

MINUTES
of the 151st MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Trinity Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA
June 7, 2018

The Reverend David Oppold, host pastor, welcomed the Synod Council and shared some aspects of the ministry of Trinity, South Philadelphia. He noted that Trinity is in its 176th year of ministry in South Philly, and indeed predates many of the streets in this area. Trinity may look like a big building without much going on, but there is great outreach to the community, and a desire to grow in impact to the surrounding neighborhood. Trinity has a school which is registered through eighth grade. While currently only a preschool and kindergarten, they will be starting 1st and 2nd grade classes soon. Trinity is host to several AA groups, is a strong supporter of the Welcome Church, has provided space for a women's home for the Well, and hosts the oldest Boy Scout troop in Philadelphia (103 years!), which has produced 77 Eagle Scouts.

The Reverend Regina D. Goodrich, Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference, led the Council in devotions. These devotions were a series of reflections and prayers based on 2 Corinthians 4:5-12.

“You will get hit. You will go down. But you can, and will, get up in Jesus Christ.”

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 151st meeting of the Synod Council to order at 4:36 p.m.

OPEN POSITIONS

As the first order of business, the Council was asked to consider persons to fill open positions on the Synod Council. Vice President Beasley called on the Reverend Karl M. Richard, secretary, to present the names recommended by the Executive Committee.

Secretary Richard noted there are now four open positions: Lay Female at Large, term expires 2020, still unfilled from last year; Clergy, term expires 2019, open because of the election of Pr. Goodrich as Dean of Central Philadelphia Conference, Female Youth representative, term expires 2019, open due to inability of the previous person to make the meetings, and Clergy, term expires 2020, open due to the election this week of Pr. Christopher McKinstry as Dean of the Upper Montgomery Conference.

The Executive Committee has recommended Ms. Savannah Tucker for the position of Lay Female at Large. Because there is more than half this term available, if approved by the Synod Council Ms. Tucker would be available to serve one additional term, if she desires to run and is elected to serve. The Executive Committee also put forward the Reverend Gwendolyn S. King for the open clergy position. Because there is less than half of this term available, Pr. King would be eligible to serve two additional terms if she desires to run, and is elected to serve. At this date the Executive Committee does not have a person to recommend for the position of Female Youth representative, nor for the Clergy position just vacated by Pr. McKinstry.

The Synod Council approved the recommendations from the Executive Committee without objection, and Ms. Tucker and Pr. King took their seats with the Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Due to the hospitalization of Secretary Richard's brother, and the shortness of time since the Assembly, the Minutes of the 31st Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod were not available for approval at this time. The Minutes will be completed and shared with the Synod Council to review and will be presented for adoption at the September meeting of the Synod Council.

The minutes of the 150th meeting of the Synod Council were approved as presented.

SETTING THE AGENDA

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 151st meeting as presented.

Welcome and Introductions

Vice President Beasley welcomed the Council, and welcomed in particular the Reverend Patricia A. Davenport as our Bishop-elect. Members of the Council shared their names and their home congregation. Bishop-elect Davenport was asked if she wished to share anything in particular. She said "I feel very welcomed. And I know not to prolong a meeting, so thank you."

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Welcome new and returning members

Bishop Claire S. Burkat welcomed those members who are new to the Synod Council – Ms. Doreen Kinzler, St. John, (Mayfair) Philadelphia; Pastor Matthew Staniz, St. Luke, Devon; and Mr. Everett Wick, St. Andrew, Perkasio; and those who were re-elected to the Council – Ms. Joyce Malone, Trinity, South Philadelphia; Pastor Tyler Rasmussen, Trinity Pleasant Valley; Mr. Philip Tackett, St. Peter, Hilltown; and Pastor Laura Tancredi, St. Paul's, Ardmore. She expressed her appreciation for their willingness to serve in this capacity.

Reflections on the Assembly

Bishop Burkat shared that she felt we had a wonderful Assembly. We knew there would be a change, but she never worried about how it would turn out. She knew the Holy Spirit would work through the Synod to select a leader for the Synod, and that is what happened. While grateful for all who participated in the process, Bishop Burkat expressed her thanks in particular to the "final seven" who addressed the Assembly, Pastors Julie deWerth, Carlton Rodgers, Karl Richard, Charles Leonard, William Vanderslice and Serena Sellers, for their willingness to have their names in consideration.

Bishop-elect Patricia A. Davenport

SEPA Synod made history at our Assembly on May 5, with the election of the first African Descent woman bishop in the ELCA. Bishop Burkat also shared she believes Bishop-elect Davenport is also the first Lutheran African Descent woman bishop in the *world*, but that has yet to be confirmed. Within 24 hours, the Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, another African Descent woman, was elected bishop in South Central Wisconsin Synod. And in Southwestern Texas

Synod, the Rev. Susan Briner, who is White, was elected. That is important because she will be the first woman ELCA bishop south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

The election of Pastor Davenport on the fourth ballot, with 77% of the vote, shows strong unity in our Synod. It is unusual for the process not to take all five ballots when there is no incumbent. This strong affirmation bodes well for the future of our Synod.

One bishop at a time...

Bishop Burkat reminded the Council that we have only one bishop at a time, and so please give our bishop-elect space in these next two months to prepare to enter this office on August 1st. Please do not overwhelm her with appointments or requests that are not yet her responsibility. She will need this time to close her current position and responsibilities, and prepare mentally and spiritually for her new role. And please give our Synod Staff a break so that they do not have to keep two calendars going!

United Lutheran Seminary

Bishop Burkat asked the Council to read her submitted report for more details regarding the seminary. She noted it has been a difficult Spring with the departure of President Latini. There has been much work put in to keep our seminary unified. Much of this work has been to ensure the LGBTQIA+ community knows they are being heard. There has also been work to reach out to the African American community, and the historically black churches that are a significant part of our Urban Theological Institute.

The Board has experienced its share of struggles and criticisms. The Board realized there is a need to select an Interim President as quickly as possible to bring a steady presence in this time of transition as we find a permanent President for the school. Bishop Burkat was asked to chair the committee to find the interim president. Seven persons were vetted for the position. All were retired presidents of colleges, universities and seminaries. The committee suggested, and the Board approved, the Reverend Dr. Richard Green to be the Interim President. Dr. Green is an African American, a lifelong Lutheran, has served as president of two Lutheran colleges, and was provost at Lincoln University, one of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. During the process Dr. Green has said "I am not a place-holder." He intends to work diligently to make needed change and progress happen for the seminary. Bishop Burkat feels very positive about the impact Dr. Green will have. She also noted that at commencement it was announced the seminary is the recent recipient of a \$30 million bequest from an anonymous source for its ongoing work training leaders for the Church. This gift is an affirmation that God has plans for the future of this school. There is also a new "slogan" for the school: *Unifying, Learning, Serving: United Lutheran Seminary is a welcoming and diverse learning community, equipping people to proclaim the living Gospel for a changing church and world.*

Goodbyes, thank yous, and statistics

Bishop Burkat noted she has been engaged in a long succession of goodbyes and thank yous, and this is a bittersweet process. The list gets shorter as the time moves forward, as each team and board and agency meeting becomes her last. Responsibilities decrease, and people to address become fewer. She is not sad to leave the multiple conflicts that are a part of this position, but it is emotional to leave the people with whom she has served. It was a powerful experience as each

person came for communion at the Assembly, as she has come to know the deeper concerns of many of them over the past 12 years, much as any pastor does in their own parish.

It is hard to categorize all that one does in ministry, but within her report she put a list of statistics which indicate many of the things of which she has been part in her time as bishop. When placed in one list, it is an impressive record of active ministry.

Actions on the Roster

Secretary Richard presented the actions of the roster, with some explanation of each category for those members who are new to the Synod Council.

Call to Interim Ministry:

S.C.18.06.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Gwendolyn King to interim ministry at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Secane, PA beginning June 1, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor King resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Call to Transitional Ministry:

S.C.18.06.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. J. Christian McMullan to transitional ministry at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Pottstown, PA beginning April 15 to October 14 2018, after which the agreement may be renewed for an agreed upon amount of time until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Rev. J. Christian McMullan resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

On Leave from Call Request:

S.C.18.06.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Tina Mackie on leave from call status, first year, effective July 1, 2018

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Retirement Requests:

S.C.18.06.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Charles E. Romanowski retirement status effective August 1, 2018

S.C.18.06.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Norman J. Haas retirement status effective July 1, 2018

S.C.18.06.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Claire S. Burkat, Bishop, retirement status effective August 1, 2018

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

Information Not Requiring Action

Transfers:

The Rev. John Hansen (Retired) from New Jersey Synod effective May 2, 2018

The Rev. Bernhard A. Bischoff (Retired) from Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod effective April 30, 2018

The Rev. Dr. James Echols (Retired) from Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod effective April 17, 2018

The Rev. Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath from New Jersey Synod effective April 1, 2018

The Rev. L. George Detweiler (Retired) from New Jersey Synod effective January 25, 2018

Deacon Karen Matthias-Long from NEPA Synod effective November 8, 2017

Deaths:

Deacon George S. Edwards March 12, 2018

Sister Janice E. Painter March 22, 2018

The Rev. Rinda Rogers April 8, 2018

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice President Beasley referenced her written report.

Synod Assembly

The Vice President thanked all those who assisted at the Synod Assembly, and gave special thanks to Mr. William Graham for coordinating the Assembly Team. Ms. Beasley welcomed those Synod Council members elected at the Assembly, and noted there will be a time for orientation after the meeting at the dinner. A table will be set aside for the new members. Vice President Beasley shared that ELCA Secretary Chris Boerger was very impressed with how our Assembly went, and all the work we did in the process for the election of our next bishop. Secretary Boerger has asked Vice President Beasley to consider having her name in nomination for the ELCA Church Council.

Central Philadelphia Conference

Vice President Beasley asked our host Dean, Pr. Goodrich, if there was any news from the meeting of the Conference on April 14th, and whether there had been any discussion of the “In the City for Good, Again” document and its implementation. This document had been a topic of significant conversation at the April meeting of the Synod Council. Pr. Goodrich said there was not a discussion of this document at this meeting. She focused on the positive at this meeting, and is working on getting the congregations of Central Philadelphia to come out and meet together, and re-engage with each other, and then they will look at the criteria and groundwork that needs to be done per the Bishop’s request of the Conference. The plan is to look at this underlying information before they take any further action on the document as it currently is.

Confidentiality Agreement

Vice President Beasley passed out a confidentiality agreement, which all members of the Council are asked to sign each year as a part of their service on this body.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Richard shared the following pieces of information:

Synod Council Roster and Attendance Sheet

Secretary Richard asked each member of the Synod Council to review their information for accuracy. He noted the current Roster and Attendance sheet will be updated for the next meeting, as these documents reflect the configuration as it is now, listing Bishop Burkat in the Roster and in the main segment of the Attendance sheet. As Bishop-elect Davenport becomes Bishop on August 1st, these documents will be updated to remove Bishop Burkat, and reflect the changed position for Bishop-elect Davenport.

Open Positions

The Synod Council thanks Pr. McKinstry for his service on the Council, and congratulates him on his election as Dean of the Upper Montgomery Conference. The Executive Committee will work to find a successor for this now open Clergy position, and for the open Youth Female position, to present to the Synod Council at its September meeting.

In addition, it was discovered following the elections at the Assembly that the Reverend Donna Wright was elected as Clergy to the Committee on Discipline, a position she already holds. Consequently she will not fill this seat as well. As this is a "jury pool," from which persons are selected as necessary, we are well covered at this time on this Committee. We will look for persons to fill this position as part of the nominations and elections process of the Synod at the next Assembly.

Summary of Actions

The Summary of Actions from the 2018 Synod Assembly has been completed and shared with the Synod Council and the Secretary of the ELCA. It is also ready for posting on MinistryLink for the Synod to access.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, made the following notes from her written report:

We are ahead of where we were last year at this time, which represents the first quarter of our fiscal year, by \$18,000 overall.

Ms. Neff then described the four categories of the budget for those new to the Synod Council. She noted that she will also answer any deeper questions the new members may have at the orientation session following the meeting.

In the **Unrestricted** category we are underspending at this point in the year. This is helpful as we have a significant deficit in income for this portion of the budget due to reduced investment proceeds in light of the drop in the Stock Market in the first quarter of the year.

Our **Temporarily Restricted** category has a very small deficit of \$1,300 at the end of the first quarter.

The **Mission** portion of our budget has received slightly more income than anticipated, but the expenses in this category are always in excess of the amounts received. At this point that shortfall is nearly \$57,000, which is less than the \$64, 800 shortfall we had budgeted.

The **Permanently Restricted** portion had an overall positive of \$8,800 compared to the budget.

While we are behind in income to expenses, our overall financial position is strong, with total assets of \$4.8 million, and liabilities of \$90,400.

We continue to consider the issue of the Synod office space. Our pre-paid rental agreement with the Seminary lasts another 8 months until the lease is expired.

Embedded within the report is the sale of the former St. Michael's, Germantown, which ultimately did not go through.

Mr. Albert (Bert) Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, added his observations from their meeting:

The Finance Committee reviewed the statements dated April 30, 2018, and all seemed to be in order. The Committee wants to find a way to make the presentation of this information clearer and more easily accessible, particularly in the report to the Synod Assembly.

The Committee is reviewing the various restricted funds we have to see what the parameters are for each. They may retain the assistance of outside parties to accomplish this.

The Fund for Mission is also being reviewed, particularly for the ways in which its resources are distributed. The Committee realizes that this money has essentially been used for the "Mission" portion of our budget, but wants to be clear of the process by which we allocate these monies, even as they are used for appropriate purposes.

Though not the Committee's role, they did discuss the concerns of Pr. Carlton Rogers which had been raised to the Executive Committee and discussed at the last Synod Council meeting. The Committee feels they had a healthy conversation regarding the concerns of adequately caring for the Rostered Ministers and congregations of the Synod, particularly in the Central Philadelphia Conference.

MISSION MOMENT

The Mission Moment for this meeting was a discussion of the May Synod Assembly. Vice President Beasley and Bishop Burkat led the discussion, asking for comments and reflections from the Council.

Ms. Joyce Maloney felt the Assembly was exciting because of all the elections, and particularly the election of a Bishop.

Vice President Beasley was pleased that the process worked well, and believes we are likely to see this process adopted by more Synods in the future.

Pr. Gwendolyn King felt the Spirit was experienced in a strong way, both by those present at the Assembly and by those watching the process on-line.

Ms. Sandra Zimmerman expressed how the bracelets were a powerful symbol for her, and the fact that we had so many made and donated was a testimony to the involvement of the congregations of our Synod.

Mr. Adam Clarke expressed his dismay that so many people did not seem to understand the fact that all pastors were eligible to be considered for the position of Bishop, not just those who were pre-identified. He felt we had done a good job of describing the process, and did not understand how so many people did not “get it.”

Secretary Richard shared that it will help if we are more careful with our language going into the process next time. The process calls for people to be “pre-identified *for consideration*,” but we used the term “pre-identified *candidates*” throughout our correspondence, which gives a very different meaning to the process.

Pr. Serena Sellers stated that she felt we also need to avoid the term “running” for bishop, as that is not what the process is, nor what all were doing. “Running” implies campaigns, position papers, and the like, rather than entering into a time of discernment of the Spirit’s movement and call.

After the open discussion was completed, sheets of paper were distributed to the members of Synod Council, on which each was asked to write down their greatest hope(s) for the future of our Synod. Following a time to write, people were asked to share, if they so desired, what their hope was.

A second paper was then distributed, on which members were asked to write their greatest dreams for the Synod. Bishop-elect Davenport asked people to “dream big!” A dream was described as something bigger than a hope, and much more expansive. Following a time of writing, people were again given the opportunity to share their dreams.

All the cards, for hopes and for dreams, were collected and given to Bishop-elect Davenport for her reflection and consideration as she assumes the office of Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Constitution Committee

No report

Investment Committee

Mr. David Ehret, chair, submitted a written report, wherein it was noted \$40,000 has been added to the T. Rowe Price portfolio during the first four months of 2018. We are now fully invested, with no additional investments scheduled. The total investment portfolio stands at \$3,166,327.

Forward Together in Faith

Total donations to date:	\$616,863
Total expenses to date:	\$244,006
Total Distributions to date:	\$ 44,395

Total Pledges:	\$448,739
Pledge payments to date:	\$272,965
Pledge Balances to date:	\$175,774

Total balance in fund	\$328,462
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Grants of \$500 to \$5,000 are being made available from the Forward Together in Faith fund. Applications can be found on MinistryLink and may be submitted through September 30, 2018.

Descriptions of the Committees of the Synod Council

Vice President Beasley distributed a sheet that described each of the committees of the Synod Council, along with the expectations of each. Ms. Beasley then offered each of the chairpersons present the opportunity to personally describe the nature of their committee. The Vice President noted that every member of the Synod Council is assigned to a committee as part of their service to the Synod. Each member was then asked to fill out a sheet listing, in order of preference, the top three areas in which they would like to serve. The Bishop-elect and the Vice President will take this into consideration as the members are placed on committees. The list of committee assignments will then come to the Synod Council for confirmation at the September meeting.

Election of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is comprised of seven members: the officers (Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and three members from the Synod Council (one Minister of Word and Sacrament, one lay male, and one lay female).

Nominations for Minister of Word and Sacrament:

Ms. Emily Fowler nominated Pr. Matthew Staniz
Ms. Sandra Zimmerman nominated Pr. Laura Tancredi
Pr. Serena Sellers nominated Pr. Sarah Anderson Rajarigam

The Synod Council elected Pr. Laura Tancredi.

Nominations for Lay Male

Pr. Laura Tancredi nominated Mr. Emanuel Alves
Ms. Sandra Zimmerman nominated Mr. Everett Wick

The Synod Council elected Mr. Emanuel Alves

Nominations for Lay Female

Mr. Bert Glenn nominated Ms. Cheryl Detweiler

Mr. Everett Wick nominated Ms. Sandra Zimmerman

Mr. Emanuel Alves nominated Ms. Lisa Hand

The Synod Council elected Ms. Cheryl Detweiler

OLD BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

In the City for Good, Again

The question was raised of what we should do with regard to the concerns Pr. Rogers had raised, and which the Finance Committee had discussed.

An extensive conversation ensued around many aspects of the issue. It was determined to be much broader than some may have thought, and certainly broader than can be addressed by the Synod Council as a “committee of the whole.”

Bishop Burkat stated that she and Bishop-elect Davenport will be reviewing the situation of all the Rostered Ministers of the Synod. It is not just city pastors that are struggling with issues of adequate pay and benefits. This issue needs to be addressed privately and individually, rather than publically and with sweeping generalizations.

Ms. Janet Neff confirmed that it is an issue for urban, suburban, and rural congregations.

Mr. Bert Glenn said that if one third of the congregations cannot afford a full-time pastor that could be a concern for the whole Synod, and thereby the Synod Council.

Pr. Sarah Anderson Rajarigam expressed her desire that we have a way to share about the overall health of our congregations. She felt perhaps the Deans could do this within their Conferences.

NEW BUSINESS

The Synod Council wishes Mr. Emanuel Alves and his fiancée congratulations and many blessings as they are to be married on the coming weekend.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m. with prayer by Pr. Matthew Staniz.

The 152nd meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held September 20, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Paul’s Run Community, Philadelphia, PA.

Respectfully submitted,

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