

MINUTES
of the 164th MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Zoom Meeting
February 18, 2020
4:00 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley invited the Reverend Matt Staniz to lead the Synod Council in devotions. Pastor Staniz based his devotion on an encounter by Dietrich Bonhoeffer had while making an address in London. His host spoke with him, saying “You are a German. Your church is on fire. It is your job to go home and put it out.” Pastor Staniz shared words from Bonhoeffer: “All human life is transformed by the fact the Jesus is only there for others. The Church is the church only when it is there for others.” Pr. Staniz further reflected that *we* are only the Church when we are here for others, and conveyed to the Synod Council, “‘ELCA, your church is on fire.’ White supremacy and racism is on fire. It is our job to work to put it out. Might it be our calling in Lent 2021 to move from insurrection to resurrection?” Pastor Staniz then led the Council in a bidding prayer.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 164th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:23 p.m.

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, called the roll. A quorum was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the 163rd meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved with the following changes:

- on page 2, section on Muhlenberg College, “working” with the new president
- on page 8, section on Finance Committee, “good” instead of “food”
- on page 13, section on Mission Moment, under rationale, “men” instead of “mane”

The minutes were approved with these changes.

SETTING THE AGENDA

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 164th meeting as presented.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

As the meeting occurred in the midst of a winter storm, Bishop Davenport commented on how we are blessed by the technology we have in this time, allowing us to continue the work of the church via Zoom and other vehicles.

Bishop Davenport noted that Ms. Cynta Outterbridge’s father-in-law, who was not considered “in-law,” but father, has died. Please keep our sister and her family in prayer in this time of deep loss and mourning.

Bishop noted that the staff is in a time of transition. Ms. Mercedes Lee has begun a new position with the University of Pennsylvania, and that has left a hole in the synod staff. It also provides an opportunity to reimagine what staffing we need as we move into the future. Noting that the ELCA is engaging in such reimagining with the Future Church Design, it is a good time for us to do a similar redesign in light of the Church's areas of focus. Please pray for the staff in this time of transition, and particularly for the Reverend Dr. William Flippin, our Director for Evangelical Mission, as he is facing transition on both the ELCA and the Synod level.

Rostered Ministers

We need to be in prayer, for each other, for our rostered ministers. Our ministers are feeling a great deal of stress these days with Ash Wednesday, Lent and all the pressures of leading the Church in this time. There is also stress from trying to lead in these days of civil unrest, insurrection, and racial injustice. Fortunately, prayer is our super-power.

We as a Synod provided the rostered ministers a chance to meet together with the Bishop in sacred cyber-space to share with each other and support each other in the tasks before them. There was great personal sharing, honesty, and vulnerability on display in this time together, and for that the Bishop is grateful.

Ms. Barb Debski offered a program on "sabbath" to encourage our leaders to do self-care as much as "other" care. Two opportunities are scheduled with Dr. Stephen Treat, moderated by the Rev. Dr. Dee Littleton, to assist rostered ministers with the stresses of ministry in this time. Many lay people think that the work of the rostered minister has lessened with the pandemic, as there are not the same visible meeting schedules and contacts being made and seen. The work has not lessened; it has ramped up. Everything is harder. As you pray for our ministers, please also pray for our Presiding Bishop.

Conference of Bishops

Please pray for the Conference of Bishops as well. They continue to meet weekly, learning from each other, and striving to faithfully implement the Future Church Design for the ELCA. A reminder of the areas of emphasis that have been affirmed:

1. Prioritize the engagement of new, young and diverse people.
2. Unite all expressions of the church (congregations, synods and the churchwide organization) into one church—together.
3. Align decision-making, accountability and leadership where best suited.
4. Operate in agile, flexible and speedy ways.
5. Act based on data and measurable impact.
6. Eliminate silos and divisions."

African Descent Strategy Team

There have been deep conversations among the leaders of this team. There is concern regarding the number of persons of color that were released from Churchwide staff in the downsizing that resulted from implementing the Future Church Design. It seems incongruous that, when we are looking to be newer, younger, and more diverse, we would lose as much of our diversity as we have. We have a gap in what we say, and what we do. Bishop Davenport is grateful to be at the table to point out these discrepancies.

Authentic Diversity Team

Bishop continues to serve on this team as well. In her written report she shared the resolution from the Churchwide Assembly describing the work of this team. She did so to remind the Synod Council of the important task before us all as we continue to be the whitest denomination in the United States, even as we have stated we want to rectify this, and intentionally work to become more diverse.

Muhlenberg College Board

The board is still working and walking along with President Haring, the faculty, the staff, and the students to keep the college functioning well in this time of the pandemic. Bishop Davenport is grateful for the work of our former bishop, the Reverend Claire S. Burkat, as she serves as the interim chaplain for the college. Applications are being processed for the settled chaplain. If anyone knows of someone who is interested, please let them know.

North Eastern Diocese of Tanzania

The newly elected bishop, the Rev. Dr. Mblilu, has begun his duties, and is building his staff. Until we can meet in person, social media has been quite helpful as a tool to keep in contact in this time.

Religious Leaders Council

This group represents another gathering where we can work together for justice and peace. Dr. Flippin has taken up the “Heeding God’s Call” initiative to address gun violence, a task of particular importance following the most recent shooting in the Olney neighborhood of Philadelphia. This shooting took place only a few blocks from Bishop Davenport’s house. Systemic racism keeps people in poverty, and that continues to keep them from other services, and so what they don’t have, they feel a need to take. The Religious Leaders Council is working with government and community leaders as they strive to address these crucial issues.

Other Meetings and Gatherings

The Black Clergy Association continues to meet, as do too many other meetings to count. Bishop Davenport thanks Vice President Beasley for her work with the Philadelphia Chapter of the African Descent Leadership Association, and particularly for her efforts coordinating the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration in conjunction with the Detroit chapter of ADLA and the Southeast Michigan Synod, our domestic companion synod.

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

The Reverend Gwendolyn King asked if recordings of the programs from Ms. Demski and Dr. Treat will be available for those who cannot join the online events.

The Reverend Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Communication and Mission Interpretation, said that Ms. Demski’s program is already online. It will need to be determined if Dr. Treat’s will be made available, as this program may be more personal than presentational, and there may be a need to be sensitive to the privacy concerns of the participants.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Noting the report had been distributed beforehand, Vice President Beasley asked if there were any questions or comments. As there were none, Ms. Beasley called on Ms. Carrie Schwab, Synod Events coordinator, to give an update on the plans for the upcoming Synod Assembly.

Ms. Schwab noted that the comments and concerns expressed by the Synod Council at its December meeting were taken into account at the next meeting of the Assembly planning team. The Assembly will now be a one-day assembly to limit the amount of screen time in an online assembly. It will be predominantly a business meeting, but it will include inspirational words from the Bishop.

Ms. Schwab shared two documents with the Council: one a block schedule, and one a “cast” schedule. The cast schedule noted the minute-by-minute plan for the Assembly. This will not be shared with the entire Assembly so voting members do not get too caught in times that are hoped to be accurate, but by nature are approximate.

There will be several workshops prior to the Assembly to allow for conversations to occur in depth, but which will save time on the actual day of the meeting. These will include a discussion of the proposed Constitutional changes and the proposed Budgets for 2021 and 2022.

Training videos will also be posted, and there will be a live “Test your Tech” training for all people the day before the Assembly.

There will be five tech people available the day of the Assembly.

We will create a virtual mission center where agencies and organizations can post videos or other information to share their story.

The members of the Council were invited to ask any questions they might have.

Mr. Bert Glenn felt it might be helpful to include some of the time markers to allow people to have a sense of what is going on and when.

Ms. Schwab stated that we do want people to have a sense of the flow and the timing. What the team is trying to avoid is members missing votes because they expect them to happen at a specific time, while in reality the times to vote may be moved up or down the schedule depending on how many votes are needed, and how long the tabulations may take.

Pr. King asked about the time for the presentation from our Churchwide representative. It is a desire of the Synod Council that the Future Church Design be a part of the presentation. Will 15 minutes be enough time?

Bishop Davenport said we will have a conversation with him about this. We may want to have something in the pre-assembly videos to allow voting members to have a background on the Design before his presentation at the Assembly. There is already a recording of the conversation with the Presiding Bishop that can be posted as part of the pre-assembly materials.

Pr. King asked if we would be able to ask questions at the Assembly. Ms. Schwab asked if this was of the Churchwide representative, or of the Assembly in general. Pr. King indicated “both.”

Ms. Schwab said that we will have people monitoring the group to allow participants to speak to issues on the floor.

Vice President Beasley thanked Ms. Schwab for her faithful work, and her explanations to the Council.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Housing Allowances

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, presented the following resolution regarding Synod authorized housing allowances:

S.C.21.02.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the 2021 housing allowance for Bishop Patricia Davenport, Pastor Robert Fisher, Pastor Violet Little 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.

Actions on the Roster

Secretary Richard then presented the following actions on the roster:

Call to Specialized Ministry:

S.C.21.02.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one-year, renewable call to Specialized Ministry to the Rev. Margaret J. Ainslie as Director of Pastoral Care at Doylestown Hospital effective February 27, 2021 to February 26, 2022.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Calls to Interim Ministry:

S.C.21.02.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Stuart Luce to interim ministry at St. Michael's (Unionville) beginning January 4, 2021 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Luce resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

S.C.21.02.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Christian McMullan to interim ministry at St. Luke's (Zieglerville)

beginning January 25, 2021 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor McMullan resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Request to Move from Active Roster to Retired Roster:

S.C.21.02.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant retirement status to the Rev. Kristina V. Ahlman effective March 1, 2021.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Request to Move from On Leave Roster to Retired Roster:

S.C.21.02.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant retirement status to the Rev. Andrena Ingram effective May 1, 2021.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Items Not Requiring Action

Transfers:

The Rev. Stuart Luce *from* Delaware-Maryland Synod effective January 4, 2021, *pending call through Synod Council*

The Rev. Bruce Davidson (retired) *from* New Jersey effective February 2, 2021

The Rev. Michael McKillip (retired) *to* New Jersey effective February 5, 2021

Bear Creek Camp Easement

Secretary Richard shared as information that Bear Creek Camp is considering an easement for another pipeline across an unused portion of its property. The Camp entered into such an agreement in 2017. The Camp is jointly owned by the Northeastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania Synods, and so each will have to sign off on the agreement when it is prepared. SEPA Synod holds the deed, and so this Council will be key in its approval.

Mr. Glenn felt prior to approval we should know if there is any community opposition to the pipeline in the area.

The Reverend Serena Sellers asked if there is any protocol for the Camp if there is a leak, and who is responsible for the clean-up: the Camp, or the Company?

Mr. David Ehret asked if we can request a copy of their disaster recovery plan, as this may clear up some of these issues. If there is not a recovery plan, that itself may not be a good sign.

Amendment to Synod Bylaws Proposal

Secretary Richard shared with the Synod Council that since the December Synod Council meeting there have been several conversations, some with the Assembly Planning Team, some with the Nominations Committee, and most recently with the Reverend Becky Schanelly, chair of the Elections Committee, Vice President Beasley, and Bishop Davenport. The subject of these

last conversations was a concern regarding the timing to implement the proposed restructuring of the Synod Council, which was approved at the December Synod Council meeting.

Upon further reflection, as we have so many slates to elect at this Assembly, and as there are many steps that would need to be taken to alter those slates if the Assembly does adopt the proposed realignment with the timing as previously adopted, it is the recommendation of the Secretary that we amend the time when this realignment would be put in effect from the terms ending at this Assembly to the terms ending at the next Assembly. He proposed the following change to the December resolution, alteration underlined:

S.C.21.02.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council amends the “**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**” that this proposal be enacted beginning with the terms ending in 2022.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Secretary Richard also brought forward the following proposal to be added to the changes to be presented to the Assembly in April of this year:

Proposed Bylaw Change to allow for a virtual Assembly

According to state law a non-profit is allowed to have remote meetings unless its governing documents prohibit them. Our Constitution and By-laws do not prohibit such meetings, but neither do they give explicit permission for them. The following is a proposed change, based on the existing language allowing Synod Council and its committees to meet remotely, to allow the same for the Assembly and its committees.

S.C.21.02.08. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the following addition to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the SEPA Synod for adoption by the Synod Assembly to provide for electronic meeting of the Synod Assembly:

S7.13.10. Notice of the time and place of the regular meeting or of an adjourned meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be sent by the secretary not less than four weeks preceding the meeting. Notice of the time and place of a special meeting shall be sent by the secretary not less than two weeks preceding the meeting. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Assembly and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, reviewed the financial report of the past year. She noted the following:

Mission support from congregations was under budget by \$144,000, but we had other income that aided our ministry.

We had proceeds from the sale of a building from a former ministry, St. John, Ambler. To review, 15% of the sale goes to the Unrestricted portion of the budget. The expenses related to the care for the properties we have under management from former ministries are then reimbursed. The remainder of the proceeds are placed in the Fund for Mission.

We received \$168,000 from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program.

We had a good response to our special appeals, including the Blessed to be a Blessing covid relief fund, the Have a Heart fund for Bishop Munga's surgery, and the All the Saints annual appeal.

We are budgeting \$1.7 million as income for the current year (FY ending 1/31/2022), and \$1.75 million for coming year (FY ending 1/31/2023).

There is a pending sale of another property under management, that of the former Grace, Norristown.

Expenses were down this year. Some of this was due to less travel during the pandemic, some was due to fewer retreats and other meetings, and some was due to the fact that we sent less to the Churchwide organization, since we also received less in our offerings from congregations. Each year we send on to the ELCA 50% of what we receive from our congregations. When we receive less, we send less.

When you see the "bottom line" you will notice an overall surplus. A great deal of this is due to the performance of our investment portfolio.

Bishop Davenport noted how well people of our Synod have stepped up for the special offerings of this past year. Even in the midst of a pandemic, when we ask them, our people deliver.

Mr. Bert Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, shared highlights from his written report, and presented the budget for the coming year for the Council's review and approval.

Seminary Debt Relief

The 2021 budget includes \$50,000 for assistance for rostered ministers with debt from their seminary education. \$51,000 was awarded for such relief last year. The process has just begun for rostered ministers to apply for assistance this year.

Policy for use of Restricted Funds

The Synod's auditors have recommended that the Synod adopt a spending policy setting the maximum rate of annual withdrawal from our permanently restricted funds (endowment) to 7%, in compliance with the general requirements of PA Act 141 (applicable to non-for-profit organizations in PA). Currently we spend the annual earnings on the funds. Heeding the advice of the auditors, the Finance Committee brought the following resolution to the Synod Council:

S.C.21.02.09. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council adopts the following policy for the use of permanently restricted funds:

In accordance with Act 141, realized and unrealized gains on Synod endowment assets may be expended for the purposes stipulated by the donors only to the extent that the total of such expenditures, including dividends and interest and less fees, do not exceed 7% of the average of the three most recent fiscal years' fair values of the net assets with donor restriction held in perpetuity. Realized and unrealized gains in excess of the annual limitation would be included in the statements of activities as increases in the net assets with donor restriction. Such restricted amounts may be released to net assets without donor restriction in future years based on authorization of the Synod only to the extent of the 7% limitation applicable to the year in which they are to be released.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Presentation of the budget for 2022 (FY ending 1/31/2023)

The budget as presented is very similar to the budget for the current year.

It includes a modest increase in staff compensation.

It anticipates the sale of properties under management.

It also anticipates a reduction in Seminary debt relief from \$50K to \$25K.

We will be more transparent in the fact that much of the Mission portion of the budget is being covered by the Fund for Mission, even as conversations continue as to the proper process for the use of money from this Fund.

Pr. Sellers asked why administrative costs were so much lower.

Mr. Martin Schwab, the Synod's Senior Accountant, said it was because we have fewer properties that we have to manage, therefore we have fewer expenses.

Pr. Klinger asked if the need is for seminary debt relief actually that much less than last year.

Mr. Glenn said this number is based on the amount of the requests the committee has been receiving. There may be less need now that the seminary offers free tuition.

Ms. Neff said that we are fortunate to have many people who are generous and are not requesting assistance.

Secretary Richard asked which property was anticipated to sell as part of the budget.

Ms. Neff said it was the former Grace, Norristown, which is anticipated to sell in April of 2021.

The following resolution was placed before the Synod Council:

S.C.21.02.10. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the proposed budgets for 2021 (FY ending 1/31/2022) and 2022 (FY ending 1/31/2023) to present to the Synod Assembly for adoption.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

MISSION MOMENT

Vice President Beasley welcomed the Rev. Marcia Bell to present the Mission Moment. Pr. Bell is the Director of Mobility and convener of the Committee of Deans. She came to give the

Synod Council an update on the status of congregations in our Synod that are in transition, and updates on the transition process.

New Deans

Pr. Bell noted that there has been a transition to a new Dean in two of our Conferences. She noted with great thanks the work of Dean Leslie Richard, who brought her gifts of Spiritual Direction and awareness to the process of the Deans' work. Pr. Richard has completed her second term and has been succeeded in this office by Pr. Jenn Casey of Holy Trinity, Wallingford.

Dean Carolann Hopcke has relocated to the Nebraska Synod, after serving Christ, Trumbauersville for 20 years. Pr. Hopcke is succeeded by Pr. Erica Wesch of Little Zion, Telford.

Both previous deans are missed, but the Committee is very pleased to welcome the new deans, even as they, to this point, have only met on Zoom.

Transitions in Ministry

In 2020 the Synod Council extended 3 calls to interim ministry, 1 call to a Lutheran pastor to serve a Presbyterian congregation, and retirement status to 11 ministers.

There have been 10 new calls to congregational ministries. All of these have been to pastors; no deacons. Several of these calls were to pastors who are already serving in these congregations. There has been a transition from second staff to lead pastor, from lead pastor to second staff, and a transition from full-time to part-time ministry.

The Committee of Deans has been impressed with and grateful for the document on Guidelines for Virtual Meetings created under the direction of Secretary Richard. Congregations have been incredibly resourceful, creative, and nimble in finding legal ways to gather to call pastors.

A list of the numbers of congregations in transition by Conference:

Central Philadelphia	4
Chester	5
Delaware	0
Lower Bucks	6
Lower Montgomery	5
North East/West	2
Upper Bucks	7
Upper Montgomery	4
Total congregations in transition:	33

Trends affecting mobility:

Several pastors have left after a brief pastorate – fewer than 4 years. Some have stayed less than 2 years. In times like this it is difficult to follow the interim process as we have it. There are many reasons why these short stays happen, generally logical and valid reasons, but it has an impact on the congregation. In conversations with councils, there is a shudder – do we have to go through the whole interim process again? The process takes so long; what is the value of doing this again so quickly?

We are working on a “fast track” version for congregations in these situations, putting a little less emphasis on the history and other portions of the process. There is potentially work that still needs to be done and so we are not cancelling the process entirely, but we are trying to be more focused in this time on the issues that most need to be addressed.

This trend toward shorter pastorates is something other synods and other denominations have also experienced. What we are experiencing is not peculiar to SEPA Synod. We do not yet know what impact there may be post-covid.

We are also seeing more congregations seeking part-time pastors than we have in the past. This is usually related to income. Most congregations do not want part-time ministry, but this is the financial reality they face. With this as the reality congregations face, both congregations and Deans are being creative and resourceful.

Dean Christopher McKinstry has worked with Pr. Finney to fill a ¾ tie call to St. Paul’s, Sassmansville, and contracted to serve at Christ, Niantic.

In Pottstown, Emmanuel and Grace are looking at a similar possible configuration. This is not seen so much as a “yoking” as it is a sharing of clergy. Still, there is the hope that these congregations will grow together over time, and not just share a pastor, but grow into sharing ministry as well.

In Upper Bucks, where 3 congregations are looking to call part time pastors, seeds are being planted to help congregations realize that while a full-time pastor serving just them is not possible, several congregations sharing clergy can strengthen each congregation.

Need for Interim and Bridge Pastors

We are working on cultivating more interim and bridge pastors to serve in the transition process. We have had great support from several of our retired pastors, but others just want to be retired, and so we have a shortage in interim and bridge ministers. We do have two new lay people who have taken the training and are serving as interim consultants. Please pray for more people to feel the call to interim ministry, even as we recognize that interim ministry is changing, and will not likely be as secure a position as it has been in the past.

Mr. Glenn thanked Pr. Bell for this information. He noted she has focused on need side, the congregations in transition. He is curious about the supply side; are there enough pastors in the pipeline to provide ministers for congregations?

Pr. Bell replied that SEPA Synod has not had trouble finding pastors to interview. Congregations that have been difficult to fill have often been those calls that are unusual, such as the situation in Pottstown. A minister may interview, but then one congregation or the other says no; or sometimes, as the process unfolds, the candidate says no.

We have some graduates who would like a call, but they have reasons as to why they cannot relocate, and so it becomes difficult to place those candidates. We find that many pastors across the ELCA will list SEPA Synod as one of their top choices. We interview them before we bring

them into our Synod. Sometimes we feel they are a good fit. Sometimes we interview them and choose not to bring them in.

The Reverend Karen Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy, Mobility and Interim Ministry, and Mission Advancement, noted that there is a clergy shortage across the ELCA, but we have not experienced this. This is in part because we are a major metropolitan area which is attractive both culturally and as a place for employment for spouses of clergy, and in part because we are not a Synod that places restrictions on candidates because of race or gender identity.

Vice President Beasley thanked Pr. Bell for her presentation and her service to our Synod.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Forward Together in Faith

Ms. Ellen Daneke, chair of the Team, shared a brief summary of the activity of the Fund for this year.

Fourteen grants awarded for total of \$26,024.

Half of the grants were for equipment to improve streaming.

One grant was approved for an Anti-racism program, some were for food programs.

A United Lutheran Seminary student applied to go to an Immersion Program.

Balance in the Forward Together in Faith fund is \$553,800.

Investment Committee

Mr. David Ehret, chair of the Investment Committee, shared two reports:

The first described actions in the month of January. There was a slight decrease due to market correction. The Committee decided to make some slight adjustments in our portfolio. The T. Rowe Price Real-estate fund will be liquidated, with the proceeds split between the existing Science and Technology Fund and a new fund, Blue Chip Growth. Both

The second portrayed the activity of the past year. The gain for 2020 was 15.9%.

Total value of the portfolio as of 1/31/2021 is \$8,861,441.

Nominating Committee

The Reverend Joseph Klinger, chair of the Nominating Committee, shared that there are still a few positions for which the Committee have found no nominees. These include 2 lay men and 2 lay women voting members to the Churchwide Assembly.

Pr. Klinger noted that there is diversity reflected in the slates that will go to the Assembly, but he reminded the Synod Council we could always do better in this regard. He asked the members of the Council to continue to reach out to people, particularly people of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, to consider serving the Synod and the broader Church by standing for one of the many seats we have open this year.

Bishop Davenport thanked Pr. Klinger and the Committee for the thoroughness of their efforts. She sees the request everywhere: on the website, in emails, and on social media, and for that she is grateful.

Mr. Henry Geyer asked if it is permissible to serve both on Synod Council and the Consultation Committee. Pr. Klinger replied no, it would be a conflict of interest.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m. with prayer by the Pr. Karen Sease.

The next meeting of the SEPA Synod Council will be April 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m., and will be held via Zoom.

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

Approved by Synod Council April 8, 2021