly including: Communion assistants, ushers, readers, pray-ers, water sprinklers, anointers and Silver Springs - Martin Luther Choir and staff; Mr. Paul Friesen-Carper who wrote the hymn “Now is the Time” especially for this year’s Synod Assembly; The Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose who supplied the wine for Communion and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Coatesville for again providing the font

Bishop Burkat introduced some particular guests to the Assembly: Ms Judith Roberts, Director for Racial Justice for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, attending our Assembly both as our keynote presenter and ELCA Churchwide Representative; Ms Prairie Rose Seminole, Director for American Indian Alaska Native Ministries with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, Director for Evangelical Mission in Metro NY Synod, and National President of the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) ; The Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, parliamentarian; Ms Barbara Debski, Portico Benefit Services; and Mr. Gerry Lauro, of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

Bishop Burkat recognized and thanked the Synod Officers; members of the Synod Council; the Deans; the Rev. Christian McMullen, Director of Interim Ministry; the Rev. Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility; Deacon Allison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy; and the Rev. Donna Wright, chair of the Transitional Ministry Team

The Bishop then invited those rostered leaders who were new to the Synod since our last Assembly to come forward and introduced themselves. One of these, the Rev. Lydia Posselt, was recognized for receiving the Lutheran World Federation Young Preacher Award. Pr. Posselt will be preaching at the Lutheran World Federation as it gathers in later this month.

### **Report of the Registrar:**

Ms Cynta Outterbridge, Registrar, reported that the total number of voting members was 441, the total number of voting members registered was 407, and the number of voting members needed for a quorum was 221. Bishop Burkat declared a quorum.

### **Report of the Secretary**

The Rev. Karl M. Richard, Secretary, presented, and the Assembly adopted, 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 29<sup>th</sup> annual assembly on June 9, 2016.

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

### **Report of the Constitution Committee**

Secretary Richard presented as information the required provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which were adopted by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. He then presented for approval the following amendments as recommended by the Committee to review the Synod Constitution and endorsed by the Synod Council.

### **†S18.12. AMENDMENTS**

Secretary Richard explained that amendments that are adopted by the Churchwide Assembly but not required "may be adopted by the Synod Assembly on a majority vote at one assembly under †S18.12."

Secretary Richard shared that the following are in sections that are not marked with a †, but include language that is necessary to keep consistent with the newly required provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, and also include grammatical corrections which bring us in line with the Model Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions for Synods. Also included are sections S14.30., 33., 34., 42. and 47., which are new and delineate further the expectations and responsibilities for Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) as they are called ministers of this Church.

He presented the following resolution, which the assembly adopted:

**S. A. 17.05.01 Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments, as well as grant permission to correct language regarding the new roster language in sections which may have been inadvertently omitted from the following:** *(A majority vote at one Synod Assembly is required)*

**S7.22.** ~~The This synod may establish processes that permit retired ordained-rostered ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled,~~

or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c-~~above~~. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ~~leaders~~ ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

**S7.24.** ~~Ordained ministers~~ Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters ~~of ordained ministers~~ of this synod. ~~Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod.~~ Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant an ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ~~ordained~~ minister's service in a congregation of this church.

**S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four year term.

**S10.03.** The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

...

d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ~~ordained ministers~~ of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service ~~and of other official rosters~~, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.

e. Issue letters of call to ~~ordained-rostered~~ ministers ~~and letters of call to associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

...

**S11.11.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and

to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ~~ordained~~ ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

**S13.11.** When a ~~pastor or when an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

**S13.12.** A congregation under financial obligation to its former ~~pastor or associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

#### **Chapter 14.**

#### **~~ORDAINED MINISTERS AND LAY ROSTERED MINISTERS~~**

#### **S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament**

**S14.013.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**S14.014.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.

**S14.015.** Each ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**S14.127.** No ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. ~~An ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

**S14.215.** All ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

#### **S14.30. ~~Official Rosters of Laypersons~~ Ministers of Word and Service**

**S14.33.** The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**S14.34.** Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**S14.42.** No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

**S14.47.** All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

### **Amendments to Bylaws from previous Churchwide Assembly Action**

Secretary Richard then brought forward the following changes to bring our Constitution in line with the Model Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions for Synods. They reflect actions from a previous Churchwide Assembly which were not incorporated into our Synod's Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions.

He presented the following resolution, which the assembly adopted:

**S. A. 17.05.02** Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments to Sections S8., S10., S13., and S14.: *(A majority vote at one Synod Assembly is required)*

**S.8.42.** The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for  
**S8.42.f. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. ~~Giving of corporate surety in the amount determined by the Synod Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefore shall be paid by this synod.~~** Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

†**S10.02.** The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**S13.40. Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities**

**S13.41. Authorized worshipping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.**

~~S14.29. The provisions in the churchwide documents and such provisions as may be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit governing associates in ministry shall apply in this synod.~~

### Amendments to Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions related to Synod Council

Lastly, Secretary Richard brought forward the following changes to the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, the intent of which is to properly re-align segments of the Synod Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions that are related to Synod Council.

He presented the following resolution, which the assembly adopted by the required 2/3rds vote:

**S. A. 17.05.03 Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments to Sections S6, S9, And S10.:**

*(A two-thirds majority vote at one Synod Assembly is required)*

~~**S6.04.D10.**—*The Synod Assembly shall elect two Synod Council youth representatives, one female and one male, and two Synod Council young adult representatives, one female and one male. At least one of the youth or young adult representatives shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English. The terms of the two youth representatives shall be two years and shall expire at the same time. The youth representatives may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult representatives shall be three years. The young adult representatives may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. Those nominated for the young adult representative positions and not elected shall be added to the nominees for the Synod Council “at large” positions.*~~ (moved to S10.01.02)

#### **S9.08.01. Synod Council**

**a. The nominating and election process for the 24 persons, not including the four officers of this Synod and the two youth and the two young adult representatives, elected as members of Synod Council members of the Synod Council shall proceed in a manner that will ensure the composition of the Synod Council meets the requirements set forth in Chapter 10 of this constitution. shall proceed in a manner that will assure that at least three members so elected will be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English, (moved to S10.01.01.c) nine of the 24 elected members shall be ordained ministers and 15 shall be lay persons. (moved to S10.01.01.a) Terms for members other than the youth member shall be for three years (moved to S10.01.02) and shall be arranged so that the terms of three ordained ministers, three conferences and two at-large lay members expire each year. (moved to S10.01.01.b) None of the 24 elected members shall be eligible to serve for more than two terms consecutively. (moved to S10.01.01.b) Terms of office for the youth members shall be two years, (moved to S10.01.02) and for the young adult members, three years, subject to a two-term limitation. (moved to in S10.01.02)**

**b. Representatives of congregations in Each conference whose lay position is up for election shall meet prior to the Synod Assembly and shall nominate at least one layperson from their conference for the Synod Council position, one nominee per conference to be elected by the assembly at the annual meeting. Every conference may nominate laypeople for the**

at-large lay positions. (new) Normally, these nominations will take place at a full assembly of the conference. (new, language borrowed from S7.24 and S12.01.05) ~~These lay seats assigned to conferences shall alternate every six years (or two terms) between male and female Council members.~~ (moved to S10.01.01.b) The Nominating Committee shall receive these nominations from the conferences to include in its report. ~~Voting members at the annual meeting of the assembly may nominate from the floor persons from the assigned conferences for election to the Synod Council.~~ Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (new, language borrowed from S9.05 thru S9.07)

c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each minister of Word and Sacrament and lay at-large position up for election. (new, removes implied need to nominate people for positions not up for election) Geographic consideration shall be given in proposing nominees, as well as the need to assure an adequate number of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. ~~Balloting for the conference lay positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to represent conferences shall be added to the at large ballots. Balloting for at-large lay members shall be by male and female panels;~~ (moved to S9.08.01.e) each year a male and female at-large lay representative shall be elected. (moved to S10.01.01.b) Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (new, language borrowed from S9.05 thru S9.07)

d. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each youth and young adult position up for election. (new, repeats pattern from previous provision) Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (new, language borrowed from S9.05 thru S9.07)

e. ~~Balloting for the~~ The election of conference lay positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to represent conferences lay positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. The election of young adult positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. (new, repeats pattern from previous sentences) Nominees not elected to the young adult positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. (moved here from S6.04.D10, language changed to match previous sentences) Balloting for at-large lay positions shall be by male and female panels. (moved here from S9.08.01.c).

~~d f. No nomination for Synod Council shall be made if that nominee's congregation already has a member on the Synod Council or if a member of a congregation has already been nominated, provided, however, that no nominee shall be ineligible if the Synod Council member from that congregation is an officer of this Synod and/or one of them is a Synod Council youth or young adult member. The Synod Council may make exceptions to this requirement in order to promote greater diversity and/or inclusivity.~~ (moved to S10.01.01.d) If a nominee is ineligible or becomes ineligible for a position on the Synod Council, as defined in †S10.01 and related bylaws, that nominee shall be removed from the ballot.

S10.01.01. General Membership (new, best term we could find to describe the "other members", as listed in †S10.01)

a. With the exception of the officers, the youth members, and the young adult members, the general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of 32 members: four officers (as set forth in 8.01. of the Synod Constitution), two youth (a youth is defined as a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment to service), two young adults (voting members of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service), (already defined in †S10.01) and 24 other members (nine ministers of Word and Sacrament, and 15 lay members). one layperson from each conference of this synod, and six at-large laypersons, three male and three female. (more clearly spells out the conference and at-large positions than was previously stated) ~~The Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time, provided, however, that two or three members of the same congregation may serve on the Synod Council concurrently if one of them is either an officer of this synod and/or one of them is a Synod Council youth or young adult member. (moved to S10.01.01.d)~~

b. The terms for the general membership other than the youth member shall be for three years and of the Synod Council shall be arranged staggered (language borrowed from †S11.05) so that the terms of three ministers of Word and Sacrament, three conferences approximately one-third of conference lay positions, and two at-large lay members positions, one male and one female, (moved here from S9.08.01.c) expire each year. None of the 24 general membership of the Synod Council shall be eligible to serve for more than two terms consecutively consecutive terms. (moved here from S9.08.01.a) These lay seats The lay position assigned to each conferences shall alternate every six years or two terms between male and female Council members. (moved here from S9.08.01.b)

c. At least three members of the general membership so-elected of the Synod Council will shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. (moved here from S9.08.01.a)

d. The general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time, provided, however, that two or three members of the same congregation may serve on the Synod Council concurrently if one of them is either an officer of this synod and/or one of them is a Synod Council youth or young adult member. (moved here from S9.08.01.d; simplified based on the whole section only referring to the general membership) The Synod Council may make exceptions to this requirement in order to promote greater diversity and/or inclusivity Exceptions may be made to this requirement only if necessary to meet the requirements of S10.01.01.c. (moved here from S9.08.01.d)

S10.01.02. The Synod Assembly Council shall elect include two Synod Council youth representatives members, one male and one female, and two Synod Council young adult representatives members, one male and one female. At least one of the youth or young adult representative members shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English. The terms of the two youth representatives members shall be two years and shall expire at the same time. The youth representatives members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult representatives

members shall be three years and shall expire at the same time. (new, describes current practice) The young adult ~~representatives~~ members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. (moved here from S6.04.D10) ~~Those nominated for the young adult representative positions and not elected shall be added to the nominees for the Synod Council “at large” positions.~~ (moved to S9.08.01.e)

## **Final Result**

### **S9.08.01. Synod Council**

- a. The nominating and election process for the members of the Synod Council shall proceed in a manner that will ensure the composition of the Synod Council meets the requirements set forth in Chapter 10 of this constitution.
- b. Each conference whose lay position is up for election shall nominate at least one layperson from their conference for the position. Every conference may nominate laypeople for the at-large lay positions. Normally, these nominations will take place at a full assembly of the conference. The Nominating Committee shall receive these nominations from the conferences to include in its report. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each minister of Word and Sacrament and lay at-large position up for election. Geographic consideration shall be given in proposing nominees, as well as the need to assure an adequate number of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- d. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each youth and young adult position up for election. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- e. The election of conference lay positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to conference lay positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. The election of young adult positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to the young adult positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. Balloting for at-large lay positions shall be by male and female panels.
- f. If a nominee is ineligible or becomes ineligible for a position on the Synod Council, as defined in †S10.01 and related bylaws, that nominee shall be removed from the ballot.

### **S10.01.01. General Membership**

- a. With the exception of the officers, the youth members, and the young adult members, the general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of nine ministers of Word and Sacrament, one layperson from each conference of this synod, and six at-large laypersons, three male and three female.
- b. The terms for the general membership of the Synod Council shall be staggered so that the terms of three ministers of Word and Sacrament, approximately one-third of conference lay positions, and two at-large lay positions, one male and one female, expire each year. None of the

general membership of the Synod Council shall be eligible to serve for more than two consecutive terms. The lay position assigned to each conference shall alternate every two terms between male and female.

c. At least three members of the general membership of the Synod Council shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

d. The general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time. Exceptions may be made to this requirement only if necessary to meet the requirements of S10.01.01.c.

**S10.01.02.** The Synod Council shall include two youth members, one male and one female, and two young adult members, one male and one female. At least one of the youth or young adult members shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English. The terms of the youth members shall be two years and shall expire at the same time. The youth members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult members shall be three years and shall expire at the same time. The young adult members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible.

Secretary Richard thanked the Assembly for their consideration.

#### **Report of the Nominating Committee**

The Rev. Laura Tancredi, Chair of the Nominating Committee, made the report.

#### **Synod Council**

**TICKET 1: SYNOD COUNCIL, VICE PRESIDENT** (One lay person to be elected for a term ending 2021)

The Committee nominated Ms Tracey A. Beasley. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Beasley elected.

**TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY** (Three to be elected for terms ending 2020).

The Committee nominated the Rev. Sarah Srobie and the Rev. Lydia Posselt. Nominated from the floor were The Rev. Serena Sellers, the Rev. Christopher McKinstry, and the Rev. Norbert Hahn. Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 2 closed.

**TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Ms Elizabeth Young. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Young elected.

**TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Ms Sandra Zimmerman. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Zimmerman elected.

**TICKET 5: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Mr. Burt Glenn and Mr. Henry Geyer. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 5 closed. Persons not elected on this ticket shall be added to Ticket 8

**TICKET 6: SYNOD COUNCIL, YOUTH, LAY MAN** Voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election. (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The Committee presented no nominations. There were no nominations from the floor.

Synod Council will be responsible for filling this position

**TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, YOUTH, LAY WOMAN** Voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election. (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The Committee nominated Ms Raine Bedeaux. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ms Bedeaux elected.

**TICKET 8: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Mr. Donald Gleiter. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 8 closed.

**TICKET 9: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee presented no nominations. There were no nominations from the floor.

Synod Council will be responsible for filling this position

**Committee on Discipline**

**TICKET 10: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY** (Two to be elected for a term ending 2022)

The Committee nominated the Rev. Moses Dennis and the Rev. Lynette Chapman. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Pr. Dennis and Pr. Chapman elected.

**TICKET 11: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2022)

The Committee nominated Ms Charlene Jenkins. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ms Jenkins elected.

**TICKET 12: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2022)

The Committee nominated Mr. Thomas Salber. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Salber elected.

Bishop Burkat thanked Pr. Tancredi, who was only recently named chair, for her report, and Pr. Regina D. Goodrich for her work as chair of this Committee earlier in the year.

### **Bishop's Address to the Synod Assembly**

Vice President Beasley introduced Bishop Burkat to the Assembly. "She loves Jesus and fights for the Church. Thank you for fighting for us and for loving God!"

### **A Vision for the Appointed Time**

For Such a Time as This – What time is it? The Appointed Time!!

As Bishop Burkat leaves office, there are many things that need to happen in this time:

We are celebrating 500 years since the Reformation. We are now at a time of Reformation of all we know as the Church. And it is coming whether we are ready or not!

+ Our Church needs to rally around a vision of how Christ is making himself known in this time.

A Reformation of the Church has been launched, whether we like it or not.

We need to stop worrying about the decline in the church's attendance – those who are here WANT to be here. We need to align ourselves with Christ and move forward.

+ We need to celebrate the Spirit in the lives of the people!

Too often we celebrate the history of our congregations, marking the terms of the pastors and the dates and size of the building projects. We need to look at the movement of the Spirit in the people of our congregations.

We need a portable vision, a portable faith, where we are working for Christ in the world.

We need to be collaborative and ecumenical, putting Christ first, and denominational identity lower.

We need to develop vibrant, visionary communities of faith, that move out into our neighborhoods in the power of the Spirit for the sake of others, not to build our membership.

+ We are an aging church

Never a time in history when 6 generations are living at the same time!

The oldest 3 generations planted the church of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; now the youngest 3 generations need to take hold of this brave new church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We need to intentionally raise up younger leaders, and more diverse leaders, including persons of color, for the future of the church.

+ Brave New Church

We need to find ways to engage the world, and particularly the younger generations, in new and different ways.

The Brave New Church initiative is designed to do just that. Through forums, podcasts, and blogposts conversations are being held between a diverse gathering of lay and clergy who are striving to find ways to approach this new time with fresh and innovative ideas.

#### + Racial Reconciliation

We need to address the issues of racism and inequality all around us and within us.

We need to learn to truly listen to each other, and make our homes and congregations safe places for all people.

We need to make friends with someone who does not look like us, and be blessed in this!

Bishop Burkat concluded with these remarks – “The vision is this. I want us to arrive at next year’s Synod Assembly and be able to look back on the work we have begun here and say – yes, God’s work of reconciliation is being done here.

**You** are the ambassadors of Christ’s reconciliation. And **now** is the acceptable time.”

#### **United Lutheran Seminary**

The Rev. Dr. J. Jayakiran Sebastian, who is Dean of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and will continue in this role as the new United Lutheran Seminary begins, was joined by Leah Woehr-Grande, a member of final graduating class of LTSP from our own synod to share reflections on the coming United Lutheran Seminary. A video was presented.

#### **Portico Benefits**

Ms Barbara Debski, representing Portico Benefit Services, shared a video about the work of Portico and the work they do for leaders on the ELCA.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Leonard, Director of Contextual Education and Associate Professor of Practical Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, led the Assembly in prayer before the lunch break.

*The Assembly recessed for lunch.*

#### **Friday afternoon, May 5, 2017**

Deacon Rachel Bailey led the Assembly back into session with prayer.

#### **Report of the Committee on Elections**

The Rev. Rebecca Shanely, Chair of the Committee, made the report

Two ballots were distributed, Ticket 2, Synod Council, Clergy and Ticket 5, Synod Council, Lower Montgomery Conference Representative, Lay Man. On Ticket 2, the Assembly may vote for no more than three. On Ticket 5 the Assembly may vote for one.

The Rev. Gwendolyn King was recognized, and she asked if the biographies for the clergy nominated from the floor had been distributed.

When it was recognized that they had not been, Pr. Shanely declared that we would not count this ballot for Ticket 2, but will present a fresh ballot at a later time.

The Ballot for Ticket 5 was completed, and the pages collected the ballots for tabulation.

### **Report of the Treasurer**

Ms Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, presented the Treasurer's Report and the Audit Report.

She referred the Assembly to the financial reports which had been distributed in the Bulletin of Reports. She noted the following items:

With regard to our Statement of Financial Position, assets vs. liabilities, we have significantly more assets than liabilities. Ms Neff noted we had contributions from sources other than congregational Mission Support that assisted with this. These sources included gifts to the Forward Together in Faith Campaign, Grants from the ELCA, undesignated and designated income, and income from trust funds. We also received money from selling the property of the former Redeemer, East Falls.

Congregational Mission Support has been decreasing over the years. In 2011, we received \$2,254,000 from congregations, where in 2016 we received \$1,851,000. 79 Congregations maintained or increased their financial support of the Synod.

Ms Neff described some of the places the money is used, pointing out that we do a great deal with the resources we have.

She shared that the Auditors found no concerns with our financial reports for the past fiscal year. She moved that the Assembly adopt the following resolution:

**S. A. 17.05.04 THEREFORE BE IT 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 2016.**

Discussion followed.

The Rev. Lisa Jefferies, pastor of Emmaus Road, noted the decrease in Mission Support, and asked if there is any indication how many giving units this represents. Are there fewer giving units? Or are the regular givers contributing less?

Ms Neff replied that both are true. There are fewer congregations, and some of the continuing congregations are in the midst of building campaigns, or are adding staff or programs, and this sometimes affects what they are able to share with the Synod.

The Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, commented that yes, congregations are experiencing financial struggles, but the "easy way" of dealing with this is to cut support to the Synod and the broader Church. We encourage congregations to model good stewardship practices for their members, placing resources where it is part of our vision.

As there was no further discussion, the vote was taken.

The Assembly adopted the resolution.

### **Consideration of the Budget**

Ms Sue Massey, Chair of the Finance Committee, joined Ms Neff to present the proposed budget for 2018.

Ms Massey shared that these continue to be times of financial uncertainty in many of our congregations. But she has had something running in her mind: “The Lord will provide. But the Lord needs us to be faithful.” And with this, she has focused on the verse from scripture that says “Do not worry about your life, for the Lord knows what you need.” With this assurance, and this challenge, she is convinced we can do the work before us as a Synod.

Ms Massey shared via Power Point presentation the basics of the budget.

Total anticipated receipts from all sources:	\$2,716,175
Total anticipated expenses in all areas:	2,775,327
Anticipated deficit	\$ (59,152)

Ms Massey put the following resolution before the Assembly:

**S. A. 17.05.05 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the 2018 budget as presented.**

The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.

Bishop Burkat thanked Ms Neff and Ms Massey for their faithful work with our finances.

### **Keynote Presentation**

Ms Judith Roberts, ELCA Program Director, Racial Justice was the Keynote speaker.

Ms Roberts said she was glad to be back in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

She commented she is standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Her grandfather, CC Bryant, was president of the NAACP and was active in the work for civil rights. But for Judith, he was a person of faith - willing to lay down his life for his friends. She is very proud that there is a marker to commemorating him on the Freedom Trail in Mississippi.

Ms Roberts noted she has several desired outcomes for this time together.

1. That we learn some common language for talking about racial equity and inclusion
2. That we gain an understanding of different levels of racism
3. That we consider next steps in confronting racism

To make this time most effective we will all:

- Need to participate
- Listen well for deep understanding
- See other’s points of view
- Be fully present

We are joined in our Baptismal covenant. We are joined in, and by Jesus. Jesus’ justice was always interpersonal. In his justice work Jesus included people, challenged people, confronted people, and advocated for people.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a Social Statement – Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture. The work of the church in Racial Justice is informed by this statement.

We are involved in many Ethnic Specific ministries. Among the efforts we are making, the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice is a ministry where white people are working to meet the needs of ending racism and joining people together.

Ms Roberts cited two websites, <http://colorlines.com/> and <https://www.raceforward.org>, that members of the Assembly may find helpful. The Women of the ELCA also has excellent information and materials available.

Ms Roberts then directed the Assembly in conversation. She asked members to turn to one another in groups of two or three. She encouraged members to tell their own stories, while listening deeply to the stories of our neighbor. The structure for this conversation was

- Describe your racial or ethnic background
- Who were your people growing up – those “inside your fish bowl”
- Who were people outside your bowl – those with whom you did not come in contact

Following the time of sharing, Ms Roberts asked, “What is Race? Is Racism real? Race is a human made construct, but racism is very real.” She noted that if you can keep people separated by social construction – by color and ethnicity – then we create a way in which some are considered inferior or superior. When it comes to the science behind race, color is only about how we can be protected by the sun. In genetic studies we all have one particular marker as human beings, and we have migrated all over the world.

In these social constructs we have committed crimes against humanity. The “Doctrine of Discovery” was a construct that was sanctioned by the church, and used to allow the taking of land, or selling of persons, because “we” (white Christians) are the true humans, and “they” (native Americans, Africans, other people of color) are inferior.

Often people will say “I don’t see color.” The problem is not seeing color. To say “I don’t see color” becomes a way of either denying the reality of your experience, or denying the reality of the life situation of the person before you. The problem is not seeing color, it is a problem how we use color to keep others down.

The work for Racial Justice is not just a Civil Rights Movement issue, or something that happened “back then.” We are still seeing accumulated privileges for whites and accumulated disadvantages for persons of color. We are called to the ongoing work for equity, love and justice. In Galatians 3:28 Paul writes, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Or In the words of Cornell West, “Justice is what love looks like in public.” Parents are our first teachers. What happens at home is critical in forming both our identity and how we view others.

There are different levels of racism. There is racism on the Micro level. This is the effects of racism that are internalized and interpersonal. And there is racism on the Macro level. This is racism that is corporate and structural. Privilege and oppression are two sides of the same coin.

Institutional racism is discrimination within institutions where there are unfair policies and practices that lead to inequitable opportunities based on race.

Structural Racism is racial bias across institutions and society; the cumulative and compounded effects of an array of factors that systemically provide advantages based on race

What can you do?

Be active in racial healing. Create support groups. Get involved in mentoring and counseling. Build relationships with people who are not like you. Reach out and celebrate historically black churches. Take a stand. Take action. Be about the work of racial reconciliation and racial justice.

### **Second Report of the Committee on Elections**

As the biographical information for those nominated from the floor had been made available, the Rev. Rebecca Shanely had the pages distribute fresh ballots for Ticket 2, Synod Council, Clergy. The Assembly was instructed to vote for no more than three persons. When the balloting was completed Pr. Shanely had the pages collect the ballots for tabulation.

### **Recognition of Anniversary Celebrants**

The Bishop recognized those rostered leaders who are celebrating significant anniversaries of their ordination or consecration.

Those celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

- The Rev. David Deal
- The Rev. Edward Neiderhiser
- The Rev. George Loewer
- The Rev. John W. Carlson
- The Rev. Richard Connor, Sr.
- The Rev. Rodney S. Kopp

Those celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

- The Rev. Barbara Barry Bailey
- The Rev. Donna M. Wright
- The Rev. Mark R. Singh-Hueter
- The Rev. R. Don Wright
- The Rev. Violet Little

The Bishop then recognized congregation that are celebrating significant anniversaries (100 years and above, in 25 year increments) this year.

- 225<sup>th</sup> Immanuel Lutheran Church (Somerton), Philadelphia
- 175<sup>th</sup> Trinity Lutheran Church, Philadelphia
- 150<sup>th</sup> St. John Lutheran Church (Mayfair), Philadelphia
- 125<sup>th</sup> Trinity Lutheran Church, Perkasio
- St. Mark Lutheran Church, Conshohocken
- 100<sup>th</sup> Zion Lutheran Church, Bristol
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Southampton

The Rev. Kris Chandler noted that Trinity Lutheran Church, Fort Washington, is also celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

The Rev. Bryan Penman noted that St. Mark, Conshohocken is not celebrating their 125<sup>th</sup> this year; he was also contacted by the ELCA, but the date the Churchwide office has is incorrect.

### **Stewardship Word**

The Rev. Mukesh Cheedie was invited forward to share information with the Assembly. He noted that there are three pastors which have been trained by the ELCA to assist congregations in the areas of stewardship and discipleship. Congregations are invited and encouraged to reach out to these individuals. They are very willing to work with you. The three pastors that received this training and designation are the Rev. Karen Sease of Grace, Pottstown and the Rev. Timothy Ness of St. Mark, Clifton Heights in the area of stewardship, and the Rev. Mukesh Cheedie in the area of discipleship.

The Rev. Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility and interim pastor at Trinity, Perkasie, led the Assembly in prayer. The Assembly was then dismissed to forums and dinner.

*The Assembly recessed for forums and dinner.*

### **Friday evening, May 5, 2017**

Bp. Burkat announced that Floyd, the sexton and a faithful member of the Franconia Mennonite Center, died this morning as he was setting for our event. His wife Monique also works here. Floyd was a great man of faith, very well loved, and we give thanks to God that he has claimed his baptismal promise. He has been our “go to” guy for the past 18 years that we have been coming here.

The Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey led the Assembly back into session with prayer.

### **Third Report of the Committee on Elections**

The Rev. Rebecca Shanely shared the results of the previous balloting:

Ticket 2, Synod Council, Clergy

Total Ballots cast -	369
Total Valid Ballots cast -	369
Total Invalid Ballots -	0
Ballots needed to Elect -	185
The Rev. Christopher McKinstry	259
The Rev. Lydia Posselt	234
The Rev. Serena Sellers	208
The Rev. Norbert Hahn	173
The Rev. Sarah Stobie	172

Bishop Burkat declared Pastors McKinstry, Posselt, and Sellers elected.

Ticket 5, Synod Council, Lower Montgomery Conference, Lay Male

Total Ballots cast -	317
Total Valid Ballots cast -	316
Total Invalid Ballots -	1
Ballots needed to Elect -	159

Mr. Henry Geyer	173
Mr. Albert Glenn	143

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Henry Geyer elected.

Pr. Shanely stated that Mr. Albert Glenn would move forward to Ticket 8, Synod Council, Lay Male at Large.

The ballots for Ticket 8 were distributed at this time. When the balloting was completed, the pages collected the ballots for tabulation.

### **Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel**

The Rev. Raymond Miller presented the following resolution, which the Committee on Reference and Counsel recommended for adoption:

#### **Support of Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees**

**Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Social Statement “For Peace in God’s World” states that “through the cross of Christ, God calls us to serve the needs of our neighbor, especially of those groups and individuals who suffer and are vulnerable” (pg. 6) and that, on the basis of our faith, “we pledge to continue our church’s historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants” (pg. 21).;**

**Whereas the ELCA Social Message on Immigration states that even though we “recognize the obstacles and difficulties our church and society face in welcoming newcomers” (pg. 1), those difficulties only “deepens our belief that ‘all people are God’s creatures, sinners for whom Christ died’ and our responsibility to respect the human dignity of all” (pg. 1);**

**Whereas the ELCA Social Message on Immigration continues by stating that “immigration, refugee, and asylum policies express who we are as a nation, influence the nation’s future character, and affect the lives of millions of people. We encourage our members, in light of our history and our ministry with newcomers, to join with other citizens in our democratic society to support just laws that serve the common good” (pg. 6);**

**Whereas Lutheran Children and Family Services, Pennsylvania’s largest refugee resettlement program, had to shut down in 2016 due to “unpredictable state and local funding, coupled with reimbursement that didn’t cover the true cost of service contributed to mounting deficit,” as stated on Lutheran Children and Family Services’ website;**

**Whereas Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) has issued statements strongly opposing the Trump Administration’s actions regarding refugees and migrants, stating that these actions “prevent us from undertaking life-saving work during the most critical time for refugees and displaced persons in human history.”;**

**Whereas ELCA Presiding Bishop, the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, issued a pastoral message in response to “President Trump’s refugee executive order” urging “ELCA congregations into learning, prayer and action on behalf of those who seek refuge on our shores”; and**

**Whereas the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Synod is a leader in the ELCA in working on behalf of our neighbors in need; now,**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod:**

- 1. reaffirm the ELCA Social Message on Immigration;**
- 2. follow the guidance of ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton by recommending resources for learning and faithful guidance about immigration and refugee services to ministers and congregations;**
- 3. urge ministers, congregations, and members to use their Christian freedom to act on behalf of neighbors, including immigrants and refugees; and**
- 4. urge ministers, congregations, and members to contact elected officials concerning their beliefs related to immigration and refugee policies.**

The Rev. Tyler Rasmussen, Trinity, Pleasant Valley, addressed the Assembly on behalf of the Upper Bucks Conference expanding on the reason for the resolution, taking a stand against the current policies that are working against our neighbors.

Mr. Tom Salber, Prince of Peace, Philadelphia, spoke in favor of the resolution: I totally support this. We have a flagship ministry in our congregation related to this issue – “Welcome Home” which is helping with refugee resettlement.

The Rev. Lynette Chapman, Trinity, Quakertown, proposed an amendment to the Resolution. She stated, “We have discovered the LIRS has composed a similar resolution which was not completed in time for this Assembly. We would like to amend our resolution to include some of LIRS’s language.”

Pastor Chapman moved to amend by addition to the 3<sup>rd</sup> resolved – “offering welcome and hospitality, and to support the work of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other similar ministries;”

The Assembly adopted the Amendment.

Deacon Beth Barkhau, Reformation, Media, moved to amend points 3 and 4 of the resolution by substitution: Urge ~~ministers~~ pastors and deacons, congregations and ~~members~~ all God’s children

The Assembly adopted the Amendment.

Mr. Robert Warner, Good Shepherd, Southampton, asked for a point of clarification. He stated he is being asked to vote to affirm something he does not know about.

It was shared that the supporting documents are available on the app the Synod used to post the Assembly materials.

The resolution as amended was placed before the Assembly for a vote:

**S. A. 17.05.06 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod:**

- 1. reaffirm the ELCA Social Message on Immigration;**
- 2. follow the guidance of ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton by recommending resources for learning and faithful guidance about immigration and refugee services to ministers and congregations;**
- 3. urge pastors and deacons, congregations, and all God's children to use their Christian freedom to act on behalf of neighbors, including immigrants and refugees, offering welcome and hospitality, and to support the work of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other similar ministries; and**
- 4. urge pastors and deacons, congregations, and all God's children to contact elected officials concerning their beliefs related to immigration and refugee policies.**

The Assembly adopted the resolution.

**Introduction of Candidates for Rostered Ministry**

Deacon Allison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy, thanked the members of the Candidacy Committee, noting particularly those members who are departing the committee.

Mr. Fred Renigar, chair of the Candidacy Committee, introduced the candidates. Before his introductions he shared some that nationally there is a great shortage of clergy in the church. Last year the whole ELCA only graduated 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the clergy we need for the number of congregations that are in search of leaders. Mr. Renigar asked the Assembly to speak about this need, keep your hearts and eyes open, speak with your pastor about persons with gifts, and raise up leaders from your congregations.

He then introduced the following persons. Ms Shirley Keiter was not able to be present.

- + Shirley Keiter – from SEPA Synod – assigned to SEPA Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and service
- + Deacon Rachel Bailey – from SEPA Synod – chaplain at Seasons Hospice of PA, just installed as a Minister of Word and Service
- + Louis Tillman, IV – from Southeast Synod – assigned to SEPA Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and sacrament
- + Micah Krey – from SEPA Synod – assigned to DE/MD Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and sacrament
- + Leah Woehr-Grande – from SEPA Synod – assigned to East-Central Wisconsin Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and sacrament
- + Pastor Chris Glod – from SEPA Synod – visitation pastor at Trinity Lansdale, Minister of Word and Sacrament

**Evening Prayer** was led by members of the Synod Assembly Worship Team

*The Assembly recessed for the evening.*

**Saturday morning, May 6, 2017**

### **Worship**

The Rev, Carlton Rodgers, Tabernacle, Philadelphia and Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference, and the Rev. Erika Wesch, Little Zion, Telford led the Assembly in worship. They led those gathered in a time of deep reflection and confession around the ways in which we all harm our neighbor and play a role in the ongoing racial tension in our society. Anointing stations were available for individual prayer and absolution as participants felt moved to receive such anointing. The choir from Silver Springs – Martin Luther School provided a moving anthem as part of the worship experience.

### **Report of the Vice President**

Bishop Burkat introduced Vice President Tracey A. Beasley, and commented on how good it is for Tracey to be with us this year, after she was unable to attend our last Assembly due to illness. Bishop Burkat also informed members of the Assembly that Ms Beasley had been on the ballot at the Churchwide Assembly for Vice President of the E.L.C.A. While she was not elected, she made us proud, as she serves the Church well every day.

Vice President Beasley began by thanking the Assembly for re-electing her as our Vice President.

She extended thanks to two people who have been a tremendous help to her as Vice President of the Synod, Bishop Claire Burkat and Ms Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations of our Synod. And she expressed her thanks to Bishop Burkat and Ms Susan Pursch for their support, guidance, and advice as she was being considered for the position of Vice President of the E.L.C.A.

Ms Beasley also thanked the Synod Council. She noted there are 62 pages of the Synod Council report – “We have been BUSY! Talk to them about what we have been about!”

Ms Beasley thanked all the sites that hosted the Synod Council this year for their hospitality, support, and food! Thank you to the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia; St Andrew Lutheran, Perkasi; Living Word Lutheran, Roslyn; University Lutheran, Philadelphia; and St. John Lutheran, Blue Bell.

She also thanked all the Deans, particularly those who hosted the Council on their territory, and especially Pr. Julie DeWerth, who was with us three times this year!

Vice President Beasley stated “Ministry can’t be just about the building. Look at all we have done this year, and seen this year.” She then went on to highlight several innovative ministries that have occurred across our Synod in this past year.

Pr. Tom Russert of St. Paul’s, Doylestown, has been offering free prayer in a coffee shop on Thursdays. There are 300 – 650 people in Starbucks each day. How many of them can we

minister to in a day? We need to take ministry beyond the walls. What about in a movie theater, a gym, a barber shop?

Ms Beasley quoted Psalm 150 – “Praise the Lord, praise God in the sanctuary, let everything that has breath praise Lord!”

Every Thursday for 20 years at 5:00 pm Holy Communion, Philadelphia has hosted Jazz Vespers. The point of jazz vespers is to see that God reaches us where we are!

St. Mark, Conshohocken has been holding “Dinner Church” every Thursday. They gather in the auditorium, not even in the sanctuary! They read scriptures and talk about how the Word of God speaks to their everyday life.

SEPA Synod, we feed the hungry! Spirit and Truth worship center provides a meal each week at the Life Center of Delaware County. It costs \$120 to feed 70 people. You can help them to do this!

In a collaborative approach to service, Grace, Philadelphia, and Holy Trinity, Narberth, come together to distribute meals to the homeless.

When it comes to the work before us, “God has a plan, and SEPA, you are it!” “Let all that has breath, Praise the Lord. Hallelujah!”

Following her celebration of the work we do in this Synod, the Vice President noted that next year we will be electing a new Bishop to lead us in ministry. She gave a review of the process for the election of the new Bishop.

There are three teams that will be a part of our process; a Transition Team that will develop a Ministry Profile of the Synod; a Discernment Team that will determine a prayer-filled way to consider what types of gifts/skills might be helpful to meet the needs referenced in the Profile, and raise up names of people who might possess such gifts; and a Team that will run the actual process of the election at next year’s Assembly.

The Synod Council has appointed chairpersons for each of these teams:

Transition – Ms Pat Robertson and Ms Julie Kinzel

Discernment – Ms Tracey A. Beasley

Committee on Bishop Election – Ms Christine Simpson

People who have an interest in serving on one of these teams are encouraged to submit their name and information to Vice President Beasley by May 10<sup>th</sup> for consideration by the Executive Committee.

Ms Beasley encouraged us all to be in prayer throughout this year as we move forward in this process to discern who will be our next Bishop. She then asked the Rev. Patricia Davenport to pray for our current Bishop, Claire Burkat, and the process we are entering.

### **SEPA Anti-Racism Team**

The Rev. Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission for SEPA Synod, introduced the Synod's Anti-Racism Team for a presentation.

The Rev. Dr. Susie Folks began the presentation by sharing two videos which show the depths of systemic racial bias in our own area. One was on housing practices in Levittown, PA from 1947 – 1951, in which there was a deliberate and intentional exclusion of persons of color from purchasing homes in this new “ideal” community. The second was a video on racism today, displaying how “Racism is Real.”

Dr. Folks continued the presentation, noting that at the 2011 Synod Assembly we passed a resolution in which we said, “this Synod will claim and practice an anti-racism mentality, and actively seek full participation in its ministries, and train in anti-racism training.”

She challenged us all to consider how we are living out this resolution. The Anti-Racism Team is willing to go to congregations to help them address these issues. Are you going to live out your baptismal covenant with God? Are we going to work on this not? Sometimes we hear and cry, and then go to lunch. It is fine to go to lunch, as long as after lunch, we do something!

### **Report from the Church-wide Office of the ELCA**

Ms Judith Roberts presented the Church-wide Report to the Assembly. She began by sharing a video from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton which included, among other points, that the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment is not just don't kill, but do not harm your neighbor! We are called not to “do no harm,” but also to help our neighbor in every possible way.

Ms Roberts noted that the Lutheran movement is a world-wide movement. This became clear to her at a time when she was in Wittenberg, Germany, and heard the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Malaysia making a presentation. Our focus on the free gift of grace has been proclaimed and received around the world. We are celebrating 500 years of this movement.

We are a Church in three expressions – Congregations, Synods, and the Church-wide Organization. Your giving supports all these expressions. Congregational partnership support given through SEPA Synod and shared with the Church-wide Organization came to over \$900,000 this past year. Thank you for that gift!

As we commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, there are many resources available. For more information congregations may see the website [ELCA500.org](http://ELCA500.org). Rick Steves has also made a video of Luther and the Reformation which is available for all congregations as they explore again some of the actions that led to where we are today.

The ELCA is engaged in a strategic initiative entitled, “Called Forward Together.” The directions of this initiative include ways for us to be a thriving church spreading the Gospel to all people. We are Called Forward Together to be:

1. A church equipping people
2. An inviting church
3. A visible church
4. A well governed church, connected and sustainable

Some of the areas to which your offerings have been directed include: Leadership Development and a reworked candidacy process have been a focus of the Church-wide organization.

Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations have also been a priority. It was wonderful to witness the ongoing development of Lutheran-Catholic relations, culminating with the joint prayer service in Lund, Sweden, at which Pope Francis worshipped and prayed with members of the Lutheran World Federation. Lutheran Muslim relations have been highlighted, and the ELCA has made rapid response to anti-Muslim bigotry. Relationships with Historic Black Church organizations, particularly with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, have been an area of intentional conversation and cooperation.

AMMPARO – Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities – is an initiative aimed at caring for so many in our society who are among the most vulnerable.

The ELCA Foundation works to help with gift planning for fueling future ministry. Yvonne Lembo works in SEPA Synod for the Foundation.

We are engaged in theological discernment, and are considering issues related to Women in Ministry, and we are working to develop a social message on Human Rights.

The “Always Being Made New” Campaign has, after three years, raised \$113 million. As part of this Campaign we have been strengthening the World Hunger Appeal. In 2016 \$21.9 million was contributed to this important work. From SEPA Synod over \$29,000 has been given to the World Hunger Appeal. It is important to note that in addition to the World Hunger Offerings each year, SEPA synod will be sharing 10% of our Forward Together in Faith Campaign with the ELCA Campaign.

We as a Church continue to work to build resilient communities through sustainable development and health –system resourcing.

We are expressing our concern and support for the deaf community. SEPA Synod’s own Christ the King deaf church provides cell phones for deaf inmates at Graterford prison.

We continue to support and encourage the Young Adults in Global Mission program. We encourage and provide missionary sponsorships. The International Women’s leaders program supports 100 global women in short or long term educational and networking opportunities.

These are just some of the many ways we work together as Congregations, Synods, and the Church-wide Organization to make an impact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As an encouragement to rostered leaders, Ms Roberts also made an appeal that they attend the first Rostered Ministers gathering in Atlanta, GA this August. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Dr. James Forbes, and Rachel Held Evans will be among the featured speakers.

## **Final Report of the Committee on Elections**

The Rev. Rebecca Shanely shared the results of the previous balloting:

Ticket 8, Synod Council, Lay Male at Large

Total Ballots cast -	221
Total Valid Ballots cast -	221
Total Invalid Ballots -	0
Ballots needed to Elect -	111
Mr. Albert Glenn	139
Mr. Donald Gleiter	82

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Albert Glenn elected.

Pr. Shanely stated that this concluded our elections for this Assembly. She thanked her team for all their dedication in preparing, distributing and tabulating the many ballots.

### **Forward Together in Faith**

The Rev. Timothy Johansen of Temple, Havertown shared information about the ongoing Forward Together in Faith Campaign. He began by sharing a video regarding the Campaign. Pr. Johansen said “It is a fun and exciting time to be the church. It is hard, but there is also growth.”

He noted three different eras in the life of the Church:

1. The glory days of the 1950s when “everyone” went to church!
2. The 80s and 90s, a time when things were dwindling, but if we only keep going maybe things will get better. We were asking the wrong questions, but were supported by money from the good old days.
3. Today, when things are noticeably different. We are in a time when we are asking the right questions, but now our financial resources and partnership support are diminishing.

The Forward Together in Faith Campaign will give us the money to fund these new ideas.

This Campaign has four areas of focus: Networking; Communicating; Equipping; Innovating. We are already using gifts to the Campaign to empower congregations in these areas.

- Networking – DeafCAN by Christ the King Lutheran Church of the Deaf
- Equipping – MAP study (Ministry Assessment Profile) allows leaders to identify what the needs are for ministry in their congregational context
- Communicating – We need to revisit how we share the story outside the church walls, especially through up to date websites and interactive social media. The Communications team has people ready to come and do a communications assessment in your congregation.
- Innovating- Together as a synod we can plant new worshipping communities in the areas of the greatest missional need. This campaign will also provide grants to support creative, collaborative and innovative planning by congregations with ideas that can be shared throughout the Synod and the ELCA.

Bishop Burkat and the campaign teams have worked hard to raise funds to make this endowment a reality for future generations. This will be a parting gift from our bishop as she leaves office next year. We can make this happen as we share generously.

Pr. Johansen thanked all congregations and people who have pledged or given to the appeal. He encouraged people and congregations to make a significant gift, one that would “take your breath away,” to breathe new life into the ministry we do in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. He then had pledge cards distributed so that all can make a “pledge that will take your breath away.”

### **SEPA Anti-Racism Team – second presentation**

The presentation began with a Video from the Rev. Dane Skilbred, formerly of Trinity, Lansdale, in which he read a poem “Guilt to Love.”

Ms Jane Bischoff from Prince of Peace, Philadelphia, and member of the Anti-Racism Team spoke, citing words from our Order of Confession and Forgiveness. We confess “what we have done, and what we have left undone.” It is precisely what we have left undone that we must address. The ELCA is the least diverse denomination in the nation. And we are not just the least diverse of any other protestant group, but the least diverse of ANY religious group.

We would never identify ourselves as racist. But we are not aware of how much implicit bias we carry around. We need to confess that we are a white culture that has built our society on the backs of people of color – the African, the Native peoples from whom we stole this land. We need to confess that we turn a blind eye to the inequity in incarceration. We don’t have racism without racists! WE are responsible for what we do not know, for what we have left undone. We need to develop diverse cultural relationships; we need to give up our rugged individualism.

The Rev. Christopher Weidner then spoke. He shared a song about a little bird that he sang every morning to his children, and now to his grandchildren. When he sings it, they know he is nearby. When he sings it, they know it is a new morning.

He said, “I wake up, beginning to open my eyes to the unknown effects of privilege and realize I am being called to wake up and begin this new day with more awareness and open eyes to the needs of others. I can’t wake up on my own. I need a “little bird.” We need each other to wake us up. To do this well, we need the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints. Let us hear the bird sing to us, and wake up, Church.”

The Rev. Dr. Susie Folks stated that when the team was reconstituted it was given the name Racial Justice Team, but they still claim the name Anti-Racism Team, because that is the work they are about. “Please call on us to come to your congregation and we will work with you!”

### **Vote to extend session**

Bishop Burkat shared with the Assembly that there was minimal work left before them. She asked if it would be agreeable to the whole to extend the business of the day, and conclude with lunch, rather than follow the Order of the Day approved as we began our time together.

The Assembly voted to extend the session.

## **50 year anniversary celebrations**

Four pastors have reached the milestone of the fiftieth anniversary of their ordinations. Two of them, the Rev. Fredrick Hopke and the Rev. Ralph E. Peterson were not able to be with us at the Assembly. Bishop Burkat expressed her thanks for their service.

Bishop Burkat invited the Rev. Roy Almquist, former Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, to address the Assembly.

Bishop Almquist came forward, and invited his wife, Shannon to join him. Reflecting on 50 years he quipped “the greatest thing is to live that long!” He said “The clichés are all true.” He then shared how a few of these clichés played out in his ministry. “Sometimes you get the bear, and sometimes the bear gets you.” Sometimes ministry is just good luck. But sometimes the work is affected by what you bring to the congregation. “93% of success is showing up regularly.” “They don’t care what you know, until they know that you care.” “You must join the system.” You have to see yourself in the pew. If you see the congregation as “them” you will never be successful. “You are only as good as the people around you.” My best partner is the woman next to me, my wife, Shannon.

Bishop Burkat invited the Rev. Robert Linders, who has served St. Paul’s Doylestown for 40 of his 50 years of ministry, to address the Assembly.

Pastor Linders was pleased to invite his daughter Brooke to join him as his wife Debbie was in Florida. Then he addressed the assembly

“What do I say to encourage those younger than I am when the news says the church is on its last legs? Here are a few thoughts. A preacher who is not a pastor is remote. A pastor who is not a preacher is petty. Get into the people’s homes. It is the personal touch that gets people connected. Then read a lot. Write early in the week. Religious language is as out of place in a sermon as botanical languages is out of place in the garden. One needs to make the message of the Gospel understandable for the people of today.”

## **Final Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel**

### **Resolution of Thanks**

The Rev. Raymond Miller brought forward the following resolution, which was adopted by acclamation:

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,

**S. A. 17.05.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we offer our appreciation and thankful applause:**

**To our keynote speaker and ELCA Churchwide Representative, Ms. Judith Roberts;**

**To Ms. Prairie Rose Seminole from the Churchwide Office, who led a forum on the “Doctrine of Discovery;”**

**To this Synod’s Anti-Racism Team for its vital leadership;**

**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 immense gratitude.**

### **Synodical Organization of the Women of the ELCA**

Ms Joy Grace, member of St. Matthew, Springfield and Synodical President of the Women of the ELCA, shared the numbers of the ingathering received at the Assembly.

There were 588 quilts, 310 personal health care kits, 268 school kits, 14 fabric kits, 48 baby kits, 42 blankets and afghans, 50 soaps donated by the congregations of the Synod.

Bishop Burkat led a prayer of thanks and appreciation for the ingathering.

Ms Grace expressed her thanks for the tremendous support given to this effort.

### **Final Report of the Registrar**

Ms Cynta Outterbridge presented the final report of the registrar.

**Total voting membership, 488;** total number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call, 175; total number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament voting, 16; total number of ministers of Word and Service under call, 11; total number of retired ministers of Word and Service voting, 5; total number of lay voting members certified, including council members, youth, and young adults, 279; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in the previous total, 71; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 15%; number of female lay voting members, 120; number of male lay voting members, 106; number of youth/young adults members, 15.

**Total registered (actually in attendance) voting membership, 424;** number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call registered, 149; number of retired voting ministers of Word and Sacrament registered, 18; number of ministers of Word and Service under call registered, 6; number of retired ministers of Word and Service registered, 2; number of lay voting members registered, including council members, youth, and young adults, 249; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in previous total, 71; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 17%; total number of visitors and guests registered, 75.

Bishop Burkat thanked Ms Outterbridge, and announced that the thirty-first annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held May 4 & 5, 2018.

### **Recognition and Installation of the Synod Council**

Bishop Burkat thanked the following outgoing members of Synod Council: Mr. Wynne Fisher, Mr. Donald Gleiter, Ms. Lucille Hall, Pr. Jane Marston, Ms. Sue Massey, Pr. Bryan Penman, Mr. Rod Rothermel, and Mr. Henry Strobel, and installed those members who had been elected at this Assembly.

### **Order for the Closing of the Assembly**

Bishop Burkat led the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The thirtieth annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

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

*Approved by Synod Council, September 14, 2017*