SECTION D – REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND TASK GROUPS

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ANTI-RACISM TEAM

2019 SEPA Synod Anti- Racism Team Report

"Love is creative and redemptive. Love builds up and unites, hate tears down and destroys. ...the aftermath of the love method is reconciliation and creation of the beloved community."

Martin Luther King Jr. 1957

Building the "Beloved Community" requires understanding the past, dismantling oppressive systems and policies, and strengthening relationships while building networks. This is part of the mission of the SEPA Synod Anti-racism Team (ART). We are blessed to have God with us in this sacred work. As a team we have met ten times for official meetings during the year.

Last April 2019, we said thank you and Godspeed to Rev. Linda Manson, ART co-chair for the past 2 ½ years; trainer, facilitator, and member (for the past 9 years), who accepted a call in the Metro New York Synod. Her leadership, guidance and commitment to educating others about the necessity of pursuing anti–racist behavior and education and advocating for racial justice were gifts to the Synod. She will be sorely missed, but we have no doubt that the Team will have opportunity to collaborate with her in the future. In November 2019 we accepted, with sadness, the official notification by Rev. Christopher Weidner that he would be stepping back from his active involvement with ART. Chris' initial leadership (in 2016) was instrumental in helping to renew SEPA Synod's commitment to this work. We consider Chris an ally and friend who will still keep in touch, we are certain.

The last Synod Assembly (2019) voted overwhelmingly to require anti-racism education/training for all rostered leaders at the same level as the requirement for "Boundaries" training, which is every 2-3 years. To this end ART offered a series of four educational opportunities open to lay members and rostered leaders alike using the Women of the ELCA's curriculum "Todays Dream, Tomorrow's Reality" as its foundation. This curriculum, developed by Deacon Inez Torres Davis, encompasses three main areas:

Context {I and II (history)}, Connections and Conversations. Much thanks to St. Luke, Devon (Sat. 9/21/19 & Sat. 11/16/19) and United Lutheran Seminary (Sat. 2/8/2020) for their hospitality in hosting these full day events. The fourth session in the series is scheduled to take place in May 2020.

The Team continues to encourage anti-racism education within congregations and within the various Conferences around the Synod. The following 2-3 hour presentations were offered:

Delaware County Conference – at Christ Lutheran, Upper Darby – June 1, 2019

Central Conference – at Tabernacle Lutheran, Philadelphia – June 22, 2019

Messiah Lutheran, Downingtown – July 13, 2019

Good Shepherd Lutheran, South Hampton – November 2, 2019

Prince of Peace, Lawncrest – January 25, 2020

Over the course of this last year ART bought much needed equipment (a projector, screen, various cables, etc.) to help better support our mission and respond to the requests that have been made. Keeping our eyes and ears open for those who feel called to do this work, we hosted an open house on June 29, 2019 and invited those who had expressed interest in the Anti-racism Team to join us for conversation. The team now has five new persons who are in training to become facilitators and presenters. Praise God!

Our thanks to Bishop Davenport for her unwavering support of the SEPA Synod Anti-Racism Team and to the SEPA Synod staff, especially Mercedes Lee. Mercedes has been **awesome and a blessing**, as she has helped us with challenging logistics and offered a wonderful sense of hospitality at our meetings on behalf of SEPA Synod.

As a Team we are humbled to serve our Lord in helping to bring about the Kingdom. We are grateful for the opportunity to help bring about the "Beloved Community" through this vital work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. Susie Folks, Co-Chair, SEPA Synod Anti-Racism Team

Rev. Gwendolyn S. King, Co- Chair, SEPA Synod Anti-Racism Team

ART Team Members:

Rev. Jane Marston Karen Paulus Rev. Raymond Miller

Janet Bischoff' Rev. Jay Mitchell Rev. Daniel Phelps

Fern Hagadorn Deacon Kathleen Afflerbach Rev. Serena Sellers

Charles Ferguson Rev. Kathleen Harkness

CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

Candidacy Committee Report to the 2020 SEPA Synod Assembly

"But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" – Romans 10:14-15

The ELCA candidacy process is designed to raise up leaders for our church who will proclaim the Good News. Our congregations, our synod, and the world crave leaders who are authentically and boldly witnessing to their faith in Jesus Christ and God's power to change lives. The candidates who are discerning calls to public ministry are eager to continue finding new ways to be the Church even as our religious landscape changes.

Nearly 40 people are in contact with the Vocations and Leadership office about pursing candidacy. They range from the beginnings of the Spirit's whisperings about calling to waiting for their first calls. We are proud of our candidates who have been approved (the final step of our candidacy process) since the last assembly. Congratulations to Rich Bergen, Ralen Robinson, and Eric Schwirian who are approved as candidates for Minister of Word and Sacrament.

This assembly marks a year since our candidacy leadership transitions. Many thanks to Pastor Sarah Stobie, former Candidacy Chair, who has since taken a new call outside our synod. Additional thanks to Deacon Allison Wilcox, former Director of Candidacy, who has moved on to other service within Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. We are grateful for all that you have done to build up the kingdom through our candidates and to support us as we transition into new roles.

At the 2019 assembly, the Rev. Karen Sease began her call as Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership / Mission Advancement. Later that summer, the Rev. Paul Neff accepted Bishop Davenport's invitation to serve as the committee chair.

We are privileged to work with a whole team of people in the communal work of discernment. We seek members of our committee to be diverse including, and not limited to, rostered ministers and lay people, age, gender, race, and sexuality.

- The following people currently serve on the SEPA Candidacy Committee: the Rev. Dr. Paul Baglyos (Churchwide Representative), the Rev. Dr. Karyn Wiseman (ULS Representative), the Rev. Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam, Jonathan Bagby, Deacon Beth Barkhau, the Rev. Thadd Book, Sara Calderon, Diane Casey, the Rev. Mukesh Cheedie, the Rev. Dr. Shirley Guider, the Rev. Noah Hepler, Bobbie Hoffman, the Rev. Nathan Krause, Margie Pendarvis-Wright, Lisa Pressley, the Rev. Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath, and the Rev. Thomas Russert.
- The Rev. Maggie Ainslie serves as chaplain of the Candidacy Committee.

- Our initial interviews are conducted by the Rev. Steve Keiser, the Rev. Susan Lynch, the Rev. Tina Mackie, the Rev. Carlton Rodgers, and Deacon Allison Wilcox.
- Life Keys instruction is done by Bobbie Hoffman and the Rev. Janelle Krais.
- Additional thanks go to the Rev. Dr. Moses Dennis who completed two terms on the Candidacy Committee and to the Rev. Dr. Charles Leonard who had previously served as the representative from United Lutheran Seminary.
- We grieve the death of Charmaine Hamilton who served faithfully on our Candidacy Committee and was the primary relator for several of our candidates at the time of her passing.
- A special thank you to Bishop Patricia Davenport for her support of our candidates, her prayer for the committee's work, and her leadership with committee appointments.

The committee meets 5-6 times annually, including 1-2 gatherings spent in fellowship and formation. In between decision meetings, our committee members serve on relator teams, staying in regular communication with our candidates to provide support and guidance.

We are grateful to all for their dedication to our candidates and the Church. Please thank these leaders for the ministry and service they provide. They have given much of their time and commitment to the candidacy program here in our synod.

As always, we ask that our congregations, rostered ministers, and lay people continue to lift up future leaders within their communities and nurture their development as leaders of the church. Our world and the ELCA need strong, visionary leaders for the future who are not afraid to call on the name of Jesus, to proclaim Christ crucified and risen, and to be sent to form beloved community.

Thank you for partnering with us in this important ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Paul Neff Candidacy Committee Chair

and, The Rev. Karen Sease Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership / Mission Advancement

FORWARD TOGETHER IN FAITH

The Forward Together in Faith team has shifted its focus from primarily raising funds to now awarding congregations grant monies. These grants are awarded to help communities do God's work along the key pillars of the campaign in the form of grants to help congregation Network, Innovate, Communicate and Equip. It is exciting and energizing time for the campaign as we begin to make this campaign dream a reality! While we still welcome and encourage congregations and individuals to donate to the fund, we are thrilled that we are shifting our focus to helping and equipping congregations for the work of ministry.

This fall the team received sixteen grant applications totaling \$52,500 in requests to do something new and creative, which shows that Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod is alive and vibrant. We are a synod that is ready to do something new. While the team would have loved to award grants to all those who applied, the reality of our funds made the selection process all the more difficult. Given the amount of funds due for disbursement this year, we were able to award \$24,595 to 15 congregations.

I would like to take this time to thank the many teams that worked to make the Forward Together in Faith Appeal possible through their hard work and dedication during these initial years of the campaign. These volunteers put in many hours over several years to work with consultants; educating rostered and lay leaders about the campaign; talking to congregations, assisting congregation launch the Mission Assessment Plan (MAP); guiding congregational leaders to develop new ministry plans; reviewing grant applications and toiling over awarding grants.

But this campaign would not be possible without your support. A special thank you to congregations and individuals who have made a donation to the campaign making it possible to live into the vision of the campaign. With your continued help we hope to support congregations increase their networking; develop and execute innovative ministries; develop strong communications and equip leaders and lay leaders.

INTERIM MINISTRY

Intentional transitional ministry is conducted by experienced pastors and lay people who have gone through specific training to work with congregations through a transition time. In addition to the intentional interim pastors in our synod, we also have two trained lay consultants. Intentional interims and consultants are assigned by the Director of Interim Ministry in consultation with the Director of Mobility (Pr. Marcia Bell) and the Bishop. Throughout the transition the interim pastor/consultant attends required continuing education meetings (known as consultations), submits quarterly reports, and at the end of each transition process an evaluation is conducted. These are some of the ways we are accountable for our work. The interim pastor/consultant guides the congregation through the transition process and the preparation of the Ministry Site Profile if it is calling a new pastor. In addition to these tasks

specific to transitional ministry, the interim pastor is also responsible for all of the normal pastoral duties of the church. The interim ministers and consultants also work closely with the Transitional Ministry Development Team (TMDT), a team of interim pastors, settled pastors, and lay people.

More and more we are using interim consultants in congregations that are in transition but for various reasons, do not have an interim pastor. In some cases, these congregations are being served by bridge pastors who are contracted for pastoral services. Every church is different, and this is another example of how we are being flexible in meeting the transitional needs of a congregation. Interim consultants have participated in extensive interim training and work with congregations on a limited, part-time basis.

Some topics of our consultations this past year: a presentation led by members of the Anti-Racism team and how that work can be done with congregations in transition, rebuilding an online database of resources for use in our work, a joint meeting with the Bishop and Committee of Deans to discuss interim ministry in the context of a changing church, and our annual meeting with the Bishop. As a group we are very intentional about being responsive to changing ministry contexts and learning new tools for the benefit of the people we serve.

Pastors and Consultants who have served this past year: The Rev. Marcia Bell, The Rev. Katherine Cartwright-Knodel, The Rev. George Detweiler, The Rev. Ghislaine Cotnoir, The Rev. Susie Folks, The Rev. Arlene Greenwald, The Rev. Gwen King, The Rev. Tina Mackie, Ms. Teri Lanan, The Rev. Michael McKilip, Mr. Karl McClellan, The Rev. Christian McMullan, The Rev. David Mueller, The Rev. Janet Peterman, the Rev. Kris Peterson, The Rev. Elaine Quincey, The Rev. Jack Saarela, The Rev. Wayne Shelor, The Rev. Chris Weidner, The Rev. Donna Wright.

Rev. Christian McMullan- Dir. of Interim Ministry

THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF MOBILITY

One of the major responsibilities of the Director of Mobility is oversight of the Committee of Deans. Deans are generally elected by the conference (on occasion appointed by the Bishop) and serve three-year terms. As a committee deans meet monthly along with Bishop Davenport, Pastor William Flippin, Director of Evangelical Mission, and Pastor Karen Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership / Mission Advancement. The Deans hold their monthly meetings in the various congregations in which they serve. In June 0f 2019 the Deans held their annual 2-day retreat at Paradise Falls Lutheran Association in the Pocono Mountains. This

retreat included conversations with Pastor Bill Vanderslice about Holy Closure and with Bryan Penman, chair of our synod's Vitality Team.

The deans work on an almost daily basis to support the needs of the pastors and congregations in their conferences. This support includes conducting exit interviews when a pastor retires or takes another call, explaining the basics of the transition time, interviewing candidates interested in serving in SEPA Synod, reviewing MSP's, and making recommendations of possible candidates for candidates in the Call Process. In addition, deans conduct and assist with installations, work with congregations in times of conflict, and also walk with congregations through the steps of closing after they have voted to end their ministry.

The following pastors are now serving on the Committee of Deans: Regina Goodrich, Central Philadelphia Conference; Ron Wesemann, Chester Conference; Leslie Richard, Delaware Conference; Norbert Hahn, Lower Bucks Conference; Bryan Penman, Lower Montgomery Conference; Jane Marston NE/NW Philadelphia Conference; Erika Wesch, Upper Bucks Conference; Christopher McKinstry, Upper Montgomery Conference; and Christian McMullan who serves as the Director of Interim Ministry. I am grateful to Pastor Carolann Hopcke who served as Dean of Upper Bucks Conference and has recently accepted a call to the Nebraska Synod, and to Pastor Julie DeWerth who competed two terms as Dean of Lower Montgomery Conference.

As Director of Mobility I also review Rostered Ministers' Profiles from across the ELCA and review Ministry Site Profiles for congregations in our synod who are seeking to call rostered leaders. I make recommendations to the Deans of candidates to interview and review the summaries of those interviews. Together we work to find the most suitable candidates to recommend to congregational call committees.

It is a privilege to work with congregations, pastors and deacons, and our synod staff in the important work of mobility.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Marcia G. Bell

REPORT OF THE SYNOD GENEROSITY TEAM

The synod Generosity Team would like to thank the congregations of our synod for their Mission Support, and especially for those congregations that are modeling good stewardship to their members by giving at least 10% of their regular giving towards Mission Support. Unfortunately,

most congregations have difficulty reaching even 6.2% of their regular giving, which is what we estimate the amount needed from all congregations to reach our synod budget.

This year, a number of strong supporting congregations found it necessary to decrease their mission support and a number of other congregations gave less this year than in the past. Thus, we experienced another loss in mission support of \$82,000 when compared to 2018. This is especially discouraging following a year in 2017 of modest increase.

The Good News is that our <u>All Saints Appeal</u> offering - in 2019 we received \$40,175 and in 2018 we received \$16,835, an increase of nearly \$24,000. Thanks so much for the generosity of those who helped with this significant increase.

The synod sends <u>half</u> your mission support dollars to the ELCA in support of the work of national church. The specific uses of these funds are outlined on annual report covers used by many congregations for their annual meetings, and additional reports on how your Mission Support dollars are used by the ELCA can be found at <u>www.elca.org</u>, and our synod work can be viewed at <u>www.ministrylink.org</u>. The ELCA also provides <u>Stories of Faith in Action</u>, including bulletin inserts that can help your congregation appreciate the tremendous work we do together as an ELCA.

Partnering with NEPA Synod, we had our Stewardship Extravaganza on **January 10-11, 2020 featuring Clif Christopher Aimee Laramore, and CeCee Mills.** It was by all accounts an outstanding event. One participant said, "It was the best stewardship event I've ever been to. And, I've been on (our congregational) stewardship for 30 years!" The event underscored several important themes:

- You have to ask.
- You have to Tell stories about how the offerings help change lives.
- You have to Thank members (preferably with personal notes).
- You have to provide alternative ways to give including a variety of electronic means.
- You have to educate members about all aspects of stewardship all year long.
- You have to have an intentional plan for an annual response.

Over 250 people attended the event, inspired by the worship and preaching, enjoying and learning from the keynote addresses and the 11 workshops, and appreciating the outstanding fellowship and support provided by volunteers from our host congregation, Trinity, Lansdale.

We were able to have this event at such a modest cost (\$50/person) because of generous sponsors, including SOLI (Stewardship of Life Institute); the Larry House Fund for Stewardship Education; Thrivent financial; Mission Investment Fund; Vanco; Reformation Lutheran Church, Media, Calvary Lutheran Church, West Chester; St. Luke Lutheran Church, Devon; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ardmore; St. John's Lutheran Church, Phoenixville; Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale; Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading, (NEPA); Trinity Lutheran church, Robesonia, (NEPA); St. Paul Lutheran Church, Douglassville, (NEPA) and the West Berks Mission District, (NEPA). We are grateful to all of these sponsors for their support and modeling generosity.

We also sent two members of the synod, Karl Krueger and Karen Sease to the ELCA Mission Interpreters conference. The event emphasize the value of having <u>congregational mission</u> <u>interpreters</u> who can be trained to tell the story of how your congregational offerings make a difference in the lives of people. If you would like to learn more about this, contact the synod office or see the contact information below.

Your synod Generosity Team is committed to working with you to strengthen generosity in your congregation. Please contact Larry Smoose (<a href="livestatell

VISIT our Resource Table and workshops at the Synod to <u>receive your 2019 Thank you</u> <u>certificate for your Mission Support.</u>

If you are interested in serving on our Generosity Team or one of our conference teams, contact me at lvsfish1@aol.com.

Members of the Synod Stewardship Team are Pr. Larry Smoose, chair, Carl Reitz, Pr. Mark Singh-Hueter, Doreen Kinsler, Pr. Tim Ness, Theresa Haenn, Pr. Julie Bergdahl, Yvonne Lembo, Pr. Phil Krey, Pr. David Penman and Pr. Mike Carlson. We also want to thank our entire Synod staff, and especially Bishop Patricia Davenport, Pr. Karen Sease, Pr. William Flippin, and Mercedes Lee, along with Martin Schwab, Bob Fisher, and Cynta Outterbridge who do so much to support congregational stewardship ministry.

Larry Smoose, Chairperson

TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The TMD is, a team of clergy and lay leaders who have experience in congregations in transition. Our work is to support congregations and pastors as they move through pastoral transitions. We review quarterly reports and conduct exit interviews when transition pastors have finished their work in a congregation.

A key aspect of our work is ensuring that our transition practices are flexible, to suit varying needs and situations, while maintaining integrity and quality. Reviewing standards and practices for transition ministry in our Synod is very important to us. We review and adapt the handbook

and resources used by transition pastors and congregations as we learn from congregations and from the experience and expertise of transition professionals in the national arena.

We are continuing our work creating an on-line database of resources for pastors and consultants. We are also wrestling with how to be responsive to the changes in the wider church as congregations go through transition.

The Rev. Ghislaine Cotnoir, chair

Members, the Rev. Marcia Bell, the Rev. Sandra Brown, the Rev. Regina Goodrich, Ms. Teri Lanan, Mr. Karl McClellan, the Rev. Christian McMullan

WOMEN OF THE ELCA (SEPA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANZATION)

WOMEN OF THE ELCA SE PA SYNOD MAY 2019 TO JUNE 2020

We started the year with our Ingathering of items for Lutheran World Relief. Items received were as follows:

476 Tie Knot Quilts
22 Blankets
55 Personal Care Kits
57 School Kits
47 Baby Kits
Fabric & Sewing Kits

Items were brought to the Synod Assembly in May and transported by truck to the warehouse in New Windsor, Maryland. We also had a display table in the Mission Center at Assembly.

In June we held our Annual Gathering for the women of our synod at Trinity, Lansdale. The theme for the day was Water of Life and we had speakers on the topic of keeping our water clean and safe. We made a sizeable contribution to the people of Flint, MI who are still suffering due to contaminated water.

Fall Conferences were held with the theme of Being Family. Our speakers talked about the many different groupings of families today including the incidence of domestic violence and how we can help these victims; women, men and children. In kind gifts of clothing were given to A Woman's Place in Doylestown and canned goods to the Daily Bread Community Food Pantry in Collegeville.

Spring Conferences are planned for April of 2020 using the topic of Women Serving. In addition to these events monthly Bible Studies are held by the women of the Upper Montgomery Conference. All women of the SE PA Synod are invited. The schedule can be found on Ministry Link under Women of the ELCA.

If the women of your church would like to hear more about this organization and possibly start a unit of their own please contact Phyllis Boyer at frauphilly@gmail.com or call 215-679-6626. We will send someone to tell you about this exciting ministry. It is a national organization of Lutheran Women from across the USA and beyond.

Phyllis D. Boyer SE PA Synod President Women of the ELCA

Youth, Young Adult & Spiritual Formation Ministry

Here in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, we continue to seek new and innovative ways to invest in our young people. Though the synod is experiencing a transition in leadership with the resignation of The Rev. Bradley R. Burke, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult and Spiritual Formation, who accepted a congregational call, we as a synod continue to reimagine ministry and all its possibilities. Through the continued help and support of Adult Leaders Karolin Brechbill, Shirl Devoll, Robin Alderfer, Kendra Kramer and others, we experienced two amazing youth retreats in 2019 as well as the 2019 Youth Servant Trip to South Dakota.

SEPA Youth Leadership Team – The 2019 Youth Leadership Retreat had over 20 participants with 4 new members joining the team. This is now our third year of the new Youth Leadership model as we transitioned out of Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO). The retreat was a great opportunity for our High School leaders to connect deeper with one another, their faith, and begin to cast a new vision for what the Youth Leadership Team can evolve to in the future. Each Youth Leaders is very active in their congregations and we are excited to see them living out their leadership roles at home, in their congregations, and in their communities.

2019 South Dakota Trip - The 2019 Servant Trip was a major success and the impact of the trip went far behind our 10 days in South Dakota. Our hosts at Tree of Life Ministry provided a jampacked experience with educational components about Native American Lakota culture as well as fun and interactive games and discussions.

Some of the ways we were able to help the community on the reservation included helping transition a gym into a music room at a local school where kids can explore their creativity through music, working on a church that was transitioning into a safe space of spirituality and healing for people recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction, working at a warehouse going through palates of items to clean out the warehouse and have a rummage sale, construction, working on building walls and decks and lastly working on the Sundance Grounds to help prepare for the Sundance ceremony.

Many youth expressed just how life-changing the experience was and how it challenged them to not only learn something new about a different culture, but to take an internal look at our own privileges and positions of power in America. One pastor even expressed that this was the best servant trip he had ever been a part of in over 30 years of ministry. Our theme was: "Faith Wide Open" and it was so amazing to see our youth and young adults step outside of their comfort zone miles away from Southeastern Pennsylvania and face new challenges and new ways to do God's work.

2019 Junior Youth Gathering – This year's theme for the Junior Youth Gathering was "I Believe" focusing on the Apostle's Creed. We had the pleasure of having Bishop Patricia Davenport serve as our retreat Chaplain and speaker and learned about the importance of having a faith statement. What it means to believe as Lutherans and as Christians. We also learned about the connection between all the Lutheran churches in our synod, country, and world and how our beliefs and the words we say connect us all to other Christians throughout our society. The Junior Youth Gathering had over 100 participants representing over 10 congregations throughout the synod.

Finally, though the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of our Philadelphia Servant Trip we look forward to finding new and creative ways to serve. In 2021, we hope to focus our attention on what it means to live out our faith in the mist of this "new normal" of social distancing, and how we can continue to grow on our individual and collective faith journeys despite these unprecedented times.

Your partner in Ministry,

Mercedes Lee, M.A.

Coordinator for Congregational Vitality, Discipleship Ministries, and Receptionist

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod ELCA