

**MINUTES**  
**of the 149<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**Grace Lutheran Church, Broomall, PA**  
**February 22, 2018**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley welcomed the Synod Council, and thanked the Reverend Leslie M. Richard and the people of Grace for hosting. Vice President Beasley noted that Pastor Richard is not only the pastor of Grace, but also the Dean of the Delaware Conference, and she invited Pr. Richard to share words of welcome and lead the Council in devotions. Pr. Richard distributed a booklet which gave an overview of the ministries of the congregations in the Delaware Conference, and led devotions based on the Lenten theme of surrendering to God's will, making use of a provocative litany called "God said no."

Vice President Beasley called the 149<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council to order at 4:27 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 148<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council were approved as presented.

**SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 149<sup>th</sup> meeting as presented.

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Claire Burkat commented that it was good to be back with the Council after having missed the last meeting.

**Update on Metro NY Synod**

Bishop Burkat shared with the Synod Council the news that Bishop Rimbo has stepped down from service, and resigned from the E.L.C.A. Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament following an affair with an adult. Metro NY is grieving; please keep this Synod in your prayers. The Reverend Donald McCoid, formerly Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, will serve in Metro NY as Interim Bishop for a year. Metro Synod will hold an election for a new bishop at its Assembly in May, 2019. The Church is intentionally taking its time in this matter. The Region 7 bishops will meet soon, and welcome Bishop McCoid.

Bishop Burkat said she is proud of the way our Church speaks truth to power, not just to those beyond us, but to those among us. We need to be courageous and act with moral authority.

**First Call Theological Retreat**

First Call theological education is a constitutionally mandated process for those new to rostered ministry. It takes place in January of each year. In the past this has been a Regional event, and has been held over a four day period. With changes in the Regional structure of the Church, and a decrease in available funding, this process has been given to Synods to do on their own. We had our event as an overnight retreat held at Crossroads in New Jersey. This made the event significantly less expensive. The Reverend Brad Burke, the Reverend Chris McKinstry, and a

team of SEPA Synod leaders organized the retreat, trying to incorporate practical and helpful segments that will benefit our first call leaders, and help them to build a mission plan for their ministries.

### **Anti-Racism March on Washington**

Presiding Bishop Eaton has called on the Church to participate in a March in Washington D.C. to take a stand against racism. The event, which will be held April 3<sup>rd</sup> through April 5<sup>th</sup>, is motivated by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This is a very quickly planned event. We in SEPA Synod are planning to participate in one day of the event, April 4<sup>th</sup>. We are looking to charter a bus that can hold 55 people.

Ms. Emily Fowler asked if this event was only for rostered leaders. Bishop Burkat said that it is open to any who wish to participate. Ms. Fowler suggested she may be able to get many of her classmates from Susquehanna University to participate. She will see about coordinating a bus from her campus.

### **Actions on the Roster**

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, presented the actions on the roster.

#### *On Leave from Call Extension Requests to ELCA Conference of Bishops:*

**S.C.18.02.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Reverend Margaret Ainslie be granted a second extension for *Study Leave*, and that Deacon Suzanne Rigg be granted her first *On Leave From Call* extension from the ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council request approval of these extensions from the ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee.**

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

#### *Calls to Interim Ministry:*

**S.C.18.02.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Katherine Cartwright Knodel to interim ministry at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, PA beginning February 15, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Cartwright Knodel resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S.C.18.02.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Wayne Shelor to interim ministry at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Exton, PA beginning March 1, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Shelor resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S.C.18.02.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Donna M. Wright to interim ministry at Grace Lutheran Church in Pottstown, PA beginning March 12, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Wright resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.**

***Retirement Requests:***

**S.C.18.02.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Daryl C. Nelson retirement status effective February 1, 2018**

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

***On Leave from Call Requests:***

**S.C.18.02.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Louis Tillman, IV on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective December 16, 2017**

**S.C.18.02.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend David Maddox, II, on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective January 1, 2018**

**The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.**

**Information Not Requiring Action**

**Transfer**

The Reverend Robert Holum from Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod effective January 8, 2018

The Reverend Linda Hatcher to South Carolina Synod effective January 9, 2018

The Reverend Karen Sease to New Jersey Synod effective January 15, 2018

**Deaths**

The Reverend Paul H. Howells, which occurred January 23, 2018

**REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley presented an update on the process for the Election of the Bishop.

**Transition Team**

Pastors Donna Wright and Paul Neff are present from the Transition Team, and will present the Synodical Mission Profile during the Mission Moment. The Profile is completed and has been posted to MinistryLink.

**Discernment Team**

The Bible study led by the Discernment Team was held at 11 sites around the Synod on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Study at the United Lutheran Seminary was live streamed on the internet, and a recording of it has been saved and posted on MinistryLink.

Vice President Beasley asked how many of the Council were able to attend one of these sessions, and was pleased to see that most had. She invited comments from the Council regarding their observations and learning.

The Discernment Team is encouraging members of congregations to make Prayer Bracelets for each person attending the Assembly. These bracelets will be used to assist the Assembly to keep this process surrounded in prayer, and will make a connection between the congregations of the Synod and the Synod gathered in Assembly.

When Bishop Burkat had first been elected prayer stoles were distributed to those present at the Assembly, which Bishop Burkat said was a powerful part of the process. These prayer bracelets are hoped to be a similarly powerful symbol, and are a way to emphasize the theme of the Assembly, which is “Come, Holy Spirit.”

Now that the Profile has been posted, and the Bible Study has been completed, people are welcome to fill out the Pre-Identification forms to lift up persons who may have the skills or gifts to serve as our next Bishop. These forms are on MinistryLink under the Assembly tab. Four forms have been received so far. Vice President Beasley will be contacting those persons who have been identified to see if they are willing to fill out the information form and have their names posted on the website. If so, they will be directed to fill out the form, which will be returned to the Vice President for posting.

A question was raised to clarify who may raise up a name. Did one have to attend a Bible study to pre-identify a person? The Vice President said that anyone can raise a name; it was not a requirement to have attended one of the studies to do so.

Vice President Beasley stated that all names and related information will be removed from the website by April 4<sup>th</sup>. None of the persons who may be pre-identified are in nomination at this point. No one is nominated until or unless they receive a vote on the first ballot in the Ecclesiastical Balloting process at the Assembly.

The Reverend Serena Sellers asked if the names of those who decline to be pre-identified would be made known to the Synod.

Ms. Beasley said no, because such persons may be willing to be considered if they receive a vote at the Assembly, but not wish to have their names out prior to the Assembly.

## **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard noted the extensive Rules of Procedure for the upcoming Synod Assembly. He noted that most of the procedures are from constitutional provisions, and include provisions of who is eligible to be a Voting Member, some of the requirements for the positions up for election, and the extended process for the Election of a Bishop.

One item in particular that he brought to the attention of the Council is the final provision, which calls for Assembly registration to be closed 30 minutes prior to the anticipated time for each ballot for Bishop. This will ensure that the number of persons eligible to vote can be verified vis

a vis the actual votes cast on each ballot. This provision was added at the request of the Reverend Wm Chris Boerger, Secretary of the E.L.C.A., who will be our Churchwide representative overseeing our election process.

Members of the Synod Council suggested this provision be posted prominently to the Synod prior to the Assembly. This may help minimize questions and animosity at the time of the Assembly, by allowing people to be aware they need to plan carefully when they arrive at the Assembly, particularly if they may be coming late to the meeting.

Vice President Beasley stated that when it comes to the balloting process for the Election of a Bishop we still need eight more counters. We could particularly use more persons of color, or persons whose primary language is other than English.

### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, made her report, referencing her written information previously submitted to the Council. She noted that Mr. Albert Glenn, chairperson of the Finance Committee will be presenting the Budget for 2019 at the Assembly. She will share with the Assembly reports from the past year, and updates and adjustments we need to make with regard to this current fiscal year.

An Agreement of Sale is in process for the property of the former St. Michael, Germantown. This is currently our last property under management. The anticipated sale price is \$650,000, of which 15% of the net proceeds will go to the general operations of the Synod.

We anticipate receiving \$30,000 from the Hauenschild Trust, which is \$10,000 less than we originally thought.

The market has been performing well, so we have had good receipts from our investments.

At this point we are in line with our budget.

Overall position at the end of Fiscal Year 2017 was a positive \$243,000.

Mr. Albert Glenn, chairperson of the Finance Committee, shared the following: The Committee reviewed the financial statements, and all seemed in order. He noted the Synod's fiscal year runs from February 1 – January 31.

The Finance Committee has asked the United Lutheran Seminary what might be possible with regard to extending the lease the Synod has with the school. This is now in the hands of another team.

He stated the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 does not yet include numbers for office space, as this issue is not yet resolved and we have no firm estimates for this expense.

Bishop Burkat interjected that now that there is more money in the Fund for Mission, we will expand the process for grants from this fund that may include more than the Trustees. The Reverend Pat Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission, is working on a process for this.

Ms. Janet Neff stated that if there is any change to the process for using money from the Fund for Mission it will need to come to the Synod Council for approval, as the Council was the body that originally authorized the Fund for Mission.

Mr. Glenn stated that we will want to be prudent on how we use these funds, as there is no guaranteed source for increasing the Fund for Mission, particularly as we sell the last of the properties we have from previously closed congregations.

Mr. Glenn presented the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 to the Council. He noted it matches fairly closely to the FY 2018 budget. It includes a 2.5% increase for salaries, and has a slight increase to the line for the Office of the Bishop because of the costs associated with the transition to a new bishop.

Mr. Glenn, on behalf of the Finance Committee, offered the following motion:

**S.C.18.02.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 for presentation to the Synod Assembly for its adoption.**

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

### **MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Paul Neff and the Reverend Donna Wright, members of the Transition Team in the process for the Election of the Bishop, were welcomed to present the Profile to the Synod Council.

They shared that there were three segments to their approach: who we have been, who we are, and where we hope to be. The goal was identification and celebration, not blame, guilt or judgement over what was discovered.

The audience for the report is two-fold: members of the Synod with an interest in who and what we are to be used for ministry options and planning, and pastors who may be considering if they are being called to be Bishop of our Synod.

The Profile has been posted on MinistryLink and includes a Power Point summary of the Profile, as well as many supporting documents for review and or analysis.

Included in the Profile is demographics of the five county area that defines our Synod, detailed information regarding the size and diversity of our congregations, and the number and ages of pastors and deacons in our Synod.

There is a description of the position of the Bishop from the constitution and other sources. The role of the Committee of Deans is described as they are, in effect, deployed staff.

The Profile also includes financial assessments of our Synod and our congregations' resources, and where we are in our support for the E.L.C.A. and other ministries. There is also information about the Forward Together in Faith Campaign.

The full Profile adds to what is in the Power Point summary such things as staffing structure, and much more complete trends.

Pastors Neff and Wright went into some detail for the Council so the members would feel adequately informed of the Profile, so they can help explain it to others.

Vice President Beasley presented a certificate and letter of thanks to each pastor for their faithful and diligent work on behalf of our Synod. The other members of the Transition Team will be given a similar certificate and letter.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Forward Together in Faith Campaign**

Six members of the Synod Council have not yet given or pledged to the Campaign.

13 of 29 Synod Council congregations have made gifts or commitments.

Gifts and pledges to date: \$ 726,420

Yet to raise to meet goal: \$1,773,580

Administrative costs associated with the Campaign: \$ 228,784

Outlays related to the Goals of the Campaign: \$ 34,395

### **Constitution Committee**

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, chairperson, reported that four congregations have completed their constitutional revisions, and brought the following resolution to the Synod Council:

**S.C.18.02.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregation constitutions as amended of St. Paul's, Telford; Good Shepherd, King of Prussia; St. Andrew's, Perkasie; and Family of God, Buckingham.**

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

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, chairperson, shared that as of December 31, 2017, the

Total Investment Portfolio stood at \$3,091,056

The gain for the year ending December 2017 was \$402,304 amounting to a 15% gain for the year. As always, he noted that past performance is no guarantee of future earnings, but the Committee will continue to monitor the funds to optimize their production.

### **Administration Committee**

The Administration Committee presented a revised draft of the Agenda for the Assembly, which the Synod Council approved.

Members of the Synod Council were encouraged to register for the Assembly if they are not already registered as Voting Members from their congregations.

Members were reminded that their assistance will be needed at the registration tables to welcome and sign in people who come to the Assembly.

#### **Nominations Committee**

The Reverend Christopher McKinstry, chairperson, shared that they are filling the needed slates of candidates for presentation to the Assembly. The Committee is still seeking in particular a Minister of Word and Sacrament for the Committee on Discipline and lay persons as Voting Members to the Churchwide Assembly. Vice President Beasley and Bishop Burkat said they will try to encourage attendees at the Congregational Council Leaders gathering in March to consider running for open positions.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Albert Glenn repeated his request from last meeting that the Synod create a resource of options for congregations to review and consider prior to times of crisis. Such a resource might include options for full time, part time, bi-vocational, or collaborative arrangements for pastoral ministry and coverage. It may also include steps and options in the transition process that may include an Intentional Interim pastor, a bridge pastor with an Interim Consultant, or other possibilities to prepare a congregation for how the transition might take place.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Susan Pursch noted that the Audit Committee will need time on the agenda of the April meeting of the Synod Council to present the results of the Audit.

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m. with prayer led by Pr. Donna Wright.

The 150<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held April 5, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Reformation Lutheran, Philadelphia.

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

*Approved by Synod Council April 5, 2018*