Report of the Synod Council to the Thirty-second Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, May 3-4, 2019

Included:

1. Minutes of the 150th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 5, 2018
   - Approved by the Synod Council June 7, 2018

2. 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
   - Approved by the Synod Council December 6, 2018

3. Minutes of the 151st Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, June 7, 2018
   - Approved by the Synod Council September 20, 2018

4. Minutes of the 152nd Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, September 20, 2018
   - Approved by the Synod Council December 6, 2018

5. Minutes of the 153rd Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, December 6, 2018
   - Approved by the Synod Council February 21, 2019

6. Minutes of the 154th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, February 21, 2019
   - Approved by the Synod Council April 4, 2019
Vice President Tracey A. Beasley welcomed the Synod Council, and thanked the Reverend Nate Preisinger, host pastor, who brought words of welcome. Pr. Preisinger shared that at Reformation they focus on hospitality and welcome, from AA to girl scouts to other community groups, they strive to make all feel welcome. He noted that if any member or their congregation wishes to have an event in the city, they should keep Reformation in mind. Pr. Preisinger led a brief devotion on John 21:12 “come, have breakfast with me.” We experience the resurrection in meals, in eating together, in experience. Vice President Beasley, a member of Reformation, closed the devotion with prayer.

Vice President Beasley called the 150th meeting of the Synod Council to order at 4:09 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The minutes of the 149th meeting of the Synod Council were approved as presented.

SETTING THE AGENDA
The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 150th meeting as presented.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP
Thank you to outgoing Council members
Bishop Burkat expressed her thanks to the members of the Synod Council who are completing their terms, and are ineligible for re-election:
Ms. Susan Pursch has served in many areas of our Synod, including as a former Vice President. She has been active in the ministry of our Synod for about four decades. One of the most significant projects in which Susan has been involved is the work of founding and funding the construction of Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University in the North East Dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. Not only did she do a great deal of the fund raising, she also solicited support from persons from Ken Crest and Temple University to create the curriculum for the school. The university now graduates 1,000 people each year, training leaders with sensitivity to, and advocacy for, people with special needs. Susan currently serves as the chair of our Audit Committee, and has been a key part of the Discernment Team in the process for the election of our next bishop.
Mr. Robert Hensil has served faithfully, and has been involved behind the scenes in ways that many will never know. He has served on the Executive Committee, and as chair of the Committee on Bishop’s Election for our last two elections. He has helped during the legal issues with the former Redeemer, East Falls, and has been a valuable source of advice and counsel over the years.
Thank you both. Well done, good and faithful servants!
Conference of Bishops

Bishop Burkat shared extensively in her written report from her time at the Conference of Bishops meeting. This was her last meeting, and she wanted to share with the Council the types of work the Conference addresses.

Among the things she highlighted:

- Three first call candidates were assigned to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Lauren Heywood, Danny Phelps, and Daniel Smith. Lauren is currently working at Holy Trinity, Narberth as a senior seminarian; Danny Phelps is completing his two year co-op internship at Bethany, Roxborough; Daniel Smith is serving as senior seminarian at St. Matthew, Springfield.
- The ELCA Campaign has reached 72% of its $198 million goal in cash and commitments.
- The ELCA is making intentional strides to increase diversity. Continuing Resolutions are being enacted that will ask each synod to develop strategies to increase diversity within its territory.
- There was a presentation on congregational vitality with some key insights. Among these are a congregation’s vitality is not related to its location (rural, suburban, or urban); vitality does not equal sustainability; and from congregational reports, fewer than 20% of our congregations consider themselves highly vital.
- There will be 11 bishop elections this year; at least 6 elections will result in a new bishop being chosen.

On Friday, the second of the four days she was able to attend, the Conference held a lovely farewell and thank you for her, for which she was very grateful.

United Lutheran Seminary

Bishop Burkat had to leave the Conference of Bishops early to deal with issues at the United Lutheran Seminary. The ongoing controversy regarding the transparency, or perceived lack thereof, in the process of selecting the president of the school continues to have a huge impact. Bishop Burkat finds herself in a position of dual roles: one as a member of the Board of Directors of the seminary; one as the Bishop for approximately 30 LGBTQIA+ leaders and seminarians who have varying opinions about the issue and its impact.

In retrospect, Bishop Burkat can see and identify ways in which she, and the Board, could have been more proactive, and possibly have avoided some of the pain and controversy. But as it is, the Board is striving to move forward as faithfully as possible.

She expressed her dismay that the issue continued to escalate over social media, and wishes all involved could have approached the situation with a bit more compassion and grace, while speaking truth and calling for transparency and accountability.

It has become clear that there are many instances of micro-aggression that the LGBTQIA+ community senses and feels every day. This situation has also raised concerns from other constituent groups, particularly African Americans and other persons of color, who also experience the sting of being discounted. There will need to be ongoing conversation and dialogue to bring peace and healing to this institution and the Church.
Bishop Burkat is hopeful that with half the board either ending their terms, or leaving in light of the controversy, there will be the chance for a fresh start with fresh eyes and less personal history. “New wine cannot be held in old wineskins.”

The bishop noted how much change has happened at the seminary in a very short period of time. When Dr. Lose came he had three years to turn the organization around. It quickly became clear the only viable solution for both schools was to merge. This happened in 18 months, and there are still many underlying issues and injuries that need to be addressed, but it will take time. Yet in spite of all this, we have record enrollment with 110 new students who have a more united sense of the school and its ministry, rather than the division we have had in the past between Philadelphia and Gettysburg.

Bishop Burkat opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Albert Glenn noted that his source of information is the Philadelphia Inquirer. He asked if it is true that Dr. Latini actually did reveal her involvement with the group in question as part of the process.

Bishop Burkat said that yes, Dr. Latini had revealed this, but only to the board president, not to the search committee.

Ms. Lisa Hand asked why the president of the board did not share it with the committee.

Bishop Burkat said that Dr. Brown had done her own investigation early in the process. She felt this information was from long enough ago, and not part of Dr. Latini’s body of work for the past two decades, that it did not seem to her to be an issue that needed to be raised.

The bishop went on to say that this is a hugely public position, and as such, nothing can be left out of the process. One always has to lean toward more disclosure, rather than less.

Mr. Robert Hensil said he has read a great deal on social media about this. It does not appear as though anyone asked the question “Is there anything in your background that could come back to embarrass this institution?” It seems that the board was so impressed with her paperwork and her presentation that this basic question fell through the cracks.

The Reverend Serena Sellers said she is not hearing 100% agreement regarding the actions of the Board. Some people feel the students were too reactive; and then the board was too reactive in its response, and so perhaps the decision to terminate the president was not truly fair.

Bishop Burkat replied that the Board was caught with a short school semester and a wide 15 synod constituency, the reality of which gave pressure for a swift, definitive response to avoid further rumors and innuendo. The board tried to find a third way, but could not determine one in the time they felt was available.
The Reverend Brad Burke, Assistant to the Bishop, shared that he feels some of the real mistake was that this issue was brought to Dr. Latini and she did not address it early enough.

Mr. Adam Clarke said he has been raised to know that people change, but if Dr. Latini did not come out with this information early how does it make the members of the LGBTQ community feel?

Ms. Susan Pursch noted that we live in a hyper sensitive time, and we need to be aware of that, like it or not.

Ms. Elizabeth Young stated in this time people believe a church should be better and above this kind of thing; it puts more pressure on situations like these.

The Reverend Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission, said issues surrounding the merger are part of what made this so powerful. What will the seminary do about the issues of the people of color which were finally being heard? Persons of color are now fearful that their issues will no longer be addressed in light of this concern. Pr. Davenport asked Bishop Burkat to be sure to use the remainder of her time on the board to continue to advocate for those issues, and not allow them to be left behind in the conversation.

Bishop Burkat agreed that we need to push for these concerns. We in the Philadelphia region have a particular awareness of these issues, and we need to be sure we do not let them go without being addressed.

Pr. Sellers suggested to the bishop that while she still has a voice on the board, that she encourage the board to publish the names of the new members of the board as soon as possible, and the background they bring, to show that we are moving forward.

Bishop Burkat said that the seminary is putting out a weekly update on what Acting President James Dunlop is doing, and is trying to be transparent.

Ms. Young inquired as to what we can do. Just receiving the seminary updates seems too passive.

Bishop Burkat pointed out that getting the updates allows one to review the information, and then to get a sense of whether or not things seem to make sense. If there is something that seems untoward, then one can reach out at that time asking for clarity or seeking correction. But if one is not getting the updates, one cannot know when to raise a question or sound an alarm.

**Farewell to Pastor Regina D. Goodrich**

The bishop shared with the Synod Council that the Reverend Regina Goodrich has been elected Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference, and so this will be her last meeting with us. Pr. Goodrich has served for some time on this Council, having previously served for two terms, and now she is in the second round of two terms. “Pastor Gee” has a broad sense of the work of the Church and the ministry of the Synod. She will be a good asset as Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference.
**Congregational Council Officers Gathering**

Bishop Burkat thanked Vice President Beasley for her very fine job presenting an overview of the process for the election of a bishop to the leaders gathered for this event.

Bishop Burkat shared with the officers various statistics from the Synod Mission Profile of congregational ministries that ended since 2,000. Of the 13 congregations or missions that closed, 7 were in suburban settings, and 6 were in urban settings. Three of these congregations filed lawsuits, each one over a daycare that made claim to the property in some form or another. We need to be clear about our relationships between schools and congregations, and clear about titles to properties we may hold. Another issue with which we need to deal is congregation owned cemeteries, and the legal issues surrounding them. Of particular concern is the need to follow state laws regarding perpetual care of the cemetery, whether or not the congregation continues to exist at that site.

The bishop also shared some of the statistics regarding our rostered leaders, and the impact that may have for the church and the next bishop. We have 114 pastors that are between 70 and 92. This will mean a significant amount of the next bishop’s time will be dedicated to pastoral care for these leaders and their families. We have 65 pastors that are between the ages of 60 and 69, which means as many as 2/3 of them will be retiring in the next six years. This will impact our need for interim ministers, and for attracting people into ministry to fill these spaces. We have 50 pastors between the ages of 45 and 59, and 47 pastors under the age of 45. We have been very good at gaining younger pastors to serve in our congregations and ministry sites, but will need to be creative and intentional about recruiting more young ministers to lead us into the future.

**March to End Racism**

The March to End Racism took place in Washington D.C. on April 4, and was coordinated around the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This march was not as well attended as many hoped it would be. It was impacted by weather concerns that caused some speakers not to be able to address the gathering. Presiding Bishop Eaton of the ELCA and Presiding Bishop Curry of the ECUSA were two of the guests that were not able to speak. Even though the numbers were low, and the rain interfered, it was good to have the Church make a public stand on an issue of such importance.

Pr. Davenport said that even though they did not have their speaking slots, it was a very powerful image to see Bishops Eaton and Curry stand together to show we are addressing this issue not in isolation, but together as the Body of Christ.

**Actions on the Roster**

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

*Extension of a Term Call:*

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Mr. Phil Tackett, a member at St. Peter Hilltown, where Pr. Varsanyi currently serves, asked that due consideration be given to St. Peter as they have been growing under Pr. Varsanyi’s leadership, and most people will be surprised and saddened to hear of this change.

Bishop Burkat assured Mr. Tackett that St. Peter will not be forgotten. Pr. Varsanyi has unique gifts for the ministry at St. Michael, and that is why the change has come so quickly. If St. Peter was not a stable as it is now, the move would not have been considered.

**Extension of Non-stipendiary Call:**
S.C.18.04.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extends the non-stipendiary call to the Rev. Dr. Anita Baly as pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Plymouth Meeting, PA beginning April 30, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**Renewal of Calls to Specialized Ministry:**
S.C.18.04.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council, in accord with bylaw 7.41.15., in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, renew a call as Spiritual Director to the Rev. Leslie M. Richard under Unusual Circumstance for a period of one year effective June 1, 2018. (Renewable on an annual basis.)

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**Request for Synod Council Approval to Move from Active Roster to Retired Roster:**
S.C. 18.04.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Cheryl Hensil retirement status effective July 1, 2018

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**On Leave from Call Request:**
S.C. 18.04.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Jonathan Shin on leave from call status, 2nd year, effective February 1, 2018

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**Request for Synod Council Approval of On Leave Extensions:**
S.C. 18.04.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Harold Evans extended on leave from call status, 5th year, effective April 1, 2018
S.C. 18.04.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Suzanne Rigg extended on leave from call status, 4th year, effective May 31, 2018

S.C. 18.04.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Margaret Ainslie extended on leave from call status, 7th year, effective June 30, 2018 (Study Leave)

S.C. 18.04.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Kristine Peterson extended on leave from call status, 5th year, effective July 14, 2018

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolutions.

Information Not Requiring Action

Transfers:
The Rev. Kristina Ahlman from Northwestern Ohio Synod effective December 1, 2017
The Rev. Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath from New Jersey Synod effective April 1, 2018

Deaths:
Deacon George S. Edwards, which occurred March 12, 2018
Sister Janice E. Painter, which occurred March 22, 2018

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Vice President Beasley referenced her written report.

Bear Creek Camp Lease
Vice President Beasley informed the Synod Council that an extension of 10 years to the lease of property to Bear Creek Camp has been authorized. This extension will relieve some concerns the Camp has had regarding tax status for at least a decade.
Ms. Pursch asked whose responsibility it is to renegotiate this lease.
Vice President Beasley said that the lawyers for the two synods which have joint ownership, that is, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and Southeastern Pennsylvania, have this responsibility.
Mr. Glenn asked about the nature of the lease.
The vice president said that the synods lease the land to the Camp, which coincidentally, is also owned by the synods.

In the City for Good, Again
A request had come from the Central Philadelphia Conference to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss their concerns of support for congregations in the City of Philadelphia.
Four representatives came to this meeting: Pr. Carlton Rodgers, Dean of Central Philadelphia Conference; Pr. Noah Hepler; Pr. Paul Hagedorn; and Ms. Fern Hagedorn.

This team had asked for help in the past, and Bishop Burkat had asked them to come up with a defined strategy, needed funds and human resources for the strategy, and an assessment of what
they would be willing to invest to make this strategy work. When this was complete she would then work with them to analyze their plans and discuss possibilities for implementation.

At this meeting there was not evidence that they had started such intentional, strategic work yet.

Vice President Beasley expressed her displeasure that this team began taking their own notes at the meeting as though they were in charge of this event, rather than waiting for the official minutes of the meeting to be released for action.

This team then published their own minutes, which were extensive and filled with commentary, to members and congregations in the Synod, particularly in the Central Conference. Vice President Beasley expressed her feelings that this was highly inappropriate, and very negative and prejudicial in its assessment of the action of the Executive Committee and the Synod.

Not only were their opinions circulated to various persons within the Synod, this team also sent their concerns to the Churchwide offices, asking for assistance from Chicago before they came to the Executive Committee with their concerns.

Ms. Pursch stated that she is offended that this went to the ELCA without being dealt with at the Synod level first. This makes the Synod look as though it does not know what its people are doing, and that we are not being proactive in addressing the needs for ministry in our territory. In addition, we are now left with hard feelings between the Synod and the Central Conference.

Ms. Lisa Hand asked if it went to Bishop Eaton, did she say anything to this team to send it back to the Synod Council first.

Pr. Davenport said Pr. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director of the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA, did not send anything in writing, but did say that this should not have come to his attention without Synodical input and endorsement.

Pr. Goodrich, as new Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference, shared that she is now inheriting this situation, but she wants the Council to know that not everyone in the Conference is behind this initiative, or even knows about it. There have been a few people who have been working on it. There is a meeting on April 14th, at which this document will be discussed. If the people of the Conference are on board, then the next steps will be pursued.

Bishop Burkat suggested the Executive Committee write a response to address the ways in which the Committee and the Council disagrees with the action to release this information, and delineate the errors contained in it.

Pr. Davenport suggested we simply follow the process already outlined by the Executive Committee in its notes from the meeting.

Ms. Pursch echoed the idea, saying we have the minutes from the meeting detailing the next steps we are looking to see, we have the email trail they have put forward, and we can address the situation by following the process agreed to, and not get drawn into someone else’s agenda.
The Synod Council was in broad agreement with this course of action.

**Election of the Bishop**

Vice President Beasley said the process we had established is being followed. The names of those pre-identified for consideration have been removed from the website. She thanked the members of the Discernment Team for the work they have been doing in this second stage of the process to prepare for the Election, encourage the making of prayer bracelets from across the Synod, compile the questions for those who will be the final three, and keeping the entire process in prayer.

Ms. Beasley also informed the Council that, since Secretary Richard is one of the pre-identified persons, if he is nominated at the Assembly, Pr. Rasmussen has been asked to be the acting secretary for the Assembly.

Ms. Pursch offered deep appreciation to Vice President Beasley for all her work in this process for electing our next bishop.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard offered words of clarification as to his role at the Assembly. He noted he had a conversation with ELCA Secretary Boerger, who said that the secretary does not have to recuse himself or herself during the process of the election of a bishop. It continues to be the role of the secretary to record the actions of the Assembly, and there is no conflict in doing so. This is why there is a representative from the Churchwide expression to oversee the process. Even if the secretary is in the process, it is the responsibility of the secretary to ensure the proper recording and posting of the minutes.

As such, Pr. Richard will be at the table taking the minutes until such time as he is, or is not, in the process by means of a vote at the Assembly. At such time as he needs to be involved in the process, he will yield the role to Pr. Rasmussen. Pr. Richard did not want there to be concerns or questions from the Council if they see him in his role as secretary at the beginning of the Assembly. Explanation of this will be made to the Assembly by the chair if it becomes necessary for Pr. Richard to step aside during the process.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Bert Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, directed the Council to the reports that had been distributed. He said there was nothing unusual at this point. Expenses are on target; income is as expected. It is early in the year, only one month into the new fiscal cycle, and as a result there is not yet a trend to evaluate.

**MISSION MOMENT**

Ms. Susan Pursch, chair of the Audit Committee, presented the audit as the Mission Moment.

She began by saying, “You may think you don’t care about the audit. But you need to care.” We are elected board members of this corporate body. Whether you are good at reading audits or not, you need to become good at it. This is the way in which we know what is holding up the
synod. The way you truly know where we are is by understanding where our money is invested and where it goes.

Look over the notes. The notes, which may be pages later from their reference, give you the detail of what is going on with our financial standing. For instance, look at the Fund for Mission. We have replenished much of this fund from the sales of closed properties.

About 60% of the pledges for the Forward Together in Faith Campaign have been realized. This is a rather strong percentage. There will still be more coming, and requests for gifts and pledges will still be made. The auditors think we are doing fairly well, and can anticipate that progress to continue for the next few years, as we have pledges that will go on beyond the stated end of the Campaign.

Overall we have had a very good year. Thank you to Bishop Burkat and her staff, and all who utilize operating expenses for the Synod. We are living within our means. We have come a tremendously long way in the management of our revenue and expenses. In the beginning of Bishop Burkat’s service we had to make huge changes in our operation. This is paying off and we are doing well. However, we still need to increase partnership support.

Thanks are due to Mr. Martin Schwab, our Synod’s senior accountant, for his exceptional service. We have financial reports that are accurate and helpful. We are using good financial vehicles with Razor’s edge, and Martin has done very well at entering and maintaining the information correctly.

We have been very successful at selling our properties. This is good financially, but sad for the loss of the impact of those congregations we used to have in those regions and neighborhoods.

We have done very well with our investments. Thank you to Mr. Rod Rothermel for his work pushing us, and Mr. David Ehret for his faithful work and service in these investments. A 20% increase has been realized, which is amazing.

We have received an “A” rating and a clean audit. This is the first time Ms. Pursch has seen the Synod receive such a rating.

She issued just one word of warning: we have a surplus. We should not allow ourselves to be tempted to spend down this surplus as we start a new administration in the Synod.

The Audit Committee is one of the few constitutionally mandated committees. The committee picks the auditor, and Ms. Pursch and the current committee strongly encourage the next audit committee to retain Tait Weller again. They did a wonderful job, and we had a time to meet with the auditors, ask questions, and review the management letter.

Ms. Pursch then made the following motion for the Synod Council to consider:
S.C. 18.04.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve that the Audit report be presented to the Synod Assembly for its reception.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Forward Together in Faith Campaign
About 60 churches made commitments or gifts. If you are not listed but you made a gift, please let Pr. Rachel Anderson know, because the congregations which have made gifts and/or pledges will be recognized at the Assembly.

Constitution
Pr. Tyler Rasmussen brought the revised constitution for Temple, Havertown, to the Council for consideration. He moved the following:

S.C. 18.04.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution for Temple, Havertown.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Investment
Mr. David Ehret reported on the Investments with the phrase “what the market giveth, the market taketh away.” We are flat to date this year, down $296.

Administration
Mr. William Graham shared that there is a need for volunteers and pages for the Assembly. The team could use a dozen more. As people seek for volunteers, please share that pages can have their way to the Assembly paid as a visitor.

Nominating
The Report of the Nominating Committee was shared with the Council as part of its packet for this meeting. There are candidates for all but one position. Vice President Beasley noted, however, that there were no identified candidates who are people of color, or whose primary language is other than English. We need to be intentional about reaching out to persons of color before the Assembly, as the current slate does not reflect our goal to have diversity represented in our committees and boards.
Ms. Pursch stated that when you look at the list of teams we have in our Synod we pride ourselves in our diversity. These teams could be a source of persons for the positons we need to fill for Synod Council, Churchwide Assembly, and the like.

OLD BUSINESS
Pr. Sellers observed that the Synod Council is not fully represented as supporters of the Forward Together in Faith Campaign. She noted that in her experience with fund raising it is important for the leadership to be fully committed. This may be with a very modest gift of a few dollars, but the ability to say the Council is 100% behind the effort is key in a successful campaign.
Vice President Beasley shared that conversations are being held with members of the Council to see if we can make this goal.

NEW BUSINESS

**Bishop Burkat’s Retirement Gala**

Bishop Burkat’s retirement gala is scheduled for Sunday, July 8th, 2018, at the Crystal Tea Room. The cost is $115 per person. Forms are available at this meeting. There is also the possibility for persons or congregations to become sponsors of the event. You can also get a table for your congregation.

On Saturday, July 7th, there will be a family friendly event at the United Lutheran Seminary. This will be a free event, a party for people of all ages.

**Thank You**

Vice President Beasley thanked Ms. Susan Pursch and Mr. Robert Hensil for their service to this Council. She also thanked Pr. Regina Goodrich, and wished her well in her new role as Dean.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

The 151st meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held June 7, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran, South Philadelphia.

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

*Approved by Synod Council June 7, 2018*

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**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.”

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 31st 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 30th 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 4th 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 21st 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 Bukat 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 8th 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 an 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 an 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 ecclesiastical 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 Outerbridge, to report on the current number of voting members registered at the Assembly. Ms. Outerbridge 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)
NAME CONGREGATION
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, Perkasie

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 1 closed.

TICKET 2 - COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MALE (One lay male to be elected to a term ending 2024)
NAME CONGREGATION
Mr. Donald P. Gleiter Redeemer, Jamison
Mr. Bruce Seachrist St. Matthew, Perkasie
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)
NAME CONGREGATION
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CONGREGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Tyler Rasmussen</td>
<td>Trinity, Pleasant Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Laura Tancredi</td>
<td>St. Paul, Ardmore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Daniel Schaefer</td>
<td>Jerusalem, Schwenksville</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Nominated from the floor:
Rev. Matthew Staniz,  St Luke, Devon

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CONGREGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Joyce Maloney</td>
<td>Trinity, Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CONGREGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Philip Tackett</td>
<td>St. Peter, Hilltown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CONGREGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Doreen Kinzler</td>
<td>St. John, Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Doris Sterner</td>
<td>St. Peter, Chester Springs, PA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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)

**NAME** | **CONGREGATION**  
---|---  
Mr. Everett Wick | St. Andrew, Perkasie  

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)

**NAME** | **CONGREGATION**  
---|---  
Rev. Nathan Krause | Redeemer, Jamison  
Rev. Lydia Posselt | Family of God, Buckingham  
Rev. Jennifer Ollikainen | Trinity, Perkasie  
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and investments</td>
<td>$3,749,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$5,044,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>$124,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets:</td>
<td>$4,919,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>$3,663,376</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
<td>$549,594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanently Restricted</td>
<td>$706,139</td>
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</table>

2017 Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Support</td>
<td>$1,859,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Contributions</td>
<td>$618,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Fees</td>
<td>$135,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>$516,262</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sale of closed churches</td>
<td>$524,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Support and Revenue</td>
<td>$3,653,661</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Forward Together in Faith Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td>$765,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributions</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>$1,168,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>$ 349,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>$ 112,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$ 255,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Bishop</td>
<td>$ 973,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$2,859,118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of ballots cast</th>
<th>438</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of illegal ballots</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of legal ballots</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number needed to elect</td>
<td>329</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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
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. Krais, 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.


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 to before the Assembly

Memorial on the ELCA’s 50th 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\textsuperscript{th} 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\textsuperscript{th} 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\textsuperscript{th} 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\textsuperscript{th} 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 45th 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 50th 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  
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
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)

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<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<td>Deacon Rachel Bailey</td>
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<td>Ms. Cynthia Moultrie</td>
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<td>Ms. Katie Schnaath</td>
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<td>Ms. Doreen Kinzler</td>
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<td>Ms. Courtney Smith</td>
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<td>Ms. Susan Massey</td>
<td>206</td>
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<td>Ms. Sandra Zimmermann</td>
<td>187</td>
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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.

**40th 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

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

25th Anniversary Celebrants

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 a 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; ther Reverend Dr. Shirley Guider; Ms. Charmaine Hamilton; the
Reverend Noah Hepler; the Reverend Nathan Krause; Ms. Margie Pendarvis-Wright; the Reverend Thomas Ruset; 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-Acension 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 Adrianne 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)

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<tr>
<td>Number of ballots cast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of invalid ballots</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of valid ballots</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed to elect</td>
<td>186</td>
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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)

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<tr>
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<td>Number of invalid ballots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of valid ballots</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed to elect</td>
<td>177</td>
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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)

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<tr>
<td>Number of ballots cast</td>
<td>364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of invalid ballots</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of valid ballots</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed to elect</td>
<td>182</td>
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</tbody>
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Mr. Mathew Banda 308
Mr. Paul Ziegler 281
Mr. Clark Shuster 259
Mr. Jeff Nase 257
Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Matthew Bands, Mr. Paul Ziegler, Mr. Clark Shuster, and Mr. Jeff Nase \textit{elected}.

\textbf{TICKET 13: CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT} (one lay \textit{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)

\begin{align*}
\text{Number of ballots cast} & \quad 374 \\
\text{Number of invalid ballots} & \quad 0 \\
\text{Number of valid ballots} & \quad 374 \\
\text{Needed to elect} & \quad 188
\end{align*}

Mr. Emanuel Alves \quad 239 \\
Mr. Charlie Zeon \quad 135

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Emanuel Alves \textit{elected}.

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

\textbf{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.

\textbf{S. A. 18.05.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT} the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the 2019 budget as presented.

\textbf{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.

\textbf{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 8th, with a barbeque on July 7th.

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
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 you 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 cars. 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 ill 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 Outerbridge 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 4th ballot to be closed, and returned the chair to Bishop Burkat.

**Recognition of 50th 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 to long, his wife says, “Aren’t you going 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 100th 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 30th to be part of what will be presented to the Churchwide Assembly in 2019.

ELCA Youth Gathering – beginning June 30th, 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*

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

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

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

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

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

OPEN POSITIONS

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

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

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

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

SETTING THE AGENDA

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 151st meeting as presented.
Welcome and Introductions
Vice President Beasley welcomed the Council, and welcomed in particular the Reverend Patricia A. Davenport as our Bishop-elect. Members of the Council shared their names and their home congregation. Bishop-elect Davenport was asked if she wished to share anything in particular. She said “I feel very welcomed. And I know not to prolong a meeting, so thank you.”

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

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

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

Bishop-elect Patricia A. Davenport
SEPA Synod made history at our Assembly on May 5, with the election of the first African Descent woman bishop in the ELCA. Bishop Burkat also shared she believes Bishop-elect Davenport is also the first Lutheran African Descent woman bishop in the world, but that has yet to be confirmed. Within 24 hours, the Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, another African Descent woman, was elected bishop in South Central Wisconsin Synod. And in Southwestern Texas Synod, the Rev. Susan Briner, who is White, was elected. That is important because she will be the first woman ELCA bishop south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

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

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

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

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

Goodbyes, thank yous, and statistics

Bishop Burkat noted she has been engaged in a long succession of goodbyes and thank yous, and this is a bittersweet process. The list gets shorter as the time moves forward, as each team and board and agency meeting becomes her last. Responsibilities decrease, and people to address become fewer. She is not sad to leave the multiple conflicts that are a part of this position, but it is emotional to leave the people with whom she has served. It was a powerful experience as each person came for communion at the Assembly, as she has come to know the deeper concerns of many of them over the past 12 years, much as any pastor does in their own parish.

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

Actions on the Roster

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

Call to Interim Ministry:

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

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

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

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

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

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

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

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

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

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

Information Not Requiring Action

Transfers:
The Rev. John Hansen (Retired) from New Jersey Synod effective May 2, 2018
The Rev. Bernhard A. Bischoff (Retired) from Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod effective April 30, 2018
The Rev. Dr. James Echols (Retired) from Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod effective April 17, 2018
The Rev. Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath from New Jersey Synod effective April 1, 2018
The Rev. L. George Detweiler (Retired) from New Jersey Synod effective January 25, 2018
Deacon Karen Matthias-Long from NEPA Synod effective November 8, 2017

Deaths:
Deacon George S. Edwards March 12, 2018
Sister Janice E. Painter March 22, 2018
The Rev. Rinda Rogers April 8, 2018

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Vice President Beasley referenced her written report.

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

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

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

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
Secretary Richard shared the following pieces of information:

Synod Council Roster and Attendance Sheet
Secretary Richard asked each member of the Synod Council to review their information for accuracy. He noted the current Roster and Attendance sheet will be updated for the next meeting, as these documents reflect the configuration as it is now, listing Bishop Burkat in the Roster and in the main segment of the Attendance sheet. As Bishop-elect Davenport becomes Bishop on August 1st, these documents will be updated to remove Bishop Burkat, and reflect the changed position for Bishop-elect Davenport.
Open Positions
The Synod Council thanks Pr. McKinstry for his service on the Council, and congratulates him on his election as Dean of the Upper Montgomery Conference. The Executive Committee will work to find a successor for this now open Clergy position, and for the open Youth Female position, to present to the Synod Council at its September meeting. In addition, it was discovered following the elections at the Assembly that the Reverend Donna Wright was elected as Clergy to the Committee on Discipline, a position she already holds. Consequently she will not fill this seat as well. As this is a “jury pool,” from which persons are selected as necessary, we are well covered at this time on this Committee. We will look for persons to fill this position as part of the nominations and elections process of the Synod at the next Assembly.

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

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, made the following notes from her written report:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We continue to consider the issue of the Synod office space. Our pre-paid rental agreement with the Seminary lasts another 8 months until the lease is expired.
Embedded within the report is the sale of the former St. Michael’s, Germantown, which ultimately did not go through.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Adam Clarke expressed his dismay that so many people did not seem to understand the fact that all pastors were eligible to be considered for the position of Bishop, not just those who were pre-identified. He felt we had done a good job of describing the process, and did not understand how so many people did not “get it.”
Secretary Richard shared that it will help if we are more careful with our language going into the process next time. The process calls for people to be “pre-identified for consideration,” but we used the term “pre-identified candidates” throughout our correspondence, which gives a very different meaning to the process.

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

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

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

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Constitution Committee
No report

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

Forward Together in Faith

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

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

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

Nominations for Minister of Word and Sacrament:
Ms. Emily Fowler nominated Pr. Matthew Staniz
Ms. Sandra Zimmerman nominated Pr. Laura Tancredi
Pr. Serena Sellers nominated Pr. Sarah Anderson Rajarigam

The Synod Council elected Pr. Laura Tancredi.

Nominations for Lay Male
Pr. Laura Tancredi nominated Mr. Emanuel Alves
Ms. Sandra Zimmerman nominated Mr. Everett Wick

The Synod Council elected Mr. Emanuel Alves

Nominations for Lay Female
Mr. Bert Glenn nominated Ms. Cheryl Detweiler
Mr. Everett Wick nominated Ms. Sandra Zimmerman
Mr. Emanuel Alves nominated Ms. Lisa Hand

The Synod Council elected Ms. Cheryl Detweiler

OLD BUSINESS
None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

In the City for Good, Again
The question was raised of what we should do with regard to the concerns Pr. Rogers had raised, and which the Finance Committee had discussed.
An extensive conversation ensued around many aspects of the issue. It was determined to be much broader than some may have thought, and certainly broader than can be addressed by the Synod Council as a “committee of the whole.” Bishop Burkat stated that she and Bishop-elect Davenport will be reviewing the situation of all the Rostered Ministers of the Synod. It is not just city pastors that are struggling with issues of adequate pay and benefits. This issue needs to be addressed privately and individually, rather than publically and with sweeping generalizations. Ms. Janet Neff confirmed that it is an issue for urban, suburban, and rural congregations. Mr. Bert Glenn said that if one third of the congregations cannot afford a full-time pastor that could be a concern for the whole Synod, and thereby the Synod Council. Pr. Sarah Anderson Rajarigam expressed her desire that we have a way to share about the overall health of our congregations. She felt perhaps the Deans could do this within their Conferences.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m. with prayer by Pr. Matthew Staniz.
The 152nd meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held September 20, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Paul’s Run Community, Philadelphia, PA.

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

Approved by Synod Council September 20, 2018
The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 152nd meeting with the following additions: the Investment Committee and the Nominating Committee Reports will be included in Committee Reports.

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP**
Bishop Davenport shared that her written report had been submitted. She then shared some reflections that have been growing for her. Bishop Davenport reflected her sense that we in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod have a working Council. Our members are active in numerous committees, on this Council, in their home congregations, and in their lives as people of faith. In her experience at the Formation event for new Bishops she was taken by the breadth and depth of the work we do as the Synod, the Synod Council, and the Church. When she served in the congregation (Spirit and Truth, Yeadon), she knew she had 12 members on the congregation council that had her back. As Bishop, she knows when we gather as the Synod Council she has 30 people who have her back.

Mr. Bert Glenn made the following observation to Bishop Davenport: “I notice that you use language of kingdom building that I am not comfortable with, but I see you have a vision. What is that vision?”

Bishop Davenport replied, “Kingdom is when we get to a place where our love relationship with Jesus will lead us to loving and serving others. How do we move ourselves to get us to that place where this love of God and God’s kingdom is so within us that we are moving in this reality and relationship? It is about community, not necessarily church. How do we get ourselves to recognize we are the beloved community? Our community is broader than we think. Each of our congregations is one of 150 congregations in the Synod, which is one of 65 synods in ELCA, which is a part of the global reach of the Lutheran World Federation. Now that’s kingdom.

Ms. Emily Fowler said, “I was raised to believe the Lutheran Church doesn’t change. But I sense in you a time of change. I am looking forward to it.”

**Installation of the Bishop**
A reminder that the Installation Celebration for Bishop Davenport will be held September 22nd at New Covenant Church, 7500 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia. All Synod Council members are invited both to the Installation and to the Dinner at the Brossman Center following the reception at New Covenant Church. Please let Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations, know if you plan to attend the dinner.

**Actions on the Roster**
Secretary Richard presented the actions of the roster.

*Renewal of Invitation to U.C.C. minister to serve an ELCA congregation:*
S.C.18.09.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve entry rite renewal, Invitation to Extended Service, for the Reverend Suzanne Marie Spaulding to St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Ferndale, PA,
beginning September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019. *This invitation is renewable annually by the Synod Council.*

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**Renewal of Call to Specialized Ministry:**
S.C.18.09.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one year, renewable call to the Reverend Ghislaine Cotnoir as Director of Spiritual Care at Artman and the Hearth at Drexel, beginning May 15, 2018 to May 14, 2019.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**Call to Interim Ministry:**
S.C.18.09.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Donna Wright to interim ministry at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Huntingdon Valley, PA beginning October 3, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until the Reverend Wright resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**On Leave from Call Requests:**
S.C.18.09.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Phillip Waselik on leave from call status, first year, effective March 31, 2018

S.C.18.09.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Ethyl Geist on leave from call status, first year, effective April 1, 2018

S.C.18.09.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Nancy B. Brown on leave from call status, first year, effective April 8, 2018

S.C.18.09.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Matthew Ollikainen on leave from call status, first year, effective May 14, 2018 - disability

S.C.18.09.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Raymond A. Miller on leave from call status, second year, effective June 1, 2018

S.C.18.09.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend James Goodyear on leave from call status, first year, effective June 1, 2018
The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

**Requests to move to Retirement Roster:**
S.C.18.09.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Michael A. McKillip retirement status, effective August 1, 2018

S.C.18.09.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Paul M. Sorcek retirement status, effective September 1, 2018

S.C.18.09.12. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Marcia G. Bell retirement status, effective October 1, 2018

S.C.18.09.13. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Joyce E. Nelson retirement status, effective November 1, 2018

S.C.18.09.14. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Christopher L. Weidner retirement status, effective December 8, 2018

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

**Information Not Requiring Action**

**Transfers:**
The Reverend Dana Heiserer Smith TO Upstate New York Synod, effective April 30, 2018
The Reverend Daniel Eisenberger FROM New Jersey Synod, effective July 9, 2018
The Reverend Joshua Ferris TO New England Synod, effective July 29, 2018

**Deaths:**
The Reverend Thomas Kadel, July 24, 2018

**Authorization of Housing Allowance**
S.C.18.09.15. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the 2018 housing allowance for Bishop Patricia A. Davenport in the amount of $23,083, and the Reverend Bradley Burke in the amount of $30,000, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recipients be reminded that amounts so designated as rental/housing allowance are excludable from the gross income of the respective recipients only to the extent that said amounts are used to rent or provide a home. Further, the amount eligible for the Section 107 exclusion may not exceed the fair rental value of the minister’s home (including furnishings and appurtenances) plus the cost of
utilities. To the extent that a greater amount is designated as rental/housing allowance, the designation will be ineffectual with respect to such amount.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Vice President Beasley referenced the Executive Committee report.

Office Space
Ms. Beasley noted the Executive Committee did have the opportunity to tour the space the seminary had proposed as alternative office space for the Synod. The Committee found it lacking in several respects, not least of which were handicap accessibility, and the usefulness of each of the areas offered. The space was quite disjointed. While we recognize the Bishop may choose her own space, the Committee does not recommend this as the space she might choose.

Bishop Davenport said the space would need significant renovations for us to be able to use it well. The site of the former Prince of Peace, Plymouth Meeting, which we own, may be a good alternative site. We are inquiring into the cost to renovate that space. Both the cost of renovation, and the reality that we own this property, may make Plymouth Meeting a better choice in terms of stewardship of all our resources. We are also considering space in Blue Bell, PA.

Mr. Bert Glenn asked if, in order to keep close to Philadelphia, there has been any consideration of using the site of the former St. Michael’s, Germantown if it has not been sold. Bishop Davenport shared it may be in process, and we may not have it for long. There are other congregations considering Holy Closure, and one of them may prove to be a good possibility.

Follow up on City Pastors
In previous meetings there were questions regarding the financial well-being of the pastors serving in the City. Bishop Davenport and former Bishop Burkat met with and reviewed the situations of these leaders, and found that all have health insurance, and only one pastor is significantly below the minimum compensation.

Committee Assignments
Vice President Beasley presented the proposed assignments for the committees of the Synod Council. She thanked all the returning chairs, and welcomed the new chair of the Nominating Committee, Pastor Lydia Posselt. Secretary Richard noted that we need to vote to affirm these committee assignments. To that end, he proposed the following:

S.C.18.09.16. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the committee assignments as put forth by the Bishop and the Vice President.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
Secretary Richard thanked the Synod Council for their prayers, cards, and support during the ongoing recovery of his brother, and the recent death of his mother. He also expressed his gratitude for their patience during this difficult year.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

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

Income is down about $40,000 year to date. It is true that this is the end of the summer, but this is not a good financial place for us. We need to do what we can to make up support before the end of the year if possible. We don’t want to bring down a hammer on congregations, but we need receipts on a regular basis to make our operations work. Even though we are down $40,000 in partnership support, we have watched our expenses carefully. Consequently we are not as far off income to expenses as we might be. Since our receipts are down, so is our support to the ELCA. Since we send Churchwide 50% of what we receive, we have sent less than we budgeted.

**MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Brad Burke, Assistant to the Bishop, introduced Bishop Stephen Munga and the Reverend Dr. Aneth Munga from the North East Diocese of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to the Council. The Mungas are in the United States for the installation of Bishop Davenport, and are here to share with us some background on their Church.

Bishop Munga expressed his thanks to Bishop Davenport for the opportunity to be here. He conveyed greetings from the North East Diocese and its congregations, and their congratulations to Bishop Davenport on her election. “We are pleased that someone we have known has been chosen as bishop. Peaceful transition of leadership is something we hope for in Africa.” This is the second time the Mungas have been here for an installation. They were here for the installation of Bishop Burkat, and now they are here again; it is a blessing. Bishop Munga has worked with three bishops in this Synod: Bishops Almquist, Burkat, and now Davenport. He has seen what our Synod has been through. “You know us, and we know you too. We have other partnerships, but there is a depth to this partnership. You are part of us and that is what the kingdom should look like.”

Bishop Munga stated that the North East Diocese is still a growing church. “If you think you are grown up, then you are not grown up.” They can see their church is growing and expanding. The Diocese is adding about 2,000 people each year, most of them young adults, becoming part of the faith through baptism. The North East Diocese has 29 congregations, and is about to add 12 more. Each congregation has numerous sub congregations, totaling more than 700 sub congregations. There are about 120,000 active members in the Diocese, and approximately 230,000 persons if you count inactive members. Some congregations have 30 sub congregations, served by one pastor. They use lay preachers, training them and sending them out. It is tough to have a growing church without enough pastors. They have now started training more pastors at universities. They host the oldest mental health hospital in east Africa. They have congregational ministry, and institutional ministry – hospitals, schools, and the like.
Dr. Aneth Munga shared about the Sebastian Kolowa Memorial University, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. “We celebrate in words and actions the ministry before us. We had a group of people in 2005 who came to us and took up the cause of assisting us in this project. That partnership was not just in words, but in deeds and generosity. Many thanks for the partnership we have with SEPA Synod to serve the downtrodden through the work of those trained in this school. We continue to have as our mission being a leading institution in caring for all people, whatever their need, to be advocates for their full inclusion in the life of society.”

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Forward Together in Faith
Ms. Ellen Daneke, chairperson of the Campaign shared the following:
Most of the teams for the Campaign have been dissolved. One team will remain: the Grants team. The first grant period is open until September 30. One complete application has been received, and there is an awareness of two others “in the pipeline.” The Grants team has been allocated $25,000 for grants to award for 2019. There has been some confusion from congregations as to the level of grants – some feel their cause is too big, others fear theirs is too small. The answer from the Grants team is “just apply.” We will see what we can do, and will not consider any project too big or too small. Mr. Bert Glenn asked, “For the remaining funds not yet disbursed, are they all committed to congregational projects, or will they be available more broadly?” Ms. Daeneke replied that there can be monies for clusters of congregations to work together. Bishop Davenport echoed this, stating that we are encouraging collaborative efforts.

Nominating Committee
The Reverend Lydia Posselt, chairperson, stated that this is a light year for nominations; we are only seeking names for Synod Council. If you are coming to the end of your term and are eligible for a second, we will reach out to see if you are willing to serve again. Please feel free to reach out to the Committee if you are willing to stand for re-election. You will need to fill out a nomination form, complete with picture.

Investment Committee
Mr. David Ehret, chairperson, shared that our Investment Portfolio has produced 7.2% gains so far this year. “We are doing well so far, and we are having fun.”

Old Business
Vice President Beasley encouraged all members to please come to the pre-service and the installation of our new Bishop. “You are the Board of Directors, and you are welcome.” The pre-service, “Holy Smoke,” will be held at Reformation, Philadelphia on Friday the 21st at 7:00 p.m., the installation will be on Saturday the 22nd at 2:00 p.m.

New Business
Bishop Davenport: At the last Synod Council meeting you filled out cards stating your hopes and dreams for the Synod. What are your hopes and dreams for Synod Council?
Mr. Bert Glenn: “Can we discuss substantive things? There is so much that is perfunctory in our meetings. If there is the possibility of talking about substantive matters, it would feel as though we are making more of a difference.”

Bishop Davenport: “One of my ultimate concerns is the health of our rostered ministers. Their health directly impacts the health of the congregations and the people they serve. This would be one thing we can discuss.”

When starting Spirit and Truth she prayed “How do we build excitement for the people to experience God in this space?” How can we make this true for this Council and this Synod as well?

The Reverend Brad Burke: “Perhaps there may be issues in ministry that could benefit from our collective discussion.”

Bishop Davenport: Perhaps the next Mission Moment can be on Congregational Vitality.

Ms. Elizabeth Young: “How do we let people know the value of the Synod, so they can know why they should be excited?”

Bishop Davenport: “We need to encourage lifting up many things, including our communities and the world – pray for hurricane relief, people in the community who have died, what is happening in the broader church.”

Ms. Lisa Hand: “I believe we need to come together and let each of the congregations know that they all belong.”

Bishop Davenport: “We need to have a Synodical revival!”

With no other business, Vice president Beasley asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

The 153rd meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held on December 6th, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at the United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia Campus.

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

Approved by Synod Council December 6, 2018

MINUTES
of the 153rd MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Brossman Center, United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia, PA
December 6, 2018

DEVOTIONS AND MISSION MOMENT
The Reverend Dr. Jayakiran Sebastian, Dean of the Philadelphia Campus of United Lutheran Seminary, was present to lead the Synod Council in devotions, and to bring the Mission Moment. He brought greetings from the Seminary’s Interim President, the Reverend Dr. Richard Green, who was unable to be present as he was attending a meeting of the ELCA Seminary presidents on this day.

Dean Sebastian said there is much envy about two of the seminaries in the ELCA: ULS and Luther. There is a strong effort to foster a collective vision of ministry for seminaries in this changing American context. ULS and Luther are at the forefront of this effort.

The number of students enrolled is strong. If one counts the certificate programs, there are 378 students enrolled. The number of those seeking degrees is 292. There are nearly 200 full-time equivalent students. These numbers are higher than the two predecessor schools had prior to merger, but are not close to the boom of the 90’s when there were over 400 full-time equivalent students.

Dr. Green, in the midst of his many initiatives, is very pleased about his weekly “i-dates” (internet updates). If you do not receive them he invites you to sign up for this source of information about our Seminary.

Dean Sebastian shared that while the school launched with no mission statement, a statement now exists: “Unifying, Learning, Serving.” When it comes to creating a mission statement the school has worked somewhat out of order. Normally one identifies values, then sets a vision, which then leads to a mission statement. ULS has clarified its values, created a mission statement, and is now working to finish a vision statement. All this is being done under the review of two agencies – the Mid Atlantic Adjudication Agency, and the federal accrediting board, the Association of Theological Schools, which is the peer accrediting agency, for whom the Seminary is answering questions about values, visions, and plan.

Dr. Green inherited a lot of challenges, and not just the public ones like the concerns of the LGBTQ+ community and the loss of the RIC status of the previous institutions. With regard to these particular concerns, the Seminary has continued its efforts to address them and has made a welcome statement as a part of this process.

With regard to the staffing of the school, all faculty members are on contracts. There is still a need to develop a system to address concerns of tenure and faculty permanence. Having a secure faculty is critical to the ability to create a viable and stable curriculum. Beyond the faculty concerns, major staffing issues have been, and are being, addressed since Dr. Green has come. For instance, Human Resources needed to revise many of the personnel policies because of changes in state requirements.

The challenges continue as the school works to integrate all three “campuses” – Gettysburg, Philadelphia, and the on-line community. There is a need to address concerns of students in all three categories. Staff members have been rising to the challenge.
Financially efforts are being made to secure the viability of all three expressions of the school. Recently a $30 million gift was made to endow a chair, and to provide student scholarships. On the Philadelphia Campus properties on Boyer Street are being sold. On the Gettysburg Campus work is being done with the Battlefield Trust to ensure its perpetual security.

Dean Sebastian finished his remarks by conveying how much the Seminary values its partnership with the SEPA Synod, as it is the home Synod of the Philadelphia Campus. The Seminary values the local congregations that make contributions, particularly undesignated gifts which can be used with the most flexibility. Yet this partnership goes beyond financial support. This is the Synod in which many students do their field education, pursue their internships, and where many of them worship regularly. The congregations of SEPA Synod are crucial as co-instructors of these students, as together we prepare leaders for the Church.

CALL TO ORDER
Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 152nd meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:39 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The minutes of the 31st Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod were approved as presented. The minutes of the 152nd meeting of the Synod Council were approved with the correction of the date at the heading of the minutes; September 20th, not September 6th.

SETTING THE AGENDA
The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 153rd meeting with the following changes: moving the Mission Moment to follow the devotions.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP
Bishop Davenport listed several people who stand in need of prayer, and asked the Synod Council to add these individuals to their personal prayer lists. Bishop emphasized how important it is that we advocate and pray for each other. This is a significant part of the work we do as Church. She also offered her prayer of thanksgiving for the members of Synod Council. Each member of Council gives of themselves and their time for this work of the Synod, and for that Bishop Davenport is grateful.

Bishop Davenport then asked if there were any questions about her report.

Pastor Matt Staniz asked about the numbers under the Bishop’s activities, specifically why is there a “/” between them. The Bishop replied that these cover two months of activities, and the numbers for each month are delineated by the /.

Pastor Serena Sellers thanked the Bishop for the worship number, sharing her support for the way in which Bishop Davenport just pops up in worship at sites around the Synod. Pastor Sellers feels this is important and impactful.
Vice President Beasley noted in the first section of the Bishop’s Report regarding the celebration for the Bishop’s installation, you can add that the African Descent Lutheran Association Philadelphia Chapter was the host of the “Holy Smoke” gathering the evening before the Installation.

**Bishop’s Convocation**

Pastor Gwendolyn King expressed her gratitude to Bishop Davenport for staying with those attendees of the Bishop’s Convocation who were stranded because of the snowstorm. She stated how Bishop’s presence was a boost to the spirits of those who were not only caught in the storm, but who also experienced an incident with the activation of the fire alarm early in the morning of the following day.

A discussion of the event followed, beginning with Vice President Beasley asking how it was to have a one day retreat.

Pastor Sellers said she was grateful for the snowstorm and the extra night. While recognizing it is more expensive to have a two day event, the second night is very helpful to actually get away and rest. Pastor Tyler Rasmussen concurred.

Pastor Laura Tancredi noted that she had been able to get away before the storm hit, but did miss the time away. There was not as much free time at the event, and she missed that time to connect with friends in a non-programmed setting.

Bishop Davenport was grateful for the feedback. She said that many similar comments are in the evaluations that have been received this far. The effort is to balance the needs of the participants for a helpful retreat while trying to contain the costs of the program to make it possible for leaders to attend.

**Actions on the Roster**

This will take place under the Secretary’s Report

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

Vice President Beasley referenced the Executive Committee report.

**Connecting the Synod in Prayer**

As the prayer initiative has been discussed, one of the ideas has been to set a time where we just stop and pray. Secretary Richard shared that the former Faith in Action team had, at a previous Synod Assembly, set “a minute for the Synod” at 1:11 each day as a time to pray for the Bishop and our common ministry as the SEPA Synod.

Bishop Davenport shared that one of the Conferences had the idea that perhaps the Synod Council could pray for three congregations each Sunday in their congregational prayers. Another suggestion from the Conferences was the possibility of a gathering for the lay adults of the Synod. We have SHYG (Senior High Youth Gathering), and JYG (Junior Youth Gathering), why not a LAG (Lay Adult Gathering)?

**Actions on the Roster**
Vice President Beasley is aware that there are times when there are actions on the roster that involve people who are in transition who have not had the opportunity to inform their ministry site of their change in status. Consequently she would suggest that whenever we have guests at the Synod Council meeting we go into executive session for these deliberations.

**Bear Creek Presentation**

Vice President Beasley then invited Ms. Karen Heser, Director of Development and Assistant Program Director from Bear Creek Camp to bring us an update from the Camp on their ministry this past year.

This past summer 1,136 kids attended camp. This is the highest enrollment since 2000! The camp has seen increase each of the last six years, and this year’s enrollment is 4% higher than last year. There has been a large increase in attendees from SEPA Synod. There has also been an increase in campers from other denominations. The staff is working hard to expand this ecumenical outreach. The staff also continues to offer programs off-campus for congregations to provide for their communities.

Ms. Heser said that they have always felt that what they are doing makes an impact; now there is a study that verifies this! She asked the Council to see the 3rd page of the handout she provided, which contained information from the Effective Camp Research Project. Among the pieces of a Camp program that make an impact are: 1. it is faith centered; 2. it is a safe space; 3. it is participatory; 4. it is “unplugged” from home; 5. it is relational.

Ms. Heser thanked the Council, and those whose congregations send campers, for all they do to support and promote Bear Creek.

Mr. Albert Glenn commented that the growth is impressive. He asked to what the Camp attributes this growth; is it the incorporation of these 5 principles?

Ms. Heser replied that it was evident that there needed to be a change in mindset to focus on campers and Christ, and the change in leadership at the Camp helped emphasize this new focus.

Ms. Savannah Tucker said that she has been to Bear Creek Camp. She learned the songs, and has passed them on to her mother’s church groups.

Ms. Heser was delighted to hear how Camp is being passed forward.

Pastor Brad Burke, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult, and Faith Formation Ministries expressed his pleasure at the intentional efforts to bring kids from the City, particularly youth of color, to the Camp.

Ms. Elizabeth Young shared that her congregation has had Bear Creek staff come to their site and lead Vacation Bible School, and that it was a great program.

Mr. Everett Wick said his congregation has also had the Bear Creek staff at their site, and it was a very positive experience for the youth and for the community.
Ms. Heser shared that these “off-site” programs are also very helpful for the Camp, because it lets kids learn about Bear Creek and inspires them to come to the Camp. She noted that there are also many opportunities beyond the summer offerings. There are events that take place in the Spring and the Fall, and cabins are available for rent for your congregation to have its own program at the Camp.

Bishop Davenport praised the changes in the Camp, and encouraged the staff to be proud of that. The shift changed when the leadership changed; “the spirit of the leader falls on the people.” She thanked Ms. Heser and the staff for their willingness to be open to new ideas, and to try them. She thanked the staff for their work reaching out to children of color. It is important that, to increase an appreciation for this gift of life, perhaps we can decrease some of the senseless death that surrounds them. For these efforts and more, she expressed her thanks to the staff of Bear Creek Camp.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
The Synod Council went into executive session for the following deliberations. The actions will be reflected in the minutes as the persons in question will have had time to inform their ministry sites prior to the approval, and subsequent posting, of the minutes.

Actions on the Roster

Call to Interim Ministry:
S.C.18.12.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Kristine Peterson to interim ministry at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Aston, PA beginning April 22, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until the Reverend Peterson resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

On Leave from Call Requests:
S.C.18.12.02. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Sozinho Alves on leave from call status, second year, effective December 1, 2018

S.C.18.12.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Louis Tillman, IV on leave from call status, second year, effective December 16, 2018

S.C.18.12.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Linda Manson on leave from call status, second year, effective January 1, 2019

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

Requests to move to Retirement Roster:
S.C.18.12.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Ellen M. Anderson retirement status, effective January 1, 2019

S.C.18.12.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend David C. Lutcher retirement status, effective February 1, 2019

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

Information Not Requiring Action

Transfer:
Deacon Rachel Bailey to North Carolina Synod effective December 17, 2018

Death:
The Reverend William A. Davis December 2, 2018

Following the actions on the roster the Synod Council emerged from Executive session.

Housing Allowance

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<tr>
<th>Clergy Name</th>
<th>Housing Allowance Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Patricia A. Davenport</td>
<td>$23,033.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor Bradley Burke</td>
<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor Violet Little</td>
<td>$32,000.00</td>
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S.C.18.12.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the 2019 housing allowance for Bishop Davenport, Pastor Burke and Pastor Little, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT that the recipients be reminded that the amounts so designated as rental/housing allowance are excludable from the gross income of the respective recipients only to the extent that said amounts are used to rent or provide a home. Further the amount eligible for the Section 107 exclusion may not exceed the fair rental value of the minister’s home (including furnishings and appurtenances) plus the cost of utilities. To the extent a greater amount is designated as rental/housing allowance, the designation will be ineffectual with respect to such amount.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Reception of Properties from Closed Congregations

Whenever a congregation closes, we need to ensure responsibility for the property is properly recognized as received by the Synod. We have two properties for which we need to adopt resolutions for such transfer and care. The two properties in question are for the recently closed congregations of Prince of Peace, Plymouth Meeting, and Immanuel, Burholme.

S.C.18.12.08. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges the action of Prince of Peace, Plymouth Meeting, to close
(also termed “disband,” “dissolve,” and “cease to exist”), effective July 22, 2018; receives the property of Prince of Peace, Plymouth Meeting, in accordance with the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, specifically 9.71.b., +S13.23., and *C7.01. ; and authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, the Reverend Patricia A. Davenport, or the Bishop’s representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod on a determined date.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

S.C.18.12.09. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges the action of Immanuel, Burholme, to close (also termed “disband,” “dissolve,” and “cease to exist”), effective November 11, 2018; receives the property of Immanuel, Burholme, in accordance with the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, specifically 9.71.b., +S13.23., and *C7.01. ; and authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, the Reverend Patricia A. Davenport, or the Bishop’s representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod on a determined date.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER
Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, made the following notes from her written report regarding each of the funds of our budget

Unrestricted Funds
Through nine months we are behind last year’s receipts by $50,000. This is a concern. Please check with your congregations, and those in your Conference, and see if you can encourage support of the Synod. There may be issues in your congregation that are causing you to fall behind in your support, but we cannot know that unless you share it with the Synod. We need to know about such issues so we can revise our expectations, and so we can know if there are things we may be able to do to assist your congregation with the underlying issues or concerns you may be facing.

Mr. Bert Glenn suggested that members check their congregational giving, and if it seems inaccurate, be sure your gift was sent and credited to the appropriate account.

We have approximately $52,000 in expenses related to properties of former congregations.

Temporarily Restricted Funds
This fund has a surplus as of October 31, but this is because of receipts for the Bishop Convocation received in October which will not be expended until November.

Mission Funds
We have three teams responsible for monies in the Mission portion of our budget. There is the Congregational Vitality Team, the Forward Together in Faith Team, and the trustees of the Fund
for Mission. Ms. Neff feels we need to coordinate these initiatives so that one congregation does not receive from all three funds, while other congregations may receive no funding.

Ms. Neff shared examples of some of the ministries we support through the mission portion of our budget, which we use to support youth ministry, global ministry, and local ministries.

- The Welcome Church receives $55,000 of support. $20,000 comes from the ELCA, and $35,000 comes from us.
- Kairos Ministry is a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, but receives no financial support from the Synod.
- Living Gospel Ministry receives some support from the Synod, and some from the ELCA.

The ELCA provides $45,000 for our missions, we provide $49,000. The Congregational Vitality Team evaluates places for ministry and how we might support these ministries.

The mission portion of our budget will always be in a deficit, as these are not programs that generate income, but which we feel we need to support as a Church.

Mr. Glenn asked if the Congregational Vitality Team is a new thing. The answer is no, it is a reconfiguration and renaming of the Evangelical Outreach Team.

Bishop Davenport said there is a template for the disbursement of Forward Together in Faith Funds that is known to the Congregational Vitality Team. It may be good to have this same template used by each of the three funding teams – Vitality, Forward Together in Faith, and Fund for Mission. Perhaps a coordination of requests and which fund has been accessed could be made by the Congregational Vitality Team.

Mr. Glenn stated that coordination of information may be helpful, but we should be sure to follow the parameters set for each entity’s funds, per each fund’s guidelines.

Pastor Burke noted this is the beginning of the change, not the end. We would need to consider whether we should change the procedures, but until then we keep each fund under its current processes.

An extensive conversation took place regarding congregational health; particularly financial health, but also the underlying issues of organizational health that impact financial health.

After much discussion Bishop Davenport emphasized one of the most significant things we need to do is build trust – within congregations, between congregations and each other, and between congregations and the Synod. When we build these relationships of trust, we can be invited in to have deeper conversations on issues of health, both structural and financial.

Vice President Beasley suggested that the Congregational Vitality Team present the Mission Moment for the next meeting of the Synod Council.
REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE
Mr. Bert Glenn, chairperson, referenced the report from the Committee. He noted that the Committee is exploring two issues with the Fund for Mission. One issue regards appropriate re-allocation of gains or losses from the Fund, and the second regards transparency of the use of the money from the Fund for Mission. At this time the Committee is not making recommendations, but is investigating how these issues might be addressed.

Vice President Beasley encouraged use of the word “clarity” rather than “transparency.” Questioning our transparency gives the impression that some information is being hidden or withheld from the Council or the Synod, which is not accurate. Clarity of how the money is being used is indeed important, and may need to be improved, but we do not want to give the impression that we are not being fully honest about the use of the resources in our care.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Forward Together in Faith
Ms. Ellen Daneke, chairperson of the Campaign shared the following:

The Forward Together in Faith Team received 16 applications for grants. The total amount requested was $187,000! This is significantly more than the $26,000 that is available, but shows that congregations are actively considering ministry ventures in their respective settings. There has been a very diverse team evaluating the proposals. The team does have some overlap with the Congregational Vitality Team, as Pastor Bryan Penman is on both teams.

From the 16 applications, several were collaborative proposals involving multiple congregations, and there was one proposal made by a Conference. In the deliberations it was determined that some of the proposals were more applicable to the Congregational Vitality Team than the Forward Together in Faith Team.

It was determined that 11 of the applicants will be supported with grants, though only one of them will get their full request. There is ongoing conversation as to how the applicants will be informed of their awards, and how much of their requests are granted. Some of the remaining applicants will be referred to the Congregational Vitality Team, while some are labeled “not at this time.”

Mr. Glenn asked how the number of $26,000 was determined. Ms. Daneke said that it was determined in the first year to use only the interest that had been generated in that year. The hope is to be able to provide more in grants as we move forward.

Constitution Committee
Pastor Tyler Rasmussen, chairperson, presented four congregation constitutions for approval by the Synod Council:

S.C. 18.12.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution for Temple, Havertown.
S.C. 18.12.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution for St. John, Richlandtown.

S.C. 18.12.12. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution for Grace, Broomall.

S.C. 18.12.13. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution for Trinity, Fairview Village.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolutions.

**Investment Committee**
Mr. David Ehret, chairperson, shared that while the funds had done incredibly well as of the last meeting, the bubble has now burst. We sustained a loss on paper, but not an actual loss. We are currently back to where we were at the beginning of the year.

**Administration Committee**
The Agenda for the 2019 Synod Assembly was presented. The biggest shift in the agenda is the move of the main worship service to Saturday so that lay people who are not Voting Members and have to work may be able to attend. The Committee is discussing how it might be possible to have a mass choir of people from across the Synod as part of this service.


The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**Nominating Committee**
Pastor Lydia Posselt, chairperson, said the Committee is continuing to seek qualified candidates. She noted we need people who are under 25. Please continue to put forward names.

**OLD BUSINESS**
None

**NEW BUSINESS**
Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations, is currently locked out of the ELCA Sharepoint system. While that is being resolved she will continue to send information by email attachments. Members expressed their support of this, with many members commenting that the email attachments are easier to use than Sharepoint.

Pastor Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam asked if we are planning to do anything as a Synod to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the ELCA. Pastor Anderson-Rajarigam and Pastor Serena Sellers agreed to gather a group together to see what might be possible.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
Ms. Sandra Zimmerman has heard a strong lack of trust between the Synod and the congregations, and asked how we can be more effective at sharing what we are as the Synod. Can Synod Council members go out and visit to make the connection?

Bishop Davenport stated that we all need to be telling the story of our Synod. If you are in Upper Bucks, tell the story to Upper Bucks. If you have a cell phone, post about our ministry on social media. If we, particularly as Rostered Leaders, are not saying who and what we are, the story will not get out. We all need to be sharing what God is doing in our Synod so that the people of the Synod will hear.

With no other business, Vice President Beasley asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

The 154th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held on February 21st, 2019, 4:00 p.m., at St. James Lutheran, Limerick.

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

Approved by Synod Council February 21, 2019
Bishop Patricia A. Davenport thanked the Synod Council for their ongoing work for the Gospel. She rejoices in the resilience of our leaders to proclaim the grace and light of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Davenport then highlighted the following items from her written report.

**Bishop’s Academy**
Bp. Davenport was struck by conversation on climate change and global warming. The conversation really brought home the harm we have done to the planet. If we do not do something SOON we will cause irreparable harm to the planet for our children and our children’s children. Please read how you can be involved, and act as you are able.

**Consultation with Seminary Presidents**
The Bishops of Color were invited to be a part of the continuing conversations regarding racism, and how we can make progress combating systemic racism in our schools and our church structure. It is good to have these conversations, and Bishop Davenport is grateful that they are ongoing. At the same time, the Bishop relayed that she can only deal with the part that is within her as a person of color, and the micro-aggressions she experiences. She stated that she believes it is incumbent on those who have privilege to examine how they can make movement in these concerns.

**Conversation on Faith and Race**
Bishop Davenport brought some of the materials from the recent program from Interfaith Philadelphia’s Year of Civil Conversation. She brought this so we can consider how we are doing in these steps. How does my faith inform this conversation? How can my faith make a difference in how I approach people and systems? We can all benefit from these conversations and opportunities for self-reflection. For example, Rabbi David Straus was present, and became aware of new areas for growth in his self-understanding. He has never thought of himself as person of privilege because he is Jewish; but still, he is white and male, and has privilege of which he was not aware. How can we continue to be open to such growth in ourselves as we strive to care for our neighbor?

**Jewish/Christian Relationships**
The Bishop was honored to have been a part of the ELCA’s delegation that went to Israel to continue the conversation of how Jews and Palestinians are learning to sit at table with each other to grow and learn from each other. This is a complex issue with no easy solution. It is good that the Church still has a role in the conversation.

**Synod Office Space**
Conversation continues about how culture and hospitality have impacted our relationship with the Seminary regarding space. We have been invited by Dr. Green to stay as long as we wish; he hopes for the long-term. At this point we continue with a month-to-month lease until we decide on a space for our offices.

**Holy Closure**
Several of our congregations will enter holy closure in the near future. St. John Ambler’s final service is scheduled for March 31st; St. Petri-Hope will close within 3 months; Living Word
Roslyn within the next 6 months to a year; and one other congregation not yet able to be named will probably end its ministry within the year. We want to empower the impact these congregations have made in the communities they have served. We want to reignite idea of rethinking vitality from “butts and bucks” to other measures of health. Whether you worship 100 or 25, you can make an impact in your community.

**Bear Creek Camp**
Mr. Daniel Scharnhorst has taken a new call, but he shares there is a space on the Board. It would be good to fill this with a person of color from the city.

**First Staff Retreat**
The first Synod Staff retreat was held in Lafayette Hill. This was a wonderful chance to step away and understand who we are and where we are going. The event was facilitated by Dr. Jeffrey Branch, program chair at PCOM. Bishop Davenport is planning to invest in annual staff development to increase communication and effectiveness.

Bishop Davenport then opened the floor to questions from the Council.

Ms. Elizabeth Young asked what part of the Bishop’s trip to Israel she enjoyed the most. Bishop Davenport replied that it was wonderful to be with the people, experience their hospitality, and learn how to make the local food. But this joy was also tempered by seeing the level of oppression so many of them deal with on a daily basis.

Mr. Bert Glenn asked about the Bishop’s meeting with United Lutheran Seminary President Green, and whether Bishop Davenport sees a shifting in the culture that may lead to something more powerful. The Bishop said that Dr. Green has made a point to come and speak with her about both the good and the difficult concerns on campus. She feels we have been treated more like ministry partners as of late.

**REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
Vice President Beasley referenced the Executive Committee report.

The position of Secretary of the Synod is open for election at this year’s Assembly. Nominations for Secretary are made by the Synod Council. When there is an incumbent only one nominee is needed to be placed before the Assembly. Nominations are welcome from the floor. The Executive Committee recommends that the Synod Council place the current Secretary, the Reverend Karl M. Richard, in nomination for the position of Synod Secretary.

**S.C.19.02.01. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council place the Reverend Karl M. Richard in nomination for the position of Synod Secretary.**
The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**
Secretary Richard brought forward the need to affirm the email vote taken following the last Synod Council meeting to appoint the Reverend Bradley Burke as Acting Bishop during Bishop
Davenport’s journey to the Holy Lands. He pointed out that we received 23 affirmative votes, and no negative responses in the email correspondence.

The Reverend Serena S. Sellers made the following motion:

S.C.19.02.02. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm the email vote appointing the Reverend Bradley Buke as Acting Bishop during Bishop Davenport’s trip to Israel.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Churchwide Assembly – Open Seats

The Reverend Dr. Jennifer Ollikainen is unable to attend the Church-wide Assembly. The Executive Committee recommends the Reverend Dwight Mason as her successor.

S.C.19.02.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm the Rev. Dwight Mason of Good Shepherd, Philadelphia as Voting Member, Clergy to the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Further, Deacon Rachel Bailey received a call to another Synod, and is therefore not able to attend as a Voting Member from SEPA Synod. The Executive Committee recommends Deacon Beth Barkhau as her successor.

S.C.19.02.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm Deacon Beth Barkhau of Reformation, Media as Voting Member, Lay Female to the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Appointment of the Treasurer

The term of treasurer is a four year term, which expires this year (2019). According to the Constitution, By-laws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, the Synod Council appoints the Treasurer. The Synod Executive Committee recommends that the Synod Council re-elect Ms. Janet Neff to another term:

S.C.19.02.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoints Ms. Janet Huber Neff as the Treasurer of this Synod for a term ending 2023.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Actions on the Roster

The Synod Council went into executive session for the following deliberations. The actions will be reflected in the minutes as the persons in question will have had time to inform their ministry sites prior to the approval, and subsequent posting, of the minutes.

Call to Unusual Circumstances:

S.C.19.02.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call Mr. Robert Fisher to Serve in Unusual Circumstances at the Kairos Communities, pending approval from the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops. The actual call date will be effective with ordination.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Call to Interim Ministry:
S.C.19.02.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Wayne Shelor to interim ministry at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Exton, PA beginning January 1, 2019, until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Rev. Wayne Shelor resigns this call, whichever comes first. The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

On Leave from Call Requests:
S.C.19.02.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend David Maddox, II on leave from call status, second year, effective January 1, 2019

S.C.19.02.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Phillip Waselik on leave from call status, second year, effective March 31, 2019

S.C.19.02.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Ethyl Geist on leave from call status, second year, effective April 1, 2019

S.C.19.02.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Nancy Brown on leave from call status, second year, effective April 8, 2019

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

Information Not Requiring Action

Deaths:
The Reverend Dr. James Echols, December 22, 2018
The Reverend William Welther, December 16, 2018

REPORT OF THE TREASURER
Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, made the following notes from her written report regarding our financial status.

Unrestricted Funds
Revenue:
We have a significant deficit at this time. Mission Support from congregations is $50,000 under budget. This is a concern for us. The Bishop is seeking a person who can assist with gathering revenue.
Part of our deficit is due to market losses in our investments. While this is not a realized loss, it is still a loss on our balance sheet.

Expenses:
While income has been down, so have our expenses. We have sent less to Church-wide than budgeted, because we send 50% of what we receive from congregations to the ELCA. When receipts are lower, so is what we send on, so we have “saved” $25,000 against budget at this
time. We also have a staff vacancy in Candidacy. This, too, has lowered our expenses for the time being.

**Temporarily Restricted funds**
We currently have a surplus in this fund of $227,000.

**Mission Funds**
While we are under budget by $213,000, revenue to expenses, this is normal for this portion of the budget. We have not used money from the Fund for Mission to cover this, with the exception of a $20,000 disbursement for African Descent ministry that was approved by the FFM committee. We have several sources of funds that assist with this portion of the budget. One of the sources which has not been realized is we have not had any sales of properties under Synodical management. When we sell the property of a former congregation we place 15% of the sale into the operating budget. We then cover the accrued expenses of the properties under management. The remainder goes into the Fund for Mission. The property of the former Prince of Peace, Plymouth Meeting is under agreement, but it is not likely to close before April. The property of the former St. Michael, Germantown is listed for sale at $775,000, but has not yet sold.

**Overall Financial Position**
Unrestricted assets are approximately $2.3 million, where unrestricted liabilities are approximately $139,500. Our ratios are in good order.

**Forward Together in Faith**
Gifts and pledges to the Campaign amount to $850,000.

**REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**
Mr. Bert Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, brought the Committee’s report, including presentation of the 2020 budget for consideration.

Mr. Glenn stated that the Committee has reviewed the financial statements, and all were in order. They had a discussion of the Fund for Mission, and have changed the way in which gains and losses will be assigned.

Assets apportioned to University Lutheran were discussed, including the appropriateness of “UniLu” keeping the proceeds from rentals, particularly the air rights from the cell tower in the building. No change in this arrangement was seen as necessary at this time.

Money from the sale of former congregations was discussed, and particularly the value of setting a separate fund to clarify what expenses are covered when we close out the expenses of properties under management. There is no decision at this time. The proposal put forward in the Finance Committee’s minutes was not endorsed by our auditors.

**Budget**
The budget for the Fiscal Year February 1, 2020 – January 31, 2021 was described. Mr. Glenn clarified that, though sometimes confusing due to the fiscal cycle we follow, at this Assembly we will approve the budget for the following year (2020), not the current year (2019). The primary change that is contained in the budget is a reduction of our support of the Seminary by $50,000. This money would instead be used to assist seminary graduates, who were not able to benefit from the recent action of the Seminary to offer free tuition for full-time ELCA students, with their remaining student loans.

The Reverend Gwendolyn King asked where one would find the money for particular programs or teams, and specifically the money for the Anti-Racism Team. Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant for the Synod, answered that it is under the Office of the Bishop, line #21. Ms. Elizabeth Young asked how we can make this clear for the people at the Assembly. Vice President Beasley asked that we receive the full excel spreadsheet at least twice a year so the Council can see what the Finance Committee sees. The Reverend Serena Sellers asked that we have the detailed budget available for people to reference. Bishop Davenport noted that this would then potentially give the details of salaries, which should stay confidential. Vice President Beasley said that it is possible to create a spreadsheet with salaries “blacked out” so they are not able to be attributed to specific persons. Ms. Doreen Kinzler requested that we have a break-out of the funds under each category. The Reverend Brad Burke asked if we could leave time in the agenda at the Assembly for people to bring their questions prior to the consideration of the budget so that the presenters can have the answers available at the time of the budget presentation. Perhaps such a time could be added to the announcements, and a time and place could be set where people could raise these questions. Ms. Elizabeth Young affirmed Pastor Burke’s suggestion. The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen asked if the Power Point of the budget presentation can be on the app as well as the spread sheet. In the past it has just been the spreadsheet, and the Power Point may help bring clarity. Secretary Richard asked about the reduction of the support to the Seminary. Will this reduction have a negative impact on our relationship with the Seminary at a time when we are requesting a closer working relationship with the school? Bishop Davenport responded that she does not believe this will be the case. We are all in a situation where we need to make alterations based on the reduced resources we receive. Mr. Everett Wick asked if the money to support the seminary graduates is solely for those who graduated from United Lutheran Seminary. Bishop Davenport replied no, it is for all Rostered Ministers on our territory. After the discussion concluded, the Synod Council was asked to vote.

S.C.19.02.12. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the budget for the 2020 -2021 fiscal year to be presented to the Synod Assembly for adoption. The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.
MISSION MOMENT
The Reverend Bryan Penman, chair of the Vitality Team, along with the Reverend Dwight Mason, the Reverend Kris Chandler, and the Reverend Mary Ann Siefke, members of the Vitality Team, were present for the Mission Moment.

Pastor Penman provided the Synod Council with a handout which defined the concept of Vital Congregations: “Vital congregations are communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another, and the world.”

One of the goals of the Vitality Team is to help congregations move from quantitative metrics, such as money and attendance, to qualitative metrics such as energy and impact as the way to measure their health and vitality.

Congregational Vitality has become the umbrella under which Development, Re-development, Innovative ministries, collaborative ministries, and holy closure of congregations reside.

Pastor Chandler noted we need to figure out how to do things differently so that we do not wither and die. We encourage people to look at things differently, but too often we then continue to work the same way. We need to find ways to support one another, and this does not always have to be with money. Sometimes we need to “go there,” and then determine how we resource the idea.

Some small congregations are doing good things, and if they go away a Lutheran Christian presence may no longer be present in their community. How can we identify the needs of such congregations, and get to them sooner?

Pastor Sellers: Creativity needs kindling. What if your team was able to get answers to the 3 questions from each congregation? Then share the ideas from all congregations with each congregation, so that this kindling is there to perhaps catch a spark?

Pastor Penman: This is a great idea, but we need to find ways to do that. There are not enough hours to do that on our own; how we can empower this will take time.

Mr. Emanuel Alves: I know this Team is new, but what steps are you taking to market your team so people can know you exist and can be called on?

Pastor Penman: Communications strategy is a part of our work. We are trying to find some really engaging success stories, which will help with this marketing. We are also working to establish relationships with our Deans, as they know the congregations in deeper ways than most people do.
Pastor Reuben Duran, Executive Director of Congregational Vitality for the ELCA, is exploring ways in which congregations can work in partnership and collaboration with each other. It may be in the same town; it may be urban/suburban partnership; it may be ministry efforts and connections. Redevelopment is now looking at “anchor” congregations that can help smaller congregations be supported and strengthened.
Mr. Bert Glenn: Do you have a way of entering congregations to bring some of these options to them?

Pastor Penman: Yes, but it is an intentionally slow roll into this ministry, even as we recognize the urgency of the needs. Trying to flip the paradigm from strengthening buildings to supporting the witness and work that congregations are providing in their area is a large, and gradual, undertaking.

Mr. Alves: – what resources do you have?

Pastor Penman: We don’t want the Vitality Team to be seen as a money resource team, but a team that connects you to the resources that you need.
Pastor Chandler: Our work is that of connecting, not providing.

The parochial report is important, but it is not the full story of vitality. There are larger churches have no energy, and there are smaller churches that are vibrant. We rejoice in the energy and enthusiasm that comes as we reach out to minister alongside one another. One of the examples of this is the partnership between Holy Trinity, Narberth and Grace, Philadelphia, where they combine in a very effective feeding program. The more we can build this kind of innovation and love for the work of Jesus in this place, the more vital our congregations will be, and the more the Gospel will continue to be proclaimed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Forward Together in Faith**
Vice President Beasley stated that the report is before the Council. Are there any questions?

Mr. Everett Wick noted that the grants for 2018 totaled $26,000. What accountability is there to ensure the grantees have used the funds appropriately, and how successful their efforts were?

Vice President Beasley responded that measures of accountability were a part of the application process. They vary depending on the ministry being funded, but they are a part of the process.

**Constitution Committee**
The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, chair of the Constitution Committee, brought forward one congregation constitution for approval by the Council.

**S.C. 19.02.13. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution for God’s Love, Newtown, Pennsylvania. The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.**

**Nominating Committee**
The Reverend Lydia Posselt, chair of the Nominating Committee, referenced the draft of the nominations so far received. She noted that if any member of Synod Council notices that a person they had put forward is missing, please let her know. She also noted that the Committee is still seeking candidates for Lay Male, Young Adult; Lay Female, Young Adult; and Lay Male, Youth. Please consider who may be good candidates for these seats on Synod Council.
Investment Committee
Mr. David Ehret, chair of the Investment Committee, shared that as Ms. Neff stated in the Treasurer’s Report, we did have a loss at the end of the past year. Fortunately the market has been rebounding in January, and we have regained some of that loss.

Audit Committee
The Audit will be completed, and a Report ready to share with the Synod Council, at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS
None

NEW BUSINESS
Reconciling in Christ
Ms. Emily Fowler asked if we are an RIC (Reconciling in Christ) Synod. Bishop Davenport replied that we are. Ms. Fowler expressed some concern that as such we should be aware of the sites we use for ministry, as some places used for Youth Events do not share our acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ Community.
Vice President Beasley suggested that if Ms. Fowler is aware of a concern or has a question, the first place to go with this is to Pastor Brad Burke, who is the staff person who deals with Youth Ministry for the Synod.

Synod Council Retreat
Bishop Davenport stated that the staff retreat was such a positive experience and a helpful tool for building a team that she would like us to investigate the possibility of holding a Synod Council retreat. The Council is a good working council, and it would be good to strengthen the ties we have so we can do even better work together.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
Pastor Serena Sellers shared some good news that is happening on our territory. An organization is being incorporated that will build “Tiny Houses” for the homeless. This effort is part of a program in Philadelphia to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

Meeting adjourned at 6:39 with prayer by Pastor Brad Burke

The 155th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held on April 4th, 2019, 4:00 p.m., at Faith Immanuel Lutheran, East Lansdowne.

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

Approved by Synod Council April 4, 2019