

**Report of the Synod Council to the Thirty-third Annual Assembly of the Southeastern  
Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, May 1-2, 2020**

Included:

1. Minutes of the 155<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 4, 2019
  - Approved by the Synod Council June 13, 2019
2. Minutes of the Proceedings of the Thirty-first Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*Building Beloved Community* May 3-4, 2018
  - Approved by the Synod Council December 12, 2019
3. Minutes of the 156<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, June 13, 2019
  - Approved by the Synod Council September 19, 2019
4. Minutes of the 157<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, September 19, 2019
  - Approved by the Synod Council December 12, 2018
5. Minutes of the 158<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, December 12, 2019
  - Approved by the Synod Council February 27, 2020
6. Minutes of the 159<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, February 27, 2020
  - Approved by the Synod Council April 28, 2020

**MINUTES**  
**of the 155<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**Faith Immanuel Lutheran Church, East Lansdowne, PA**  
**April 4, 2019**

**Welcome and Devotions**

The Reverend Dr. Moses Suah Dennis welcomed the Synod Council, and described some of the ministry of the congregation. Faith Immanuel is a very community-based church. They host Girl Scouts and a day care. They host three worship services each week, including a midweek prayer service, which is being held this day.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 155<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:10 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 154<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council were approved as presented.

**SETTING THE AGENDA**

As traffic was delaying the Dean's arrival, Vice President Beasley suggested we modify the agenda to have the devotions when she arrives. The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 155<sup>th</sup> meeting as modified.

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Davenport highlighted the following items from her written report.

**Trustworthy Servants of the People of God**

Comments from Rostered Ministers regarding "Trustworthy Servants of the People of God," the successor document to "Visions and Expectations," have been numerous and varied. There have been as many questions about the process of the revised document as there have been regarding content. Many, particularly in the LGBTQIA+ community, though not exclusively so, feel they did not have enough opportunity to provide input to this document prior to it being endorsed by the Conference of Bishops for adoption. Bishop Davenport did express these concerns to the Vice President of the ELCA. Nevertheless, the Conference of Bishops has endorsed the document to go to the Church Council for adoption.

While Bishop Davenport feels there could have been more input from a broader constituency of the Church, she is in favor of the adoption of this document, as she feels it is a better expression for our life together than "Visions and Expectations," and there will be the possibility to amend "Trustworthy Servants" as we live into it.

Mr. Albert Glenn asked what the differences are between the two documents.

Bishop Davenport answered that while both documents strive to deal with how we live with integrity in our personal lives as Rostered Ministers, “Trustworthy Servants” is more theological, where “Visions and Expectations” was more legalistic in approach, particularly in sexual regulations of how we live in relationship with each other. Our LGBTQIA+ community, women, and persons of color feel Visions and Expectations had excluded their voices and identification in its adoption and implementation. They wish they had been more included in the discussion of this successor document.

### **Holy Innovation**

Bishop Davenport raised an ongoing area of focus she holds for the Synod Council and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in general:

How do we hold on to what is core to us in everything we do, and stay grounded in the Gospel, as we innovate in how we build up the Kingdom of God?

How do we continue to come back to a position of prayer and devotion as we do this work?

Where do we see the bright spots?

### **Interfaith Conversations**

One area that has been a bright spot for this region and this Synod has been our interfaith activities. Bishop Davenport noted with sadness that the Reverend Nicole Diroff will be leaving the position of Associate Executive Director of Interfaith Philadelphia, due to a change in her husband’s job for which they have to relocate to Portland, Maine. Rev. Diroff will be the keynote speaker at our Synod Assembly. One event in which Rev. Diroff will participate prior to leaving Interfaith Philadelphia is an honoring of Kristen Tippet, host of the NPR program, “Speaking of Faith,” with the Dare to Understand Award. Even with Rev. Diroff’s departure, Interfaith Philadelphia continues its work to provide a vital place for conversation and building a thriving and diverse religious democracy here in Philadelphia. Bishop Davenport is pleased to see how we can converse across faith traditions. We are all dealing with opioids, and violence, and concerns in our communities, so what can we do together?

### **Elisha’s Call**

SEPA Synod was proud to host the first Elisha’s Call on the east coast. Elisha’s Call is an event focused on young adults of African Descent, developed and sponsored by the Program Director for African Descent Ministry for the ELCA in conjunction with the African Descent Strategy.

There are still divisions in how persons of color are treated in the call process, but we in SEPA Synod are doing what we can to ensure as equitable a process as possible.

### **Meeting of the Chester Conference**

At this meeting the Dean, the Reverend Ronald Weseman was re-elected for a second term. But in addition to that, a conversation was held on what congregations can share with each other, and what it means to be in collaborative ministry. Can we open ourselves to the possibility of stronger, “Anchor Churches,” assisting smaller, weaker congregations? An example of collaboration occurred when Pastor Paul Townsend’s mother died, and Calvary, West Chester sent Pastor Dan Krewson to cover for him. A congregation with two pastors sent one of their pastors to assist a neighboring congregation in such a time of crisis. This is what we ought to do for one another. This is being the Beloved Community!

### **First Call Retreat**

For the second year we held the first call theological retreat as a Synodical, rather than as a Regional event. We again invited established pastors to come alongside our first call ministers. We have found that this process brings renewal to our established ministers, and energy to the relationship between established and new ministers.

### **Holy Closure**

Bishop Davenport found the closing service for St. John, Ambler, to be bittersweet in that they needed extra folding chairs for all the people who attended. But there was also great hope, in that many have already landed at neighboring congregations, even before the “open houses” that are planned to introduce the nearby congregations to the members of the former St. John.

### **Questions**

Bishop Davenport then asked if there were questions from the Synod Council regarding her report, or any other issue members may wish to raise.

Mr. Glenn noted in her written report that the Regions had gathered to assign First Call Candidates. We only received one. Is that equitable?

Bishop Davenport replied that no, it is not equitable, because one of the Synods in the Region needs 24 candidates, and we received the only one assigned to Region 7. We received this candidate because this candidate is a person of color, and is part of the LGBTQ community, and thereby would not have as good a chance to receive a call in many other synods. Overall we need to raise up leaders for the Church. We have many more congregations in need of leaders than we have leaders available for placement.

Vice President Beasley asked if Bishop Davenport could describe the open positions we have in the Synod office, and what is being done to fill these positions.

Bishop Davenport noted that we have two openings on the Synod Staff. One we hope to have filled at this meeting, which is the position of Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Advancement. This position will complete many of the tasks that Mr. Bill Harp used to do with regard to candidacy and mobility. The person in this position will work closely with Deacon Allison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy, Pr. Christian McMullen, Director of Interim Ministry, and Pr. Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility. This position will also have a strong focus on developing financial support for the mission of the Synod.

The other position still open on the Synod Staff is that of Director of Evangelical Mission. We are still interviewing candidates to be our DEM, and hope to have the right person selected soon. The position of DEM is a joint position with the ELCA. The Churchwide office takes the lead in hiring for this position, but significant input and consent from the Synodical Bishop is part of the process.

Following this description, the Bishop put forward the following resolution to fill the position of Vocations and Leadership/Mission Advancement.

**SC.19.04.01. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve a call to the Reverend Karen M. Sease as Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Advancement, effective May 3, 2019. This call is co-terminus with the call of Bishop Patricia A. Davenport.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

#### **Actions on the Roster**

##### ***Calls to Interim Ministry:***

**S.C.19.04.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Dr. Susan K. Folks to interim ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church in Ridge Valley, PA beginning February 1, 2019, until a pastor is called by the congregation or until the Rev. Dr. Susan K. Folks resigns this call, whichever comes first.

**S.C.19.04.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Janet S. Peterman to interim ministry at Grace Lutheran Church in Hatfield, PA beginning February 18, 2019, until a pastor is called by the congregation or until the Rev. Janet S. Peterman resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

##### ***On Leave from Call Request:***

**S.C.19.04.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Jonathan Shin on leave from call status, third year, effective February 1, 2019

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

##### ***Request for Synod Council Approval of On Leave Extensions:***

**S.C. 19.04.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Harold Evans extended on leave from call status, 6<sup>th</sup> year, effective April 1, 2019

**S.C. 19.04.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Suzanne Rigg extended on leave from call status, 5<sup>th</sup> year, effective May 31, 2019

**S.C. 19.04.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Margaret Ainslie extended on leave from call status, 8<sup>th</sup> year, effective June 30, 2019 (*Study Leave*)

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

#### **Information Not Requiring Action**

##### ***Resigned from ELCA Roster***

The Rev. Daniel M. Schaefer effective January 14, 2019

### ***Transfer***

The Rev. Daniel W. Spigelmyer, Jr. to New England Synod effective January 2, 2019

The Rev. Dee Emmert to Sierra Pacific Synod effective January 10, 2019

The Rev. Richard Zuber to Florida-Bahama Synod effective January 10, 2019

### ***Deaths***

The Rev. D. Craig Landis March 30, 2019

## **DEVOTIONS**

The Reverend Leslie M. Richard, Dean of the Delaware Conference, had arrived, and Vice President Beasley called on her to lead the Synod Council in devotions at this time.

Dean Richard noted that we are approaching Easter, and the time when Christ passes from death to life. This is a time when we also move from space to space: from Winter to Spring, from Lent to Easter, from death to life.

Palms were passed out as a reminder of a threshold crossed by Jesus. Various passages from the Gospel of John were read. In each of them members of the Council were encouraged to consider what doorways were present, doorways that lead us to God, or lead God to us.

At the threshold of prayer, enter, and bring your desire before Christ.

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

In addition to the written report, Vice President Beasley shared that she had the privilege of meeting with the participants of Elijah's Call, as they met at Reformation, Philadelphia. Vice President Beasley introduced them to SEPA Synod, and shared with them that there is no other synod like ours. Ms. Beasley was impressed by the deep conversations. Dr. Green, Interim President of United Lutheran Seminary, was present that week, and was invited to stay for the lunch and bring greetings.

The Vice President also reported that we are making progress with regard to more diverse representation across the ELCA. We have grown from 6 to 21 Vice Presidents who are persons of color since she was first elected.

## **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

### **Reception of property from former congregations of the SEPA Synod**

Two congregations of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod have experienced "holy closure." To formally receive the assets of these former congregations, I move the following:

**S.C. 19.04.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of St. John Lutheran Church, Quakertown, to close, effective January 13, 2019, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of St. John, Quakertown, 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, on this date, April 4, 2019, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**

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

**S.C. 19.04.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of St. John Lutheran Church, Ambler, to close, effective March 31, 2019, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of St. John, Ambler, 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, on this date, April 4, 2019, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**

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

#### **Churchwide Assembly – Open Seats**

The Reverend Susan K. Ericsson is unable to attend the Church-wide Assembly. The Executive Committee recommends the Reverend Karl M. Richard as her successor.

**S.C.19.04.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm the Rev. Karl M. Richard of St. Matthew, Springfield as Voting Member, Clergy to the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.**

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

Further, the Reverend Linda B. Manson received a call to another Synod, and is therefore not able to attend as a Voting Member from SEPA Synod. The Executive Committee recommends the Reverend Nancy B. Brown as her successor.

**S.C.19.04.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm the Rev. Nancy B. Brown of Tabernacle, Philadelphia as Voting Member, Clergy to the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.**

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

In addition, Bishop Davenport has asked the Reverend Tyler Rasmussen attend the Churchwide Assembly as a guest of the Synod so that he can gain experience of the CWA, and we can develop leadership skills which can assist us in SEPA Synod.

Bishop Davenport commented that we need new ideas of what we do with buildings received from former congregations. The Reverend Serena Sellers suggested sending a team out into the neighborhood to see what the community might think would be a good use for the building.

#### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, was not able to be present, and the Finance Committee has not met since the last Synod Council Meeting. Ms. Neff did submit a written report.

Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant for the Synod noted that there has not been much activity, as we are only one month into the new fiscal year.

The first month has shown good response in partnership support.

The market has rebounded, so we are seeing better returns at this time.

The property that formerly housed Immanuel, Burholme, has sold. It will become a karate school and dance studio for the community. Several former members are excited about the fact that the building will be used to serve young people in the area. It feels like an extension of ministry.

Bishop Davenport noted how important an investment in congregations can be for their support of the ministry of the Synod. She referenced St. John, Tinicum, which has not contributed to the Synod for many years, but after a visit and a request for their participation, they sent a check for \$1,200.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

The Audit Committee presented the report for Fiscal Year February 1, 2018 to January 31, 2019.

The Committee is comprised of Mr. Phil Tackett, Chairperson, Ms. Elizabeth Young, Mr. C. Everett Wick, Mr. Donald Gleiter, and Mr. Martin Schwab.

The Constitution charges the Audit Committee with assisting the Synod Council with its overview and audit process. To do this the Audit Committee has again retained the services of Tait, Weller and Baker.

We carefully review the nuts and bolts of the Synod finances, and determine if they are accurate. We then step back and discuss what these numbers mean for the Synod.

The audit report states that the numbers are accurate and complete.

### **Areas of interest:**

#### **1. Congregational contributions**

We are now receiving \$350,000 less in partnership support from congregations than we did in 2015. The good news is that the bulk of this decrease occurred four and five years ago.

#### **2. Liquidity**

As in our congregations, some months are better than others. The revenues are never consistent in their reception. We were concerned that the numbers were as low as they were. We did receive money from Immanuel, Burholme, but cannot count on a sale such as this. The Audit Committee suggests a cash flow analysis be done to assess our actual health.

#### **3. Concerns with Properties we have under management**

The Audit Committee suggests that we remove the value of the properties from the budget we present to the Assembly, to give a cleaner perspective on where we stand “on our own.”

### **Some other thoughts and questions:**

Should we have a property management service to oversee the properties we have, freeing up Mr. Martin Schwab, and placing this under the care of one specifically trained for this work?



Mr. Wick shared we need to be concerned about cash flow/liquidity. With the number of churches closing, and others which are declining, we need to work on increasing cash flow as much as we can.

Bishop Davenport: This is why we have brought on Pastor Karen Sease, who will work on telling the story of who we are, and who will invite broader participation in our ministry.

Ms. Elizabeth Young stated we need to tell the Synod's story, but we also need to listen to congregation needs.

Vice President Beasley: We need you to go to your congregation and speak up, and give SOMETHING. Less than half of the Council responded affirmatively when asked if their congregations are in line with their Synod commitment. Ms. Beasley is planning to come, unannounced, to congregations across the Synod to give a certificate and to thank them for their support. Just being there and thanking them is key.

The Reverend Sarah Anderson – Rajarigam: Can we as a Council see if we can do anything about the cash flow – perhaps a conduct a bookkeeping and accounting review?

Ms. Young replied that it might be good to wait until the cash flow analysis take place.

Pastor Anderson – Rajarigam asked if we need to authorize this so we have it actually happen?

Mr. Glenn stated that this will be discussed at the next finance meeting. Many of our expenses are fixed, and there is not much we can do to change this.

Ms. Young: Yes, that is true, but are there policies that give Mr. Schwab guidance and authorization to move funds appropriately.

Mr. Henry Geyer said the Vice President should not go alone on these thank you visits. He suggested she take the Conference Representative for that along as she visits these congregations.

The Reverend Gwendolyn S. King asked how much the audit costs. The answer was \$18,500.

Mr. Wick called attention to the discussion on properties. We have some properties for which we do not know their true value. Among these are Bear Creek Camp and University Lutheran, Philadelphia. There is also another property listed that we do not know what it is. The auditors are going through their files to determine what the property is, so we can find out what it is worth.

Vice President Beasley: I believe that Bear Creek had an appraisal as part of the lease agreement we entered into about a year ago.

It was agreed that the Finance Committee would work to evaluate Cash Flow, Asset Values, and evaluate the benefits of a property manager to oversee the properties.

Bishop Davenport thanked the Audit Committee for their faithful work, and their encouragement that we all be aware of the need to invest in the work of the Church.

**S.C.19.04.12. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council submit the Audit Report to the Synod Assembly for its approval and acceptance.**

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

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Forward Together in Faith**

The team is working hard to on their presentation to the Assembly.

### **Constitution Committee**

Pastor Tyler Rasmussen, Chairperson, said there are two requirements congregations must fulfill when updating their constitutions: 1) do not violate the ELCA Constitution, and 2) match the Model Constitution for Congregations. Please start your process by contacting the Synod Office first, either Ms. Yvonne Curtis, or the Chair of the Committee. This saves many headaches later in the process.

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, Chairperson, shared that with the rebound in the market our Vanguard account is up approximately 10%, and our T. Rowe Price account is up approximately 13%. The interest earned on the Mission Investment Fund was not reinvested, but was taken as a distribution.

Total value of the Investment Funds is \$3,311,085

### **Administration Committee**

Mr. William Graham, Chairperson, stated the Committee met with Sue Lang for what we need for the Assembly to be successful. He will need help from this Council to staff the registration tables. Please be there early, by 7:30, and help as we get ready for the Assembly. He distributed a sign-up sheet, and said he was confident of the Synod Council's faithful response. He reminded those present that that they can attend the Assembly for free as a member of Council, so please come and help. Be a page, help with registration, just help! As a thank you, you will receive a T-shirt with the new synod logo!

### **Nominating Committee**

The Reverend Lydia Posselt, Chairperson, shared that which is a nearly complete ballot. We are still in need of Youth and Young Adult nominees. She reminded the Synod Council that at least one of these four seats needs to be filled by a person of color or whose primary language is other than English. Persons nominated for these four seats may be from a congregation with someone

already on the Synod Council. Give thought to people who might be good prospects. Nominations may come from the floor.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Pastor King informed the Synod Council that the Anti-Racism Team will be bringing a motion to the Synod Assembly that we have anti-racism training as a requirement of our Rostered Ministers, just as we have the expectation that they receive healthy boundary training.

Prayers are requested for St. Petri – Hope, Philadelphia, as they close their ministry on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Bishop Davenport announced that it is our Vice President's birthday. Happy Birthday to Ms. Tracey A. Beasley, and may she have many more!

Pr. Serena Sellers requested prayer as she will journey to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago. This trip may cause her to be late to the Synod Assembly.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m. with prayer by the Reverend Gwendolyn S. King.

The 156<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 4:00 p.m., at Good Shepherd Lutheran, King of Prussia.

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

*Approved by Synod Council, June 13, 2019*

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

*Building Beloved Community*

**May 3-4, 2019**

**Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse  
Telford, Pennsylvania**

### **Friday morning, May 3, 2019**

9:30 a.m.

**Prayer, Praise, and Preaching**

Bishop Patricia A. Davenport, the Reverend Bryan Penman, the Reverend Lydia Posselt. And the Reverend Nathaniel Preisinger led the Assembly in worship based on the story of the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24. The preaching segments of the worship walked through the themes “We had Hoped,” “Was it not Necessary?,” “Stay with Us,” “Eyes Open and Hearts Burning,” and “Returned and Made Known.” In each segment the story was applied to the life of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and our desire to build Beloved Community.

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

At 10:20 a.m. Bishop Patricia A. Davenport and Vice President Tracey A. Beasley led the Order for the Opening of the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Bishop Davenport 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 Phelps Ollikainen, Chairperson, and members of the Assembly Worship Team: the Rev. Bryan Penman, the Rev. Linnea Clark, Mr. Andrew Long, the Rev. Dwight Mason, and the Rev. Linda Manson, who has begun a new call in another Synod; musicians, the Rev. Linnea Clark, Mr. Drew Long, and the Rev. Dwight Mason; prayer pause leaders: the Rev. Fritz Fowler, Ms. Dedra Florence-Johnson, Deacon Kathy Afflerbach, the Rev. Joey Klinger, the Rev. Christopher Weidner and the Rev. Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam.; Friday morning worship leaders: the Rev. Nate Preisinger, the Rev. Bryan Penman, and the Rev. Lydia Posselt; Saturday morning preacher, the Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock; Saturday morning sacristan, the Rev. Jay Mitchell, and Saturday morning prayer station leader, the Rev. Rebecca Ehrlich; thank you to the more than 50 people, who are serving as worship assistants at various times throughout the Assembly including: Communion assistants, ushers, readers, and pray-ers; and Paul’s Run for providing the font.

Bishop Davenport introduced some particular guests to the Assembly: the Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, Assistant to Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Executive Director for Administration, and our Churchwide representative this year. The Rev. Brenda Smith, ELCA Program Director of Faith Practices and the Book of Faith, who will lead a forum “**The Five Gifts of Discipleship: A Guide for Living Our Faith in Daily Life.**”; the Rev. Linda Norman, Mission Investment Fund Vice President for Administration – She, too, will lead a forum: **Stewardship in the Beloved Community: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

Welcome to the Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, our parliamentarian; Ms. Barbara Debski from Portico Benefit Services; and Mr. Gerry Lauro, of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

Welcome to the Rev. Mark Wimmer, Vice President for Church Relations, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries; the Rev. Jimmy Lee Werley, Interim Executive Director of Bear Creek Camp;

Bishop Davenport recognized and thanked the Synod Officers; members of the Synod Council; the Deans; the Rev. Christian McMullan, 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

Bishop Davenport expressed her appreciation and thanks to Deacon Alison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy, and the Rev. Sarah Stobie, Chair of the Candidacy Committee, for their faithful service on this Committee. Pastor Stobie has recently received a new call and relocated outside of our Synod, and is thereby no longer Chair. Deacon Wilcox will be stepping down from this committee as our new Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Advancement, the Rev. Karen M. Sease, begins her new position. The Bishop asked the Assembly to thank Deacon Wilcox with applause.

The Bishop then invited those rostered leaders who were new to the Synod since our last Assembly to come forward and introduce themselves. We are blessed to welcome these new leaders to our Synod:

Daniel Eisenberg, Pastor, St. John's, (Mayfair) Philadelphia  
John Heidgerd, Pastor, Emmanuel Souderton  
Lauren Heywood, Pastor, St. David's, NE Philadelphia  
Timothy Knauss, Pastor, Messiah Downingtown  
Justin Nickel, Pastor, Living God Honey Brook  
Danny Phelps, Pastor, Bethany Roxborough  
Scott Staub, Pastor, New Hanover Gilbertsville  
Joshua Sullivan – Associate Pastor, St. Andrew Perkasié

Bishop Davenport then introduced the Rev. Karen M. Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Advancement.  
The Assembly welcomed all these leaders with applause.

### **Report of the Registrar**

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, Registrar, reported that the total number of voting members was 438, the total number of voting members registered was 273, and the number of voting members present at the time of this report was 219. A quorum is present.

### **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 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 31<sup>st</sup> annual assembly on December 6, 2018.

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

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

The Rev. Lydia Posselt, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, made the report.

#### **Synod Council**

**TICKET 1 - SECRETARY** (One to be elected for a term ending 2023; nominated by the Synod Council; one nominee required if incumbent, otherwise at least two required)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Rev. Karl M. Richard

St. Matthew, Springfield

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

The Rev. Wayne Mathias-Long moved nominations be closed. Following a second, and an affirmative vote, nominations were closed, and Bishop Davenport declared Pastor Richard **ELECTED**.

**TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY** (Three **Ministers of Word and Sacrament** to be elected for terms ending 2022)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Rev. Gwendolyn S. King

Calvary, West Chester

Rev. Dwight Mason

Good Shepherd, Philadelphia

Rev. Kris Chandler

Trinity, Fort Washington

Rev. Joseph Klinger

Redemption, Philadelphia

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

Nominated from the floor:

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phelps Ollikainen

Trinity, Perkasié

With no further nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 2 closed.

**TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, DELAWARE CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE** (One **lay male** to be elected for a term ending 2022)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Mr. David Ehret

Grace, Broomall

*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 Davenport declared Ticket 3 closed. Bishop Davenport then declared Mr. David Ehret **ELECTED**.

**TICKET 4 - SYNOD COUNCIL, NEW PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE**

**REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE** (One **lay male** to be elected for a term ending 2022)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Mr. Adam Clark

Zion, Olney

*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 Davenport declared Ticket 4 closed.

Bishop Davenport then declared Mr. Adam Clark **ELECTED**.

**TICKET 5 - SYNOD COUNCIL, UPPER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE**

**REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE** (One **lay female** to be elected for a term ending 2022)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Ms. Cheryl Detweiler

Grace, Pottstown

Sr. Jane Roper

St. James, Pottstown

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor. Persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 9.*

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 5 closed.

**TICKET 6: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE, YOUNG ADULT** (One **lay male young adult** to be elected for a term ending 2022)

*(A young adult is a person between ages of 18 and 30 at time of election or appointment)*

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

No nominations from the Committee

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

Nominated from the floor:

Mr. Daniel Graeff

Trinity, Lansdale

With no further nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 6 closed.

Bishop Davenport then declared Mr. Daniel Graeff **ELECTED**.

**TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE YOUNG ADULT** (One **lay female** to be elected for a term ending 2022)

*(A young adult is a person between ages of 18 and 30 at time of election or appointment)*

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

No nominations from the Committee

*The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor. Persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 9.*

Nominated from the floor:

Ms. Suwah Davies

Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne

Ms. Andrea Alderfer

Christ, Kulpsville

Ms. Ralen Robinson

Grace, West Philadelphia

Ms. Katie Schnaath

St. Matthew, Perkasie

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

**TICKET 8: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE** (One lay male to be elected for a term ending 2022)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Mr. William Graham

Prince of Peace, Philadelphia

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

With no nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 8 closed.

Bishop Davenport then declared Mr. William Graham **ELECTED**.

**TICKET 9: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE** (One lay female to be elected for a term ending 2022)

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Ms. Lisa Hand

Good Shepherd, King of Prussia

Ms. Karen Daley

St. Petri – Hope, Philadelphia

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

Nominated from the floor:

Ms. Susan Eaddy

Immanuel, S. Philadelphia

Ms. Beth Feiss

St. Michael, Sellersville

With no further nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 9 closed.

**TICKET 10: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MALE, YOUTH** (One lay male, youth to be elected for a term ending 2021)

*(A youth is a person who is under the age of 18 at time of election or appointment)*

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

No nominations from the Committee

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

Nominated from the floor:

Mr. Tyler Emig

Calvary, West Chester

With no further nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 10 closed.  
Bishop Davenport then declared Mr. Tyler Emig **ELECTED**.

**TICKET 11: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY FEMALE, YOUTH** (One lay female, youth to be elected for a term ending 2021)

*(A youth is a person who is under the age of 18 at time of election or appointment)*

**NAME**

**CONGREGATION**

Ms. Taylor Garges

Advent, Harleysville

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

Nominated from the floor:

Ms. Hannah Malesich

Advent, West Chester

Ms. Sydney Geyer

St. Andrew's, Perkasio

With no further nominations offered from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 11 closed.

Bishop Davenport thanked Pastor Posselt for her report.



### **Bishop Patricia A. Davenport's Address to the Assembly**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley introduced Bishop Patricia Ann Curtis Davenport, the first African American woman ever elected a Bishop in the ELCA, to the Assembly, and invited her to make her address. The Assembly welcomed Bishop Davenport with extended applause.

“Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt God’s name forever!”

Last year I heard clearly: “We elect a Pastor, and then raise up a Bishop.” So when things go well, I thank you all. When things go poorly, you have not yet trained me well.

Bishop Davenport expressed her thanks to the bishops who preceded her, the Reverend Roy Almquist and the Reverend Claire Shenot Burkat, for their wisdom and support in her transition to this office. Bishop’s training is continuing education in high definition!

The Bishop expressed her heartfelt thanks for all who participated in her installation service and celebration last September. “We called on the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit had the audacity to show up!”

Bishop Davenport thanked the membership of the Synod for allowing her to show up and represent them. She emphasized that we are called into relationship. We can do better when we know better; we can do more together than we can do alone. And her relationship with Christ informs all that she does, and we do, together.

As Bishop Davenport moves around our Synod she is regularly asked, “Bishop, what is your vision for our Synod?” Her response: “Together WE set the agenda for the mission and vision of our Synod.” Bishop Davenport wants to hear from the members of the Synod to hear the joys and dreams, challenges and concerns of our people. She is continually asking each person and group “What can we do together to build up the Beloved Community?”

Bishop Davenport is grateful for the sharing done at Conference meetings, and the ways in which the Conferences are doing innovative and collaborative ministry. She cited as examples the work of the Cobbs Creek Ministerium, conversations with several congregations in Pottstown looking to do collaborative ministry, and the agreement of Immanuel, Norwood and St. Matthew, Woodlyn, to share pastoral staff.

Bishop Davenport noted the way so many congregations are working together on issues of hunger, homelessness, the opioid crisis, and re-establishing urban – suburban connections. She stated her pleasure that “You voice a desire to do God’s Work with Your Hands, not just on one day in September, but in every day of your lives.”

The Bishop then asked the members of the Assembly to gather into “Holy Huddles,” with friendly-looking strangers, and discuss these questions:

- Who do you say we are as Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod?
- What are the needs of your local community?
- How can we, as God’s Beloved Community, meet those needs?

Following conversation in these small groups, Bishop Davenport asked voting members to share some of what they had discussed.

Ms. Emma Gubonick, St. James, Limerick: As a Synod, we are all connected. We are different, but we have the Lutheran heart and belief in God.

Evangelist Elizabeth Steward, Reformation, Philadelphia, and Ms. Kathryn Addison, Trinity, Fort Washington: We have the ability to be expectant based on our work, on the spirit within us, and not on any other criteria. God is using women in ministry! Is SEPA Synod able to show a breakdown of barriers and labels that divide us?

Mr. George Miller, St. John, Mayfair: Regarding needs in the local community, we in Northeast Philadelphia are churches that are facing similar concerns and needs, but in the suburbs those needs may be “covered up.” Families need to gather and put Christ forward in their dealing with each other. Poverty, hunger, addiction and alcoholism are present in both settings.

Mr. John Garden, Holy Communion, Philadelphia: The Synod is a bridge between the different and diverse congregations in our territory. We are, otherwise, stuck in our own bubbles. As for local needs, the biggest need we have is connection, basic human connection, and that is what the Church can provide.

The Reverend Bradley Gow, St. Peter, Riegelsville: We question, we don’t just “go along.” We have inquisitive minds. The church is not four walls; we go out of them to the community.

Ms. Evans, St. Mark, Philadelphia: The Synod is a mixture of diverse cultures and economic backgrounds, all coming together to strengthen the Kingdom. Our conversation was about diversity and our commonalities across distinctions.

The Reverend Cornelius Eaddy, Emanuel, Philadelphia: We are in a tent together, but there is a dividing line. We “in the hood” are in survival mode.

Mr. Jim Moritz, Zion, Zion Hill: In our community we see the reality that we are steeped in traditions, which can keep us isolated. We need to appeal to the younger families, and find different ways to grab their attention. When we get them in we can try to deliver the message of the Gospel. We need help finding ways to reach these younger families.

The Reverend Noah Hepler, Atonement, Philadelphia: Our communities need Jesus, community, safety, health, and engagement.

Ms. Janet Hillsmeyer, St. James, Limerick: Our community needs affordable housing and ways to address addiction, particularly among our youth.

Bishop Davenport thanked the Assembly for participating in this exercise, and said that we will need to lean into these conversations. She is grateful that she gets to be in the midst of the people as they do just that.

To illustrate ways in which we are building Beloved Community, Bishop Davenport shared the following examples:

- In her visits with Pastor Bill Davis and Pastor Craig Landis prior to their deaths, she was able to gather nuggets of wisdom and encouragement from them. “Love your people, encourage them, and show up!”
- At every funeral, or rather, celebration of life, we remember the hope that is ours.
- At the Bishop’s Convocation we had time to build community among our Rostered Ministers.

Bishop Davenport concluded by saying that her heart is strengthened and her faith is renewed as the members of the congregations of the Synod pray for her, and she emphasized that she prays for them as well. As our people pray for joys and concerns, for themselves and for the world, they keep the connections going. You build the Beloved Community in the congregations of the SEPA Synod.

The Bishop shared a video of the children of Calvary, West Chester singing a song about the Beatitudes.

“We are under construction. We are the Lutheran Tribe of the Beloved Community. And we are working on it!”

### **Portico Benefits**

Ms. Barbara Demski of Portico Benefits shared a video of Portico’s ministry. We are called to a life of service. Portico helps staff and faith-based communities care for each other and engage in service through providing various financial instruments to allow this mission to continue.

In Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod you have amazing ministries happening every day. Thank you for partnering with us, and allowing us to work with you to make this ministry a reality.

### **Extension of Morning Session**

Bishop Davenport asked the Assembly if it would be permissible to extend the morning session by twenty minutes, and placed this motion before the Assembly.

**The motion passed.**

### **Anniversary Celebrations**

Bishop Davenport recognized those Rostered Ministers who are celebrating significant anniversaries.

Celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their ordination are:

- + The Reverend Bruce T. Davis, Jr.
- + The Reverend Kevin Hilgendorf
- + The Reverend Neal A. Bond

- + The Reverend Robert J. Hopkins

Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their ordination are:

- + The Reverend Jonathan Shin
- + The Reverend James Saboe
- + The Reverend Dr. Susan Kay Folks

The following congregations are celebrating significant anniversaries:

- + St. John, Blue Bell – 250 years
- + St. Michael, Sellersville – 150 years
- + Atonement, Philadelphia – 125
- + Trinity, Fort Washington – 125

Following the recognition of these anniversaries, Bishop Davenport called on the Reverend Fritz Fowler, pastor of University Lutheran, Philadelphia, to pray before lunch.

*The Assembly stood in recess for lunch*

### **Friday afternoon, May 3, 2019**

The Assembly came back to order at 1:30 p.m. with prayer led by Ms. Dedra Florence-Johnson.

### **Presentation of Candidates for Ministry**

Deacon Allison Wilcox and Pastor Karen Sease were called forward to introduce those candidates for ministry who are approved from, and/or assigned to, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Deacon Wilcox expressed her appreciation for the time she has been able to serve as the Director of Candidacy, and is now passing the baton to Pastor Sease, our new Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Development. Deacon Wilcox has been pleased to be a part of this important work of the Synod. Before the presentation, she introduced and thanked the members of the Candidacy Committee: Deacon Beth Barkhau, Pastor Thaddeus Book, Ms. Diane Casey, Pastor Mukesh Cheedie, Pastor Moses Suah Dennis, Pastor Shirley Guider, Ms. Charmaine Hamilton, Pastor Noah Hepler, Ms. Bobbie Hoffman, Pastor Nathan Krauss, Ms. Margie Pendarvis-Wright, Ms. Lisa Presley, Pastor Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath, and Pastor Thomas Russert. She also expressed her thanks to the former Chair of the Committee, Pastor Sarah Stobie, who has received a call to the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

As her last act in this role, Deacon Wilcox then welcomed Pastor Sease to present the candidates. Pastor Sease read a brief biography of each of the candidates, who include:

- + Kelsey Brown, a native of Long Island, New York, who will graduate United Lutheran Seminary this month, and who is awaiting a call
- + Robert Fisher, a TEEM graduate who has been called by Synod Council as Pastor-Developer of Kairos Community
- + Dedra Florence-Johnson, a native Philadelphian and a graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, currently awaiting a call

- + Rachel Scheible, a resident of Warminster, PA, and a graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, currently serving as stated supply pastor for Living Word, Roslyn, awaiting a call

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

Bishop Davenport called on the Reverend Rebecca Schanely, Chair of the Committee on Elections, to come forward and lead the Assembly in the balloting process. Pastor Schanely asked if her report could be delayed, as there were several biographies of persons nominated from the floor which are not yet available. Bishop Davenport concurred, and moved on to the report of the Treasurer.

### **Report of the Treasurer**

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, was called forward to present the Audit report.

As she began her report, Ms. Neff called to mind Mr. Dick Reimet, our former treasurer, who died this past year. As Dick was the impetus behind, and a huge supporter of, Lutheran Night at the Phillies, an event that raises money for Synod Youth programs, Ms. Neff announced that Lutheran Night at the Phillies will be June 7<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to support this event that was so close to Dick Reimet's heart.

Treasurer Neff then presented the Audit Report:

#### **Audit Report**

##### **Statement of Financial Position, January 31, 2019**

Total Cash and Investments	\$3,634,332
Total Assets	\$4,824,075
Total Liabilities	\$ 155,497
 Total Net Assets	 \$4,668,678
Unrestricted	\$3,223,070
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 735,953
Permanently Restricted	\$ 709,555

##### **Statement of Activities February 1, 2018 – January 31, 2019**

###### **Revenue**

Mission Support	\$1,798,189
Other Contributions	\$ 611,842
Registration Fees	\$ 130,372
Investment Income	<u>\$ (45,725)</u>
Total Revenue	\$2,494,678

##### **Statement of Activities February 1, 2018 – January 31, 2019**

###### **Expenses**

Operating Expense	\$1,235,654
ELCA Proportionate Share (50%)	\$ 899,094
Property Management	\$ 110,835 (former congregations)

Distributions to other Agencies	\$ 169,011
Mission Expense	\$ 303,375
Grants to Organizations	<u>\$ 27,240</u>
Total Expenses	\$2,745,209

### **Mission Support**

Receipts in 2016	\$1,851,130
Receipts in 2018	\$1,798,189

2018 Mission Support as % of congregational regular giving:

Total congregations	144
Giving 10% or more	14 (10%)
Giving 6 – 9.9%	45 (31%)
Giving 2 – 5.9%	53 (37%)
Giving 0.1 – 1.9%	19 (13%)
No Support	13 ( 9%)

Ms. Neff read the following from the Auditors, Tait, Weller and Baker:

**“In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Synod as of January 31, 2019, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America.”**

She then put forward the following resolution:

**S.A.19.05.01. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly accepts the report of the auditors of the synod's financial statements for the fiscal year ending 2018.**

**The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.**

### **Review of 2018 – 2019 Budget**

In preparation for the presentation of the 2020 Budget, Treasurer Neff provided the following analysis of the 2018 – 2019 Budget

#### **Income:**

Income was down in three key areas:

- As shown in the chart above, Mission Support was down. The Bishop, staff, and the Synod Council, all thank you for your mission support. It is needed for what we do locally, regionally, and globally. If you can increase your support by a percentage of your receipts, it can go a long way to helping all the work we do together as the Synod.
- Investment Income was lower than we had anticipated.
- We anticipated selling a property, and that did not happen.

#### **Expenses:**

- ELCA Mission support was lower than budgeted, as we send 50% of what we receive on to the Churchwide Organization. As our receipts were lower, so was what we sent on to the ELCA.

- Operating expenses were watched carefully, and were less than budgeted. This was in part due to the fact that we did not have a staff person in the position of Director of Evangelical Mission, as Bishop Davenport had filled that role, as well as a few other staff changes.
- Property management costs were higher than anticipated, partly because we were not able to sell one of the properties for which we have responsibility.

As a reminder, when we sell a property of a former congregation, 15% of the sale goes to the “Unrestricted” portion of our budget to assist with ongoing mission and ministry. We then pay for the accumulated expenses of maintaining the properties we have under management. The remainder then goes to the Fund for Mission, which exists to help with current ministries which could otherwise not fund themselves.

In the Mission portion of our budget,

- We provided \$20,000 in grants for African Descent Lutheran Association for strategizing ministry.
- \$10,000 was available for the Racial Justice Team – \$3,000 from last year’s offering, \$7,000 from the budget. These funds were included under “Office of the Bishop”

Ms. Neff concluded her report by expressing her thanks to Mr. Martin Schwab, our Senior Accountant, who does great work for our Synod and provides great assistance to Ms. Neff personally.

As it was Ms. Neff’s birthday on this day, the Assembly sang Happy Birthday to the Treasurer.

### **Report of the Finance Committee**

Mr. Albert Glenn, Chairperson, came forward to present the proposed budget.

#### **Presentation of the 2020 Budget**

Mr. Glenn clarified that the budget under consideration is for fiscal year Feb 1, 2020 – Jan 31, 2021. The budget as presented builds on concerns Ms. Neff has laid forth.

The process for the preparation of the budget involves several stages. Income and Expenses are first reviewed by the Office of the Bishop, which formulates the initial budget proposal. This information is then forwarded to the Finance Committee, which reviews it and offers comment and advice. Following its deliberation, the Finance Committee forwards the proposal to the Synod Council for its review and comment. The Synod Council then forwards the proposed budget to the Synod Assembly for review and adoption.

Mr. Glenn stated that there are no significant changes from the current budget. The plan for 2020 builds on that which we are using for 2019. There have been some modifications based on projection of income sources.

#### **2020 Budgeted Income**

	2018 Audit	2020 Budget
Mission Support	\$1,798,189	\$1,900,000
Other Contributions	\$ 611,842	\$ 220,500

Registration Fees	\$ 130,372	\$ 209,285
Investment Income	\$ (45,723)	\$ 173,200
Sale of property of former congregation	\$ 0	\$ 825,000
Total Revenue	\$2,494,678	\$3,327,985

### **2020 Budgeted Expenses**

	2018 Audit	2020 Budget
Operating Expense	\$1,235,654	\$1,345,491
ELCA Proportionate Share (50%)	\$ 899,094	\$ 950,000
Property Management (of former congregations)	\$ 110,835	\$ 68,802
Distributions to other Agencies	\$ 169,011	\$ 162,900
Mission Expense	\$ 303,375	\$ 334,831
Grants to Organizations	\$ 27,240	\$ 21,000
Total Expenses	\$2,745,209	\$2,883,024

Mr. Glenn noted that the most significant change in this budget from the previous budget is in the expenses. As United Lutheran Seminary has offered full tuition to ELCA candidates, we have lowered by \$50,000 what we will send to the Seminary. We did this so that the money can be used for our recent graduates who have accumulated significant student loans prior to the offering of free tuition to attend the Seminary. We wish to be able to assist them in order to allow them to serve, recognizing congregational salaries are not always enough to allow these persons to cover their loans.

The Reverend Dr. John Hoffmeyer raised a question and comment. His question was “Where might I find this particular item in the budget? Could we have a grouping in the report similar to the way we have the presentation made?”

Mr. Glenn answered that the broader detail of the budget is found on pages B1 and B2.

Dr. Hoffmeyer’s comment was, “I speak in support of the budget, and support of the student debt initiative, but the budget line we receive at the United Lutheran Seminary does not cover our expenses, so please support the seminary in your congregational and personal giving.”

Ms. Kathryn Addison, Trinity, Fort Washington raised the concern that members of the Assembly cannot see this difference in the consolidated budget as presented.

Mr. Glenn responded that yes, that is true, but that is why he wanted to point this out specifically.

With no other people approaching the microphones for comment, Mr. Glenn put the following resolution before the Assembly:

**S.A.19.05.02. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the 2020 budget as presented.**  
**The Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the resolution.**



Bishop Davenport thanked Ms. Neff and Mr. Glenn for their presentation. She then publicly thanked Senior Accountant Martin Schwab, and called him forward to be recognized by the Assembly.

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

Bishop Davenport called on Pastor Schanely to lead the Assembly in the balloting process. The ballots were distributed, but it was discovered that there were not enough for all the voting members. While there would need to be a further delay in the casting of the ballots, the following explanations were shared concerning two items.

First, in the case of Ticket 7, Synod Council, at large Representative, Lay Female Young Adult, this Ticket will be limited to two of the four young adults who were nominated from the floor. The reason for this is our Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions states that at least one of the four positions for Young Adult and Youth shall be filled by a person of color, or whose primary language is other than English. As the positions for Young Adult, Male and Youth, Male have been filled with Caucasians, and as the nominees for Youth, Female are all Caucasians, the position for Young Adult Female will have on the ballot Ms. Suwah Davies and Ms. Ralen Robinson. Ms. Katie Schnaath and Ms. Andrea Alderfer will be added to Ticket 9, at Large Representative, Lay Female.

Second, it was shared with the Assembly that Ms. Janet Neff has been re-elected to another four year term as our Treasurer by the Synod Council at its February 2019 meeting. According to the SEPA Synod's Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, the Synod Council, rather than the Assembly, elects the treasurer.

### **Keynote Address**

Bishop Davenport welcomed to the dais the Keynote speaker, the Reverend Nicole Diroff. Pastor Diroff is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, and has served as the Associate Director of Interfaith Philadelphia since 2007. Among her many efforts, Pastor Diroff has overseen the organization's "Dare to Understand" initiatives, coordinates the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia, and directs the Interfaith Philadelphia's "Year of Civil Conversations" and "Passport to Understanding" projects. The Assembly welcomed Pastor Diroff.

I have learned over the years that context matters, so let me describe myself.

1. I am a Christian. I was baptized as an infant. I was raised in youth group and Bible study. I love conversation over scripture and food.
2. I am one year from forty. My husband I am married for 16 years. We have a home in Philadelphia, and we have two dogs and a 5 year old son. I was a senior in high school on the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, when we heard that a plane hit the towers.
3. I am an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, and went to Seminary because I wanted to learn more.
4. I have an ecumenical, interfaith vocation. I started as a seminary intern, and now am associate director. I have been privileged to share stories of youth, and senior leaders, exploring faith together.

5. I am a few weeks away from a huge shift in life, as we move to Portland Maine for a new job opportunity for my husband.

I am especially grateful for this opportunity to share what I have learned about what it is to be Beloved Community, and how important it is for this to grow.

By illustration, Pr. Diroff shared that three weeks ago, the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia had a meeting hosted by Arch-Bishop Chaput. There are more than thirty traditions represented. At the end of the meeting she had to get them to take a picture of all these disparate people. She managed to make it happen. “Afterward, the new director of community relations was impressed with how I was able to take charge and make this group listen to me. I said, ‘I could do this because I love them.’” We take risks to get to know others because these connections make healthier neighborhoods, and more peaceful communities.

Pastor Diroff shared the segments of “A Passport to Understanding”

She shared that in this instrument there are five things people are encouraged to do:

1. Be Curious
2. Venture Out
3. Welcome In
4. Stand Tall
5. Stand With

### **Be Curious**

Pastor Diroff shared that several years ago she was invited by the Jewish Community Relations Council to go on a trip to the Middle East. The theme of their trip was “It’s Complicated.”

When I was asked by Jews and Palestinians why I was there, I said I needed to go to the Middle East so I could experience life there, so I could ask better questions here at home.

Sometime later, after flying to Chicago for a meeting, a three year old girl kept asking questions. Where are you from? Why are you here? Then fell silent. She cried out, “Mom! I need more questions!” Amen, sister.

There is a Buddhist concept of “mu.” It means to un-ask the question, so a better question can be asked.

### **Venture Out**

Perhaps the most obvious, but to build Beloved Community we need to venture out.

We need to put on new lenses to see our neighborhood differently. In “The Lacuna” by Barbara Kingsolver, a boy was given a pair of goggles, and went into the sea and experienced, in what seemed to be nothing but blue water, the sight of many fishes, and the feeling of creatures that kept bumping into his legs. His understanding of what “was” became broadened.

Interfaith Philadelphia runs an interfaith program for middle school youth. They enter the mosque, the church, the synagogue, and the hope is that they never be able to see their neighborhood, or their faith, in the same way again. We as Christians, as the dominant religion in this country, have a particular need to venture out and experience what it is to be the guest, and learn to be thankful for being welcomed in.

## **Welcome In**

Our American knowledge of faith traditions is incredibly low. We do not know more than what is shown or portrayed in the news. In her progressive United Church of Christ they have an open invitation to welcome all to come to the meal. As important as it is to welcome all, as Pr. Diroff worshipped one week with friends of other traditions (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist), she realized we need to welcome people to opt out as well. We need to allow people to just be present, and to ask questions. Sometimes we need to know about other traditions to become more aware of our own.

## **Stand Tall**

Interfaith openness is not about wiping away what we hold to as true and important.

We cannot just say “all religions are one.” Ramadan matters, Passover matters, Baptism matters. We are not all one. We need to be welcoming even as we stand firm on our faith.

2 temptations of which to be aware –

It can be tempting to talk about what kind of Christian I am NOT. I do this because of the damage that has been done in the name of Jesus. But my friends do not know, or care, about the ideas of which I am not. They want to know what about my faith is important to me, and why I am so engaged by it.

It can be tempting to linger in the spaces where we have commonality. “Hey, we both have water rituals. We both have meals. We both have prayer.” We need to go to the place where we are not in sync. That is where we are stretched and can grow. Why are you pro-choice? How can you possibly be pro-life? How does our theological understanding lead us to deeper knowledge? It is in these conversations that we become, and are, the beloved.

## **Stand With**

On Saturday October 27th a shooter entered Tree of life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and shot and killed eleven people before police arrived. People called to ask how we could pray together, stand together, advocate for each other. In Philadelphia we have had a Jewish cemetery desecrated. We had a pig’s head thrown at a mosque. But we also welcomed the Pope, and saw the consecration of a Mormon Temple. How do we stand with, and say yes, to being with others in their celebrations and their sorrows? It takes relationships to stand with, and that is what builds the Beloved Community.

This work takes time. A shared commitment to stay at the table is critical. Last summer the Interfaith Religious Leaders Council gathered in a basement of an Indonesian church. When it comes to creating a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, we still have a long way to go. At the end of the gathering, a former mayor of Philadelphia said tables like this are so important, and they do not exist in many places in this city or in this nation.

The divine is most powerfully revealed when our differences are the most harsh and dissonant, but we keep in conversation.

At the end of the Passport to Understanding is this blessing, which she shared with the Assembly:

May we have the courage to venture toward interfaith understanding.

May we be graced with curiosity and humility as we welcome the stranger into our lives.

May we have gratitude for the opening of our minds and the expansion of our hearts.

May we have the strength to stand in solidarity with our neighbors and find comfort in knowing we are not alone.

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

Pastor Rebecca Schanely came to present the ballots for the vote. As there were still not enough ballots for the entire Assembly, there was a call from Ms. Cynta Outterbridge that voting members check and ensure they have signed and submitted their registration card.

Additional ballots were produced. As this was happening, Bishop Davenport issued a call for assistance for the congregation of St. Mark, Conshohocken, in light of a fire which recently impacted them and caused them a great deal of concern.

Ballots finally being available in sufficient number, the Assembly voted for the following tickets:

Ticket # 2	Synod Council, Clergy
Ticket # 5	Synod Council, Upper Montgomery Conference Representative, Lay Female
Ticket # 7	Synod Council at Large Representative, Lay Female Young Adult
Ticket # 8	Synod Council at Large Representative, Lay Male
Ticket #11	Synod Council at Large Representative, Lay Female Youth

At the conclusion of the balloting, Pastor Schanely thanked the Assembly for their patience.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel**

Bishop Davenport called on Dr. Addie Butler to present the report. Resolution 1 was placed before the Assembly for consideration:

**S.A.19.05.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA establish the same requirement for anti-racism training for rostered leaders, that we currently expect of boundaries training in our synod,**

**and be it further RESOLVED, that the SEPA Synod in assembly state that this training be conducted by the Synod's Anti-Racism Team utilizing the "Today's Dream, Tomorrow's Reality" curriculum of the Women of the ELCA as its foundation, and that the full training be taken biennially,**

**and be it further RESOLVED, that the Anti-Racism Team will continue its own ongoing education in Anti-Racism and be aware of updates in curricula, in order to keep the training current.**

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, Trinity, Pleasant Valley, asked for a point of clarification. What is our current policy for boundary training in the synod? How often is it expected?

The Reverend Dr. Dee Littleton, advisor to the Bishop on Fitness for Ministry, shared we require it any time a new person enters our synod, any time a pastor changes call, and encourage those who have not taken it for a period of 15 year to do so again.

The Reverend Susie Folks, St. John, Ridge Valley, and member of the Anti-Racism Team which submitted the original resolution, stated the team included the boundary training because it is required. As for timing in this resolution, they moved forward with what they anticipate as being a leader role in addressing this concern.

Pastor Tim Knauss, Messiah, Downingtown said in his previous Synod, they were expected to do boundary training every three years. Is that an ELCA policy?

The Reverend Wyvetta Bullock, Churchwide Staff, said she does not know the answer to that question at this time.

Mr. Adam Clark, Zion, Olney asked if we can we establish a more frequent practice.

Mr. James Nilson, Trinity, Pleasant Valley, asked if we can add boundary training to this resolution.

Sister Jane Roper, "I call the question."  
The motion to end debate passed.

The Assembly then moved to the vote on the Resolution

### **The Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the Resolution.**

Dr. Bullock shared further information regarding the ELCA's timing on this training. She said that it is not a requirement, but there is the suggestion of every three years for boundary training.

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

Ms. Ellen Daneke, chair of the campaign, brought the report.

Last year we said we would post the first applications for grants. This year we did so, and we received applications for \$187,000. Good news: we are ready to move! Bad news: we only had \$26,000 to give away. 11 congregations and one conference received these first grants. A video describing some of the projects was shown.

1. The Welcome Church went to Boston to meet with peers to compare and learn from each other's ministries
2. Atonement, Fishtown, serves a community in transition. They live in dichotomy: there are high rates of overdose, and houses are highly priced for the area due to gentrification. They want to learn about how their neighborhood is changing, and who their neighbor is now. How do we care for neighbors of both ends of the spectrum?
3. Advent and Calvary West Chester created a Pickle Ball fellowship. People from both congregations, but also people from the surrounding community have come together, making connections and learning to play together. \$1 to play, money goes to help hunger ministry. We help the body as we exercise; we help the community as we come together, we help society as we provide some resources for the hungry. Pray and Play together.
4. St. John's, Blue Bell hosted a Martin Luther King Day of service for the community: materials purchased to have a number of craft projects available for the people of the

- community, especially kids, help the community – quilts, health kits, cards for vets, activity bags for children, and more were assembled. Generated publicity and good will
5. Redemption, NE Philly – communication strategy with a three prong approach
- Live stream camera
  - Better signage. They are on a corner, but are not noticed. They chose to add flags and chalkboard signage to increase visibility.
  - Face book advertising and google maps efforts.

The Forward Together in Faith Team could not award these grants without the support of those who have supported the Campaign.

Many thanks to all on the team who had a part in this campaign. They went out and helped with MAPs assessment, assisting congregations as navigators, ambassadors, and visitors. The next round of Forward Together in Faith Grants will be posted on MinistryLink on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to look for it!

### **Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrants**

There are four individuals who have reached the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their ordination. None of them were able to be present, but the Assembly offered their appreciation with applause for them.

The Reverend Burlington B. Latshaw, III

The Reverend Charles H. Eiss, Jr.

The Reverend Charles S. Miller

The Reverend Daun E. McKee

Bishop Davenport invited Deacon Kathie Afflerbach to pray for the Assembly before the forums and dinner.

*The Assembly stood in Recess*

### **Friday evening, May 3, 2019**

The Assembly came back to order at 7:00 p.m. with prayer led by the Reverend Joey Klinger.

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

Bishop Davenport called on Pastor Rebecca Schanely to give the report of the first round of balloting.

Pastor Schanely gave the following report:

As a point of clarification, the number of registered voting members is 405.

**Ticket #2      Synod Council, Clergy,  
term ending 2022, 3 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>177</b>

<b>The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>The Rev. Jennifer Phelps Ollikainen</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>The Rev. Dwight Mason</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>The Rev. Joseph Klinger</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>The Rev. Kris Chandler</b>	<b>130</b>

Bishop Davenport declared the Rev. Gwendolyn King, the Rev. Jennifer Phelps Ollikainen, and the Rev. Dwight Mason **ELECTED**.

**Ticket #5      Synod Council, Upper Montgomery Conference Representative,  
term ending 2022, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>172</b>

<b>Ms. Cheryl Detweiler</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Sister Jane Roper</b>	<b>146</b>

Bishop Davenport declared Ms. Cheryl Detweiler **ELECTED**.  
Sister Jane Roper will move forward to Ticket #9.

**Ticket #7      Synod Council, at Large Representative, Lay Female Young Adult  
term ending 2022, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>175</b>

<b>Ms. Ralen Robinson</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Ms. Suwah Davies</b>	<b>173</b>

Bishop Davenport declared Ms. Ralen Robinson **ELECTED**.  
Ms. Suwah Davies will move forward to Ticket #9.

**Ticket #8      Synod Council, at Large Representative, Lay Male,  
term ending 2022, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>358</b>

<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Mr. William Graham</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Mr. David Offult</b>	<b>137</b>

Bishop Davenport declared Mr. William Graham **ELECTED**.

**Ticket #11 Synod Council, at Large Representative, Lay Female Youth  
term ending 2021, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>347</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>347</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Ms. Hannah Malesich</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Ms. Sydney Geyer</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Ms. Taylor Garges</b>	<b>101</b>

There is no election. Bishop Davenport declared that Ms. Hannah Malesich and Ms. Sydney Geyer will move forward to the next round of balloting.

Pastor Schanely then had the pages pass out the ballots for Ticket 7 and Ticket 9. When the voting members had completed their ballots, Pastor Schanely concluded her report.

Bishop Davenport led the Assembly in prayer for Pastor Dan Bodine, whose wife died on this day.

The Assembly closed the day by joining in Evening Prayer

*The Assembly stood in recess for the evening*

**Saturday morning, May 4, 2019**

**9:00 Worship**

The Assembly reconvened with a Festive Service of Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m. Worship included a combined choir of people from congregations from around the Synod.

The Reverend Dr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Executive for Administration, preached on the texts of Micah 6 1 John 4, and Matthew 22.

“Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, are we willing to change? Are we willing to be transformed?”

**Second Report of Reference and Counsel**

Bishop Davenport called on Dr. Addie Butler to present the report.



Dr. Butler noted that one resolution had been received after the deadline had passed. The topic of the resolution is refugees and immigrants. If the Assembly would like to consider this resolution, it will require a two-thirds vote to bring it to the floor.

Bishop Davenport called for the vote. By more than the two-thirds required, the Assembly allowed the resolution to come to the floor.

The first item to come before the Assembly at this time is the Resolution on the Earth Charter. With a second from the floor, the Assembly was permitted to discuss the resolution.

**Resolution for Reference and Counsel, SEPA Synod Assembly 2019  
Memorial to the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly  
Endorsement of “*The Earth Charter*”**

*Explanatory Prologue*

*The Earth Charter* is an international declaration of values and principles that support building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It “seeks to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations.”<sup>1</sup> The Charter was created by a global consultation process, and it has been endorsed by organizations representing millions of people. It attempts to provide a new, comprehensive, and global framework for thinking about and addressing issues related to environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace, regarding these issues as interdependent and indivisible.

**Whereas** it is clear that this action is consistent with the commitments of the ELCA to act as stewards of God’s creation made in the social statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, Justice*; and

**Whereas** *Caring for Creation* states that we are called to advance international acceptance of the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability in resolving environmental issues and these principles are evident in *The Earth Charter*; and

**Whereas** our social statement *Church in Society* calls us to support institutions and efforts that serve the common good and further calls us to exercise our baptismal vocation to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life, and *The Earth Charter* specifically promotes these same principles; and

**Whereas** our social statement *Caring for Health* indicates our enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people, and it is clear that human health is very much dependent on the health of all creation and these goals are in accord with *The Earth Charter* call to ensure universal access to health care; and

**Whereas** our social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* states that human impoverishment is incompatible with the reign of God and calls for family planning and enhanced opportunities for women, reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens, and respect for the integrity and limits of the earth. These concerns are in accord with *The Earth Charter*; and

**Whereas** our social statement *For Peace in God’s World* makes clear that we are all responsible to God for earthly peace, and *The Earth Charter* recognizes that peace is the wholeness created

by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part; and

**Whereas** our social statements further state that humans are made for life in community—with God, with others, and with the rest of creation—so these statements are in concord, so that by becoming a signatory to *The Earth Charter*, the ELCA will become an even greater “presence for peace” by working with other signatories to pursue peace;

**S.A.19.05.04. Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:**

- 1. To endorse and become a signatory of *The Earth Charter*; and**
- 2. To promote the use of our existing social statements and other available materials about *The Earth Charter* and its relationship to the ELCA’s social statements; and**
- 3. To encourage members of ELCA congregations to pray for the whole of creation, to respect the rights of all species, to acknowledge the integrity of all elements, and to hold what God has entrusted to this generation in trust for future generations; and**
- 4. To encourage ELCA synods, seminaries, colleges, congregations, members and other entities to join with other endorsers of *The Earth Charter* to promote its precepts and engage in collective action to accomplish its aims.**

1 Earth Charter Initiative: “What is the Earth Charter?”

(<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/What-is-the-Earth-Charter%3F.html>)

The Reverend William Shafer, one of the proponents of the resolution, came to the microphone to address the issue. Pastor Shafer believes this is a critical issue for our world, and that it fits well with the ELCA’s commitment to the care of creation.

Mr. Jim Nilson, Trinity, Pleasant Valley: I googled Earth Charter. It is concerned with sustainable living. I have solar panels, I raise grass fed beef. I am a local politician who works for the environment. I am very much in favor of anything that works toward this lessening our carbon footprint.

Mr. Joseph Kovach, St. John Sumneytown: spoke in opposition. Some actions of the Earth Charter sound great. Other actions seem like socialism. In their research on contamination of the fish population, 90% of the fish affected were in one sample. Other concerns in the Charter call for limiting the size of families. Will we as Lutherans be endorsing a one child policy? While I am for solar and geo-thermal energy, there is much in the broader document that I cannot endorse.

Ms. Courtney Smith, Good Shepherd, King of Prussia: Will this do anything? We pass these resolutions, and I wonder if they actually do anything.

Bishop Davenport: it is my hope and prayer that it will.

Dr. Addie Butler stated that it is the recommendation of Reference and Counsel that we adopt the resolution.

Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

**The Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the resolution.**

Dr. Addie Butler then placed before the Assembly the Resolution on Immigrants and Refugees.

**Southeastern PA Synod Resolution and Memorial 2019:  
Advocating for Immigrants and Refugees in Our Communities**

**Whereas**, our faith calls upon us to welcome the sojourner, care for the most vulnerable among us, and reflect God's love for the stranger and "alien" in our land, and this is made clear in scripture (Matthew 25:35, Exodus 22:21); and

**Whereas**, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has researched Temporary Protected Status (TPS), granted by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to eligible foreign born individuals, who are unable to return home safely due to conditions or circumstances preventing their country from adequately handling their return, and recommends this status as a humane and essential support for immigrants to our country; and

**Whereas**, TPS means that during a designated period, TPS holders are not removable from the U.S. and not detainable by DHS on the basis of immigration status, are eligible for an employment authorization document (EAD), and are eligible for travel authorization; and

**Whereas**, TPS provides these men and women the opportunity to rebuild their lives and raise a family in safety; and

**Whereas**, the Lutheran Church throughout its history has been a church with deep roots in migration, immigration, and care for the stranger and vulnerable among us.

**S.A.19.05.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to advocate for the protection of TPS holders and for TPS status for all those who are eligible; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod recommits to being an advocate and justice seeker for immigrants, and communicates our concerns to our Members of Congress and other federal, state and local elected officials, and encourages all congregations and their members to express their love for immigrants to their elected officials; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to participate in LIRS Migrant and Refugee Sunday activities and pray for immigrants, for just and humane governmental policies that reflect our nation's core values of welcome and inclusivity, and for a world where no one need flee their home for fear of violence, oppression or economic hardship; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to discern ways to lift up World Refugee Day in worship and service; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to recommit to being an advocate and justice seeker for immigrants, and communicate the church's resolute commitment to the protection of TPS holders to the President and Members of Congress.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends the adoption of this resolution.

Dr. Butler clarified that in this case this is both a resolution, which speaks to us as a Synod, and a memorial, which speaks to the Churchwide Assembly.

Pastor Susie Folks asked if there is a set day for World Refugee Day, and if so, should this be stated in the resolution. If so, she would move to amend the resolution to insert this date.

The Reverend Bradley Burke, Synod Staff, clarified that the date was included in the original draft of this resolution, but it was removed to match the format for submission to the Churchwide Assembly.

Pastor Folks withdrew her amendment.

Mr. Thomas Salber, Prince of Peace, Philadelphia, spoke in favor of the resolution. Prince of Peace has been directly involved in resettling people in this country. We have seen Jesus in this care for our neighbor, and we celebrate this diversity.

Mr. Hank Merritt, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Yardley, spoke in opposition to the resolution. He expressed concern that the resolution does not include the word “legal” in relation to immigration.

Pastor Moses Dennis, Faith Immanuel, Lansdowne, spoke in favor of the resolution. We need to support this. Faith Immanuel’s membership is ninety percent immigrants, and what we do as a Church in this regard is incredibly important.

Ms. Cynthia Moultrie, Christ, Upper Darby, asked about whether the date for Refugee Day was being added.

Bishop Davenport noted that Pastor Burke had already addressed that issue.

With no other voting members approaching a microphone, Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

**The Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the resolution.**

Dr. Butler stated that this concludes the report of Reference and Counsel at this time.

**Report of the Vice President**

Bishop Davenport welcomed Vice President Tracey A. Beasley to the podium to make her report to the Assembly.

“I am Grateful to be alive! Time flies when you are busy. Just last year we were here to elect our Bishop. Give some love to Bishop Davenport.” The Assembly responded with prolonged applause.

Vice President Beasley thanked the Synod Council for their work over the past year. She also thanked the Synod Staff, and asked them to come forward and be recognized.

She thanked the congregations and institutions that hosted the Synod Council this past year:

- + Trinity, South Philadelphia, host Pr. David Oppold
- + Paul's Run Retirement Community, host Pr. Julie Dewerth
- + United Lutheran Seminary, host Dean Jayakiran Sebastian
- + St. James Limerick, host Pr. Chris McKinstry
- + Faith-Immanuel, East Lansdowne, host the Rev. Dr. Moses Suah Dennis

If you are willing to host the Council please reach out to Vice President Beasley, or Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations for the Synod.

Ms. Beasley asked the Assembly, "Do you love what we do as a Synod?" The Assembly responded strongly, "Yes We Do!"

You say you love them, but Synod support was down \$180,000. If you love these things, you need to give to support them.

I realize things are tight. And then we want to cut, especially benevolence. But we are SEPA Synod. We do amazing things. We can do more together than we can do alone. An average giving rate of 7% of regular giving would make this work happen. If you are above this, do not cut back! If you are below, can you step up?

To encourage the work we do, we want to come out and say thank you. We are not just going to come to ask for more money. We want to come to say thank you. Starting tomorrow, on the first and third Sundays, I will be going out to thank congregations.

Pr. Larry Smoose, the chair of our Stewardship team, has given out certificates. I want to give out certificates as well. And some kisses. HERSHEY Kisses! Some representative congregations, one from each Conference, will be recognized here today. Please come forward when you are called to be thanked.

- + Central Conference – University Lutheran Church of the Incarnation
- + Delaware Conference – Reformation Media
- + Chester Conference – Calvary West Chester
- + Lower Bucks Conference – St. Paul's Doylestown
- + Lower Montgomery – Trinity Lansdale
- + North East/West Conference – St. Paul's Philadelphia
- + Upper Bucks – Trinity Perkasio
- + Upper Montgomery Conference – Grace Royersford

At least three of these congregations are in transition and did not cut back on their partnership support.

Vice President Beasley then invited Pastor Karen Sease to say a word of thanks for the support given by the whole Synod.

Ms. Beasley concluded her report by saying, “I am honored to be your Vice President. And we can do this. Look to your neighbor and say it, “We can do this!”

### **Report of the Vitality Team**

Pastor Bryan Penman, chair of the Vitality Team, was invited forward to make his presentation. Before he began, he took a moment as the Pastor of St. Mark, Conshohocken, to thank the Assembly for the gift they collected to help St. Mark following the fire they have experienced.

Pastor Penman asked the members of the Vitality Team who are present to stand and be recognized.

One year ago we began a process for evaluating our Synod and make a Synodical Profile as we prepared to call a new Bishop. In building this profile, we discovered that 75% of our congregations reported a decline in worship attendance. We sensed this, but we had to face it head on. As we dealt with this, we also asked what our hope is for the next five years. This included growing congregations, fewer at risk congregations, congregations doing ministry together.

Do you hear Beloved Community in this? Yes. But I hear Vitality in this. We desire to be vital communities of faith. We do not know how to get there, but we want to learn. We need to find how to make this happen.

VUCA is an acronym first used by the Army war college to describe the battlefield since the end of the cold war. The business world has now adopted it to describe the economic world in which we live. VUCA: Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous.

The ELCA has launched a visioning process to discover how we can be the church in this new day, with clarity of purpose and vision.

There are two emphases:

1. Leadership development
2. Vital congregations

It is not just SEPA that has this desire. It runs across the country and across our church.

What is congregational Vitality? Strong, vital congregations:

Embody God’s Presence

Invite and Welcome All

Worship in Spirit and Truth

Share Faith and Tell Stories

Promote Healing

Show Mercy and Do Justice by serving all

Demonstrate Radical Generosity

Are Rooted in their Community

Create Change

Never Lose Hope

The Reverend Tim Johansen, pastor of Temple, Havertown and member of the Vitality Team, offered some examples of vitality from around our Synod.

Invite and Welcome all:

Good Shepherd, King of Prussia, has installed large Welcome Signs to welcome all who pass by. Immanuel Norwood is our latest Reconciling in Christ congregation.

Worship in Spirit and Truth

Reformation Philadelphia hosts authentic worship with their neighbors;  
Pastor Lydia Posselt and the people of Family of God have “Lit Liturgy”

Share Faith and Tell Stories

The Welcome Church took a trip to Boston to share their experiences and learn from a similar ministry in that city.

Promote Healing

Bishop’s vulnerability in issues of racial inequity;  
Pastor Bob Fisher and the Kairos Community are working with people in recovery

Radical Generosity in all things

St. Paul’s Ardmore doubled size of their community garden. If your congregation has been blessed, looked for ways in which you are able to share with other congregations.

Rooted in their Community

St. Mark Conshohocken set up a table to offer water to those in the St. Patrick’s Day parade who need hydration.

Create Change

In all change there is loss. It is not easy, but a seed must fall to the ground and die, and God is calling us to something bigger.

Never Lose Hope

Feast of Justice food ministry in Mayfair.

Embody God’s presence

We set standards for diversity on purpose, particularly on Synod Council, so that we reflect the neighborhood we inhabit. I love our logo: Beloved Community. I also see in it: Be Loved, Community. God has empowered you to be vital communities of faith.

Pastor Penman continued. How do we start growing vital communities? It starts with relationships. God entered relationship with us. As we enter relationship with others, particularly those not like us, we embrace the Great Commission, “Go, therefore, and make disciples.” Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, we will host a training day. The location is not yet confirmed, but it will be a day to discuss together how we are going to approach our process and try to determine

ways to change our ways of being beloved, vital communities of faith. I am glad you are here. You are part of the Beloved community. We are in this together, and we've got this!

Bishop Davenort presented a thank you gift to Pastor Brenda Smith, who is Director of Faith Practices for the ELCA, and who was here to lead a forum.

### **Report of the Churchwide Representative.**

Bishop introduced the Reverend Dr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, and invited her to bring the report of the CW organization.

Dr. Bullock began with Scripture. 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you for your work being Beloved Community, and for sharing Bishop Davenport, Dr. Erik Heen, Pastor Steve Keiser, Pastor Ray Miller, Ms. Hannah Knauss with the broader Church.

### **Mission Support**

Thank you for your mission support. The offerings you place in your congregation, as it is shared with the Synod, is then shared with the broader church, and allows us to be in ministry worldwide, and some even comes back to you.

SEPA Gifts to the ELCA: 50% of partnership support – \$899,094

SEPA Gifts to the the "Always Being Made New" campaign – \$589,834?

We have received record breaking gifts of \$23.5 million to ELCA World Hunger Appeal; SEPA Synod gave \$158,000

Lutheran Disaster Response has received \$11.5 million, \$100,000 from SEPA Synod.

Mission Investment Fund has provided 27 MIF loans of \$18 million in this Synod, plus investments of \$8.8 Million by people and congregations of this Synod.

You have received support for Congregational ministry on Churchwide level, some of which has helped Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne, the Kairos community, and the Well.

There are two foci of our Church's vision – Leadership and Congregational Vitality

ELCA Fund for Leaders Endowment has received \$52.5 million. At least 11 seminary students in this synod have been recipients of scholarships from this fund.

SEPA Synod has supported 6 missionary sites across the world.

### **Churchwide Assembly**

This August the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will gather for its Triennial Assembly. Among the items that will come before the Assembly are

The election of a Presiding Bishop



The election of a Secretary for the Church

Consideration of “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”

We are poised, as a Church, to offer an apology to the African American community for this Church’s complicity in slavery and the systemic racism that continues to exist today.

We want to encourage all our members to be active in their faith. We want to make “God’s Work, Our Hands” day a year round activity and identity.

At Bishop Davenport’s request, Dr. Bullock did not share the video from the Churchwide office, but for those who wish to see it, it will be loaded on the Assembly app.

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

Bishop Davenport invited Pastor Schanely to give the results of the latest ballot.

#### **Ticket #9      Synod Council, at Large Representative, Lay Female term ending 2022, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>133</b>

<b>Ms. Suwah Davies</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Sister Jane Roper</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Ms. Lisa Hand</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Ms. Katie Schnaath</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Ms. Beth Feiss</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Ms. Andria Alderfer</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Ms. Susan Eaddy</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ms. Karen Daley</b>	<b>6</b>

There is no election. Bishop Davenport declared that Ms. Suwah Davies and Sister Jane Roper will go forward to the next ballot.

#### **Ticket #11      Synod Council, at Large Representative, Lay Female Youth term ending 2021, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>113</b>

<b>Ms. Hannah Malesich</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Ms. Sydney Geyer</b>	<b>93</b>

Bishop Davenport declared Ms. Hannah Malesich **ELECTED**.

Ballots for Ticket #9 were distributed, and when the ballots were collected, Pastor Schanely concluded this portion of her report.

### **Anti-Racism Team**

The Reverend Dr. Susie Folks was invited to bring a word from the Team.

She began by introducing the members of the Team, asking them to stand if present. Members of the Anti-Racism Team include: Mr. Chase Ferguson, Pr. Chris Weidner, Ms. Fern Hagedorn, Ms. Janet Bischoff, Deacon Kathie Afflerbach, Pr. Gwendolyn King, Pr. Jay Mitchell, Ms. Karen Paulus, and Pr. Jane Marston.

I hope you have been able to stop by our table in the Mission Center, and signed up to be part of our team. We offer a two hour overview for your congregations, and an eight hour training program for people of your congregations. We want to offer this training three times a year. We thank you for your support, and for passing yesterday's resolution. We look forward to working with you as we go forward.

Bishop Davenport invited the Reverend Dr. Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam to offer prayer before our mid-day meal.

*The Assembly stood in recess for lunch*

The Assembly came back to order with prayer by the Reverend Christopher L Weidner

### **Report of United Lutheran Seminary**

Bishop Davenport welcomed the Reverend Dr. Richard Green, Interim President, ULS to bring an update on the Seminary.

Dr. Green brought greetings from the faculty, staff, students, and alums of the Seminary. We are doing great things at United Lutheran Seminary. In our second year as ULS we are approaching 200 years of training pastors for the church. Established in 1828 at Gettysburg, in 1864 we had a split and formed the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and now we have come back together as UNITED Lutheran Seminary.

On May 17<sup>th</sup> of this year we will graduate 67 degree and certificate seeking students.

Full tuition scholarships are now available for all ELCA seminary students, be they full-time or part-time students. A gift of \$130 million has made it possible for us to allow our students to graduate with much less debt than in previous generations.

Uniting, Learning, Serving embodies what we are about. We have 28 denominations represented on our campus, allowing diverse conversation and learning opportunities

At ULS we have 378 students, 292 seeking degrees. 207 are women, only 170 are men. 22% are African American. 23% under the age of 30. We are working with other schools to lower the age of the students, and are partnering with Susquehanna University, Thiel College, and even Lincoln University to create a possible 3 + 2 program for a Bachelors/M.Div. program.

We need your ongoing support. Students won't need to pay tuition, but they still need support money for other expenses of the school.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you as together we serve our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Bishop Davenport thanked Dr. Green for his report, and for his service to the Seminary.

The Bishop then also shared, especially for the sake of the Rostered Ministers who planned to go to the Rostered Ministers' Gathering in Arizona, that Rachel Held Evans has died. Bishop then prayed for all who mourn her passing.

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

Bishop Davenport welcomed Pastor Schanely to present the results of the final ballot of the Assembly.

#### **Ticket #9      Synod Council, at Large Representative, Lay Female term ending 2022, 1 to be elected**

<b>Total number of ballots cast:</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Total number of invalid ballots:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total number of valid ballots:</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Needed to elect:</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Ms. Suwah Davies</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>Sister Jane Roper</b>	<b>61</b>

Bishop Davenport declared Ms. Suwah Davies **ELECTED**, and thanked Pastor Schanely for her faithful work on behalf of the Synod.

Pastor Schanely thanked the members of her Committee for all their assistance.

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

#### **Resolution of Thanks – SEPA Synod Assembly 2019**

**WHEREAS** it is right at all times and in all places to give thanks for God's grace, mercy and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit which bless and release the people of God to serve Christ and His Church, and

**WHEREAS** the 2019 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly has earnestly engaged in prayerful discussions, deliberations and decisions, and has experienced the blessings of many gifted leaders, workers and volunteers, and

**WHEREAS** God continues to call the church to be grateful for the energy, skill, generosity, and commitment of all who have labored, both visibly and behind-the-scenes, to prosper the work of this year's Assembly;

**S.A.19.05.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we offer our appreciation and thankful applause to all those who prepared for, planned, and arranged this Assembly: To our Synod Event Coordinator, the Synod Communications team, the staff from CCI Communications, our floor pages and the Floor Page Coordinator, our Parliamentarian,**

prayer partners, sign language interpreters, food service providers, and Franconia Mennonite Church whose gracious hospitality is a true blessing;

To the Worship Team, and for all leaders, speakers, and musicians who opened our lips and our minds to embrace God's word and beckon God's spirit; to the Committee on Elections, the Committee on Reference and Counsel, and the Committee on Nominations, for their dedicated work and contribution to the orderly functioning of the Assembly process;

To our presenter, The Rev. Nicole Diroff, and our ELCA representative The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, for faithfully inspiring and informing us of the ways the ELCA, the whole church, and people of all faiths are witnessing to faith, truth, and justice in the world;

To Bishop Patricia Davenport, for her faithful leadership and continued witness to the gospel both in our synod and beyond;

To the Synod Council and Officers of the Synod, the Synod Administrative Staff, Synod Program Staff, Synod Pastoral Staff, and Synod Part-time Deployed Staff, and Conference Deans.

To all assembly voting members and guests.

For all the gifts of God that we experienced in these holy days together, *we are grateful.*

The Assembly responded with applause.

Bishop Davenport thanked Dr. Addie Butler for her faithful service on this Committee.

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

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

**Total voting membership, 452;** total number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call, 142; total number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament voting, 29; total number of ministers of Word and Service under call, 9; total number of retired ministers of Word and Service voting, 4; total number of lay voting members certified, including council members, youth, and young adults, 268; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in the previous total, 116; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 26%; number of female lay voting members, 144; number of male lay voting members, 111; number of lay Synod Council members, 16; number of youth/young adults members, 17.

**Total registered (actually in attendance) voting membership, 423;** number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call registered, 131; number of retired voting ministers of Word and Sacrament registered, 21; number of ministers of Word and Service under call registered, 5; number of ministers of Word and Service registered, 4; number of lay voting members

registered, including Lay Council members, youth and young adults, 262; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in previous total, 116; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 27.4%; total number of visitors and guests registered, 80.

Bishop Davenport thanked Ms. Outterbridge, and announced that the thirty-third annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held May 1 & 2, 2020.

Bishop Davenport and Vice President Beasley recognized the outgoing members of the Synod Council, Mr. Emanuel Alves, the Reverend Dr. Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, Ms. Emily Fowler, and Ms. Lisa Hand.

They then installed the members of the Synod Staff:

Pastor Bradley Burke, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult Ministry, and Faith Formation; Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations; Pastor Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Interpretation; Pastor Sue Lang, Synod Events Coordinator; Ms. Mercedes Lee, Coordinator for Youth, Young Adult Ministry, and Faith Formation; Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, Database Manager, Statistician, and Synod Registrar; Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant; Pastor Karen Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Development.

Finally, the Bishop and the Vice President installed the new Synod Council, and prayed a blessing on those who will be voting members to the Churchwide Assembly in August.

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

Bishop Davenport led the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The thirty-second annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

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

*Approved by Synod Council December 12, 2019*

**MINUTES**  
**of the 156<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, King of Prussia, PA**  
**June 13, 2019**

### **Welcome and Devotions**

The Reverend Julie Dewerth, host pastor and Dean of the Lower Montgomery Conference, welcomed the Synod Council and led devotions based on the lessons for the Day of Pentecost.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 156<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:13 p.m.

## **ACTION TO FILL AN OPEN SEAT ON THE SYNOD COUNCIL**

There is an open clergy seat on the Council, an unfulfilled term ending in 2020. The Executive Committee moves that the Rev. Joseph Klinger fill this term.

**The Synod Council approved the motion.**

Pastor Klinger then took his seat at the Council.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 155<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council were approved with two amendments: on page 7, the Audit Committee, not the Auditors, suggest a Cash flow analysis be done; on page 10, this trip may cause Pastor Sellers to be late to, not miss, the Synod Assembly.

## **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 156<sup>th</sup> meeting as presented. Vice President Beasley then welcomed the Synod Council, especially those who are new to the Synod Council.

## **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

### **Praise Reports**

Pastor Susan Lynch, who had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, has finished her chemotherapy, and the report has come back clean. The gene is still present, but a miracle has occurred!

Ms. Martha Fisher had a fall, but she is on the mend.

We now have a Director of Evangelical Mission. His name is the Rev. William Flippin, and he has been serving in Atlanta GA. He is currently in Switzerland with L.W.F.

Bishop Davenport highlighted the following items from her written report.

### **Synod Assembly**

Thank you for all the support and participation at the Synod Assembly! No matter how much or little you could do, it made an impact. The T-shirts were a sign of an extension of the Office of the Bishop

Thank you to our Secretary, Reverend Karl Richard, and the work that he does, as he was re-elected to a second term.

### **Women Clergy Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)**

I have been invited to go along with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Bishop Vivian Thomas-Breitfeld to preach and participate in the Women Clergy Quadrennial meeting June 22-26, 2019 in Tanzania (East Africa). Following this event from June 27-July 2, 2019, I will spend time in our companion synod, the North Eastern Diocese of Tanzania.

Because I will be out of the country, we need to appoint an acting bishop.

**S.C.19.06.01 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve Rev. Bradley Burke and Rev. Karen Sease to serve as acting bishops from June 20 through July 2, 2019 while Bishop Patricia A. Davenport is attending the Women Clergy Quadrennial meeting and visiting our companion synod, North Eastern Diocese of Tanzania. Pastor Sease will serve solo as acting bishop when Pastor Burke leaves for Tanzania.**

**The Synod Council adopted the resolution**

**Chrism Service**

Over 100 rostered and lay ministers gathered for a time for conversation and support. The Spirit of the Lord is upon US – Luke 4 – because we are so busy in everyday life, what are the core things to which we are called? Good conversation on how to find balance, and keeping the main thing of the Gospel as the Main thing. Thank you to Pr. Bill Vanderslice for his work for this event.

**Retired Ministers event**

I was able to attend the retired leaders and spouses gathering. This is a key opportunity to keep in contact with these leaders and their spouses, let them know what is happening in the broader church, and gather their wisdom on where the Spirit might be calling us.

**Conference Meetings**

We had two Conference Gatherings. Upper Montgomery Conference had a gathering at Manatawny Manor, and Lower Bucks Conference held a program at Twinings Village. We have some wonderful assets available to us as partners in ministry.

**ELCA Event**

Faithful Innovations program will be held at Crossroads Conference Center in NJ. Dr. Dawn Alitz from Luther Seminary will lead this program for leaders from both SEPA and NJ Synods. I hope to give a taste of this program to our Rostered Ministers at our annual Rostered Minister's Equipping Event (formerly known as Bishop's Convocation).

Activities not in Bishop's written report

**Leadership in the Public Square**

I was invited to speak at a high school graduation at Lasalle University High School. My remarks focused around the theme "Be fearless in the pursuit of what sets your soul on fire" – what is that one thing that set you free, makes you whole, gives you unspeakable joy. Then don't just dream it, but put action to it!

What is Synod Council's "it"? How do we put "it" in action? The "it" for me is to make a difference in all we do as a Council.

**Churches United in Christ**

I represented the Presiding Bishop at Churches United in Christ in Montgomery AL. I attended this event with Kathryn Lohre, Albert Starr, and Judith Roberts. It is a body of the Episcopal, AME, UMC, and UCC congregations. I was there to present our decision to leave this

organization to increase our efforts in other ecumenical ventures, particularly congregations of the Historical Black Churches and others. Our conversations in this group have been about issues that we have covered, and we are full communion partners with many of them. By leaving this particular group we are freeing time and resources to enter intentional work toward the goal of dismantling racism.

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

When does Pastor Flippin arrive?

We are not certain yet. He needs to end his ministry at his current congregation. We expect him by September 1<sup>st</sup> at the latest.

Mr. Tyler Emig asked if we can add a prayer. His mother (Julie) is fighting cancer, and it would be powerful to her to be held in our prayers.

Bishop Davenport asked for other prayer concerns. Lifted were Mr. Bill Graham's wife, Jean; the Donovan family (relatives of Secretary Richard) on the death of Barbara; Pastor Flippin in this time of transition; Treasurer Janet Neff's mother, who is now 90; Pastor Susan Lynch; those travelling to Tanzania. Prayer was offered for all these joys and concerns.

#### **Actions on the Roster**

##### ***Call to Interim Ministry:***

**S.C.19.06.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Wayne Shelor to interim ministry at Jerusalem Lutheran Church in Schwenksville, PA beginning June 17, 2019, until a pastor is called by the congregation or until the Rev. Wayne Shelor resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

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

##### ***On Leave from Call Request:***

**S.C.19.06.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Dr. Anita Baly on leave from call status, first year, effective July 23, 2018**

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

##### ***Request to move to from Active Roster to Retired Roster:***

**S.C.19.06.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Carol Ficken retirement status, effective July 1, 2019**

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

#### **Information Not Requiring Action**

##### ***Resigned from ELCA Roster***

The Rev. Dr. Asha George-Guiser, effective June 8, 2019

The Rev. Kim Guiser, effective June 8, 2019



## ***Deaths***

The Rev. Edward Neiderheiser, PhD, April 17, 2019

### **Housing Allowances**

Clergy Name	Housing Allowance Amount
Pastor Robert Fisher	\$17,614.00
Pastor Karen Sease	\$15,000.00

**S.C.19.06.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the 2019 housing allowance for Pastor Robert Fisher and Pastor Karen Sease, and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED 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.**

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

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley distributed a Confidentiality Agreement, which all members of the Synod Council were asked to sign and return,

### **Congregational Visits**

Vice President Beasley is making the visits to congregations which she described at the Synod Assembly. These visits are meant as "Thank you" visits, expressing her, and our, gratitude for our partnership in the Gospel, both in terms of service and financial support.

She has visited 3 congregations in three different conferences. One was having their budget meeting, and was considering cutting the Synod, but she and Mr. Henry Geyer were able to explain what we do and thank them for their support. As a result, they did not cut their support. She will be going Upper Bucks Conference this Sunday. Next up are Chester and Delaware Conferences. It is important that our congregations get to see who our leaders are on this board.

### **Silver Springs – Martin Luther School**

Vice President Beasley was able to represent the SEPA Synod at the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of this school, which is the oldest Social Ministry Organization we have. It was a great celebration of great work.

### **Pastoral Transition Guide**

The revised transition guide has been submitted to the Synod Council for review, and at this time Ms. Beasley asked for the Council to adopt it so it can be used by our staff and our congregations in times of transition.

**S.C.19.06.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the Pastoral Transition Guide as presented.**

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

#### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard shared the following items, which were included in his written report.

##### **Churchwide Assembly**

We are well represented in the diversity of the voting members attending from Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. 47% of our delegation are persons of color, or whose primary language is other than English.

We will have three resolutions considered by the Churchwide Assembly:

Memorial on the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women (from 2018 Assembly)

Endorsement of “*The Earth Charter*” (from 2019 Assembly)

Advocating for Immigrants and Refugees in Our Communities (from 2019 Assembly)

##### **Reception of property of a closed congregation**

St. Petri-Hope Lutheran Church of Philadelphia experienced “holy closure” on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.

To formally receive the assets of this former congregation, I move the following:

**S.C.19.06.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of St. Petri – Hope Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, to close, effective June 2, 2019, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of St. Petri – Hope, Philadelphia, 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, on this date, June 13, 2019, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop’s representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**

Discussion ensued. Bishop Davenport noted that there are three parcels which were related to St. Petri-Hope; the Church, the Fellowship Hall, and an Education Wing. As with each closing, there are experiences of joy and of sorrow at its closing. Fortunately many of the members have already found new church homes, and are continuing in the practice of their faith.

A question was raised about Lydia’s Closet, and what will happen to that ministry.

Another congregation has agreed to pick this up. When it comes to ministry, “Wherever you go, let’s take it with you.”

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

#### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, said that we will go into more detail on the budget in September. Please go to the website to get further information from the Assembly.

Ms. Neff reviewed that we have four segments of our budget. We have Unrestricted Funds, which are the general operational funds, Temporarily Restricted funds, which are predominantly related to events, such as the Synod Assembly, the Rostered Ministers' Event (Bishop's Convocation), youth retreats, and other similar events. The money comes in for a particular purpose, and is restricted for that purpose until that event is completed. We have Permanently Restricted funds, which can only be used for the specific purpose for which they were given, and we have the Mission funds, which cover a lot of our ministry that is not able to fund itself.

Ms. Neff described how the sale of the former Immanuel, Burholme, impacts the budget. When we sell the property of a former congregation or ministry site, 15% goes to the Unrestricted fund to assist with ongoing ministry. From the remainder, we reimburse the cost of maintaining the properties we have to manage, and after that, the remainder goes into the Fund for Mission to assist mission initiatives around our Synod.

50% of what we receive from congregations goes to ELCA as our Synod's mission support of the work of the broader church.

We also support many other causes beyond our Synod as partners in ministry.

Currently we are slightly above budget from Mission Support, but we also have been without our new staff person until this point.

## **REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Albert Glenn, chair of the committee, shared the following:

The committee met on April 30<sup>th</sup>, and reviewed the funds to date.

The Committee considered the concerns raised by the Audit Committee at the Assembly:

### **Property management**

Do we need property managers for closed properties? Mr. Martin Schwab has the authority to hire as needed. It may be good to enlist someone from a neighboring congregation to look in on the properties as needs arise, as they may be closer than Martin is to the site.

### **Review of "unknown" funds**

There is an unidentified real estate asset on the balance sheet that is of unknown origin. The treasurer and the Senior Accountant will investigate what this is, and if it cannot be identified it will be removed from the balance sheet.

### **Valuation of Bear Creek and University Lutheran**

Appraisals of Bear Creek and UniLu may not be current, but they are not detrimental to our financial status at this time, since we are not looking to mortgage them or sell them.

Mr. C. Everett Wick – the question that was raised is whether there is any value to the Synod by owning these properties. Yes, Bear Creek we own jointly with NEPA. UniLu, we own and have in cooperation with campus ministry.

Ms. Elizabeth Young – value of the land, and the buildings on the land, gives a fuller picture of what our total assets are.

Mr. Phil Tackett – Our question was if there is another way to present this in the annual audit from the more liquid assets, referencing the three properties – Bear Creek, UniLu, and the “mystery” property which we need to discover what it is.

### **Cash Flow statement**

The cash flow statements accurately reflect the reconciling of accounts and are in order.

Mr. Tackett – the cash flow conversation is simply to consider if there are times when we are aware that we are really going to need to move funds around.

Ms. Neff – yes, we can, and we can also move the real estate into a separate category for clarity’s sake.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

Pastor Karen Sease, new Assistant to the Bishop, shared about her position.

Her portfolio includes three areas:

1. Candidacy - we have about 40 people in some stage of the process to become a Rostered Minister
2. Leadership – working with those who are rostered ministers and congregations in the mobility process to ensure we have the right leaders serving in the right settings.
3. Mission Advancement – seeing how we can call forth the gifts we have among us for the work of the church. Song from Assembly – “What we need is here”

I was asked to focus on this third aspect of my position for this time.

Do you like Bear Creek? Lutheran Disaster Response? Other aspects of our ministry?  
We said yes, yes, yes.

To make these ministries happen, we need resources. As you have heard, 50 % of our partnership support received from congregations goes to the ELCA, and through this avenue we support many things.

What is the IT that we are called to do? These are just some of the things we are called to do.

We ask you to support the Synod directly. I know you support through your congregation. We are asking you to give directly in any number of ways. Give an amount that you will NOTICE. You do make a difference.

Questions:

Mr. Henry Geyer – do we as the ELCA support military chaplains? – Yes.

Pr. Gwendolyn King – We have Pr. Christopher Otten, who works with current chaplains, and works to recruit more chaplains, and keeps in touch with those of us who are no longer active military chaplains. He also works on connecting with those who are Lutheran in the military  
Pr. Sease – there is a need of more mainline chaplains in the ministry, who can and will willingly deal with LGBTQ military, and women in the military, because some chaplains refuse to minister to these groups.

Me. Bert Glenn – are we short of candidates? Are we at the point that we cannot fill our needs?  
Pr. Sease and Bishop Davenport – Across the ELCA yes, in our Synod, not as much. Because of our location as an urban center, and a welcoming synod, we generally have enough candidates. This is not true everywhere.

Pr. King – are you the one we contact with issues of mobility?

Pr. Sease – Pr. Christian McMullen (Director of Interims) and Pr. Marcia Bell (Director of Mobility) are first in line to contact. I work with them.

Pr. Sease concluded her time by saying, “It is a pleasure to serve with a staff that has welcomed me and is making my transition so easy and pleasant.”

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Constitution Committee**

Vice President Beasley noted that the members of the Synod Council received a report from Pr. Tyler Rasmussen regarding this committee. She said if you wish to change you committee structure, name, or resources, please be aware this needs to come to the Bishop and the Vice President first, and the changes may need to be endorsed by the Executive Committee. Please follow proper protocol.

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. Dave Ehret, chair of the Investment Committee, shared that there are some new funds that were found to be invested. See report of where they have been invested and the current values of the funds.

## **COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS**

Each year in June we describe, and allow the members to select, the committee they would like to serve on, and then we make assignments based on gifts and desires. The Vice President called on those chairpersons present to give a brief description of their committee, particularly for the new members of the Synod Council. The current chairs are

Audit – Mr. Phil Tackett

Administration – Mr. William Graham

Constitution Committee – Pr. Tyler Rasmussen, not present

Finance – Mr. Bert Glenn –It is more than dollars and cents. It is the work for the Synod, and it can be very interesting to be on this team – meets at 5:00 p.m. at the Seminary

Investment – Mr. Dave Ehret

Nominating – Pr. Lydia Posselt – best committee – if you are willing to seek out the few good people to serve the Synod, this is the team to join

The Bishop and the Vice President will take your top three preferences, and try to match skills and desires of the members with the needs of the various committees. The configuration of these teams will be brought to the September meeting for confirmation

The Synod Council elects members of the Executive Committee at this meeting.

The Executive Committee meets day time on a weekday, usually Thursday from 1 – 3 or 2 – 4  
The four officers are members of the Executive Committee. The Synod Council elects three more members: one lay male, one lay female, and one clergy.

Nominations for Lay Female member of the Executive Committee

- Ms. Cheryl Detweiler
- Ms. Sandra Zimmerman
- Ms. Doreen Kinzler

Ms. Cheryl Detweiler                      Elected

Nominations for Lay Male member of the Executive Committee

- Mr. Adam Clark
- Mr. Henry Geyer

Mr. Henry Geyer                              Elected

Nominations for Clergy member of the Executive Committee

- Pr. Laura Tancredi
- Pr. Serena Sellers
- Pr. Matt Staniz

Pr. Laura Tancredi                              Elected

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Secretary Richard noted that the Synod Council as currently configured has 23% persons of color, and 23% persons 30 years of age or younger

New Chair of Candidacy – Pr. Paul Neff – has declined his stipend. He stated that it is his privilege and pleasure to serve.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m. with prayer by the Reverend Karen Sease.

The 157<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 4:00 p.m., at Paul's Run, Philadelphia.

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

*Approved by Synod Council September 19, 2019*

**MINUTES  
of the 157<sup>th</sup> MEETING  
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL  
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
Paul's Run, Philadelphia, PA  
September 19, 2019**

**WELCOME AND DEVOTIONS**

The Reverend Jane Marston, Dean of the NEW Conference, welcomed the Synod Council and led devotions based on the lessons for the Day of Pentecost.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 157<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:20 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 156<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

The minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod were received as part of the packet of materials. Vice President Beasley deferred their approval until the December meeting to ensure Synod Council members had enough time to review them.

**SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 157<sup>th</sup> meeting, with the alteration of moving the Report of the Treasurer to the first action on the Agenda.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Treasurer Janet Neff presented the Treasurer's report. She explained that for this meeting, she would review the detailed financial statements for the synod, rather than just the summaries that are usually distributed to the Synod Council. Treasurer Neff then went over the full and detailed synod financial statements, explaining the various accounts and categories, and invited questions.

Ms. Neff encouraged the members of the Council to compare where their congregations are in giving versus pledge made. She emphasized that regular giving is a great help to the Synod as we work to meet our expenses.

Mr. Albert Glenn, chairperson of the Finance Committee, noted that the Committee has not met since the last Synod Council meeting, and has no independent report from Treasurer Neff.

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

### **Gratitude for the work of the Synod**

Bishop Davenport said her gratitude truly abounds for the work we have been able to do as we mark one year of her service as Bishop. The Bishop expressed gratitude for the work of the Deans, of the committees, and of the Synod Council. Yes, members are elected, but she knows that each member has much work in their life and work, in addition to the work of the Council and the sub teams of the Council on which they serve. “The way you serve, I want to serve too.”

### **Gratitude for our new D.E.M.**

The Bishop is grateful for our new Director of Evangelical Mission, the Rev. Dr. William Flippin, Jr. We have waited for over a year for the right person to come on board, and we are excited and grateful for Dr. Flippin’s presence among us, and the ways in which he will help us see and identify the ways the Spirit is moving among us.

### **Trip to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania**

Bishop Davenport and former Bishop Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld were able to accompany Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to Tanzania, where they were guest lecturers at the Women Theologians and Pastors Consultation. She was thrilled to be a part of a program that supported sisters in two dioceses that do not ordain women. Bishop Eaton spoke to them of governance, as ways to assist them going forward for their cause. These women were inspired to write a resolution to bring before their conference to make the ordination of women a reality. People from the floor brought it up for consideration, and it was passed. We spoke of women in prayer, we spoke of women of resistance in Scripture. It was an honor to walk alongside them as they work to make their next moves toward full inclusion and empowerment in the ELCT.

While in Tanzania, they also visited our Companion Synod, the Northeast Diocese. They were warmly welcomed by Bishop Stephen Munga and his wife, Dr. Anneth Munga. They were able to visit all our sites; it was thrilling to listen to learn, to love, to lead others to see Christ, and to serve.

The Northeast Diocese is starting 62 new ministries, 62 new sub-parishes. They recognize it is not about them, it is about the other. They are raising leaders from the ground up.

### **ELCA Convocation of Teaching Theologians**

Bishop Davenport was invited, along with Bishops Guy Erwin and Bill Gohl, to attend this Convocation, and to present on the topic of privilege and power, illustrated through Bonhoeffer’s concept of cheap grace. Bishop Davenport is pleased our teachers and theologians are identifying the ways in which the system itself is inhibiting people of color from entering ministry.

### **Churchwide Assembly**

Bishop Davenport produced a large folder filled with papers and reports to visually present the volume of materials that were before the voting members at the Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee. In her written report she listed many of the actions the church had undertaken in the Assembly. She then asked for comments about what people have heard regarding the Assembly. In particular she asked what members of the Council are hearing regarding the action declaring the ELCA a “Sanctuary Church.”



- + Pastor Joey Klinger – two people approached him saying “I hope we aren’t helping “those illegals.””
- + Secretary Richard – four different people asked what this was about, but also asked, “Isn’t this what we are supposed to do?”
- + Pastor Jennifer Phelps – just questions
- + Pastor Gwendolyn King – the letter from the Bishop which explains the action has helped a great deal.
- + Pastor Serena Sellers – I heard nothing until I made it the topic of my newsletter article. We have a divided congregation, and people are not talking about it; until I raised it.
- + Mr. Phil Tackett – there is an undercurrent of fear that we are doing something illegal. We will need to reassure people that what we are doing is good and right.

Persons from Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod who were in nomination for positions at the Churchwide Assembly:

Those elected:

Vice President Tracy A. Beasley – Church Council at Large  
 Mr. Frank Roth – Board of Pensions  
 Mr. Emanuel Alves – Committee on Appeals  
 Pastor Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam – Nominating Committee

Those not elected, but willing to be in nomination:

Ms. Annette Sample  
 Pastor Tim Johansen  
 Pastor Tyler Rasmussen – a top 7 nominee for ELCA Secretary out of 114 nominees.

### **Holy Closure**

Good Shepherd, Mayfair ended its ministry August 25<sup>th</sup>, and we pray for the people of Good Shepherd, and for Pastor Dwight Mason, on this emotional occasion. Bishop was pleased to be able to pray, and cry, with them. The theme of the Closing service was “Pass it on.”

### **Ecumenical Connections**

Vice President Beasley was able to join Bishop Davenport in representing the SEPA Synod at the Episcopal Elevation of Bishop Guy L. Glimp, STM, of the Church of God in Christ as we live into a deeper relationship with the Historic Black Churches in our area. Bishop Davenport also had the opportunity to preach with and before Bishop Peggy Johnson of the Philadelphia Area of the United Methodist Church.

### **Staff Change**

Bishop Davenport noted the bittersweet nature of a change on our Synod Staff. Pastor Brad Burke has left his position as Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult, and Faith Formation ministry. Bitter news, in that Brad is stepping down; sweet in that he is returning to the parish, to which he has felt a call for some time. We pray for Pastor Burke and the people of St. Paul’s, Exton, as they begin this chapter of ministry together.

Pastor Phelps asked what will happen with the First Call Theological program now that Pastor Burke is moving on. She expressed concern that this not lose momentum as we have recently

been reorienting the format. Bishop Davenport replied that Pastor Burke has assured her that all is in place for his to continue.

Mr. Bert Glenn asked about the Convocation of Teaching Theologians. Was this within the Church, or was it more broad? Bishop replied that this was for our Lutheran circle, and the many schools of higher education in our circle. They are not getting the numbers of students they would like, and they would like to know why. This is particularly true of students of color. We need these conversations so we can grow in understanding, and make changes to increase our reach and diversity.

#### **Actions on the Roster**

Secretary Richard presented the actions of the roster.

##### ***Renewal of Calls to Specialized Ministry:***

**S.C.19.09.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one year, renewable call to the Rev. Ghislaine Cotnoir to Specialized Ministry as Director of Spiritual Care at Artman and the Hearth at Drexel, beginning May 15, 2019 to May 14, 2020.**

**S.C.19.09.02. 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, 2019. (*Renewable on an annual basis.*)**

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

##### ***Request to move to Retirement Roster:***

**S.C.19.09.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Margaret D. Frischmann retirement status, effective September 1, 2019**

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

##### ***Call to Interim Ministry:***

**S.C.19.09.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a call to Interim Ministry to the Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld for a period of one year, effective August 5, 2019.**

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

##### ***Renewal of Invitation to U.C.C. minister to serve an ELCA congregation:***

**S.C.19.09.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve entry rite renewal, Invitation to Extended Service, for the Rev. Suzanne Marie Spaulding to St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Ferndale, PA, beginning September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. *This invitation is renewable annually by the Synod Council.***

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

***On Leave from Call Request:***

**S.C.19.09.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Dwight Mason on leave from call status, first year, effective August 26, 2019**

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

**Information Not Requiring Action**

***Transfers:***

The Rev. Sarah Stobie to Greater Milwaukee Synod, effective May 16, 2019

The Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld from South Central Synod of Wisconsin, effective August 7, 2019

***Deaths:***

The Rev. John Holman, June 29, 2019

The Rev. Frederic B. Geehr, September 9, 2019

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

Vice President Beasley noted that her report was contained in the packet of materials. With no questions, Ms. Beasley shared that she is continuing her visits to congregations to bring encouragement and gratitude from the Synod Council. She welcomes any Synod Council member to join her, particularly when she is visiting a congregation in their Conference.

**Committee Assignments**

Vice President Beasley reviewed the proposed Synod Council assignments for the coming year. She thanked all the chairpersons for their past work and for their willingness to continue in their roles. The Administrative Committee now has co-chairs because of the amount of work involved to prepare for the Synod Assembly. Please be mindful that we need to be creative on how our committees meet. Make use of Skype, or conference call if not able to meet face to face. Chairs, remember that you are not set up to do all the work. Use your people. Share the load and the responsibility.

**S.C.19.09.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the Committee assignments as proposed by the Bishop and Vice President.**

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

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard shared the following items, which were included in his written report.

**Affirmation of Electronic vote**

**S.C.19.09.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm the electronic vote approving the Rev. Karen Sease to serve as acting bishop from September 1 through September 10, 2019 while Bishop Davenport is attending the Lutheran World Federation 2019 Retreat of Newly Elected Leaders in Geneva.**

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

**Reception of the property of a former congregation of the SEPA Synod**  
Good Shepherd, Mayfair, Philadelphia has experienced “holy closure.”

**S.C.19.09.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 7234 Erdick Street, Philadelphia, to close, effective August 25, 2019, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of Good Shepherd, Philadelphia, 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, on this date, September 19, 2019, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop’s representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**

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

### **Churchwide Assembly**

Just prior to the Assembly, Pastor Nancy Brown was not able to attend. Pastor Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam was appointed to go in her stead.

Voting Members who attended the Churchwide Assembly from SEPA Synod include:

Mr. Emanuel Alves, Holy Communion, Philadelphia  
Rev. Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, Grace, Drexel Hill  
Mr. Matthew Banda, Faith Immanuel, East Lansdowne  
Deacon Beth Ann Barkau, Reformation, Media  
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley, Reformation, Philadelphia  
Bishop Patricia A. Davenport, Spirit and Truth, Yeadon  
Rev. Gwendolyn S. King, Calvary, West Chester  
Rev. Dwight Mason, Good Shepherd, Philadelphia  
Ms. Cynthia Moultrie, Christ, Upper Darby  
Mr. Jeffrey Nase, St. John, Hatboro  
Rev. Bryan Penman, St. Mark, Conshohocken  
Rev. Lydia Posselt, Family of God, Buckingham  
Rev. Karl M. Richard, St. Matthew, Springfield  
Mr. Thomas Salber, Prince of Peace, Philadelphia  
Ms. Katie Schnaath, St. Matthew, Perkasié  
Ms. Courtney Smith, Good Shepherd, King of Prussia  
Mr. Paul Ziegler, St. Paul’s, Glenside

Of those who attended, 47% were persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.

### **Actions at the Churchwide Assembly** **Election of Officers for the ELCA**

The Reverend Elizabeth Eaton was overwhelmingly re-elected Presiding Bishop of the ELCA on the first ballot, receiving 81.19% of the votes cast.

Deacon Sue Rothmeyer was elected on the 5<sup>th</sup> ballot to be Secretary of the ELCA. Our own Pastor Tyler Rasmussen was in the final seven nominees, and was able to address the Assembly.

With these elections we now have no white men holding any of the offices in the ELCA.  
A woman minister of Word and Sacrament is our Presiding Bishop (Elizabeth Eaton)  
A woman minister of Word and Service is our Secretary (Sue Rothmeyer)  
A lay woman is our Treasurer (Lori Fedyk)  
An African American lay man is our Vice President (William Horne)  
We also have 23 of 65 Synodical Bishops who are women. While not complete, signs of growing diversity abound in our Church.

### **Actions on Resolutions and Memorials submitted to the Churchwide Assembly by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod**

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod had submitted three items for consideration at the Churchwide Assembly, all of which were adopted. The three memorials submitted were:

**Memorial on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women** (from 2018 Assembly)

**Endorsement of “*The Earth Charter*”** (from 2019 Assembly)

**Advocating for Immigrants and Refugees in Our Communities** (from 2019 Assembly)

Secretary Richard included in his written report the full text of the memorials as adopted, along with other memorials related to these which were put forward by other Synods and adopted by the Churchwide Assembly.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Constitution Committee**

Two congregations have completed revising their constitutions, and the Committee brings them to the Synod Council for approval.

**S.C.19.09.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregation constitution of Advent, West Chester.**

**S.C.19.09.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, pending ratification by the congregation, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregation constitution of St. Peter, Hilltown.**

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

Pastor Tyler Rasmussen, chair of the Constitution Committee, shared that the new revisions to Model Constitution for Congregations which were adopted at the Churchwide Assembly are now available. Please be sure to incorporate them into your constitutions, and if you have not done so recently, now is a good time to update your constitution.

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, chairperson, shared that since our last meeting \$650,000 has been added to the portfolio, approximately \$50,000 in each fund.

Total investment portfolio as of August 31, 2019 is \$4,157,682

### **Forward Together in Faith**

Ms. Ellen Daneke, chairperson of the Campaign, shared that \$25,000 is available in grants this year. The window for applying opened June 1<sup>st</sup>, and will remain open until September 30<sup>th</sup>. So

far only one grant request has been received, but the team does anticipate several more to arrive by the deadline. The grant committee will meet in October and November, with decisions to be made in December. There may be an ability to evaluate late requests. Distribution of funds should happen in January.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The Rev. Dr. William Flippin, Jr., newly called Director for Evangelical Mission, was given an opportunity to address the Synod Council. He share that he is delighted to be in this Synod serving under Bishop Davenport. He officially arrived on August 7<sup>th</sup> in the midst of the Churchwide Assembly. He did not have his car for a while, which forced him to get around and see what is here. He has met with the Deans, and is looking forward to working with them.

Some questions he is working through include:

How do we address the three expressions of the Church? For instance, Synodically Authorized Worship Communities now fall to the Synod to endorse. Many things are moving in how we interact.

He is curious about the concept of an Anchor Church.

Do you spend time with churches at risk, or with the congregations showing signs of vitality?

Three areas of focus for Dr. Flippin are

1. deal with at risk congregations
2. justice ministry
3. strengthen our ecumenical relations

He also wants to be true to the Vitality Team as we move forward in collaboration.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **MISSION MOMENT**

For the Mission Moment, several videos from the Churchwide Assembly were viewed.

- + Apology to those of African Descent
- + AMMPARO walk to ICE office
- + Procession, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women celebration service
- + Pastor Tyler Rasmussen's "final 7" segments

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 with prayer by Dr. Flippin.

The 158<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 4:00 p.m., at United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia Campus.

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

*Approved by Synod Council December 12, 2019*

**MINUTES**  
**of the 158<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia Campus**  
**7301 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA**  
**December 12, 2019**

**WELCOME AND DEVOTIONS**

The Reverend Jane Marston, Dean of the NE/nW Philadelphia Conference, welcomed the Synod Council and led devotions: Lessons and Prayers for Advent.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 158<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:14 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod were approved as presented, with one spelling correction of “McMullan.”

The minutes of the 157<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

**SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 158<sup>th</sup> meeting as presented.

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Davenport noted that all had received her report, and asked if there were any questions regarding the report, or any other issue whatsoever.

The Reverend Serena Sellers asked if there is a process set for the restructuring of the Synod Staff.

Bishop Davenport said there is. Job descriptions have been revised. The current staff is using a team approach so nothing falls through the cracks in the midst of the restructuring. There is a staff retreat planned to discuss this further. There is an intentional effort to take into account issues that have been raised in the Conferences at their assemblies.

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, asked “What is your greatest joy as our bishop in this season?” Bishop Davenport replied that she is delighted to see the Synod Council here in this busy season. All but two are present, ready and willing to do the work of the Synod in this busy time.

Mr. Albert Glenn asked if members of the Synod Council have questions or ideas regarding the structuring of the Synod would that be welcomed, and to whom one would submit the inquiry. Bishop – you can submit questions or ideas to either the bishop or to Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations.

The Reverend Joey Klinger asked if the Bishop is able to keep a healthy balance in this hectic season.

The Bishop said she is.

### **Actions on the Roster**

Secretary Richard presented the following actions on the roster, all of which **the Synod Council adopted unanimously.**

#### ***On Leave Extension Request to ELCA Conference of Bishops***

**S.C.19.12.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Deacon Suzanne Rigg be granted her second *On Leave From Call* extension from the ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee, and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council request approval of this extension from the ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee.**

#### ***Call to Specialized Ministry***

**S.C.19.12.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a three-year renewable call to Specialized Ministry to the Rev. DeBorah Glod as Chaplain/Spiritual at Compassus Hospice & Palliative Care in Fort Washington effective November 11, 2019 to November 10, 2022.**

#### ***Term Call Extension***

**S.C.19.12.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a three-year renewable term call to the Rev. Tricia Neale as Executive Director at Feast of Justice in Philadelphia effective December 1, 2019 to November 30, 2022.**

#### ***Request to move from Active to On Leave from Call Roster***

**S.C.19.12.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant on leave from call status to the Rev. Donna Wright, first year, effective July 2, 2019**

#### ***Requests to move from Active to Retired Roster***

**S.C.19.12.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Jonathan Shin retirement status, effective June 25, 2019**

**S.C.19.12.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Harold Evans retirement status, effective April 1, 2019**

**S.C.19.12.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Dyan Lawlor retirement status, effective December 1, 2019**



**S.C.19.12.08. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Joseph Varsanyi retirement status, effective January 1, 2020**

**Information not requiring action**

***Resigned from the ELCA Roster***

The Rev. Ashley Rossi effective October 10, 2019

***Transfer***

The Rev. Terrance W. Goad to Lower Susquehanna Synod effective June 20, 2019

The Rev. Amy S. Hotter to New Jersey Synod effective September 19, 2019

The Rev. Stephen B. Johnson from North Carolina Synod effective September 28, 2019

The Rev. Burlington B. Latshaw III to NEPA Synod effective Oc. 24, 2019.

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

Vice President Beasley noted that her report had been submitted to the Council, and asked for questions regarding it.

**Synod Office Space**

Mr. Glenn asked about the status of the Synod office space at the Seminary.

Bishop Davenport asked the Rev. Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann, representative and host from United Lutheran Seminary, to respond from the perspective of the school.

Dr. Zimmann shared the Seminary would like the Synod to stay as long as they can. There are still some questions about how we can make revenue streams that allow for sustainability, but there is not a definitive answer as to what that will entail. At the moment, the Seminary is grateful for the Synod's presence as long as the Synod is pleased to be on the Seminary campus.

Bishop Davenport stated that we as the Synod are looking at all options, and at various partnerships. While we like the idea of working together to remain here, the rent is too high, and we need to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We have looked at three ministry sites as well as some corporate sites for possible office space.

**All Saints Appeal**

We have received \$29,000 toward our goal of \$35,000 for this appeal. Receipts from previous years have been: \$18,000 in 2018; \$26,000 in 2017; \$28,000 in 2016; \$46,000 in 2015.

**Resolution from St. John's, Richlandtown**

The following resolution was received from the congregation council of St. John's, Richlandtown:

**In response to the ELCA's declaring itself a sanctuary church**

WHEREAS, we understand the church's call to be one of welcoming all people who come to our door and endeavoring to help them as we are able; and

WHEREAS, we support the church caring for legal immigrants and refugees in this country, including through churchwide efforts like the program Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and the strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO); and

WHEREAS, we recognize that there is a problem with the immigration system as it currently exists in our country and that, in its current form, it puts vulnerable people at risk, especially children; and

WHEREAS, in the current political context, the word “sanctuary” is ambiguous and can be understood by others to mean that the church is proposing to undertake illegal activities on behalf of migrants, an assumption that could have dangerous consequences for individual congregations and the church; and

WHEREAS, the process of passing the resolution at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to declare the ELCA a sanctuary church left out local voices and more careful deliberation and did not properly consider the reaction of the wider church and society given the current interpretation of a politically polarizing word like “sanctuary”; and

WHEREAS, it should be the position of the church to welcome all opinions and concerns and not take on a political agenda that estranges people within the church and impacts how those outside the church perceive the church; be it

RESOLVED, that St. John’s Lutheran Church in Richlandown, PA memorializes the SEPA Synod Council and Churchwide Council to promote the removal of the label “sanctuary” from the resolution adopted in the 2019 Churchwide Assembly at the next Churchwide Assembly in 2022 and replace this word with a less politically incendiary statement such as “universally welcoming”; and

Work to actively petition all members of Congress, through advocacy programs like AMMPARO and LIRS, to work together to effect changes to the current immigration laws so that migrants and U.S. citizens alike are ensured safety and security; and, until such time as the “sanctuary” statement can be changed,

Make available educational resources that target congregations and create an informational campaign that targets the national public by the spring of 2020 about what the ELCA is doing to address the migrant crisis; and

Make available discussion resources for congregations by the spring of 2020 to deliberate with the national church about what the word “sanctuary” means; and, using the results of these discussions,

Create a publicity campaign for the wider public by the fall/winter of 2020 that clarifies what “sanctuary” is and isn’t for the ELCA.

Vice President Beasley called on the Reverend Tyler Rasmussen to bring background information to the Synod Council, as he was a part of conversations with St. John’s council.

Pastor Rasmussen shared that the congregation council is afraid of how the use of “sanctuary” will be heard in the broader community. They are concerned that this will give “bad actors” in the immigrant community permission to violate the law, and they are concerned that this will give bad actors on the extreme right the idea that we are breaking the law for illegal immigrants, and will empower them in their threats to harm immigrants. Pastor Rasmussen and Pastor Kat Steinly, who serves at St. John’s, worked with the congregation council to find a measured way for them to address their issues that was proactive, and let them feel heard in the midst of their concerns.

A wide and varied discussion ensued regarding how the Synod Council should respond.

Secretary Richard shared several items related to the resolution.

It is appropriate for their congregation council to speak to the Synod Council, and for them to request that the Synod Council address the Church Council. Councils speak to councils, and assemblies speak to assemblies. However, we cannot, as councils, override the action of an Assembly. Therefore our passing this on to the Church Council will not yield a change in language that the Churchwide Assembly adopted.

Many of the actions that St. John's is requesting are a part of the resolution adopted at the Churchwide Assembly, particularly empowering AMMPARO and LIRS to work for the advancement in the immigration issues before the country, the need to clarify the meaning of "sanctuary," and the dissemination of educational materials on the issues of sanctuary, immigration, and the need for us to stand with migrants and those in need.

Secretary Richard suggested we draft two letters; one to St. John's, Richlandtown, to let them know we have received their resolution, have discussed it, and are passing it on to the Church Council, clarifying that we cannot effect the change requested at a council level, and a second to the Church Council, including the resolution from St. John's, recognizing that the Church Council cannot change the wording, but encouraging the Church Council to expedite the work on the definition of sanctuary and the dissemination of educational materials called for in the resolution from the Churchwide Assembly, noting that St. John's is not the only congregation concerned about this choice of language, and seeking clarification and assistance in applying the spirit of the "sanctuary church" resolution.

## **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard referenced his written report, which contains the changes to the Synod constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions adopted at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The required provisions have been incorporated, needing no action by the Synod Council or Synod Assembly, but taking affect as soon as posted. The other provisions are items that will need to be adopted by the Synod Assembly, as they pertain to sections that are not required provisions of the constitution, but contain language that needs to be incorporated to keep consistent across the entire document. There will also be some other changes to incorporate the new language and understandings in portions of our SEPA constitution that are not part of the Model constitution for Synods, but have grown out of our local context.

The bulk of the changes deal with two topics. One is the change in designation of deacons from "lay" to "clergy," and representational principles of assemblies and committees based on this change. The second is a change in language from "male" and "female" to "man" and "woman," and percentages from 50 / 50 to at least 45%. This is an attempt to make room for those who do not identify as "male" or "female", and to allow flexibility in the numbers needed to make a legal gathering.

There will be a delay for all of this to be incorporated, as there is language in the constitution and the by-laws that will need to be altered by the next Churchwide Assembly to fully change the designation of deacons as clergy. This will leave an awkward period of time for deacons and their ability to serve in certain positions, as we need to formally change the language of the constitution before we can nominate deacons for these positions.

## **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, referenced her written report. She made the following comments regarding our position as we approach the end of the year: Partnership support is down, but we anticipate that increasing as we come to Christmas and the end of the year. Congregations often send in more of their pledge with the end of year income. In the meantime, we are in good financial shape because we were able to sell some of the properties we hold under management. We continue to try to encourage partnership support by showing this money is not about what the Synod needs to receive, but how this money makes a difference as it supports the work of our congregations and the ministries of our Synod.

Ms. Neff asked if there were any questions.

The Reverend Gwendolyn King asked about numbers in the Temporarily Restricted funds, particularly an entry of monies received for Racial Justice.

Ms. Neff explained that this is money that people have given personally toward this concern. This is separate from, and in addition to, the money budgeted for the Anti-racism Team.

Pr. King shared that she did not want the Synod Council to think that the Anti-racism Team was overspending their budgeted amount.

## **REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, echoed what Ms. Neff had shared that we have gained resources from the sale of properties under management. However, he emphasized that this is not a guaranteed source of income, nor an ongoing source. We still need to support the work of our Synod through our congregations' Partnership Support.

The Finance Committee reviewed the financial reports, and all seems in order.

The Committee also reviewed the allocation of assets from the sale of properties, and can assure the Council that they are being distributed properly, including the portion that goes to the Fund for Mission.

The Committee is working on a form for seminary graduates to use to apply for monies to assist with their student loan debt. This is in line with the budgeting decision made at the Synod Assembly to reduce the amount going to the seminary in order to provide help to those who graduated seminary prior to the recent decision to offer free tuition to all incoming students.

## **MISSION MOMENT**

Vice President Beasley welcomed Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann, Director of Church Relations, Adjunct Faculty for Church and Society, and Executive Director of the Stewardship Life Institute to bring the Mission Moment.

Dr. Zimmann started his remarks by thanking Pr. King for the work of mentorship, pastoral care, and spiritual support she provides for the students of ULS, Philadelphia Campus.

He then shared an "End of Year Update" describing aspects of the Seminaries work in 2019.

Dr. Zimmann thanked SEPA Synod for its ongoing support of the Seminary, noting that the money we give goes to daily operations, not to scholarships. “This is what helps to keep the lights on.”

All degree seeking students, regardless of denomination, are now receiving full tuition scholarships. As a result, many fewer students are needing to obtain federal loans to cover their debts.

The Seminary is working hard to pay off the Brossman Center on the Philadelphia Campus, and the Seminary Ridge Museum on the Gettysburg Campus.

The Seminary community is grateful for the work of Interim President Dr. Richard Green, who left the position at the end of November. While he is missed, the community is happy for him that he is able to join his wife in Arizona to enjoy their time together in retirement.

The goal is to have the presidential search completed, and a new president in place, by the fall of 2020.

Bishop Davenport thanked Dr. Zimmann for his, and the Seminary’s, partnership, hospitality, and the dinner we are soon to receive.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Forward Together in Faith**

A written report had been submitted. Grant funds will be distributed in January.

### **Constitution Committee**

Pr. Tyler Rasmussen, Chair of the Constitution Committee, presented the following resolutions for Council approval.

**S.C.19.12.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, pending ratification by the congregation, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregation constitution as amended of Trinity, Springfield, Bucks County; St. John’s, Sumneytown; and Reformation, Philadelphia**

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

**S.C.19.12.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregation articles of incorporation as amended of Trinity, Springfield, Bucks County.**

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

Pr. Rasmussen has recently accepted a call to the Greater Milwaukee Synod. The Synod Council expresses its thanks to Pr. Rasmussen for his service to this Council, and his work as chair of the Constitution Committee. We wish him Godspeed and many years of God’s blessing in his new pastorate.

### **Investment Committee**

David Ehret, chair, presented the report.

This year our investments have done exceptionally well, with a return of nearly 20%. Next year we expect to return to a more normal rate of return of 5%.

Total investment portfolio is \$4,518,109.

### **Administration Committee**

The proposed Agenda for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Synod Assembly was presented for comment and revision. The theme is “Acuity: Seeing Mission Possibilities”.

At the 2:20 presentation of the Report of the Treasurer and Finance Committee, it should be stated that this is where the proposed budget is considered.

Service and Learning opportunities will be a part of the Assembly. We have set an opportunity for people to come and serve. The projects will include filling backpacks for those experiencing homelessness and working on quilts for Lutheran World Relief. This will give even more lay members of our congregations to see, and experience, some of the work of the Synod.

Pr. King asked if there will be any inclusion of the 50/40/10 Anniversary celebration as part of the Assembly.

Bishop Davenport said she expects so, as she has dropped enough hints to that effect.

Vice President Beasley shared that there will be a weekend celebration to commemorate the anniversary. A revival will be held on Friday, October 23, and a breakfast will be held on Saturday, October 24. The event is being coordinated by Pastor Sandra Brown and Pastor Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam.

The Proposed Agenda was adopted with the addition of the consideration of the budget, and some inclusion of the 50/40/10 celebration.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Reverend Lydia Posselt, chair of the Committee, described the open positions for which we need nominees. She noted that we will be staggering the terms on the Consultation Committee.

Pr. Posselt asked the members of the Synod Council to distribute the letter, approach potential nominees, and have forms, including a picture, in by February 15<sup>th</sup>. She encouraged those members of Synod Council who are eligible for re-election to consider allowing their name to be placed in nomination, and submit their paperwork.

The Synod Council expressed their congratulations to Pr. Posselt on her recent marriage.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Please hold to timelines as we approach the Assembly, and the need for report submissions. The date for submission of reports is March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Vice President Beasley asked the chairpersons of the committees to include in their reports the date when you met, where you met, if you met remotely, and the date of your next meeting. She also asked that they be sure to sign their reports when they submit them.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

To ensure we have a process to address the concerns of St. John's, Richlandtown, Pr. King moved that **the Executive Committee draft the letters to the congregation council of St. John's, and to the Church Council regarding the issue of Sanctuary Church.**

**The Synod Council unanimously approved the motion.**

Pr. Sellers expressed gratitude to Ms. Doreen Kinzler for providing Christmas cookies to the members of the Synod Council.

Mr. Henry Geyer expressed his appreciation for Mrs. Elise Seyfried's article in the Living Lutheran. It is nice to see a person from our Synod published in the Church's magazine.

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m. with prayer by Dr. Zimmann.

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

*Approved by Synod Council February 27, 2020*

**MINUTES**  
**of the 159<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Perkasie, PA**  
**February 27, 2020**

### **WELCOME AND DEVOTIONS**

The Reverend Dr. Phil Krey and the Reverend Joshua Sullivan, pastors of St. Andrew, welcomed the Synod Council, and shared some highlights of the ministry of St. Andrew. St. Andrew focusses on invitation and details, delivering cookies to visitors, and trying to make "sticky contacts" when they come to encourage a connection to the congregation. St. Andrew has made small group ministry a priority in order to encourage such connections.

The Reverend Carolann Hopcke, Dean of the Upper Bucks Conference, led the Council in Devotions. Based on Jan Richardson's "Where Breath Begins," Pastor Hopcke had the members reflect on their journeys in life, as we enter this Lenten Journey

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 158<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:29 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 158<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

### **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 159<sup>th</sup> meeting with one alteration: to move the Mission Moment to precede the Report of the Bishop.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

Ms. Phyllis Boyer, President of the Synodical Unit of the Women of the E.L.C.A., and Ms. Linda Garcia, Vice President, presented the Mission Moment.

They commented that they are pleased to note some connections with the Synod Council. Ms. Sandra Zimmerman is a Board Member of the Women of the E.L.C.A.; the Reverend Gwendolyn King will be representing the SEPA Synodical Unit of the Women of the E.L.C.A. at the next Triennial Gathering; the Reverend Dr. Jennifer Phelps has an article in the current edition of the Women of the E.L.C.A.'s magazine, "Gather;" Bishop Davenport will be the keynote speaker at the June Synodical Unit event, held at St. Matthew, Springfield, where Secretary Karl Richard is pastor.

The Women of the E.L.C.A. was formed in 1987, just prior to the merger that created the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and was voted into existence in 1988, the year of the merger. The Women of the E.L.C.A. is a separate, self-funding unit.

A goal of the Women of the E.L.C.A. is to empower women in service, as the women of our Church work to address the needs of women and children, particularly those in poverty. There are several tools the Women of the E.L.C.A. have to empower women in their faith and service. One of them is "Gather" magazine, the official magazine of the organization. The latest edition focusses on 50 years of the Lutheran Church ordaining women, and features the hands of our Bishop on the cover. Within "Gather" are Bible studies geared particularly for women, and they are very helpful for local church study.

"The Interchange" is the newsletter of the Women of the E.L.C.A., and there is also a website to make information broadly available.

The current desire is to attract more young women to join in this ministry, and so there are blogs and podcasts available to bring information and resources in this format as well.

February 24<sup>th</sup> is the second annual "Bold Women's Sunday" – intended to encourage women to act boldly in their faith in Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement – "As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in



faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.”

When women gather together, amazing things can be accomplished. We gather in congregational groups, in synodical groups, and as a church-wide entity. We are trying to make the organization more flexible by stream-lining the leadership structure and how congregational units operate to make it more possible for more women to be able to participate.

The Women of the E.L.C.A. works for social justice in many areas, particularly issues of women and children in poverty. Among the areas of focus are: AMMPARO, the effort of the E.L.C.A. to address needs of migrant minors; “Thursday’s in Black,” an initiative of the World Council of Churches which works to bring awareness to the issues of women experiencing gender-based violence; Lutheran World Relief quilts; and advocating against the scourge of Human Trafficking.

The next Triennial Gathering, entitled, “Just Love,” is scheduled for July 16 – 19, 2020, in Phoenix, AZ.

A focus from the last triennial was the need to provide potable water to Flint, and to recognize domestic violence in our areas of serving. In kind gifts were received for food pantries, supplies for Haiti, and domestic violence shelters.

At the 2019 SEPA synodical gathering the focus was also on water for Flint. \$15,000 was raised to send to our sister synod in Michigan, along with many notes of encouragement. The speaker addressed issues of water in our own area, and the efforts we can take to keep our water safe and secure.

In SEPA Synod there are 30 congregational units. Many meet monthly. They do many things, including making LWR quilts, and collecting clothing for domestic violence shelters. They give mutual support to other congregational units, encouraging one another on the work that each does.

The Synodical Organization assists in collecting the quilts for LWR, and provides the money and transportation to get the quilts to the distribution site in Maryland.

The Synodical organization is on the SEPA Synod website; down at bottom of list with the “W”s.

This year’s Synod Gathering, “This is My Story,” will be June 6<sup>th</sup> at St. Matthew, Springfield. Bishop Davenport will be the speaker, and we will celebrate and honor the women pastors within our Synod.

## **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Patricia A. Davenport began by asking if there were questions for her from her report.

## **Assignment Process**

The Reverend Joey Klinger asked how committed the Church is to the Assignment process for seminary graduates who are candidates for call as it is currently structured, or how might it change?

Bishop Davenport said the Church is aware that the process needs to be changed, as it reflects dynamics and demographics from thirty years ago, and which do not reflect the reality of our graduates and candidates today. Different situations call for different approaches, and this is being considered by the broader Church leadership.

### **End of Year Thanks**

A small staff luncheon was held at Christmas time to thank them and spend time together. We need to respect family and friends, and cultivate personal relationships as much as we do our professional relationships.

### **Conference of Bishops**

The Conference of Bishops has decided to pull “Trustworthy Servants,” the potential successor to “Visions and Expectations,” from consideration. The goal will be to create an entirely new document, developed with a broader constituent base involved, and allowing for more discussion on this important topic.

Bishop Davenport has been elected Vice Chair of the Conference of Bishops. This has increased the number of Zoom meetings, but has not meant significantly more travel. One of the benefits of this position is the ability she has to build deeper relationships with other bishops of the Church. She is working on dividing the bishops into groups for prayer and support. It is not easy, but it is coming together.

### **AME Church Founder’s Celebration**

Bishop Davenport was asked to preach for this event, 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop noted that the AME has a reverence for their leaders that was overwhelming. Though it was the AME’s anniversary, the occasion was intentionally ecumenical. This was a good opportunity for us as the E.L.C.A. to live into our desire to intentionally connect with the historically black churches in the United States.

### **United Lutheran Seminary**

The Seminary is exploring the possibility of developing Congregational Ambassadors to develop better ties between congregations and the Seminary, to describe what is happening at ULS, and to ask congregations for support. An ongoing conversation is being had to see if we can coordinate an understanding of giving support between the Seminary and the Synod so we that we can know what our congregations are giving in direct support to ULS, in order to celebrate the total of what is given by both the Synod and our congregations.

### **Muhlenberg College**

The college’s search for a new president is on hold for two years, as they work to live into the vision set by the most recent president.

### **Leadership for Faithful Innovation**

Bishop Davenport called on Pastors Jennifer Phelps and Joey Klinger to describe a bit of what is happening in this program.

Pr. Phelps shared that one area of focus is to create lay guiding teams which will experiment with how to break old habits, and to listen to what God might be saying to the Church today. For instance, Trinity, Perkasio, is engaging young families to see how they might be better engaged in the church.

Pr. Klinger added that it is important to give permission to continually try new things.

Bishop Davenport concurred, saying her motto is “fail fast, fail forward, fail often.”

There are eight congregations that are invested in this program, and we are curious to see what they will do.

### **Stewardship Extravaganza**

This was a wonderful two day event hosted by Trinity, Lansdale. Due to the support of congregations who helped to underwrite this program, we hosted a world class event for just \$50 per person. There were great speakers who kept telling us about how to keep this vision of ministry, and to remind us that Jesus is the focus, not just paying the bills. Many thanks to The Reverend Karen Sease, Synod staff, the Reverend Larry Smoose, and the Stewardship team for their work in coordinating this event.

Those who attended are very excited to have another event like this. We need to broaden the participation and the representation so that leaders of all types are involved, not because of their ethnicity or gender, but because they have gifts to bring to this important work.

### **Holy Closure**

Grace, Norristown, ended its ministry January 12<sup>th</sup>. These events are always bittersweet, as on this day the church is always full, and there is great celebration of what has happened in the congregation’s history, leaving one wishing things could be different. It is good that Grace “visioned forward,” and planned their ending well, including sharing their resources in ways that will bless the Church. Bishop Davenport is grateful that nearly all the members of Grace have found homes in other congregations; they have not quit on the church!

### **Urban Seeds**

This program, which gives micro-loans to members of our congregations, held a Youth Financial Expo at Grace, Philadelphia. Approximately 40 youth learned about money management, starting a business, and the need for generosity. Bishop Davenport was able to speak with several adults at this event.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr., Service**

The Philadelphia Chapter of the African Descent Lutheran Association hosted this service at Grace, Drexel Hill. Bishop Davenport was the preacher for the event. Sister Tracey Beasley, Pastor Cornelius Eaddy, and the Reformation Gospel Choir sang as a part of the celebration.

### **Staff Retreat**

The staff had its first overnight retreat. It was a good time to grow and vision together. The discussion centered in Simon Sinek’s concept of the “Golden Circle:” Why, What, and How.

Bishop asked that we hold our staff in prayer as they continue to plan for the ministry we do together in SEPA Synod.

### **Silver Springs – Martin Luther School and The Villages**

These two organizations have joined forces in order to maximize their impact, and receive further funding streams. Silver Springs has been affiliated with the SEPA Synod, and The Villages had been affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). They are now incorporated as Gemma Services. This has changed the official affiliation, as the new organization no longer has its 501.c.3 status through SEPA Synod.

Pastor Phelps shared that this does not change our history of affiliation or our ministry association. Please realize that this is a difficult decision to create the funding streams that are necessary, but the work they do still continues. They still need our support.

### **Congregational Vitality Event**

Bishop Davenport, the Reverend Dr. William Flippin and the Reverend Tim Johansen were among leaders from across the E.L.C.A. who attended a training event in San Diego. There were great speakers, great workshops, and a hopeful spirit as we live into “Mission 2025” of the E.L.C.A.

AMMPARO had a large contingency at the conference. As part of the event there was a service at the border at Tijuana. At this point the wall between the U.S. and Mexico extends well out into the sea. It used to be possible to touch hands through the slats of the wall. Now a second series of slats has been added, so one can only touch pinkies through the wall. Very sad and moving experience, as U.S. Federal helicopters flew overhead during the entire service.

### **Two Significant Deaths**

Bishop Davenport noted with particular sadness the death of two leaders of the Church. The Reverend Dr. Herbert Michel, who had served in SEPA Synod, and The Reverend Dr. Herbert Chilstrom, the first Presiding Bishop of the E.L.C.A., both died recently. We thank God for their service to Christ’s Church. Please keep their families in prayer.

### **Sanctuary Church**

Bishop Davenport read an email from Mr. Brett Shaw, a member of St. Paul’s, Applebachsville, expressing his support for the direction the Church has taken regarding Sanctuary Church. Mr. Shaw had attended a gathering of the Upper Bucks Conference addressing the concerns raised by St. John’s, Richlandtown. While there is some consternation over the action of the Churchwide Assembly, it is refreshing to hear such a strong affirmation of what we are doing from one of our members. Within his message, he wrote, “How can we ever separate this word [sanctuary] from JESUS CHRIST and the Church of Jesus Christ!” Mr. Shaw ended his email with these words: “If ‘sanctuary,’ a Holy and Sacred place, is ‘dangerous’ if it means Advocacy and Protection for vulnerable refugees, then I’m all in. I cast my lot with Jesus.”

### **Actions on the Roster**

*At this time the Synod Council went into executive session to consider the actions on the roster. This is done because the actions may include changes in call that rostered ministers have not yet*

*been able to share with their ministry site. They are included in the minutes because by the time of posting, notifications will have been made.*

Secretary Richard presented the following actions on the roster, all of which were **unanimously adopted by the Synod Council.**

***Call to Specialized Ministry***

**S.C.20.02.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one-year renewable call to Specialized Ministry to the Rev. Margaret Ainsley as Director of Pastoral Care at Doylestown Hospital in Doylestown, effective February 27, 2020 to February 26, 2021.**

***Request to move from Active to On Leave from Call Roster***

**S.C.20.02.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant on leave from call status to the Rev. David Oppold, first year, effective December 27, 2019**

**S.C.20.02.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant on leave from call status to the Rev. Susan Lang, first year, effective February 27, 2020**

***Requests to move from Active to Retired Roster***

**S.C.20.02.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Rev. Janice Vogt retirement status, effective February 1, 2020**

**Housing Allowances**

**S.C.20.02.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the 2020 housing allowance for Bishop Patricia Davenport, Pastor Robert Fisher, Pastor Violet Little and Pastor Karen Sease, 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.**

**Information Not Requiring Action**

**Transfers:**

The Rev. Linnea K. Clark to New Jersey Synod effective December 7, 2019

The Rev. Nathaniel Preisinger to Rocky Mountain Synod effective December 8, 2019

**Death:**

The Rev. Dr. Herbert Michel (*Former Retired Pastor of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Member of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod as of February 17, 2009*)

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

Report was received as presented.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, referenced his written report.

**St. John's, Richlandtown**

A letter was drafted and sent to St. John's Congregation Council sharing the Synod Council's response to their resolution regarding Sanctuary Church from the discussion at the last Synod Council meeting.

A letter was also drafted and sent to Presiding Bishop Eaton, E.L.C.A. Secretary Rothmeyer, and the Church Council regarding this concern.

A letter was received from Bishop Eaton in response.

All letters were shared with the Synod Council, and Bishop Eaton's response was also forwarded to the Congregation Council of St. John's, Richlandtown.

**Changes to bylaws and continuing resolutions unique to SEPA Synod**

Secretary Richard reviewed proposed amendments to the portion of our Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions that are unique to SEPA Synod. These involve changes to language and grammar to bring these provisions into alignment with the changes to Synod Constitutions adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

One provision that is still being clarified is S6.03.14., which describes our relationship as a Synod to the Social Ministry Organizations on our territory. Secretary Richard expressed his thanks to the Pr. Jennifer Phelps for her assistance in this language. Pr. Phelps had previously served Liberty Lutheran Services, and had a strong understanding of the current structure and relationships of the SMOs and the Synod. The proposed revisions are being shared with each of the many SMOs on our territory to ensure they concur with the way in which we are amending this section.

**Reception of the property of a former congregation of the SEPA Synod**

Grace, Norristown has experienced "holy closure." To formally receive the assets of this former congregation, I move the following:

**S.C.20.02.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council acknowledges with sadness the action of Grace Lutheran Church, Haws Ave., Norristown, to close, effective January 12, 2020, on which date the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod received the property of Grace, Norristown, 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, on this date, February 27, 2020, authorizes the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or the Bishop's representative(s), to sell the property on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**

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

Bishop Davenport shared that Grace, Norristown, had suggested that it might be a good site for the Synod offices. The Synod had used space at Grace several years ago, and it is a property of the Synod. Bishop is grateful for the suggestion, but as with so many of our former congregational sites, deferred maintenance makes this impractical. There are concerns at Grace with asbestos, security, water issues, and other concerns which do not make this a feasible choice.

Mr. Adam Clark shared an observation about our former congregations. He noted that for several of them, their on-line presence is still active. This may cause concerns if someone sees their site and tries to attend worship, only to discover later that the congregation is closed. Bishop Davenport said this will be shared with Pastor William Vanderslice, who works with congregations in the process of Holy Closure.

## **REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Ms. Janet Neff reviewed the financial reports, and outlined the budget for 2021 (fiscal year ending 1/31/2022). Mr. Albert Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, was not available this evening. Pastor Sellers and Mr. Everett Wick, members of Finance, are here to assist with the report.

Main points of the budget:

Mission support from congregations is down by \$132,000. This is the lowest response we have had to budget in five years. We are hopeful the Stewardship Extravaganza and other efforts by Pr. Karen Sease, Pr. Larry Smoose, and the Stewardship Committee will bear positive results. We agree with the theme of the Extravaganza: it is not about the budget, but about ministry.

At the moment we anticipate a budget deficit (fiscal year ending 1/31/2022) of \$108,554. This deficit is in part because of the Mission portion of the budget, which is never expected make a profit due to the nature of what we do in this segment of our spending.

This past year (fiscal year ending 1/31/2020), ended with a surplus, but this was because we were able to sell six properties we had under management.

There is a cost of living increase for the staff. The staff did not include this in their budget proposal, but the Finance Committee felt it is important to do this to properly care for our staff. If we are in deficit at the end of the fiscal year we will need to apply to the Fund for Mission for the difference.

Money from the sale of the property of the former St. John's, Quakertown is a receivable; we sold the property on the last day of the fiscal year, January 31, 2020.

The Finance Committee has a concern regarding the sale of the property of St. Petri-Hope. It appears as though the congregation may have made an inappropriate designation of funds from the sale of the building. According to our practice, congregations may designate funds from their cash assets to bless other ministries, but they cannot designate money from the sale of the property. This is because when the property is sold, it is no longer in the possession of the

congregation. It is the asset and responsibility of the Synod. The congregation no longer exists to make a determination of the sale of property, or of the use of the proceeds from the sale.

This concern has both legal and relational ramifications. The interdependent nature of our structure, congregation, synod, and churchwide organization is based on trust of each other, and a need to hold each other accountable. We do not want to set a precedent that allows former congregations to believe they have continued say over assets they once owned.

Pr. Gwendolyn King asked for clarification of which properties were sold.

Ms. Neff stated that they are the properties that once housed Immanuel, Burholme; St. Michael's, Germantown; Prince of Peace, Plymouth Meeting; St. Petri-Hope, NE Philadelphia; Good Shepherd, Mayfair; and St. John's, Quakertown.

Mr. Adam Clark moved that the Synod Council approve the following resolution:

**S.C.20.02.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the budget for 2021 (fiscal year ending 1/31/2022) for presentation to the Synod Assembly for adoption.**

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

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Forward Together in Faith**

The written report submitted to the Council show where the latest round of grants has been submitted. They include:

Total Grants awarded for 2020 (\$24,595), by area of emphasis:

Networking	\$1,750	Communicating	\$4,250
Innovating	\$9,340	Equipping	\$9,255

<b>Ministry Site</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Area</b>
Ascension	Newtown	\$2,105	Communicating
Community of Love	Oxford	\$1,000	Innovating
Family of God	Buckingham	\$ 500	Networking
Grace	Hatfield	\$2,000	Innovating
Liberty Lutheran	Ambler	\$1,650	Equipping
Lutheran Campus Ministry	Philadelphia	\$5,000	Equipping
New Hanover – Peer support	New Hanover	\$2,515	Innovating
New Hanover – Incubator	New Hanover	\$1,000	Innovating
New Life Ministries	Philadelphia	\$ 500	Equipping
Redeemer	Jamison	\$1,000	Innovating
St. David's	Philadelphia	\$1,000	Equip/Comm
St. John's	Blue Bell	\$ 500	Networking
St. John's	Sumneytown	\$1,500	Equipping
St. Michael's	Philadelphia	\$2,500	Net/Comm



Trinity

Fort Washington

\$1,825

Innovating

### **Constitution Committee**

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen has moved to a new call in Michigan, and is no longer the chair of this Committee. The Reverend Serena Sellers has agreed to take over the chair. The Committee will meet in the next week or two to reorganize itself and review the status of the congregations that are revising their constitutions. These congregations will be made aware of this change in leadership, and what they still need to do in the process.

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, chair of the Investment Committee, shared that they met in early February. They have scheduled the investment of the approximately \$421,000 received from the sale of the building of the former St. Petri-Hope. This may need to be revisited, as there are questions about restrictions that may be on these funds.

The Vanguard funds are slightly (-\$14,000) down after the first month of the calendar year.

The T. Rowe Price funds are up significantly (+569,500), but this also includes new investments added to these funds.

The overall value of our investments mid-February is \$5,356,032. We are anticipating growth of 7% this year.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Reverend Lydia Posselt, chair of the Nominating Committee, distributed copies of the Nomination Report as of this date. She asked members of the Council to check it for accuracy, and inform her of any changes they see that may be needed. She asked that if any Council members are eligible for reelection, and have not yet submitted their paperwork, to please do so as soon as possible. She further requested that members of the Synod Council work to identify suitable persons to fill the open slots, and encourage them to submit their forms. All nominations need to be in by March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New business**

Mr. Henry Geyer noted that Pr. Flippin is in Living Lutheran, and Pr. Lydia Posselt is in the Christ in our Home devotional booklet.

Pr. Sellers inquired about our 501.c.3. status. Congregations are considered 501.c.3. organizations through the Synod, and the Synod forms expire next month. Are we OK with this? Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant, said yes we are, the paperwork has been filed at Harrisburg.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Position Description for Synod Council Members**

Mr. Geyer addressed an issue he had broached in the Executive Committee meeting. A question has been on his mind as to what his job is as a synod council member. Is it just to go to this meeting? He hasn't been to all the congregations in his conference. He has not met with the

Dean of his conference. He thinks the lay members' job is to represent the Synod at the Conference. To that end, he feels we need a fuller description of what the role of this position is. It was echoed by Vice President Beasley that we also need to have a description of the role of clergy members on Synod Council as well. We may want to compare it with the Dean's description to see that we overlap appropriately. This idea will be addressed more fully through the Executive Committee.

#### **Help Needed at Assembly**

Administration team will be asking for people to help at Assembly. A team is coming together to discuss this, as the Assembly will be a bit different this year, incorporating a day of service along with the business of the Synod. There will be more than just registration, as we have the service project portion that will need coordination.

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m. with prayer by Pr. Phelps

Respectfully submitted,  
The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, E.L.C.A.

*Approved by Synod Council April 28, 2020*