

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

*Come, Holy Spirit!*

**May 4-5, 2018**

**Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse  
Telford, Pennsylvania**

**Friday Morning, May 4, 2018**

**Service of Holy Communion**

The Assembly began with worship, including the Sacrament of the Altar. The preacher for the day was the Reverend Wm. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. His text was John 20:19-23. Excerpts from his sermon:

Come, Holy Spirit!

Jesus shows up in the midst of fearful disciples and says, “Peace be with you.”

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, “Peace be with you!”

To those being considered, to those voting, “Peace be with you.”

Jesus says “Peace be with you” twice. And then he sends them out. “Go! And start forgiving!” What if we saw our primary work as forgiveness?

The Gospel of John was written with Genesis close at hand. In creation, God breathed into the dust and there was life. In John, the Spirit breathes and gives new life. In Genesis the command was, “Go to work; till the ground.” In John the command is “Go to work. Forgive sins.”

What is it to forgive and retain sin? We retain the sins of Racism, Homophobia, Lack of care for creation. Sin is not the way we are called to be doing business. But forgiveness is possible.

We can’t just jump past sin to forgiveness. We need to recognize it and confess it.

At our forming the ELCA had a goal of 10% of our membership being persons of color, or whose primary language was other than English. We have not come close. It is a sin to ignore our neighbor because they are not like us.

At this Assembly you will elect a bishop. But this is not your most important work. The most important work is to go to your neighbors with the message of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Hear Jesus say, “Peace be with you.” And let our response be, “Come, Holy Spirit. Lead us into this sinful world with your message of Jesus’ forgiveness.”

Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

The service included the Commemoration of the faithful departed, and the installation of the Reverend Ghislaine Cotnoir, called to specialized ministry as the Director of Pastoral Care, The Artman Home and The Hearth at Drexel.

### **Order for the Opening of the Assembly**

At 10:47 a.m. Bishop Claire S. Burkat and Vice President Tracey A. Beasley led the Order for the Opening of the 31<sup>st</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, the Rev. Dwight Mason and Ms. Lisa Thomas; prayer pause leaders: Mr. Gary Salmon, Seminarian Courtney Smith, the Rev. Nathan Kraus, Seminary Ralen Robinson; the Rev. Ghislaine Cotnoir for baking gluten-free bread for communion; Saturday morning worship leaders: Dr. Addie Butler and Deacon Karen Matthias-Long; the more than 50 people, who are serving as worship assistants at various times throughout the Assembly including: Communion assistants, ushers, readers, pray-ers, candle bearers and water sprinklers; and Paul's Run for providing the font.

Bishop Burkat introduced some particular guests to the Assembly: the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Secretary of the ELCA, and our Churchwide representative this year, and his spouse DeDe Boerger; other bishops joining us to pray for and watch our election: New Jersey Synod Bishop Tracie Bartholomew; New England Synod Bishop Jim Hazelwood; and Upstate New York Synod Bishop John Macholz; the Rev. Sean Ewbank, Assistant to the Bishop/Director for Evangelical Mission, Southeast Michigan Synod, our domestic companion synod; the Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, our parliamentarian; Ms. Barbara Debski from 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. We are blessed to welcome some new, and some returning leaders to our Synod.

Bishop Burkat expressed her appreciation and thanks to Deacon Alison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy, the Rev. Sarah Stobie, Chair of the Candidacy Committee, Mr. Fred Renigar, former Chair of the Candidacy Committee, and Mr. Bill Harp, Synod Staff person related to Candidacy.

### **Report of the Registrar**

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, Registrar, reported that the total number of voting members was 545, the total number of voting members registered was 500, and the number of voting members needed for a quorum was 273. 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*. Secretary Richard noted in particular the last line of the Rules of Procedure, that registration will be closed approximately 30 minutes prior to each ballot for the Bishop to ensure we have an accurate count of eligible voting members for each ballot. He also noted that the registrar will come back prior to each vote to announce the current registration number.

Secretary Richard reminded the Assembly that all times are approximate, as things sometimes move more, or less swiftly than the time originally allotted, and that it is the responsibility of each voting member to be present for each part of the Assembly so they can vote, act, or contribute as necessary or appropriate.

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."

Secretary Richard reported that the Synod Council approved the minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> annual assembly on September 14, 2017.

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

### **Bishop Claire S. Burkat's Address to the Synod Assembly**

Bishop Burkat had considered sharing her vision of the future with the Assembly, but then realized she has had twelve years to do that. Instead, she decided to share reflections of what she has experienced and learned while serving in this office.

Bishop Burkat began by recalling that her parent's generation did not love their jobs. She wanted a job she could love, that would be exciting, where she could make a difference, and would allow her to travel. When she was young, even a trip from Queens to Manhattan would have been fine! She can honestly say she loves her job, it is exciting, and she has been able to travel around the world. What a blessing!

From the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Paul to the Ephesians, she shared:

*"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one*

*body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.*”

How does a Bishop say goodbye? She has been doing this for the past six months. She has said goodbye to the rostered leaders at Bishop’s Convocation, to agencies, congregational council leaders, her fellow bishops. One at a time, event by event, she has been saying goodbye.

When she began her service twelve years ago, she began with excitement, and with fear. It was post 9/11, and there were many issues and divisions facing the world and the Church. She took encouragement in Paul’s words: *“lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”* Even in the most difficult days and times, she has been aware of the presence of God, showing up in God’s timing. She was occasionally challenged or chastised, but that is necessary to be sure we are living a life worthy of our calling.

*“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love...”*

She reiterated her conviction that the Assembly elects a pastor, and then the Church raises up a Bishop. Bishop Burkat said she has learned from so many how to do the work of this office. She has learned from Bishops, seminarians, pastors, deacons, deans, council leaders and the many ministry teams we have within our Synod. She offered a special word of thanks to the officers of the Synod, both current and prior officers, who have served with her during the past twelve years.

Bishop Burkat has also learned from, and been blessed to serve with, numerous ecumenical and interfaith partners in life and ministry. Some of the most hopeful signs she has seen of God’s activity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have come from such partnerships as they worked together to fight racism, homophobia, and any way in which people are being hurt. It has come as people of different traditions have acted *“with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”*

Bishop Burkat also expressed her deep appreciation for the Synod Staff, and their significant and faithful service to Christ and the Church.

Some of the joys of her ministry have included advocacy work and work with the youth of this Church. When she began her service as Bishop, she did not expect to be so involved in advocacy work, but the world brought its concerns to her door, her mind, and her smart phone. This work has become a great joy for her over the years. Bishop Burkat is excited about attending the Multicultural Youth Event and the Youth Gathering in Houston this June, her last opportunity to attend this event as Bishop.

The bishop then highlighted the work of the Forward Together in Faith campaign, giving thanks to the team that has been working with this important effort. Leaving a legacy for funding new initiatives in the areas of Networking, Equipping, Communication and Innovation has been a

strong area of focus for Bishop Burkat. She reminded the Assembly that ten percent of the funds raised by the Campaign are going to the Churchwide campaign, “Always Being Made New.”

On a more personal note, Bishop Burkat expressed her deep love and appreciation to her son, Alex, and her best friend Dick, Alex’s godfather, for their love and support of her over these twelve years.

*“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling... making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

Much has changed since Bishop Burkat first took office, including the advent of social media and the smart phone. The i-phone came out the year *after* she began her call! She noted that this is both a blessing and a curse. We cannot imagine doing our job without the convenience this new technology brings, but we need to put filters back in place as we use these vehicles. It is an 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment issue for the Church. In light of this ever present technology, how do we “bear with one another in love,” and “make every effort to maintain unity in the bond of peace?”

*“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”*

Bishop Burkat shared how we continue to be about the work of healing and reconciliation. This needs to continue in our interfaith conversations with those of the other Abrahamic traditions. It also needs to continue in our ongoing efforts to identify and confront racism. We need to stand up to hatred and racism when it is expressed. We need to call it what it is, and be ready to forgive if the person is repentant, but if not willing then to retain that sin until there is the chance for true reconciliation. We need to be courageous to say what needs to be said, and this includes being willing to apologize when we have been in the wrong.

The Church of Christ in every age has had to face great adversities and suffering, and today Christians all over the world are suffering for the faith right now. But we can do it and we can make a better world by being the people of God we were created and equipped to be. Not alone but together...not divided but united...even with a diversity of experiences, opinions and life circumstances.

Bishop Burkat started her remarks by mentioning her prayer to God that she would find a job/vocation that she would love, find exciting, and allow her to travel. At this point she shared pictures of her travels around the world, and especially to our companion synod, the North East Diocese of Tanzania. Truly *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”*

### **Procedures of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop**

Bishop Burkat introduced the Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who had previously served as Bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod,

and is present as the deputy for the election of our next bishop. Bishop Burkat invited Secretary Boerger to describe the process for the election of the bishop.

Secretary Boerger thanked Bishop Burkat, and said he was honored to be here with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod to be reacquainted with many, bring greetings on behalf of the Church, and lead this process. He then shared some reflections on the office of bishop.

Secretary Boerger noted that this is an election, but more than this it is a call process. As such, there will be numerous times when we will stop and pray. This process has been going on for some time, with the development of a Synod profile, and time for study, contemplation, and prayer.

Secretary Boerger described the role of bishop so those assembled could have a broader understanding of this position. He quoted Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who noted that the authority of bishops comes from the fulfillment of the tasks of their office.

The largest portion of any of our constitutions, ELCA, Synodical, or Congregational, is about the office of the synodical bishop. This is because the position of synodical bishop is the most accountable to all three expressions of the Church – congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization.

A bishop is:

- ❖ a **pastor**, called to preach, teach and administer the sacraments, and has as his or her call a primary responsibility for the work of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The bishop is the pastor of the congregations of the synod, as well as the pastor of the Rostered Ministers of the synod.
- ❖ a **servant**, called to care for the people of the Church and of the world.
- ❖ a **symbol of unity** we have as the Church in the world. A bishop oversees rostering and leadership on behalf of the whole Church.
- ❖ the **CEO** of the synod, ensuring the operation of the Church in this territory is managed efficiently and in accordance with ecclesial and legal practices.
- ❖ a **leader** who speaks to, and in, the public square
- ❖ and most of all, a bishop is a **Child of God**, called to work on behalf of Christ in this world.

The process that will be used for the election of the bishop is the Ecclesiastical Ballot.

On the First Ballot you may write the name of any Minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Please make sure the name is legible. Make sure the person is on the roster of the ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA. You may also identify where the person is serving so we can have a sense of who is being raised if you happen to misspell the name.

On the First Ballot reception of 3/4ths of the legal votes cast will determine an election. Abstentions do not count as votes. People who are not on the Roster do not count as legal votes.

If no one receives 3/4ths of the vote on the First Ballot, it will serve as the nominating ballot. Those raised up on the First Ballot will then have until 2:30 p.m. to withdraw from the process. If one does not withdraw, that name will continue in the process for the duration. This is the only opportunity to withdraw from the process.

The Second Ballot will be limited to those remaining from the First Ballot, and who did not remove their name. On the Second Ballot 3/4ths of the legal votes cast will determine and election.

The Third Ballot will be limited to the top seven, plus ties. On the Third Ballot 2/3rds of the legal votes cast are needed for election.

On Saturday morning, prior to the Third Ballot the top seven persons under consideration will be asked to address the Assembly.

If there is no election, the Fourth Ballot will be limited to the top three, plus ties. These persons will answer questions that have been gathered from the Assembly prior to the ballot. 60% of the legal votes cast are needed for election.

If there is no election, the Fifth Ballot will be limited to the top two, plus ties. The final persons under consideration will then address the Assembly prior to the ballot. On the Fifth Ballot a simple majority is needed for election.

### **First Ballot for the Election of a Bishop**

Following the explanation of the process, Secretary Boerger called for the registrar, Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, to report on the current number of voting members registered at the Assembly. Ms. Outterbridge reported the current registration as 512 voting members. Secretary Boerger then asked Vice president Tracey A. Beasley to pray prior to the First Ballot. Following the prayer, the First Ballot was taken. When completed, Secretary Boerger returned the chair to Bishop Burkat.

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

The Reverend Christopher McKinstry, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, made the report.

### **Committee on Discipline**

**TICKET 1 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY** (Two ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2024)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Rev. Christopher McKinstry	St. James, Limerick

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

Nominated from the floor:

Rev. Donna Wright	Intentional Interim Pastor
Rev. Heidi Rodrick-Schnaaff	St. Matthew, Perkasio

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 1 closed.

**TICKET 2 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MALE** (One **lay male** to be elected to a term ending 2024)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Mr. Donald P. Gleiter	Redeemer, Jamison
Mr. Bruce Seachrist	St. Matthew, Perkasio
Mr. James Lanigan	Living Word, Roslyn

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

Nominated from the floor:

Mr. David Dwight	Family of God Buckingham
Mr. Charles Jorn	University Lutheran, Philadelphia

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 2 closed.

**TICKET 3 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY FEMALE** (One **lay female** to be elected to a term ending 2024)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Ms. Doris Sterner	St. Peter, Chester Springs
Ms. Barbara Hoffman	St. James, Limerick

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 3 closed.

### **Synod Council**

**TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY** (Three **Ministers of Word and Sacrament** to be elected for terms ending 2021)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Rev. Tyler Rasmussen	Trinity, Pleasant Valley
Rev. Laura Tancredi	St. Paul, Ardmore
Rev. Daniel Schaefer	Jerusalem, Schwenksville

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

Nominated from the floor:

Rev. Matthew Staniz,	St Luke, Devon
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Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 4 closed.

**TICKET 5: SYNOD COUNCIL, CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE** (One **lay female** to be elected for a term ending 2021)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Ms. Joyce Maloney	Trinity, Philadelphia

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor. Persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 7.*

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 5 closed.  
Bishop Burkat declared Ms. Joyce Maloney **elected**.

**TICKET 6 - SYNOD COUNCIL, UPPER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE** (One lay Male to be elected for a term ending 2021)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Mr. Philip Tackett	St. Peter, Hilltown

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor. Persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 8.*

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 6 closed.  
Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Philip Tackett **elected**.

**TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE** (One lay female to be elected for a term ending 2021)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Ms. Doreen Kinzler	St. John, Philadelphia
Ms. Doris Sterner	St. Peter, Chester Springs, PA

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 7 closed.

**TICKET 8: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE** (One lay male to be elected for a term ending 2021)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Mr. Everett Wick	St. Andrew, Perkasio

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 8 closed.  
Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Everett Wick **elected**.

**Churchwide Assembly**

**TICKET 9: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, CLERGY** (Five Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONGREGATION</b>
Rev. Nathan Krause	Redeemer, Jamison
Rev. Lydia Posselt	Family of God, Buckingham
Rev. Jennifer Ollikainen	Trinity, Perkasio
Rev. Bryan Penman	St. Mark, Conshohocken
Rev. Daniel Spigelmyer	Living Word, Roslyn
Rev. Jack Saarela	St. John, Melrose Park

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor. Any person not elected on this ballot who is a person of color or whose primary language is other than English will be added to Ticket 12.*

Nominated from the floor:

Rev. Susan Ericsson

St. Luke, Devon

Rev. Gwendolyn King

Calvary, West Chester

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 9 closed.

**TICKET 10: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, LAY MALE** (Four lay male voting members to be elected)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Mr. Clark Shuster

Ascension, Washington Crossing

Mr. Jeff Nase

St. John, Richlandtown

Mr. Sheldon Erb

St. Mark, Conshohocken

Mr. Paul Ziegler

St. Paul, Glenside

Mr. Thomas Salber

Prince of Peace, Philadelphia

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor. Any person not elected on this ballot who is a youth or a young adult will be added to Ticket 13.*

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 10 closed.

**TICKET 11: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, LAY FEMALE** (Four lay female voting members to be elected)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Ms. Courtney Smith

Good Shepherd, King of Prussia

Ms. Doreen Kinzler

St. John, Philadelphia

Ms. Sandra Zimmermann

St. John, Phoenixville

Ms. Susan Massey

Living Word, Roslyn

Deacon. Rachel Bailey

Grace, Pottstown

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

Nominated from the floor:

Ms. Katie Schnaath

St. Matthew, Perkasie

Ms. Cynthia Moultrie

Christ, Upper Darby

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 11 closed.

**TICKET 12: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, PERSON OF COLOR OR PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, CLERGY** (one Minister of Word and Sacrament who is a person of color, or whose primary language is other than English)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Rev. Linda Manson

Grace, Wyndmoor

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

With no nominations from the floor, Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 12 closed.

**TICKET 13: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT** (one lay male who is a youth or young adult, that is, a person who is a voting member of a congregation that is not more than 30 years old at the time of election or appointment)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Mr. Emanuel Alves

Holy Communion, Philadelphia

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.*

Nominated from the floor:

Charlie Zeon

Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 13 closed.

A motion was made and approved to re-open Ticket 10 for another nomination from the floor.

Added to Ticket 10 was:

Mr. Matthew Banda

Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 10 closed.

**Greetings and Prayer** – The Reverend Sean M. Ewbank, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission for the Southeast Michigan Synod

Bishop Burkat introduced Pastor Ewbank, noting Southeast Michigan Synod is our Domestic Companion Synod in the ELCA.

Pastor Ewbank read greetings from Bishop Donald P. Kreiss of the Southeast Michigan Synod. A portion of the greeting included, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our risen Lord Jesus Christ. I regret I cannot be there to say farewell to my colleague Bishop Burkat. She is fearless; always willing to share her opinion – forcefully, repeatedly, but with a sense of love and care for you and the issue at hand. She is a passionate and tireless advocate for building ties between people of the Abrahamic faiths. May God continue to bless Claire in her continued ministry, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and your new bishop.”

Pastor Ewbank then led the Assembly in prayer before the lunch recess.

*The Assembly recessed for lunch.*

**Friday afternoon, May 4, 2018**

The Assembly was led back into session with prayer by Seminarian Ralen Robinson.

**Report of the Treasurer** – Ms. Janet Huber Neff

Ms. Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer of the Synod, presented information regarding the audit of Fiscal Year 2017 (which concluded January 31, 2018), as well as other information related to our financial standing. The Audit Report was in the Bulletin of Reports distributed to the Assembly.

**Audit Report**

**Statement of Financial Position**

Cash and investments	\$3,749,732
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Total Assets	\$5,044,087
Total liabilities	\$ 124,978
Net assets:	\$4,919,109
Unrestricted	\$3,663,376
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 549,594
Permanently Restricted	\$ 706,139

### **2017 Receipts**

Mission Support	\$1,859,319
Other Contributions	\$ 618,227
Registration Fees	\$ 135,832
Investment Income	\$ 516,262
Sale of closed churches	\$ 524,021
Total Support and Revenue	\$3,653,661

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

Receipts	\$765,000
Expenses	\$240,000
Distributions	\$ 45,000

### **Mission Support data from Parochial Reports**

Ms. Neff noted that, in order to plan for ministry well, we need your congregation's parochial report. These reports let us know where we stand in terms of support and resources. She shared some numbers from the parochial reports.

Total Congregations reporting	109 out of 151
Congregations giving 10% or more of their receipts	12
Congregations giving 5-9%	46
Congregations giving .1 – 4%	45
Congregations making no gift	6

The Synod saw a slight increase in support in 2017 over 2016, in the amount of \$11,000  
83 congregations maintained or increased their mission support to the Synod in 2017

### **2017 Expenses**

Operating Expenses	\$1,269,125
ELCA Proportionate Share	\$ 929,660
Property management	\$ 56,931
Distributions to other agencies	\$ 176,162
Mission expense	\$ 354,239
Grants to congregations	\$ 24,291
Total Expenses	\$2,810,408

After reviewing the above numbers, with detailed explanation of the various categories, Treasurer Neff asked if there were questions from the floor. Hearing none, she put forth the following resolution:

**S. A. 18.05.01. 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 year 2017.**

**The Assembly adopted the resolution**

**Report of the Finance Committee – Mr. Albert Glenn, Chairperson**

**Presentation of the 2019 Budget**

Mr. Glenn stated the Finance Committee has two main tasks; to oversee the regular expenses of the Synod, and to propose the annual budget for the Assembly’s consideration. Mr. Glenn is here to present the budget for Fiscal Year 2019. The proposed budget is in the Bulletin of Reports. Mr. Glenn shared the following highlights.

**Budgeted Income**

Mission Support	\$1,850,000
Other Contributions	\$ 244,300
Registration Fees	\$ 190,235
Investment Income	\$ 224,700
Sale of Closed Church	\$ 300,000
Total Receipts	\$2,809,235

The proposed spending in the budget is very similar to the current budget, because it was built off the current plan.

The section for the Office of the Bishop is up slightly because of costs associated with the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, and other expenses that may be incurred with the transition to a new bishop.

**Budgeted Expenses**

Partnerships	\$1,168,280
Mission	\$ 349,479
Leadership	\$ 112,401
Administration	\$ 255,112
Office of the Bishop	\$ 973,846
Total Expenses	\$2,859,118

Discussion:

The Reverend Susie Folks of the Anti-Racism Team commented that the Team was supposed to have a line in the budget. Where might this line be in the budget overview that has been presented?

Mr. Glenn replied that he believes it is in the Mission Section of the Budget, and asked Treasurer Neff for further clarification.

Pastor Folks stated that the Team was told they would have \$10,000 set aside for their work. This is the first year that this line should have been in the budget.

Ms. Neff said it is under Ecumenical Organizations and Agencies.

Pastor Folks noted that line is only \$7,900. Where would the \$10,000 be?

The Reverend George Detweiler, Synod Archives Team, stated that \$4,500 of that \$7,900 is for the Archives, which would not leave much for the Anti-Racism Team.

Mr. Robert Werner, Good Shepherd, Southampton made the following motion:

**Moved that, if it is not in the budget, \$10,000 be added to the 2019 budget for the Anti-Racism Team.**

The motion was seconded.

Discussion on this motion:

The Reverend Ghislaine Cotnoir, Director of Pastoral Care at the Artman Home and the Hearth at Drexel, said since this has been a goal of the ELCA from 1988, and we have to search for the money, we should add this item not only as a part of, but as a separate line for, the budget so that we do not have to search for this money.

**The Assembly adopted the amendment.**

Mr. Everett Wick, St. Andrew, Perkasie noted that he sees a surplus in the 2017 budget of \$200,000, but the 2019 budget reflects a \$34,000 deficit. Are we passing a deficit budget?

Ms. Neff replied that we are not, because there are designated funds available which will be used to cover these expenses.

Mr. Wick asked what accounts for the difference in the surplus in the 2017 budget and the deficit in the 2019 budget.

Ms. Neff stated the difference is in the amount we had, and expect from, receipts from the sale of properties of former congregations. We anticipate two streams of revenue will be down in 2019; the sale of properties, and the performance of the investments.

The Reverend Lisa Jester, Emmaus Road, Levittown, moved that we have a break out of the budget, showing the lines for the individual ministries that are being supported.

Bishop Burkat stated we will delay the vote on the budget until we can have that information, particularly on the Anti-Racism line, for review by the Assembly.

### **Report of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop**

Bishop Burkat yielded the chair to Secretary Boerger and Ms. Christine Simpson, Chairperson

Ms. Simpson provided results of the First Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

Number of ballots cast	438
Number of illegal ballots	0
Number of legal ballots	438
Number needed to elect	329

There is no election.

Those receiving votes on the first ballot:

Patricia A. Davenport	77
Karl M. Richard	45
Carlton Rodgers	36
Serena S. Sellers	25
Bradley Burke	23
Charles Leonard	23
William A. Vanderslice	21
Julie DeWerth	19
Susan K. Ericsson	15
Jennifer P. Ollikainen	13
Lamont Wells	10
Paul Baglyous	9
Noah Hepler	6
Lee Miller, II	6

The following pastors received 5 votes each: Keith Anderson, Moses S. Dennis, and Daniel J. Krewson.

The following pastors received 4 votes each: Carolann Hopcke.

The following pastors received 3 votes each: Heeralal M. Cheedie, Arlene K. Greenwald, Paul E. Lutz, Wayne Matthias-Long, and Janet Peterman.

The following pastors received 2 votes each: Susie K. Folks, Christopher J. Franz, Janelle L. Kraus, Nathan Krause, Philip Krey, Karl Krueger, Dyan M. Lawlor, Delores E. Littleton, Linda Manson, Ellen Meissgeier, Patricia G. Neale, Lydia Posselt, Christopher L. Weidner, and David Lose.

The following pastors received 1 vote each: Sandra Brown, Michael J. Carlson, John W. Carlson, Lynette Chapman, Ghislaine M. Cotnoir, Bruce T. Davis, David M. Deal, David A. Genszler, Asha M. George-Guiser, Kari L. Hart, James T. Heckman, Amy Hotter, Gwendolyn Johnson-Bond, Gwendolyn S. King, Cynthia Krommes, Susan M. Lang, Robert H. Linders, Violet C. Little, Jane M. Marston, Richard A. Mathisen, Robert E. Mitman, William R. Mueller, Paul H. Neff, David Penman, Stacey-Kyle Rea, Rebecca L. Schanely, Larry V. Smoose, Daniel W. Spigelmyer, Andreas Wagner, Erika L. Wesch, Donna Wright, Timothy Taylor, Jim Echols,

John Bustard, Stewart Luce, Angela Shannon, Pastor Carlson LGLC, Brett Wilson Davis, William Chris Boerger, Ramona Bouzard, Erik Reimer, John Spangler, Lura Groen, and Ray Tiemann.

Secretary Boerger informed those who had received at least one vote on this ballot they have until 3:30 to withdraw their name if they are not willing to serve if elected. Those who do not withdraw by 3:30 will be on the next ballot, and all subsequent ballots for which they qualify. The chair was then returned to Bishop Burkat.

### **First Report of Reference and Counsel**

The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King presented the report for Dr. Addie Butler, Chairperson, who was unable to be present at this session due to the death of her aunt.

The following Memorial was submitted by members of the Upper Bucks Conference for consideration. It was submitted prior to the deadline, and is able to come before the Assembly

### **Memorial on the ELCA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of women**

To transmit the following memorial to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

WHEREAS in 1970 both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church in their national conventions voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS the ELCA rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and will recognize the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020 of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS we express our profound gratitude for the many and varied ways the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS we learned in the research related to the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education

(<http://search.elca.org/Pages/Results.aspx?k=45th+anniversary+of+women%27s+ordination>); and

WHEREAS the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for the respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of women;

### **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

We call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and

We call upon our seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods, and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to our

church, urging all congregations to have an ordained woman preach and preside at a service in 2020.

We request all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and

We call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in our church through worship services, bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and

We call upon all members of this church to examine our consciences, and confess our sins and complicity in whichever circumstances by the outright or silent actions women have faced including barriers, discrimination, or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church; and

We call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and classism, and develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry; and

We call upon our seminaries to include intentional coursework and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence; and

We urge all congregations, synods, and church-wide organizations to use the social statement currently under development and its accompanying resources as a means of educating themselves about intersectionality and sexism; and

We urge all congregations, synods, candidacy committees, and the churchwide organization in 2020 to develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice in all areas of their work and life, in light of the findings of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary research; and

We call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Conference of Bishops in 2024 and at the Churchwide Assembly in 2025; and

We call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls; and

We call upon the churchwide expression's Domestic Mission Unit to develop, undertake, and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt of women of color after seminary; and

We request the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and

We invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

**The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends transmitting the memorial to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.**

**S. A. 18.05.02. RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts**

**the Memorial on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women, and transmit it for consideration by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.**

The Reverend David Deal, Evangelical, Durham, spoke in favor of the resolution. He feels we would be in much worse shape than we are if not for the work of the women clergy in our Upper Bucks Conference, including our Dean. He noted that he is married to a woman who is a pastor, and has seen first-hand the struggles she has faced in ministry, and we need to deal with these issues.

The Reverend Lynette Chapman, Trinity, Quakertown, also spoke in favor of the resolution. She privileged to serve in several congregations where she been the first female pastor. She has felt discrimination because of her gender, and she has had people embrace her just because of her gender. This memorial seeks to encourage the celebration of the gifts of women in ministry. The resolution will also encourage us examine ourselves, repent of our sin, and seek new ways forward. It is important for our Synod, where the gifts of women are largely embraced, and for other Synods where the gifts of women are not as well lifted up, or even ignored.

Bishop Burkat called for the vote.

**The Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the resolution.**

**Addition to First Ballot for the Election of a Bishop**

Secretary Boerger was recognized for a message regarding the election of the bishop. He stated that the Reverend Wayne Shelor also received 1 vote on the First Ballot, and will continue unless he withdraws.

**First Report of the Committee on General Elections and Balloting**

The Reverend Rebecca Schanely, Chairperson, came forward to lead the Assembly through the process for general elections for positions before the Synod. Six tickets were presented:

- Ticket 1 – Committee on Discipline, clergy
- Ticket 2 – Committee on Discipline, lay male
- Ticket 3 – Committee on Discipline, lay female
- Ticket 4 – Synod Council, clergy
- Ticket 9 – Churchwide Assembly, clergy
- Ticket 11 – Churchwide Assembly, lay female.

It was noted that the biographies of those candidates nominated from the floor were not made available to the members of the Assembly, and so the vote was delayed until these biographies could be shared.

**Portico Benefit Services**

Ms. Barbara Debski, Regional Representative for Portico Benefit Services, brought greetings, and described “wellness” as a main focus of Portico’s mission. She spoke of wellness as a key part of the work of this Synod, and of the Church. The many ways in which this Synod shows its care for each other, from celebrating staff birthdays, to recognizing anniversaries of ordinations and consecrations, and many other ways, is evidence of our desire to promote spiritual and emotional health. This commitment to wellness is also the focus of Portico Benefit Services.

From financial health, to physical and emotional health, Portico is a partner with the church in its work towards wellness.

### **Back to General Election balloting**

Biographies of those persons nominated from the floor for the tickets under consideration were posted on the screens, and were read by Pastor Schanely. Balloting took place after bios were read.

### **Report of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop**

Secretary Boerger and Ms. Christine Simpson, Chairperson, were called forward for the Second Ballot for the Election of a Bishop.

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, registrar, shared the updated registration figures. There are currently 519 voting members. Registration is closed, and will reopen after this second ballot.

As the team was not ready to have the second ballot, Bishop Burkat called forward two members of the Franconia Mennonite Center staff, thanking them for their sharing their space, and asking them to share a bit about the ministry here.

One of the pastors, Josh Meyer, had been raised in Trinity Lutheran, Lansdale, had engaged in the Theological Education for Youth program, and now serves here in part because of what he learned there.

The other pastor, Mark Wenger, shared how blessed we are to be able to worship and serve together. 400 years ago we were shouting and throwing things at each other, and now we can work together.

Bishop Burkat noted that Bishop Tracey Bartholomew from the New Jersey Synod had arrived. Bishop Bartholomew has agreed to be Bishop Burkat's chaplain for the weekend. Bishop Bartholomew's husband, the Reverend Daniel Whitener, serves in our Synod as pastor of the Lutheran Church of God's Love, Newtown.

Pastor Dwight Mason led the Assembly in "Give Me Jesus."

Bishop Burkat reviewed the various forums that are available at 4:00

With the ballot still not ready, the Assembly took a few minutes to stretch as the preparations for the second ballot for bishop were finalized.

### **Second Ballot for the Election of a Bishop**

As the Assembly reconvened after the short intermission, Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, registrar, gave updated numbers prior to this ballot. There are now 522 voting members registered. Registration is closed until the end of this ballot.

Prior to the Ballot there were several questions from the floor.

The Reverend Kat Steinly, St. John, Richlandtown, noted the Reverend Jim Echols' name is spelled incorrectly on the ballot.

The Reverend Sara Hale, retired, questioned if this is a complete ballot. She believed a name was missing.

Secretary Boerger replied that this is the list of the names remaining following the self-removal of those previously nominated.

Pr. Hale felt there was still a name missing.

Secretary Boerger asked Pastor Hale to check with the team and the person to see if there is an omission.

The Reverend Thomas Russert, St. Paul's, Doylestown noted the Reverend Paul Baglyos has no "u" in his name.

A question was raised if all those on the list have agreed to serve.

Secretary Boerger replied, "No, all those on the list have not withdrawn by 3:30."

Following word from the Committee on Bishops Election regarding Pastor Hale's inquiry, Secretary Boerger directed the Assembly to please add the name of the Delores E. Littleton to the ballot.

Mr. Joseph Davidson asked "If the name is not added to the ballot, is the ballot invalid?"

Secretary Boerger replied, "No, since the chair has instructed the name to be added, if you do not it is not invalid, you just can't follow instructions."

Mr. Emanuel Alves, Holy Communion, Philadelphia, and member of the Discernment Team, was asked to pray prior to this ballot.

Following the collection of all the ballots, Secretary Boerger declared the Second Ballot closed. He then returned the chair to Bishop Burkat, who dismissed the Assembly to the forums.

*The Assembly recessed for forums and dinner.*

### **Friday evening, May 4, 2018**

Mr. Gary Salmon, Tabernacle, Philadelphia, led the Assembly back into session with prayer.

### **Second Report of the Committee on General Elections and Balloting**

Bishop Burkat called on the Reverend Rebecca Schanely, Chairperson of the Committee, to make her report.

### **TICKET 1 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY (Two ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2024)**

Number of ballots cast	490
Number of invalid ballots	1
Number of valid ballots	489
Needed to elect	245

The Reverend Donna Wright	341
The Reverend Christopher McKinstry	310
The Reverend Heidi Rodrick-Schnaaff	306

Bishop Burkat declared the Reverend Donna Wright and the Reverend Christopher McKinstry **elected**.

**TICKET 2 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MALE** (One **lay male** to be elected to a term ending 2024)

Number of ballots cast	470
Number of invalid ballots	6
Number of valid ballots	464
Needed to elect	233

Mr. David Dwight	190
Mr. Charles Horn	144
Mr. Donald P. Gleiter	53
Mr. Bruce Seachrist	47
Mr. James Lanigan	39

Bishop Burkat declared that Mr. David Dwight and Mr. Charles Horn will move forward to the next ballot.

**TICKET 3 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY FEMALE** (One **lay female** to be elected to a term ending 2024)

Number of ballots cast	443
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	443
Needed to elect	222

Ms. Barbara Hoffman	273
Ms. Doris Sterner	179

Bishop Burkat declared Ms. Barbara Hoffman **elected**.

**TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY** (Three **Ministers of Word and Sacrament** to be elected for terms ending 2021)

Number of ballots cast	478
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	478
Needed to elect	240

The Reverend Laura Tancredi	406
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The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen	350
The Reverend Matthew Staniz,	312
The Reverend Daniel Schaefer	273

Bishop Burkat declared the Reverend Laura Tancredi, the Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, and the Reverend Matthew Staniz **elected**.

**TICKET 9: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, CLERGY (Five Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected)**

Number of ballots cast	489
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	489
Needed to elect	245

The Reverend Gwendolyn King	397
The Reverend Jennifer Ollikainen	347
The Reverend Susan Ericsson	345
The Reverend Bryan Penman	284
The Reverend Lydia Posselt	246
The Reverend Nathan Krause	244
The Reverend Jack Saarela	209
The Reverend Daniel Spigelmyer	204

Bishop Burkat declared the Reverend Gwendolyn King, the Reverend Jennifer Ollikainen, the Reverend Susan Ericsson, the Reverend Bryan Penman, and the Reverend Nathan Krause **elected**.

**TICKET 11: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, LAY FEMALE (Four lay female voting members to be elected)**

Number of ballots cast	480
Number of invalid ballots	2
Number of valid ballots	478
Needed to elect	240

Deacon Rachel Bailey	315
Ms. Cynthia Moultrie	294
Ms. Katie Schnaath	262
Ms. Doreen Kinzler	239
Ms. Courtney Smith	213
Ms. Susan Massey	206
Ms. Sandra Zimmermann	187

Bishop Burkat declared Deacon Rachel Bailey, Ms. Cynthia Moultrie, and Ms. Katie Schnaath **elected**. She also declared that Ms. Doreen Kinzler and Ms. Courtney Smith would move forward to the next ballot.

Ballots for four tickets were then distributed to the Assembly:

Ticket 2 – Committee on Discipline, Lay Male

Ticket 7 – Synod Council, Lay Female at Large

Ticket 10 – Churchwide Assembly, Lay Male

Ticket 13 – Churchwide Assembly, Youth or Young Adult

Pastor Schanely noted that on Ticket 10 Mr. Sheldon Erb is no longer eligible for election, as Pastor Bryan Penman, who is also from St. Mark, Conshohocken, was just elected to the Churchwide Assembly.

When the ballots were collected, Pastor Schanely thanked the Assembly for their cooperation.

### **Recognition of Anniversary Celebrants**

The Assembly recognized those Rostered Ministers who are celebrating significant anniversaries of their ordination or consecration. The following were called forward by Bishop Burkat to receive a certificate, and be recognized for this milestone in their ministry.

#### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrants**

The Rev. Claire S. Burkat  
The Rev. David L. Stickley  
The Rev. Diana M. Vidlak  
The Rev. James A. Shelly  
The Rev. James E. Gulotta  
The Rev. Paul R. Beck  
The Rev. Robert T. Mylod  
The Rev. Ronald P. Wesemann  
The Rev. Dr. James K. Echols

#### **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrants**

The Rev. Carolann Hopcke  
The Rev. Edward F. Kane, Jr.  
The Rev. Janet M. Corpus  
The Rev. Janice A. Vogt  
The Rev. Shirley S. Guider  
The Rev. Suzanne S. MacFadden

The Assembly then recognized those congregations a special anniversary of 100 years or greater, in 25 year increments. Members of these congregations who were present were called forward By Bishop Burkat to be recognized by the Assembly.

### **Celebrating 275 years of Ministry**

Peace-Tohickon Lutheran Church, Perkasie, PA

Zion Lutheran Church, Spring City, PA

**Celebrating 250 years of Ministry**

Christ's Lutheran Church, Trumbauersville, PA

**Celebrating 200 years of Ministry**

St. James Lutheran Church, Limerick, PA

**Introduction of Candidates for Ordination**

Bishop Burkat called on Deacon Allison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy, and the Reverend Sarah Stobie, Chairperson of the Candidacy Committee, to come forward and present the candidates for ordination or consecration. Both Deacon Wilcox and Pastor Stobie spoke of their joy in this process, and what an honor it is to be a part of this journey of discernment with these candidates. As they began their report, Deacon Wilcox and Pastor Stobie presented a gift to former Candidacy Committee Chair, Mr. Fred Renigar, for his many years of faithful service.

Deacon Wilcox then introduced and thanked the members of the Candidacy Committee: The Reverend Sarah Stobie, chairperson; the Reverend Dr. Paul Baglyos, ELCA representative; the Reverend Dr. Charles Leonard, United Lutheran Seminary representative; the Reverend Maggie Ainslie, committee chaplain; Deacon Beth Barkhau; the Reverend Thadd Book; Ms. Diane Casey; the Reverend Mukesh Cheedie; the Reverend Dr. Moses Suah Dennis; Mr. Rick Eberts; Mr. Chase Ferguson; the Reverend Dr. Shirley Guider; Ms. Charmaine Hamilton; the Reverend Noah Hepler; the Reverend Nathan Krause; Ms. Margie Pendarvis-Wright; the Reverend Thomas Russert; Ms. Arlette Stansbury; and Mr. Thomas Salber.

They then presented a bit of background and introduction of the following persons who have been approved for ordination or consecration through the Candidacy process.

Mr. Joshua Sullivan is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the New England Synod. His home congregation is Bethany Lutheran, Cromwell, CT. He has been assigned to the SEPA Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Ms. Sharon Richter is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the SEPA Synod. Her home congregation is Holy Communion Lutheran, Philadelphia, PA. She has been assigned to the NEPA Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Mr. Lenny Duncan is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the SEPA Synod. His home congregation is Temple Lutheran, Havertown, PA. He has been assigned to Metro NY Synod, and has been called as Pastor of Jehu's Table in NY City.

Ms. Lauren Heywood is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the Metro Washington, D.C. Synod. Her home congregation is Luther Place Memorial, Washington, D.C. She has been assigned to SEPA Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Ms. Julie Peterson is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the Metro Chicago Synod. Her home congregation is Good Shepherd Lutheran, Naperville, IL. She has been assigned to the New Jersey Synod or SEPA Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Mr. Daniel Smith is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the New Jersey Synod. His home congregation is Our Saviour Lutheran, Pompton Plains, NJ. He has been assigned to the SEPA Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Mr. Daniel Phelps is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the Florida-Bahamas Synod. His home congregation is All Saints Lutheran, Lutz, FL. He has been assigned to the SEPA Synod, and has been called as Pastor of Bethany Lutheran, Roxborough.

Mr. Ron Dziuk is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the SEPA Synod. His home congregation is St. Paul Lutheran, Exton, PA. He has been assigned to the SEPA Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Ms. Heidi Link is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the SEPA Synod. Her home congregation is St. John Lutheran, Ridge Valley, PA. She has been assigned to the New Jersey Synod, and is currently awaiting a call.

Mr. Bradley Gow is a candidate for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and is from the SEPA Synod. His home congregation is Christ-Ascension Lutheran, Chestnut Hill, PA. He has been assigned to the SEPA Synod, and has been called as Pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran, Rieglesville.

### **Report of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop**

Bishop Burkat called on Secretary Wm. Chris Boerger and Ms. Christine Simpson to make their report.

Ms. Simpson provided results of the Second Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

Number of ballots cast	489
Number of illegal ballots	0
Number of legal ballots	489
Number needed to elect	367

There is no election.

Patricia A. Davenport	153
Karl M. Richard	56
Carlton Rodgers	42
Julie DeWerth	41
Serena S. Sellers	32
Charles Leonard	30
William A. Vanderslice	30

Bradley Burke	28
Paul Baglyos	19
David Lose	11
Carolann Hopcke	8
Paul E. Lutz	7
Arlene K. Greenwald	6
Lamont Wells	5
Robert E. Mitman	5
Karl Krueger	4
Andreas Wagner	3
Wayne Shelor	3

The following pastors received 1 vote each: Delores E. Littleton, Asha M. George-Guiser, Timothy Taylor, Jim Echols, Stewart Luce, and Lura Groen.

The following pastors received 0 votes on this ballot: David A. Genszler, Robert H. Linders, Brett Wilson Davis, Erik Reimer, and John Spangler.

Secretary Boerger stated that the seven with the highest received total of votes will move forward to the Third Ballot. The top seven are:

Patricia A. Davenport  
 Karl M. Richard  
 Carlton Rodgers  
 Julie DeWerth  
 Serena S. Sellers  
 Charles Leonard  
 William A. Vanderslice.

These seven will address the Assembly in the morning session, immediately after the opening worship, for five minutes each. The Third Ballot will be held following the addresses. Secretary Boerger asked the final seven candidates to meet with the Committee for the Election of a Bishop immediately following this session. He then returned the chair to Bishop Burkat.

The Worship Team led the Assembly in Evening Prayer to conclude the day's session.

*The Assembly recessed for the evening.*

### **Saturday morning, May 5, 2018**

#### **8:30 Worship**

Deacon Karen Mathias-Long and Dr. Addie Butler led the Assembly in a moving service, in which those present were encouraged to confess and repent of the sin of systemic racism so prevalent in the Church and the World, that true reconciliation might be possible.

#### ***Notice Regarding the Recording of Minutes***

*As Secretary Richard was in the top seven candidates being considered for the office of bishop, the Reverend Tyler Rasmussen took over the duties of recording secretary for the duration of Pastor Richard's eligibility in this process.*

### **Report of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop – Presentations by the top 7 candidates to the Assembly**

Bishop Burkat invited Secretary Boerger to come forward and continue the process for the Election of the Bishop.

Biographical information and digital pictures for the seven remaining nominees had been made available to the Assembly.

Secretary Boerger noted the candidates will speak for five minutes each on a topic of their choosing. The order was selected last evening.

The Reverend Adrienne Meier, St. Michael, Unionville – Point of Information – Missing Biographical Information for Karl Richard

Secretary Boerger invited pages to distribute forms as necessary

#### **Pastor Karl M. Richard**

“I love to tell the story, because I know it’s true.” Pr. Richard thanks the assembly for their prayers while his brother is in the hospital, and said it is at times like this he trusts in the truth of the gospel.

“For some have never heard the message of salvation;” We need to share this story, but we often tell the story for our sake, that is, to grow our churches, not their sake, because they need to know the love of Jesus. What if we simply saw the other person as a person, and tell the story because we love it and we love them.

“For those who know it best are hungering to hear it like the rest.” We come together knowing we aren’t all we want to be, that we are broken and sinful, yet thankful that Jesus forgives and renews and makes us all we need to be. We love to tell the story of Jesus and his love.

#### **Pastor Charles R. Leonard**

Pr. Leonard thanks God for all the pieces of his life and the work of this Synod. We need a strategic plan for urban ministry. We need to consider hiring a staff person that works in the city and works to address the millennials and the “nones.”

I affirm the various ministries we are doing in the city, especially the prison ministry, the homeless ministry, and the Spanish-speaking ministry.

I want to encourage the participation of the laity; we need them to step up to the plate. We need to forge a partnership with United Lutheran Seminary. We need to use all the latest technology to move forward.

#### **Pastor Patricia A. Davenport**

Greets the assembly. Pr. Davenport recognizes the diversity of those nominated for bishop, Look! There are 3 women and 3 people of color! People from across the ELCA are praying for us. How did we get here? “We come this far by faith” – that, for me, is what it is.

I love Patrick Overton: “Faith is that step into the darkness of the unknown, and we have to believe that one of two things will happen. One, that there will be something solid for us to stand on, or God will simply teach us how to fly.” SEPA is willing to fly.” She named stories of faith throughout Scripture and history.

Faith is the community chest, the connection between church and community, the first Lutheran social service. She names faith throughout the Church. Faith can’t just be our money; it has to be our way life.

### **Pastor William A. Vanderslice**

God is good. This Synod has been blessed with abundant gifts. We need to regularly bring rostered and lay leaders together, so that, centered in Word and prayer, we can build up the Body of Christ and love our neighbor. In partnership, we seek to be the people of God in this new apostolic age.

There are challenges in facing sins, but we speak truth to power, suffering with those who suffer. The person across from us is a child of God, beloved and precious. Our work may seem overwhelming, but I can tell you after standing at the threshold of death 2 years ago that there is hope in Christ, new life. We have the blessing of bringing the life-saving work of God to those who hunger for new life in Christ.

### **Pastor Carlton E. Rodgers**

Our faith commitments shape how we think about everything. Pr. Rodgers’ faith is shaped by the social Gospel as epitomized by Micah 6:8. We can accomplish more together than we can apart.

My vision is that we will become a Synod that affirms the priesthood of all believers, encouraging one another to work together for the sake of the Gospel. Our lack of diversity is the elephant in the room standing in the way of our ministry. We need to put an emphasis on the need to rectify the poor state of our urban ministry.

I stand here because of my commitment to speak truth to power. “Do not think that because you live in kings palaces that you will escape the fate that will come...but who knows if you have come to this place for such a time as this.”

### **Pastor Julie K. DeWerth**

Why is Pr. DeWerth still here, still in the game? It is because of the people. Her sister went to Nativity in Chester as a young family even though there were no children there, because the people welcomed them. They continued to build a relationship, even through the generational divide.

My childhood church I love, because those people cared for me; they were invested in my life and saw the gifts in me; they raised me in the faith.

At St. Paul’s, Ardmore (where she served as pastor) I raised my children – my children can’t tell you about the programs, but they can tell you about the people who loved and cared for them. It’s not about the programs; it’s about the people, about the relationships. We can do this in our synod. We can partner and do things together. We can be the Church in this new time.

### **Pastor Serena S. Sellers**

If the Church is going to be loved by the world, first the Church has to love the world.

Pr. Sellers told a story about Russ, a construction worker. Russ had something like ALS. I communicated with him in the hospital, and needing to communicate with a letter board, he said, “I am grateful. For ALS.” All his life he worked hard and he knew he was loved, but he never knew he was loved just for himself until he could no longer rely on anything but God’s love. Grace was no longer an idea, and it filled him with joy. Every day he listened to Scripture and prayed, because that’s what he had. There is a clarity when all else is stripped away that allows us to see the freshness of God’s grace for us, and if we see that, we have exactly what the world needs now. We are so blessed.

**Third Ballot for the Election of the Bishop**

Secretary Boerger reminded the Assembly of the process for the election of the Bishop. On this ballot 2/3rds of the legally cast ballots are needed for election. He called on the Registrar for the current number of voting members in attendance.

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge announced the current registration is 542 voting members. Registration closed until this ballot is completed

The Reverend Jay Mitchell, Christ Ascension, Philadelphia, was called on to pray before the ballot.

A white card was raised. Point of order. Why are the candidates not listed in order of number of votes?

Secretary Boerger: The order of the ballot was random, per your Synod’s constitution.

When all the ballots were collected, Secretary Boerger declared the ballot closed; returned chair to Bishop Burkat.

Bishop Burkat welcomed Secretary Boerger’s spouse, DeDe.

**Third Report of the Committee on General Elections and Balloting**

Bishop Burkat called Pastor Schanely forward to make her report.

**TICKET 2 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MALE (One lay male to be elected to a term ending 2024)**

Number of ballots cast	370
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	370
Needed to elect	186

Mr. David Dwight	189
Mr. Charles Horn	181

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. David Dwight **elected**.

**TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE (One lay female to be elected for a term ending 2021)**

Number of ballots cast	353
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	353
Needed to elect	177

Ms. Doreen Kinzler	185
Ms. Doris Sterner	168

Bishop Burkat declared Ms. Doreen Kinzler **elected**.

**TICKET 10: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, LAY MALE** (Four lay male voting members to be elected)

Number of ballots cast	364
Number of invalid ballots	1
Number of valid ballots	363
Needed to elect	182

Mr. Mathew Banda	308
Mr. Paul Ziegler	281
Mr. Clark Shuster	259
Mr. Jeff Nase	257
Mr. Thomas Salber	252

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Matthew Bands, Mr. Paul Ziegler, Mr. Clark Shuster, and Mr. Jeff Nase **elected**.

**TICKET 13: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT** (one lay male who is a youth or young adult, that is, a person who is a voting member of a congregation that is not more than 30 years old at the time of election or appointment)

Number of ballots cast	374
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	374
Needed to elect	188

Mr. Emanuel Alves	239
Mr. Charlie Zeon	135

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Emanuel Alves **elected**.

Pastor Schanely then distributed the ballot for Ticket 11 to the Assembly. When ballots were collected she ended her report.

**Report of the Treasurer, Continued – Ms. Janet Huber Neff, treasurer and Mr. Albert Glenn, Chairperson, Finance Committee**

Ms. Neff provided the Assembly with an update on the budget based on questions raised the previous day, identifying where anti-racism training was at. The funds are in two different locations in the budget, part in the Bishop's budget and part in the temporarily restricted funds. Ms. Neff will provide additional detail on a one-on-one basis; we will always be completely transparent. In slides, she provided a number of details that were specifically requested by the Assembly the prior day.

Mr. Glenn notes again that the 2019 budget is not substantially different than previous years and moves to approve the 2019 budget.

**S. A. 18.05.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the 2019 budget as presented.**

**The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.**

Bishop Burkat declared that the budget passed.

Bishop Burkat thanked Ms. Neff, Mr. Glenn, and Mr. Martin Schwab, the Synod's Senior Accountant for their faithful work with our finances.

**Report of the Vice President**

Bishop Burkat introduced Ms. Tracey A. Beasley, Vice President of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Ms. Beasley thanks the Assembly for their kind welcome. She is honored and grateful to have been the Synod's vice president for 5 years. She thanks the Synod Council for their hard work, and the congregations and deans that hosted Synod Council this past year.

Ms. Beasley has been busy this past year working with the three teams responsible for the election of the Bishop and helping the Synod prepare for this election, the Synod Profile Team, the Discernment Team along with the people who lead the Bible studies across the Synod, and the Bishop Election Team. She thanked the congregations that made the prayer bracelets, receiving over 1600 bracelets. She invited congregations to take bracelets home and continue praying for the new bishop throughout this coming year.

Ms. Beasley thanked the congregations that given to the Forward Together in Faith Campaign, inviting those congregations that have given to stand. Starting June 1, applications will be accepted for grants related to the 4 pillars of the campaign, for a total grant amount around \$26,000.

Ms. Beasley recognized the Synod Staff, 9 people doing the work of 20 people. She recognized the people who have been particularly helping her with the bishop election process, giving them a token of appreciation for all their help. She thanked John and Joan Carlson for their help behind the scenes. She also thanked Susan Pursch for her prayers and help.

Ms. Beasley thanked the one who stayed up with her until 2:00 a.m. as she prepared for the election of the vice president of the ELCA in 2017, the woman who was by her side when her sister died, Bishop Claire Burkat. “She has helped me grow into the leader that I am. We can agree to disagree and still love one other. She is not my sister in Christ; she is my sister. Psalm 121: Your help comes from the Lord.”

A video of thanks for Bishop Burkat by Ms. Beasley was played, and Ms. Beasley gave a special gift to Bishop Burkat in thanks for her friendship and sisterhood, including pictures from her installation. Bishop’s retirement party will be July 8<sup>th</sup>, with a barbeque on July 7<sup>th</sup>.

Bishop Burkat expressed gratitude for the love of this Assembly and the Synod.

**Report from the United Lutheran Seminary** – The Reverend Dr. J. Jayakiran Sebastian, Dean, Philadelphia Campus

Dr. Sebastian thanked Bishop Burkat for being one of the first people to welcome him into this country and a place of opportunities and challenges.

He began by naming the challenges facing United Lutheran Seminary near the end of its first year in existence. Dr. Cone: Repentance is connected with death, and forgiveness makes us whole. We cannot be made whole without the freedom of the oppressed.

Dr. Sebastian brought the warmest greetings of the Seminary. He celebrates the fact that in just a few days we will have the first graduates from ULS. We celebrate that we had an incredibly robust enrollment in 2017, including enrollments from across the ecumenical Church.

How best can we, with the support of all of you, not shy away from but address the deep and important theological issues that challenge the heart of us to be disciples of Christ and theological companions? Our sins, such as prejudice, are learned and can be unlearned. Dr. Sebastian referenced “The Unprejudiced Jesus and the Prejudiced Church,” by George Soares-Prabhu. Jesus’ experience of God as Abba, parent, is to experience all humans as brothers and sisters, the ground of universal love that will never tolerate prejudice. It is my hope that this ground of unprejudiced will be lived out in the vision of United Lutheran Seminary.

**Report of the Committee of the Election of a Bishop**

Bishop Burkat handed over the chair to Secretary Boerger, who invited Ms. Christine Simpson to share the results of the Third Ballot for the Election of a Bishop.

Number of ballots cast	494
Number of invalid ballots	2
Number of valid ballots	492
Needed to elect	331

There is no election.

Patricia A. Davenport	218
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Julie DeWerth	89
Carlton Rodgers	57
Karl M. Richard	56
Charles Leonard	30
Serena S. Sellers	25
William A. Vanderslice	17

The Fourth Ballot will contain Pastors Patricia A. Davenport, Julie DeWerth, and Carlton Rodgers.

Secretary Boerger returned the chair to Bishop Burkat.

Bishop Burkat called on Ms. Courtney Smith, seminarian, to pray for the Assembly as the lunch break had arrived.

*Assembly stood in recess for lunch*

### **Saturday afternoon, May 5, 2018**

#### ***Notice Regarding the Recording of Minutes***

*As Secretary Richard did not move forward to the final three candidates, he resumed his duties as recording secretary.*

As the Assembly prepared for the forum with the top 3 Candidates for Bishop, Bishop Burkat called on the Reverend Nathan Kraus, pastor of Redeemer Jamison, to come forward to lead us in prayer.

#### **Report of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop – Forum with Top 3 Candidates for Bishop**

Secretary Boerger invited the 3 remaining nominees to come forward for the Forum period. The candidates had drawn lots for answering each question, in random order. Each nominee will have 90 seconds to answer each question.

**Question 1** “As you look at the difficult issues facing this Synod and this Church, how will you provide leadership to facilitate decision making to help address them?”

Pastor Patricia A. Davenport

Listening is an art. We listen and then we formulate action plans. We can certainly identify issues: finances, racism. But we need to start with listening to each other, and then begin doing that together.

Pastor Julie DeWerth

I would echo what Pastor Davenport said. We are in this together. We need to find ways to gather groups together to talk. We need to listen to different groups, and not assume what various groups want, and then move forward together.

Pastor Carlton Rodgers

To address the problems communication and collaboration is the key. We need to be transparent as to what the issues are, and then come to a decision together. In the local church we need to compromise, and I believe this for the Synod level as well.

**Question 2** “Describe specific events or experiences in your life that reflect your commitment to making this Church diverse and multi-cultural.

Pastor DeWerth

I love to travel, and I have seen much. Our church has a mission with to Rwanda and I have been there, I went on a trip to Israel and I’ve seen the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. I am always listening to the struggles of other people and look for ways we can work together to make a difference.

Pastor Davenport

I show up. I show up through every trial and tribulation and micro-aggression. I continue to be present and remain as a witness that this is a welcome place for all. I take the opportunity to stand with people be they Liberians, Latina and Latino, or the people of the Welcome Church who are experiencing homelessness, or the youth, I stand with them. I lift up the name of Jesus, because in Jesus we are all welcome.

Pastor Rodgers

I am blessed to be Dean of Central Philadelphia Conference. I have tried to make this church more diverse by working others to lead the conversation about how to work where the diversity is, that is in the City. We need to establish an office of Urban Ministry in our Synod. If the urban churches are strong, diversity will happen, and that will grow throughout the Synod.

**Question 3** “From your perspective and experience what do you see as the specific challenges confronting urban congregations, and if elected, what would you do in the next two years to rectify these challenges?”

Pastor Rodgers

I get to repeat my commercial? There are many challenges in the urban churches. Pastors are underpaid, many don’t have health care coverage, church facilities are decaying. We need a reinvestment in urban churches. There needs to be a reinvestment in the urban churches not just at the Synodical level, but at the national level.

Pastor DeWerth

Most of my ministry has been in suburbs; but did have training in the Camden Lutheran parish, and did some work in Northeast Philadelphia. In addition to underpaid pastors, we also have mammoth buildings that we don’t know what to do with. We may need to consider some consolidation, but need to be aware of consequences. A Jewish friend left his synagogue, and he never went back because that was where his family was married and buried. We need to find out, gently, what to do with these spaces.

Pastor Davenport

The challenges numerous; we have friends who are pained by inequities in salaries, and the opportunity for growth and mobility. We need to invest in the leaders. We need to discover what assets we have. We need to get together and decide how we can minister in this area, where people are well below the poverty level. We need to deal with this as a Synod; how are we going to do this? How do we create the Acts church, where no one has lack?

**Question 4** “How would you foster the vision of inclusion of LGBTQ people, lay and ordained, in our Synod and in our Church, in light of the ELCA’s welcome expressed in the decision on human sexuality made by the Churchwide Assembly in August 2009?”

Pastor DeWerth

In Good Shepherd, King of Prussia, a suburban congregation, we are pretty diverse. An active member of our congregation and his wife came and informed me he was transitioning and becoming Jen. We were able to walk through this in our congregation. I was invited to be a part of a conference to help congregations navigate this path. I would be glad to bring this experience to the Synod to help others in this process.

Pastor Rodgers

I have not had LGBTQ people in my family. I have not had to deal with this issue in my congregation. But Paul in Galatians says there is no difference. We need to not label people but hear them and accept them for who they are. If we do this, then we will do well as the church.

Pastor Davenport

I have an open door policy. Our seminarians know this, and they come. We are an RIC Synod, so that is who we are. The other day in my small office we were in prayer, and as I looked around we were black, white, gay, transgender and queer. This is what we are as the Church. Open your hearts to everyone because there is room at the table for all.

**Question 5** “How would you go about developing and nurturing a mutually supportive ministry between the Synod office and Synodical congregations, and holding all parties accountable?”

Pastor DeWerth

I have pastored 5 different congregations and in each of them I have been deeply connected to the Synod. We at Good Shepherd tithe to the Synod, and when we are short on our budget, that is not where we are going to cut. We have many new people come to Synod Assembly so there are always having new people learning ways to connect more people with the Synod.

Pastor Rodgers

Christianity is about relationship. We have a relationship with God, but also are in relationship with each other. It is incumbent on us to let our people know that we are connected as the body of Christ. We are not doing this alone. It is my duty and my obligation as a pastor, and a leader to remind people we are in it all together.

Pastor Davenport

This is how we do it. We lead by example. When I come to Synod Assembly and see the reports and I see zeroes it troubles me. I say to the leaders I visit, it is your responsibility to share with your people about the 3 expressions of the Church. I tell them to give, if even a dollar, and then tell people why it is you are giving. Send your people, and help them learn what we do as a Synod: lead and encourage by example for the people in your congregations.

**Question 6** “Pretend you are the author of Revelation and you are writing letters to the churches. How would you characterize the churches in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod today, and how would you guide them closer to the Cross?”

Pastor Davenport

I am just going to call you all the church at Philadelphia! Words of encouragement to the Church at Philadelphia – God has loved you from the beginning of time, and we have been tasked with sharing that love with others. so that when our time unfolds and we are no longer we will pass through to the other side, where we will see them in the end.

Pastor Rodgers

I see the churches in our Synod as a pack of scattered cats. Some larger, some smaller, some fat, some very thin, all running after some food some reward, but in different ways. It is a difficult enterprise to herd cats. But we are called to be shepherds of the sheep so it is our job to round up these cats, and move them in one direction. It is not easy, there will be troubles, and mess on the way, but that is our job.

Pastor DeWerth

I love the chant that we have been starting with: “Everything we need is right here.” I love the image our worship leader used today of interlacing our fingers. We just need to come together. We are so isolated in so many ways. But God has given us so many things, and we are blessed in so many ways.

**Question 7** “There are a number of parishes in our Synod where the number of people attending Sunday services is 25 people or fewer. Many of these churches struggle with limited resources and part-time clergy. What skill sets do you bring that could assist small congregations to grow, or move to a more renewed sense of mission?”

Pastor DeWerth

I am Dean of Lower Montgomery conference. In our Conference we have closed two of these congregations. So I bring knowledge and experience. Moving forward, we will have to do what we haven't wanted to do – yoking, mergers, shared ministry, share some financial matters such as insurance or office staff. This is difficult, because we all want our own pastor on Sunday morning, but we need to be open to new ways.

Pastor Rodgers

A lot of the churches in the city are smaller and aging. I bring my faith in God and my willingness to step out of the box. I believe what the book of Hebrews says, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” We preach faith, but we also need to step out of the box. I try to use

all social media, Instagram; we need to find different ways to reach out in this new era. To reach a different demographic we need to try different things for a time as this.

**Pastor Davenport**

I am a developer at heart. As a developer that started a church, I know it is about being willing to get out of your comfort zone and try something new. Holy closure is not a new word. Neither is holy innovation but to do holy innovation sometimes you need a holy closure. How do we learn to do ministry together? We have conversations to see in what areas we can collaborate. There are ways for smaller congregations to share programming, to share staff, to share expenses, but we can only really learn which make sense when we have conversation.

This concluded the forum period. The Assembly thanked with applause the final three nominees for the office of bishop.

**Disclosure:**

Secretary Boerger announced to the Assembly an unusual occurrence. During the last ballot he had been informed by his office that a file that is maintained of allegations made against pastors exists on Pastor DeWerth. He checked on her disclosure form that she filled out, and she did disclose it. However it seemed appropriate that, in light of recent history, this be disclosed to the Assembly. He began by saying that nothing that has been discovered disqualifies her as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, nor would it necessarily disqualify her from this office. But it seemed appropriate that she make this disclosure to you before the next ballot.

**Pastor DeWerth**

We need full disclosure, especially in light of the issues at the Seminary. Some of you already know this, as it is not private. Back in 2008 I was divorced, and had been divorced for some time. I fell in love with a man, Tim, who is now my husband, who was separated and in the process of divorce, but for whom the judge had not yet signed the papers, and so his divorce was not final. This information came to the attention of the Bishop, who informed me that I was in violation of the Church's policy, which says both persons must be completely divorced before entering into a relationship with each other. I consequently resigned my call at that time. I have since served as an interim pastor, and now am called at Good Shepherd. And that is my disclosure.

**Fourth Ballot for the Election of the Bishop**

In preparation for the Fourth Ballot for the Election of the Bishop Secretary Boerger called on the Registrar for the current number of voting members in attendance. On this ballot 60% of the legal votes cast will constitute election.

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge announced the current registration is 542 voting members. Registration closed until this ballot is completed

The Reverend Daniel Spigelmyer, pastor of Living Word Roslyn and member of the Discernment Team, led the Assembly in prayer prior to the ballot.

When all the ballots were collected, Secretary Boerger announced the 4<sup>th</sup> ballot to be closed, and returned the chair to Bishop Burkat.

### **Recognition of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrants**

Bishop Burkat recognized those Rostered Ministers who are celebrating 50 years of ordination or consecration. Two of them were not able to be present, and did not submit a biography to be shared. They are the Reverend David R. Shaheen and the Reverend Leonard F. Ashford.

The three pastors who were present were invited forward to share reflections on their fifty years of service to Christ and his Church.

#### **The Reverend Thomas T. Kochenderfer**

“I didn’t think I’d live this long, but here I am. Forty-seven years ago an intern wanted to join in foreign mission because he wanted an interesting life. I’ve had an interesting life, and I never left the Synod!”

Pr. Kochenderfer shared stories from the congregations he served, indicating the excitement he has had without leaving “home.”

Mediator, Philadelphia, was nearly lost by a fire at the gas stove in the kitchen.

Tabernacle, Philadelphia, suffered from an incident of major vandalism. Mrs. Kennedy, the matriarch of the congregation, said “I am on my way immediately. We cannot let the devil keep us down.” The women of the church heard she was coming and they started cleaning – She will expect us to get ready! In a week they had their church back in shape. On a positive note, he also had a day where he baptized 18 people of varying ages.

At St. Andrew’s, Audubon, there was one Sunday where he baptized 7 infants at one time. They had a dedication of the new sanctuary. One woman said what we need is bagpipes. So we had bagpipes as we marched into the sanctuary.

In summary, Pastor Kochenderfer said, “Take the bitter with the sweet, and when you get knocked down get up again, because we are NOT going to let the devil keep us down!”

#### **The Reverend John Smolik**

Pastor Smolik noted that he has been ordained for 50 years, and 40 of those years he has served at St. Peter’s, Pottstown. He referenced Confucius, who said “he who loves his work doesn’t work a day in his life.” He said, “While I don’t agree with this entirely, I have truly enjoyed my job.” He thanked his wife for the years of support.

Pastor Smolik remembered talking with the Reverend Sam Kidd, former President of the Synod. President Kidd had asked “What’s more important to you? People or ideas?” Smolik wondered why that was the question. He asked President Kidd, “How do you separate people from ideas?” Pastor Smolik enjoys preaching and teaching and catechism. He said it has been a wonderful experience to be involved in this work. He has been asked “When are you going to retire?” He isn’t planning to anytime soon. He doesn’t golf, doesn’t fish, and when he sits at home too long, his wife says, “Aren’t you going back to work?”

#### **The Reverend Soenke Schmidt-Lange**

Pastor Schmidt-Lange recalled his Confirmation verse: “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines the steps.” Proverbs 16:9. He shared reflections on how this verse played out in his life.

Pastor Schmidt-Lange was one of four children. His mother was a medical doctor. In the war in Austria they were huddled together; just the women and the children. They were in the midst of the bombs that fell on the city. Mother sent his sisters and himself to Sunday School at the church. On the way home a truck that held oranges and fruits was overturned. He picked up as many as he could. “The Lord determines the steps.”

They were kicked out of Austria after the war because they were Germans. They got on a train until they reached the north of Germany. He was told he would become an engineer, but he did not. “The Lord determines the steps.”

When he began his ministry, he was sent to the northern corner of Germany to a difficult congregation with a very difficult colleague. He thought, “Who knows what I might learn there.” “The Lord determines the steps.”

When he went to this congregation he was single. And then there were all sorts of invitations, but none of them became his partner. He was led to United States – he wanted to learn about the church in the US. He attended Southern Methodist University, and there he met his wife. “A man plans his course, but the Lord determines the steps.”

Pastor Schmidt-Lange shared his advice: we need to be actively apologetic with good conscious. We need to explain the faith so the people are equipped to speak of the faith, because they are not ready on their own, They need to be taught how to care, to support justice, and to become people who are able to witness to their faith in their daily work.

He learned much from Bonhoeffer, as he served in many different contexts, “If a religion is not different from the surrounding culture, it dies, because it is seen as unnecessary.”

### **Report of the Committee for the Election of a Bishop**

Bishop Burkat handed over the chair to Secretary Wm. Chris Boerger. Secretary Boerger invited Ms. Christine Simpson to share the results of the Fourth Ballot for the Election of a Bishop.

Number of ballots cast	484
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	484
Needed to elect	291

Carlton E. Rodgers	58
Julie K. DeWerth	89
Patricia A. Davenport	337

### **Secretary Boerger declared the Reverend Patricia A. Davenport elected Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**

The Assembly erupted in applause.

### **Bishop-elect Davenport addressed the Assembly.**

“God bless you one and all. I talked to God. This is no reflection on you. There is a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party at 6:00 p.m.; can we be done with this so I can go?”

I want to thank each and every one of you, and thank God and the Holy Spirit. You know, it is one thing to know the job description. It is another thing to know the job. Who would want to do this? And so my prayer was, “Not my will, but thine be done.”

I am a team player. We meet around the table. We do this together. I believe in the priesthood of all believers. I want to get to know the lay leaders, so we can call on their leadership. I want to give credit to the Holy Spirit. My devotion today was this: “Lacking Nothing.” “I have given you a gift to help others and you lack nothing in your calling. Do not think you are weak and unpowerful for I am empowering you to do great things. Will you oppose me? I know your capabilities, your limitation, your responsibilities, and your needs. I give the gifts you need. If you feel you lack the strength or courage to fulfill your calling, ask me for help. My Holy Spirit is at the center of every God-called ministry. I will give you all you need. So you lack nothing.” To God be the glory!

Bishop Burkat thanked Pastor Julie DeWerth, Pastor Carlton Rodgers, and all of the final seven for their willingness to be open to this process and God’s call.

Bishop Burkat and Vice President Tracey A. Beasley then prayed for the Bishop-elect, our first female African American Bishop!

#### **Fourth Report of the Committee on General Elections and Balloting**

Bishop Burkat once again called Pastor Schanely forward to report on the final round of balloting for General Elections.

#### **TICKET 11: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, LAY FEMALE (One lay female voting member remains to be elected)**

Number of ballots cast	465
Number of invalid ballots	0
Number of valid ballots	465
Needed to elect	233

Ms. Courtney Smith	293
Ms. Doreen Kinzler	172

Bishop Burkat declared Ms. Courtney Smith **elected**.

As there are no further persons eligible to move forward to **Ticket 12, Churchwide Assembly, Minister of Word and Sacrament, Person of Color or whose Primary language is other than English**, the Reverend Linda Manson is thereby **elected**.

Pastor Schanely thanked her committee and all the pages for their hard work in conducting all the elections before the Assembly. This concludes the balloting for General Elections.

**Report from the ELCA Churchwide Representative** – The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Secretary Boerger brought greetings from Presiding Bishop Eaton and the staff persons of the ELCA. He also conveyed personal greetings, and noted many connections he has had with the

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. He expressed his greetings and thanks to former Bishop Almquist. When Secretary Boerger had become bishop of NNNNN, he received a plaque from Bp. Almquist on the task of the bishop, which he kept on his desk all 12 years of his service as bishop. He also noted that Dr. Addie Butler was Vice President of the ELCA when he became bishop.

A video was shared about the ways in which the offerings we share with the ELCA make a difference in the life of the Church and the world. Financial support of the ELCA in 2017 totaled \$68.9 million. SEPA Synod sent \$929,659

People do not always understand the structure we have. Often people think we have a hierarchical structure. Instead, we have an “inter-dependent” structure, the basis of which is the congregation. The only place to define membership is in the congregational constitution. I am a member of my congregation, which means I am a member of the Synod, and a member of the ELCA. When I put my offering in the plate, it is supporting all of my church! SEPA is a witness to this, and participates in the way in which local offerings make a global difference.

Secretary Boerger shared some highlights of the work of our ELCA:

**Future Directions** of the ELCA focuses on two main areas: Leadership and Congregational Vitality:

**Leadership** – soon there will be 2,000 congregations that could afford a pastor that will not be able to find a pastor. We need to focus on leadership development

**Congregational Vitality** – we need to find ways to have structure, but we need flexibility for each local context. The Welcome Church is a good example of this. We need to focus on vitality. How do we define Vital Congregations? They are communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing impact in the communities they serve.

**Social Statement on Women and Justice** – Public comments are being welcomed by the task force. All in the Church are invited to talk about this now and make their responses before September 30, so those comments can be included in the final draft next spring, which will be placed before the Churchwide Assembly in August, 2019.

**Inter-Religious Policy Statement** – How should we respond and react to other faith traditions? How should we remain in dialogue with other traditions, while keeping true to our identity as Lutheran Christians? Similar to the Social Statement on Women and Justice, comments are welcome by September 30<sup>th</sup> to be part of what will be presented to the Churchwide Assembly in 2019.

**ELCA Youth Gathering** – beginning June 30<sup>th</sup>, 30,000 youth will be in Houston for the Gathering. Five hundred youth and adults will be going from SEPA Synod. Of all the events the ELCA holds this is by far the single largest. Do not let it be just for the youth! Ask the participants, youth and leaders, what they learned!

**Lutheran Disaster Response** – \$22.8 million (\$295,000 from SEPA Synod) has been received to assist with the aftermath of hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes. Much of this need came from the last 3 months of the year.

**God’s Work Our Hands Day** – This ELCA wide initiative has thousands of people working to make a difference in their communities in the name of Christ. Think about how you can go out into your community and serve visibly to make Christ known.

**ELCA Statistical Directory** is now online. It will no longer be printed.

Secretary Boerger then shared a video from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton on Grace.

Secretary Boerger concluded his address by expressing thanks to Bishop Burkat for her strong voice and faithful service to the Church over the past 12 years.

Bishop Burkat presented a gift of tickets to “Carmen” and dinner in Philadelphia to Secretary Boerger and his wife DeDe to thank them for their presence and leadership in this important and historic Assembly.

Secretary Richard announced that our representation to the Churchwide Assembly is 41% persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.

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

Dr. Addie Butler, Chairperson, was called to bring forward the final report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

#### **Resolution of Thanks**

Whereas it is right at all time and in all places to give thanks for God’s grace and mercy, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit that blesses the people of God to do God’s work with our hands;

BE IT RESOLVED that we offer our appreciation and thankful applause;

To our own Bishop, Claire S. Burkat, for her years of service and dedication to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the people of God who are members of and affiliated with this church;

To our ELCA representative, the Reverend Wm. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the ELCA;

To the Reverend Sean Ewbank, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission of our domestic companion Synod, the Southeast Michigan Synod, ELCA;

To all those on the clergy roster of the ELCA who were moved by the Holy Spirit to permit their names go forward in the Bishop’s election;

To the officers, staff, and volunteers of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod who worked tirelessly to make this 2018 Assembly a success;

To the representatives of all organizations and agencies of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod present at the Assembly;

To the Franconia Mennonite Church for their unfailing hospitality;

To all participants from the SEPA Synod of the ELCA who offered their energy, skills and time to prepare for, plan, arrange, and attend this Assembly;

Let us express our gratitude!

The Assembly responded with applause.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Recognition of Outgoing Synod Council Members**

Bishop Burkat and Vice President Beasley expressed their thanks and appreciation to those members who are leaving the Synod Council. The Reverend Regina D. Goodrich is leaving Council to serve as the new Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference. Mr. Robert Hensil and Ms. Susan Pursch are leaving Council because they have completed two consecutive terms. Both of them have been key leaders on the Synod Council, and in the life of our Church, for the past 12 years and more. Many thanks to these three leaders of the Church!

#### **Installation of Synod Council Members**

Bishop Burkat and Vice President Beasley then invited the newly elected members of the Synod Council to come forward, and be installed. Those new to the Synod Council are the Reverend Matthew Staniz, Ms. Doreen Kinzler, and Mr. Everett Wick.

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

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge presented the final report of the registrar.

**Total voting membership, 548;** total number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call, 164; total number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament voting, 33; total number of ministers of Word and Service under call, 11; total number of ministers of Word and Service voting, 10; total number of lay voting members certified, including council members, youth, and young adults, 330; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in the previous total, 109; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 20%; number of female lay voting members, 163; number of male lay voting members, 134 number of youth/young adults members, 33.

**Total registered (actually in attendance) voting membership, 542;** number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call registered, 155; number of retired voting ministers of Word and Sacrament registered, 35; number of ministers of Word and Service under call registered, 6; number of ministers of Word and Service registered, 9; number of lay voting members registered, including Lay Council members, youth and young adults, 337; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in previous total, 97; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 18%; total number of visitors and guests registered, 88.

Bishop Burkat thanked Ms Outterbridge, and announced that the thirty-second annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held May 3 & 4, 2019.

Installation of Bishop-elect Patricia A. Davenport will be September 22, 2018, at New Covenant Church, Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia.

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

Bishop Burkat led the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The thirty-first annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

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

*Approved by Synod Council December 6, 2018*