

Report of the Synod Council to the Thirty-fourth Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 30, 2022

Included:

1. Minutes of the 165th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 8, 2021
 - Approved by the Synod Council June 17, 2021
2. Minutes of the Proceedings of the Thirty-third Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America *Serving an Unchanging God, in Changing Times – “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8* virtual meeting, April 24, 2021
 - Approved by the Synod Council September 23, 2021
3. Minutes of the 166th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, June 17, 2021
 - Approved by the Synod Council September 23, 2021
4. Minutes of the 167th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, September 23, 2021
 - Approved by the Synod Council December 9, 2021
5. Minutes of the 168th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, December 9, 2021
 - Approved by the Synod Council February 17, 2022
6. Minutes of the 169th Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, February 17, 2022
 - Approved by the Synod Council April 7, 2022

**MINUTES
of the 165th MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Zoom Meeting
April 8, 2021
4:00 p.m.**

DEVOTIONS

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley invited the Mr. Everett Wick to lead the Synod Council in devotions. Mr. Wick based his devotion on John 20:19 – 23, where the disciples are locked in the “upper room” in fear following the crucifixion of Jesus. He noted parallels to today, where we are in troubled times, and many are confused and afraid. What are our fears and concerns at this time? What can we do? How can we see the power of the Resurrection in these days? How

can we, like the disciples, finally move from fear to proclaiming the good news of Jesus and his power over all things, even death, even our fears? In this passage Jesus calms the disciples by saying, “Peace be with you.” He then breathes the Holy Spirit on the disciples and commissions them. As he said to the original disciples, so Jesus says to us, “Peace be with you.” And then, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” We need to go and speak this good news to a fearful world.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 165th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:31 p.m.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the 164th of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

SETTING THE AGENDA

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 165th meeting as presented.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop Davenport thanked Mr. Wick for his devotion, calling us to speak out about Jesus.

Thank you, Synod Council

Bishop thanked the Synod Council for its ongoing work in lifting up the Name of Jesus. She expressed particular thanks to those whose terms are ending with the April 24th Assembly. Among those who are not eligible for re-election, Bishop thanked Pastor Laura Tancredi, Ms. Joyce Maloney, and Mr. Philip Tackett. She also thanked those whose terms are ending, and are eligible and willing to stand for re-election, which include Vice President Tracey Beasley, Pastor Joseph Klinger, Pastor Serena Sellers, Mr. Albert Glenn, Mr. Everett Wick, and Ms. Sandra Zimmermann. And she also expressed her gratitude to those who have chosen not to stand for re-election; Mr. Tyler Emig, Ms. Hanna Malesich, Pastor Matt Staniz, and Ms. Suwah Davies. Mr. Henry Geyer is also among those who will not stand for re-election because he is moving from our territory. We wish him well in his move.

Churchwide Happenings

Conference of Bishops

The Conference continues to meet virtually each week, building relationships, welcoming new members, and saying farewell to those whose service is ending.

Document on Discipline

Among the items the Conference of Bishops is addressing is the ongoing revision of the document for discipline of Rostered Ministers. The LGBTQIA+ community has expressed concerns, but their input is being heard for the re-write. There will also be language to address retired persons who are not honoring their covenant to move on after they end their call. In the document there will be provision for a Bishop to use discretion in matters of discipline, making allowances for those who may be holding to the spirit, if not the letter, of the “law.”

The document will be voted on later this month.

Immigration Concerns

There was also a conversation with LIRS regarding programming for fostering children. We need to reinstitute some programs for helping unaccompanied minors as they enter the country.

Authentic Diversity Advisory Team

The primary function of the ADAT is to support the Task Force for Strategic Authentic Diversity in their quest to fulfill the resolution adopted at our 2016 Churchwide Assembly to address the challenge of becoming an authentically multiethnic, multicultural church. The quest was recently attacked in the Journal of Lutheran Ethics, which was dealt with swiftly by our team calling for a meeting and a response as noted in the latest issue.

How do we face our fears? Forget Everything And Rise! The Churchwide Assembly says we are going one direction; then two writers challenge this direction. The Team has pushed back to say NO, this is where we are!

Mr. Albert Glenn asked about the Journal of Lutheran Ethics – is this a mainstream journal, or a fringe publication?

Pastor Gwendolyn King said it is a theological journal of the ELCA, and the author of the article, Ted Peters, is a Lutheran theologian.

Bishop Davenport noted if you read his article and the two letters that were in response to his article, you will see that he is just wrong. Representatives from the Journal came to address the Authentic Diversity team and were apologetic, but they did not describe any ramifications for Dr. Peters. They sent three white people to defend a white author and defend the system.

Still, this encounter provided a chance to bring to the fore the work that needs to take place and address the hurt that exists for persons of color.

Ecumenical Happenings

Ecumenical leaders in the *Religious Leaders Council* of Interfaith Philadelphia continue to meet to discuss issues related to the pandemic, poverty, and food scarcity. They continue efforts to address gun violence, particularly through the “Heeding God’s Call” initiative. How do we break this? It is about how we show up. We can show up and be negative, or we can show up and be positive, in our witness, in our love and respect for all our people. We need to declare that resorting to violence and guns is not how we live. We live in unity and harmony, we respond with love and not hate, and not killing each other. The neighborhood and the religious communities are striving to work together to say this has got to stop.

Synod Happenings

Communications

Pastor Bob Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Mission Interpretation, has been hosting a weekly meeting for congregational communicators. In this people are sharing

what they are doing to continue ministry during the ongoing pandemic. We still need to encourage safe practices and wearing of masks.

Lay Leaders

Bishop thanked Vice President Beasley for meeting with the lay leaders of our congregations. It was a well attended, and well received meeting for these lay leaders.

Assistance for Rostered Ministers

Ms. Barb Debski of Portico Benefits provided a program on “Sabbath” for our Synod’s rostered ministers, focusing on the need to care for yourself as you are caring for others.

Dr. Stephen Treat provided two sessions to offer support to our rostered ministers. Among the topics discussed were self-care, challenges of Covid, anxiety and depression, and dealing with isolation.

Food Ministries

Many of our congregations have “upped their game” in feeding ministries. Emmanuel, Souderton has passed 90,000 E-meals distributed to the community; St. Mark’s, Philadelphia, Feast of Justice, St. Peter’s Oak Lane, Olney, and Tabor have all been doing significant work in feeding the hungry. The Lutheran Tribe is saying, “Pandemic, get out of our way! We are doing what God has called us to do.”

Prayer Concerns

Pastor Bill Vanderslice died suddenly, and we grieve his loss. Before he died he planned his own memorial service, another example of his caring for people even as he went to the Lord. We also mourn the passing of a former SEPA pastor, John Cochran, who always called us to faithful work and witness to Jesus. Pastor Rich Stewart had emergency surgery, and needs prayer, and Pastor John Carlson has contracted Covid-19, but is recovering.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice President Beasley referenced the proposal in her report that would move the meeting time of Synod Council from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., and to have three of the five meetings remain on Zoom, rather than travel across the Synod for each meeting. She asked members their opinions on the proposed change.

Pastor Joey Klinger noted that it was difficult to fill nominations for Synod Council because of the time of the meetings. A move to start in the evening may assist us in getting people who have day jobs to serve without impacting their work schedules.

Pastor Serena Sellers noted that in congregational life meetings are in the evenings, and for her this change would make serving more difficult.

Mr. Phil Tackett shared that one of the things he has appreciated in his time on the Synod Council is the chance to move around the Synod and see the various churches and their ministries. It has also been an honor for congregations to host the Synod Council.

Ms. Beasley noted that she is blessed that her job can let her move her time, but not everyone can.

Mr. Wick stated a change to 6:00 would be beneficial for him, not because of work, but scheduling would be easier.

Pr. King asked if this change is for the long term, or short term because of Covid-19.

Ms. Beasley said it would be long term regarding the time, and Zoom at least through the pandemic.

Ms. Janet Neff asked about doing a hybrid format. When restrictions lift might we still want to use Zoom going forward?

It was moved that we accept the proposal as it is, with the understanding that we will evaluate Zoom use as we go forward and restrictions are lifted.

The Synod Council approved the motion. The time change will take affect with the June meeting of the Synod Council.

Vice President Beasley invited Ms. Carrie Schwab to give an update on the Synod Assembly.

Ms. Schwab shared that we have low registration for Assembly so far. There are 27 churches unaccounted for in Assembly participation.

Mr. Glenn note that some churches do not have settled pastors.

Ms. Schwab acknowledged that, but they would still have lay voting members to send to the Assembly.

There is a packet of information going out to those who have registered with what you need to do and how to participate.

April 22nd at 7:00 p.m. will be the main time we need voting members to attend to be trained on the LUMI platform we will use for the Assembly.

Three resolutions have been sent to Reference and Counsel for consideration.

Four requests for scholarships were received this year; all were granted.

There will be links to sign up for the two pre-discussions – 4/13 on the Constitution, 4/20 on the budget. Both presentations will be at 7:00 p.m.

ELCA Representative Phil Hersch does feel the time we have allotted is sufficient for his presentation to the Assembly.

We need more volunteers to help with the help desk. We need a few for the whole day, but a few just for the first couple hours.

Pastor Jenn Phelps asked if this is a remote job, or on site?

Ms. Schwab said it is remote: questions will be directed to the people to address.

Pr. Phelps – do we need these people to be voting members?

Ms. Schwab – it is better if they are not, so voting members can focus on the meeting.

Ms. Sandra Zimmerman – what time do these people need to be available?

Ms. Schwab – 8:00 a.m. They will need to be online slightly before that.

Vice President Beasley thanked Ms. Schwab for the update.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Richard gave an update on the proposed easement for a pipeline to cross the property of Bear Creek Camp. The proposal is being reviewed by our Synod Attorney. The questions raised by Synod Council are being asked, and we anticipate the proposal being set to come to the Synod Council at the June meeting

Actions on the Roster

Secretary Richard brought forward the following actions on the Roster.

All were adopted without objection by the Synod Council.

Renewal of Term Call

S.C.21.04.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. David Bruner as Pastor of Adult Discipleship and Intergenerational Mission (PADM) at Paoli Presbyterian Church, Paoli, Pennsylvania. This renewable term call is effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. This call requires an annual report to and meeting with the synodical bishop for the length of this call.

Renewal of Call to Specialized Ministry

S.C.21.04.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one-year renewable call to Specialized Ministry to the Rev. Ghislaine Cotnoir beginning May 15, 2021 to May 14, 2022.

Renewal of Call to Unusual Circumstances

S.C.21.04.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council, in accord with bylaw 7.41.15., in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, renew a call as Spiritual Director to the Rev. Leslie M. Richard under *Unusual Circumstance* for a period of one-year effective June 1, 2021.

On Leave from Call Request

S.C.21.04.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. DeBorah GLod, second year, effective May 1, 2021.

Information not requiring action

Death

The Rev. William A. Vanderslice, March 24, 2021

Request to elect a member to the United Lutheran Seminary Board of Trustees

S.C.21.04.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council elect Mr. Christopher Mondics to a second term on the United Lutheran Seminary Board of Trustees, term ending 2023.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution without objection.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, noted that we are only one month into the new fiscal year, and so there is not much of a trend on which to report. At this point Mission Support is over budget by \$20,000, and expenses are lower than budgeted. With more resources in than out, we are doing well, but again, this early in the year it is not enough to call a trend.

MISSION MOMENT

Pr. Gwendolyn King, co-chair of the Anti-Racism Team, presented the Mission Moment. Pr. King was joined in the presentation by other members of the Anti-Racism Team, including Pr. Susie Folks, co-chair; Ms. Fern Hagedorn; and Pr. Serena Sellers.

Pr. King noted that the four of them represent one-third of the Team, which has 12 members in total at this time. She thanked the Council for the opportunity to present on the Team's efforts, and its primary mission in the Synod.

She began by saying we the Anti-Racism Team is a faith-based group within the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and all are volunteers. The work of the Anti-Racism Team (ART) is anti-racist education that leads to action. To emphasize the biblical grounding of the Team's work, each member shared a piece of scripture with a brief explanation of its connection to Anti-Racism education.

Pr. Susie Folks read Genesis 1:26 – 31 “Let us make humankind in our image...”

Pr. King expanded: All humans are created in the image of God. God calls the creation “good.” Racism says that one group is better than another, and therefore is against the created order.

Pr. King read Galatians 3:27 – 28 “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

Pr. King expanded: Racism contradicts the call of baptism, where all are one in Christ.

Ms. Fern Hagedorn read Ephesians 2:11 – 22 “So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth...were at that time without Christ, being aliens...and strangers to the covenants of promise...But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ...So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone...”

Pr. King: Christ breaks down walls that separate us. Racism separates us, and therefore is contrary to the work of Christ.

Pr. Sellers read Revelation 5:8-14 “...You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God...”

Pr. King: For every tribe and nation, God's plan is that we gather to worship around the throne. Racism works against this truth.

This is the understanding of the ART; anti-racist education that leads to action. Racism is a sin and stands against God's plan and God's kingdom. We consider this to be sacred work.

Pr. King offered some history to the creation of the ART:

- In 1993 the ELCA Social Statement "Freed in Christ..." was shared.
- In May of 2009 SEPA Synod brought into existence a task force to bring understanding and knowledge of racism, and steps to be an actively anti-racist church. Ms. Inez Torres-Davis (formerly an Associate in Ministry and now a Deacon in the ELCA), came to SEPA Synod to train us in anti-racism understanding and techniques. She has been the Director for Justice of the Women of the ELCA since 1997, the year the Women of the ELCA declared themselves an anti-racist organization.
- 2011 SEPA Synod stated its desire to be an anti-racist organization.
- June of 2016 brought a reconstitution of the Racial Justice task force, and Pr. Chris Weidner was named the task force leader. This team reconnected with Deacon Torres-Davis for further training.
- 2019 Churchwide Assembly issued a repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.
- 2019 Churchwide Assembly issued the Apology to Persons of African Descent.

Pr. Sellers interjected that, for those who are not aware, which is most Americans, the Doctrine of Discovery was a series of Papal Bulls that said those who were not Christian could have their property and persons confiscated. This led to perpetual indentured servitude, or slavery. This was not started with the government, but with the Church. Knowing this history is not just academic. It gives a chance to understand what is happening and see how this is impacting life and people right in front of us. This can move us to change how we respond.

Pr. King resumed.

The SEPA Synod Assembly passed a requirement for rostered leaders to undergo anti-racism training as regularly as boundary training.

We want to do this training, but also want to have other opportunities for people to be able to gather in other settings to discuss and learn. For instance, we have had a few book studies. One was discussing America's Original Sin, by Jim Wallis. This 6-session study was held in June and July of 2020.

The second discussed Waking Up White, by Debbie Irving. This was a 4-session study, held January and February of 2021.

Our Team has been meeting with ARTs of other synods, including the North Carolina Synod and Metro New York Synod. Pastor Linda Manson, who recently served in SEPA Synod and a member of ART, has invited us to work with Metro NY Synod. Pr. Manson also said that in Metro NY, the team is paid. Our ART is finding we lack credibility in some circles because we are all volunteers. The question from other teams is, "Do we as a Synod put our money where our mouth is." We are doing more than anyone else, but we were the only group without a budget. Others evaluate us as how seriously we are taken if we do not have a budget.

The ART is planning an open house in May for those who would like to know more about our team and the work we are doing, or how to get this training into the congregations. SEPA Synod also has resources we have been using and offer to the Synod.

Ms. Fern Hagedorn described some of the education the ART has been providing via Facebook and blog posts. The Team is grateful to Pr. Fisher who has helped with the posting, and who has kept an archive of them. Ms. Hagedorn asked how many of the Council have joined the Facebook group, and encouraged those who have not to sign up for it. In response to these posts the ART has received comments like ‘Why wasn’t I taught that in school?’ and ‘I never knew what white privilege meant.’ These comments demonstrate that we are making an impact.

Pr. King noted there are some events marked on the calendar of the ELCA which are coming soon, including:

- Juneteenth, which this year is Saturday, June 19th, is now on the calendar of observations.
- A commemoration of the “Emmanuel 9”, those killed in Mother Emmanuel AME Zion Church in Charleston, SC, is June 17th.

In addition, Tuesday, June 1st, marks the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre, where as many as 300 Blacks were killed in an attack by white supremacists on “Black Wall Street.”

On May 25, 2020, when George Floyd was killed there was an increase in interest in congregations and among members in how we can know more and address this systemic racism. What has been happening in your congregations?

Pr. Sellers: At Christ, Kulpville, we had members in marches, and we included prayers in our services.

Pr. Matt Staniz: St Luke’s Devon has posted sermons and prayers about systemic racism.

Bishop Davenport: Some of our rostered ministers have peacefully protested. Some were bold enough to proclaim God’s love and were able to quote publicly and at personal threat.

Pr. King: Our bishop has been a strong proponent of our work. We want to have helpful conversation about race. We want to be moved to action for racial justice. It is in keeping with God’s plan that this sin be broken, and justice and love be restored.

Pr. Folks stated the Team name was changed from “Racial Justice” to “Anti-Racism” because you cannot do racial justice until you recognize the sin. And this is not a “one and done” enterprise. It needs continual education, self-examination, and work.

In Waking Up White, Debbie Irving says, “You need to be able to confess that you don’t know what you don’t know.” Do not make people of color explain things to you. Seek out mixed communities to help you grow.

Pr. Sellers encouraged members of the Council to ask the question in your congregations. Have our rostered ministers taken the anti-racism training/education?

Mr. Glenn asked, “If the answer is no, but they would like to, how do they go about this?”

Pr. King said have them email us at antiracism@sepa.org and we can let them know when the next training event is.

Ms. Hagedorn emphasized that the team needs more workers. If you, or someone you know, is willing to make the commitment to join in this work, please let us know.

Pr. Folks closed the session with prayer.

Bishop Davenport thanked the Anti-Racism Team for their work on behalf of our Synod.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee

Mr. Phil Tackett, Chairperson, presented the report on the Audit. He noted that the Report is in the packet. He highlighted the following things:

- There is sufficient cash on hand to meet expenses.
- While congregational giving was down last year, the decrease was less than it has been in previous years. With congregations not worshipping in person, and struggling because of the pandemic, this decrease could be expected.
- The Paycheck Protection Program loan received by the Synod has been forgiven, and the amount of the loan is now considered an asset.
- We have eliminated depreciation as a line item in the budget, as we have cleared those items.
- The audit does provide an accurate representation of the Synod’s financial position.

Mr. Tackett asked that the Synod Council approve the audit for submission to the Synod Assembly.

S.C.21.04.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the Audit Report to be submitted to the Synod Assembly for reception. **The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.**

Investment Committee

Mr. David Ehret, chairperson, shared the status of the Synod’s investments.

- The T. Rowe Price Real-estate fund has been liquidated, and the proceeds split between the existing Science and Technology Fund and a new fund, the Blue Chip Growth Fund.
- The T. Rowe Price Large Cap Core Fund has been liquidated, and the proceeds placed in the Blue Chip Growth Fund.
- Year to date we have a gain of 4.5%

The total Investment Portfolio stands at \$9,340,818.

Nominating Committee

Pr. Joey Klinger noted that we have one last minute nominee in addition to those in the submitted report. Mr. Graeme Brown has agreed to stand for Lay Man, Young Adult.

Pr. King asked that her name in the report be Gwendolyn, not Gwen.

Mr. Glenn noted that there are two “n”s at the end of his name, where the report has only one.

Pr. Klinger said he would be sure to correct those errors for the report to the Assembly.

Constitution Report

Pr. Serena Sellers brought forward the request that the Synod Council approve the Constitution of St. John, Mayfair. There are some typos in the document, but none that would interfere with its implementation.

S.C.21.04.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the Constitution of St. John Lutheran Church, Mayfair, Philadelphia. **The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.**

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m. with prayer by Vice President Beasley.

The next meeting of the SEPA Synod Council will be June 17, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., and will be held via Zoom.

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

Approved by Synod Council June 17, 2021

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

Serving an Unchanging God, in Changing Times

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8

Virtual Assembly

April 24, 2021

Morning Session

Welcome

Bishop Patricia A. Davenport welcomed the voting members and those watching as visitors to the thirty-third Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly at 9:00 a.m. She invited all to worship the Lord as she began a service of Prayer, Praise, and Preaching.

Prayer, Praise and Preaching

Two pastors of our Synod, the Reverend Joseph Klinger and the Reverend Jennifer Casey, along with musicians from our congregations, led the participants in worship.

Mr. Chris Holben from Christ, Ascension sang “Heaven is Singing for Joy” to lead into the preaching of the Word.

Pr. Klinger from Redemption, Philadelphia, preached on Mark 3:1 – 6, where Jesus enters synagogue and is challenged when he heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.

Pr. Klinger shared that he has lived this gospel reading. He has been a part of the ELCA since his family joined the Lutheran Church in Butler PA when he was five years old. He was very active in his home congregation, attended Theil College, one of our ELCA colleges, through the ELCA he found God’s love and grace was for him. He found a community that loved and supported him. He felt safe enough to come out of the closet and admit that he is gay, and he was embraced and was supported by his pastor and his congregation. He entered candidacy to enter the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

In the process of candidacy, he found a different experience than that which he had in his home church. One of the people in the interview process said to him, “You talk about being safe in your congregation. You would not be safe in my congregation. How do you respond to that?”

Pr. Klinger heard in this statement “you are not welcome here; you are not what a leader should be.” This is where he feels like Jesus in the passage. The Pharisees said to Jesus, “You are not the leader we want. We don’t want your miracles or your teachings.” He heard the same, “Joey, we do not want your gifts or heart for service.”

It is hard, when all you want to do is serve, to tell people of the love and grace of God in Jesus, to create the Beloved Community of God, to be told no, we do not want you. You do not fit what we expect or want in this Church.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of the first woman in the Lutheran Church, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of the first woman of Color, and the 10th anniversary of the ordination of LGBT persons, we are celebrating in the midst of a time and in a church that still struggles with women, Persons of Color, and LGBT persons. There are many barriers to these leaders in our church, even as we say we welcome them into the life and ministry of this Church. Yet what we celebrate is Jesus, who brings all people close.

A changeless God in changing times. God hasn’t changed, but the society has. God hasn’t changed, but as we recognize God’s call to the diversity of people that exist in this world and this Church, we are bringing the gospel to more and more people. As we proclaim God’s grace, as we do the work of breaking down oppression, we get closer and closer to God’s beautiful, beloved community.

Pr. Jenn Casey from Holy Trinity, Wallingford, preached on Ezekiel 37:1 – 14, “The Valley of Dry Bones.”

She noted we have heard from Pastor Joey about leaders in scripture who tried to control the Spirit of God, and we heard how they tried to limit who could speak for God. We also heard how the Church today strives to do the same, limiting the Spirit, limiting who can speak. But we do not worship and live by rules that divide the people. Rather we worship a God who is not bound by the rules, not even the rules of life and death.

In this passage, Ezekiel gives an image of the Spirit of God that can take old, brittle, bones, and breathe into them life. Sisters and brothers, sometimes it seems to me that the church is full of dry and brittle bones. When I see how we worship our buildings and our individual congregational identities, when the sin of systemic racism is allowed to continue, when the church seems more concerned with our bottom line than what we are doing to care for our neighbors, if God were to ask me, can these bones live? My answer would be “no, not on our own.” But the Spirit of God can breathe life into even these bones.

We have been struggling in this past year. Our spaces have been closed longer than we could imagine. We have experienced more change than we think we can handle. But God promises to be with us, and call us from death into life, to end divisions that we put on people. God says to us, “Oh, my people I will put my Spirit within you and you shall live!”

We have not been abandoned. Our God is a God of hope we can rely on. Do not fear death, do not fear change, do not fear leaving your comfort zones. God is with us in uncertainty. Life is always on the other side of death.

Ms. Dedra Florence-Johnson of Mediator, Philadelphia, a candidate for rostered ministry, sang “I’m so Glad Jesus Lifted Me” to conclude the preaching of the Word.

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley led the Assembly in prayer.

Bishop Davenport proclaimed the benediction.

The choir from Trinity, Perkasio, concluded the worship with “Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!”

Order for the Opening of the Assembly

Bishop Davenport and Vice President Tracey A. Beasley opened the Assembly with the “Order for the Opening of an Assembly” at 9:35 a.m.

Words of instruction, thanks, and welcome

Instruction

Bishop Davenport brought words of welcome, thanks, and instruction. As this year was a “virtual” assembly, held entirely on-line, Bishop reviewed the instructions needed to operate the LUMI platform so all voting members could participate fully and equitably.

Bishop Davenport welcomed those who are voting members for the first time. She noted that if we were in-person she would have them all stand to be recognized, and we would all applaud. She also thanked those who were visitors to the Assembly, viewing the work of the Synod via livestream.

Expressions of Thanks

Thank you to the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phelps and the members of the Assembly Worship Team for providing inspirational worship over a virtual platform.

Thank you to the Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, a former Secretary our Synod and current chair of our Generosity Team, for serving as our Parliamentarian.

Thank you to our Director of Mobility, the Rev. Marcia Bell, our Director of Interim Ministry, the Rev. Dr. Christian McMullen, and our Conference Deans for their expanded role in caring for our congregations in transition during this pandemic. Conference Deans who served since our last Assembly in 2019 include:

- + The Rev. Regina Goodrich, Central Philadelphia Conference
- + The Rev. Ronald Weseman, Chester Conference
- + The Rev. Jennifer Casey, Delaware Conference, elected October 2020, and thanks to former Dean of Delaware Conference, the Rev. Leslie Richard, who completed her second term
- + The Rev. Norbert Hahn, Lower Bucks Conference
- + The Rev. Bryan Penman, Lower Montgomery Conference
- + The Rev. Jane Marston, Northeast/west Philadelphia Conference
- + The Rev. Erica Wesch, Upper Bucks Conference, elected March 2020, and thanks to former Dean the Rev. Carolann Hopcke who received and accepted a call to the Nebraska Synod
- + The Rev. Christopher McKinstry, Upper Montgomery Conference

Thank you to our Synod Officers and Synod Council, which is a working team, for their efforts on behalf of our Synod in these difficult times. Many of our Synod Council have agreed to serve extended terms since 2019 because of the pandemic.

Our Synod Officers

- + Ms. Tracey A. Beasley, Vice-President, Reformation, Philadelphia
- + The Rev. Karl M. Richard, Secretary, St. Matthew, Springfield
- + Ms. Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer, St. Luke, Devon

Our Synod Council, Lay Members:

- + Mr. Adam Clark, Zion Olney
- + Ms. Suwah Davies, Faith-Immanuel Lansdowne
- + Ms. Cheryl Detweiler, Grace Pottstown
- + Mr. Tyler Emig, Calvary West Chester
- + Mr. David Ehret, Grace Broomall
- + Mr. Henry Geyer, Christ Orelan
- + Mr. Albert Glenn, St. John Melrose
- + Mr. William Graham, Prince of Peace Philadelphia
- + Ms. Doreen Kinzler, St. John Philadelphia (Mayfair)
- + Ms. Hannah Malesich, Advent West Chester
- + Ms. Joyce Maloney, Trinity Philadelphia
- + Mr. Philip Tackett, St. Peter Hilltown
- + Mr. J. Everett Wick, St. Andrew Perkasio
- + Ms. Sandra Zimmermann, St. John Phoenixville

Synod Council, Clergy Members:

- + Rev. Gwendolyn King, St. Stephen's, Feasterville
- + Rev. Joseph F. Klinger, Redemption, Philadelphia

- + Rev. Dwight Mason, Spirit and Truth, Yeadon
- + Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phelps, Trinity, Perkasio
- + Rev. Serena Sellers, Christ, (Kulpsville) Harleysville
- + Rev. Matthew Staniz, St. Luke, Devon
- + Rev. Laura Tancredi, St. Paul's Ardmore

Times does not permit naming all of the following servants, but hearty thanks to our Synod Staff, our Communications Team, the Candidacy Committee, our Interim Pastors and Consultants, our Bridge Pastors, our Transitional Development Ministry Team, and our Synod Vitality Team, to name a few.

Words of Welcome

Bishop Davenport extended a warm welcome to the Rev. Philip Hirsch, Executive for Christian Community and Leadership of the ELCA, and our Churchwide representative for this year.

She also noted that we will welcome several of our ministry partners, such as Portico Benefits and United Lutheran Seminary, by means of video presentations submitted and available on our website under 2021 Synod Assembly. Please view these recordings, as well as presentations from other partners, in our virtual Mission Center.

Bishop also noted that we welcome those rostered ministers who are new to Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod by means of a slide presentation on the website. Ordinarily we would welcome them in person, but in these difficult times we wish to be sure you are aware of who has joined us in ministry. In particular, Bishop noted the presence of the Rev. Dr. William Flippin, who came on staff as Assistant to the Bishop, and Director for Evangelical Mission. Dr. Flippin joined the staff after the 2019 Synod Assembly, but since there was no 2020 Assembly, Bishop Davenport wants to make particular mention of his work among us. In addition to his other duties, Dr. Flippin also sits on the Committee of Deans.

Report of the Registrar

Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, Registrar, reported that the total number of voting members was 353, the total number of voting members registered was 347, and the number of voting members needed for a quorum was 177. Bishop Davenport declared a quorum.

United Lutheran Seminary

Bishop Davenport invited the participants of the Assembly to view the video presentation from the Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin, president of the United Lutheran Seminary, as he shared an update on the Seminary, and gratitude for our ongoing partnership in the work of the Church.

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*, highlighting in particular the limits on submission of items to Reference and Counsel. 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."

He reported that the Synod Council approved the minutes of the 32nd annual assembly on December 12, 2019.

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

Report on the Constitution Committee

Secretary Richard presented as information the required provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which were adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. These provisions are included in the Bulletin of Reports, Report on the Constitution, Section A.

He then presented for approval the following amendments to revise the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions, which were endorsed by the Synod Council.

From Section B of the Report on the Constitution:

†S18.12. AMENDMENTS

Secretary Richard explained these are recommended amendments to the Constitution for Synods adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. These amendments are in areas that are not required provisions, but are necessary to ensure our language is consistent within the document itself, and aligns with the Constitution Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. These amendments may be adopted by a **majority vote** by the Synod Assembly. (reference †S18.12.)

AMENDMENTS TO THE *CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS* AS APPROVED BY THE 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Recommended Provisions

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
August 2019

Additions are underlined. Deletions are ~~struck through~~ in the text.

CHAPTER 7: SYNOD ASSEMBLY

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of ~~congregations under development and~~ authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw ~~10.02.03- 10.01.04.~~, to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

CHAPTER 8: OFFICERS

S8.11.01. When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.

S8.14. The ~~synodical~~ bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall from time to time authorize.

CHAPTER 10: SYNOD COUNCIL

S10.08. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.

S10.078.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

CHAPTER 13: CONGREGATIONS

S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence. Such synod administration shall continue only so long as necessary to complete the purposes for which it was requested by the congregation or until the congregation withdraws consent to continued administration.

S13.40. ~~Synodically Authorized~~ Synod-authorized **Worshipping Communities**

CHAPTER 14: ROSTERED MINISTERS

S14.14. Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a ~~Lutheran~~ congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.17. No minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the ~~chair-president~~ of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the **chair-president** of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call

CHAPTER 15: FINANCIAL MATTERS

S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to **synodical** causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

Secretary Richard presented the following motion to the Assembly

S.A.21.04.01. Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the proposed changes to the bylaws and continuing resolution of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America enumerated in Section B of the Report on the Constitution.

A simple majority is needed for this action.

The Synod Assembly adopted the motion, 259 yes, 2 no.

From Section C of the Report on the Constitution:

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS UNIQUE TO SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

To comply with new designation of ministers of word and service as ordained, not lay, and designations of men and women instead of male and female:

S7.22.11. In establishing a formula pursuant to Chapter †7.21.c of this Constitution, the number of retired **rostered** ministers ~~of Word and Sacrament~~ permitted to vote at meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be a factor in determining the number of additional lay representatives necessary to comprise at least 60% of the membership of the Synod Assembly.

S9.08.01.

c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each **rostered** minister ~~of Word and Sacrament~~ and lay at-large position up for election. Geographic consideration shall be given in proposing nominees, as well as the

need to assure an adequate number of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

e. The election of conference lay positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to conference lay positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. The election of young adult positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to the young adult positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. Balloting for at-large lay positions shall be by **male and female panels of men and women.**

S10.01.01. General Membership.

a. With the exception of the officers, the youth members, and the young adult members, the general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of nine **rostered** ministers ~~of Word and Sacrament~~, one layperson from each conference of this synod, and six at-large laypersons, three **male men** and three **female women**.

b. The terms for the general membership of the Synod Council shall be staggered so that the terms of three **rostered** ministers ~~of Word and Sacrament~~, approximately one-third of conference lay positions, and two at-large lay positions, one **male man** and one **female woman**, expire each year. None of the general membership of the Synod Council shall be eligible to serve for more than two consecutive terms. The lay position assigned to each conference shall alternate every two terms between **male man** and **female woman**.

S10.01.02. The Synod Council shall include two youth members, one **male man** and one **female woman**, and two young adult members, **one male man** and **one female woman**. At least one of the youth or young adult members shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English. The terms of the youth members shall be two years and shall expire at the same time. The youth members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult members shall be three years and shall expire at the same time. The young adult members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible.

To reflect change in language from “synodical” to “synod”

S6.04.C02. *It is the additional intention of this synod to increase from 10 percent to 20 percent the representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English who serve on the above mentioned **synodical** bodies.*

A. **S9.04.B17** *Process for preparing the Synod for the election of a Bishop Stage One. A Transition Team shall develop a **Synodical** Mission Profile. Included in such a Mission Profile might be the latest demographics and*

vitality indicators of the congregations on the territory of the synod, updated demographic information on the rostered leaders serving in the synod, and an assessment of the hoped for direction of the synod and its ministry. This Synodical Mission Profile shall be completed by December 1st of the year prior to the election and made available upon completion.

B. Stage Two. A Discernment Team shall develop a prayer-filled process for conversation and discernment across the synod. This process shall include ways to discuss the gifts for ministry that might be helpful to advance the Synodical Mission Profile and how to identify persons who might possess these gifts. The structure for this prayerful conversation shall include consideration of:

The process for these conversations shall be completed and shared by the time the Synodical Mission Profile is completed. These conversations shall begin after the completion of the Synodical Mission Profile and be completed at least one month prior to the election.

S12.01.02. The synod shall be divided into conferences in accordance with Chapter 12 of the synod constitution in order to foster interdependent relationships among congregations, institutions and synodical and churchwide units for mission purposes.

To correct designations:

S6.03.13. The synod shall relate to ~~Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and to Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg~~ **United Lutheran Seminary** through financial support and election of board members.

S9.08.04 The Synod Council shall elect members to the boards of the ~~Gettysburg Seminary, the Philadelphia~~ **United Lutheran** Seminary, Gettysburg College and Muhlenberg College according to procedures established with each of the institutions.

To change the following to reflect current social ministry organizations and relationships:

S6.03.14. The synod shall encourage support of all social ministry organizations on its territory, which are affiliated by the Division for Social Ministry Organizations of the ELCA. The synod shall serve the function of a corporate member for:
Artman Lutheran Home
Lutheran Children and Family Services of Eastern Pennsylvania
Lutheran Home at Germantown
Lutheran Housing and Development Corporation
Lutheran Retirement Homes, Inc.

Lutheran Social Mission Society of Philadelphia
The Mary J. Drexel Home as long as these social ministry organizations are affiliated with the synod.

- S6.03.14.** The synod shall encourage support of all social ministry organizations on its territory, which have a history of or are currently affiliated by ~~the Division for Social Ministry Organizations of~~ the ELCA and Lutheran Services of America, including: The synod shall serve the function of a corporate member for:
Gemma Services;
KenCrest;
Liberty Lutheran affiliates: Artman, LCFS's West Philadelphia Senior center, The Hearth at Drexel, Paul's Run, The Manor at York Town, The Becoming Center at Artman, Lutheran Congregational Services and Liberty at Home;
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, including: Manatawny Manor, and Twining Village;
Diakon Child, Family and Community Ministries, including: Diakon Adoption and Foster Care, and Diakon Youth Services, and Diakon Family Reunification and Family Preservation Services;
Lutheran Settlement House.
~~as long as these social ministry organizations are affiliated with the synod.~~

To clean up roster language missed from last round of changes:

- S11.01.B98.** *Committees on Ministry. Appropriate committees shall be established to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to this synod in the areas of candidacy of persons for ~~the ordained ministry and associates in~~ rostered ministry according to procedures established by the Division for Ministry of the ELCA, and with regard to support of the ministries of the whole people of God, including recognition and support of the ministry of lay persons, ~~ordained persons and associates in~~ ministry and rostered ministers.*

To remove references that no longer exist:

- S12.01.11.** Each conference in assembly shall elect a dean who shall be a pastor under call serving within the territory of the conference. The quorum for the conference assembly at which the dean is to be elected shall consist of a majority of the congregations in the conference. The conference shall seek to assure that the representational principles stated in †S6.04., †S6.04.A01., †S6.04.B09., and S6.04.C02. are fulfilled. If there is no quorum for the conference assembly at which the dean is to be elected, the dean shall be appointed by the bishop of this

synod in consultation with the Committee of Deans. If the conference does not call a conference assembly for the election of the dean, the bishop of this synod shall call the conference assembly.

Secretary Richard presented the following motion to the Assembly

S.A.21.04.02. Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the proposed changes to the bylaws and continuing resolution of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America enumerated in Section C of the Report on the Constitution.

A 2/3rds Majority is needed for this action.

The Synod Assembly adopted the motion, 264 yes, 2 no

From Section D of the Report on the Constitution:

Secretary Richard presented the following amendments from Section D for individual consideration:

Regarding the cancellation of an Assembly:

S7.11.01. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually unless performance becomes impossible or impracticable, especially as a result of an event or effect that could not have been anticipated or controlled, such as a public health crisis; severe acts of nature or weather events including floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, or explosions; war, acts of terrorism, and epidemics; acts of governmental authorities such as expropriation, condemnation, confinement orders/recommendations; strikes and labor disputes; or other such events that make the meeting impossible or impracticable

S.A.21.04.03. Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the following amendment by addition to bylaw S.7.11.01. of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as enumerated in Section D of the report on the Constitution.

A 2/3rds Majority is needed for this action.

The Assembly adopted the resolution, 263 yes, 2 no

Concerning the ability for the Assembly to meet Remotely or virtually

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.

S.A.21.04.04. Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the following amend by addition bylaw S.7.13.10. of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as enumerated in Section D of the report on the Constitution.

A 2/3rds Majority is needed for this action.

The Assembly adopted the resolution, 277 yes, 1 no

Concerning the realignment of the Synod Council

S10.01.01. General Membership.

a. With the exception of the officers, the youth members, and the young adult members, the general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of ~~nine~~ **six** rostered ministers, one layperson from each conference of this synod, and ~~six~~ **a sufficient number of** at-large laypersons to ensure at least 60% of the Synod Council is laypersons, ~~three men and three women.~~ **The number of conferences and at large members shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution.**

b. The terms for the general membership of the Synod Council shall be staggered so that the terms of ~~three~~ **two** rostered ministers, **and** approximately one-third of ~~the conference~~ lay positions, **both the conference representatives and two** the at-large lay position(s), ~~one man and one woman,~~ expire each year. None of the general membership of the Synod Council shall be eligible to serve for more than two consecutive terms. The lay position assigned to each conference shall alternate every two terms between man and woman. **The at-large position(s) shall also alternate, as needed, every two terms between man and woman to effect a membership with at least 45% men and 45% women.**

c. At least three members of the general membership of the Synod Council shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

d. The general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time. Exceptions may be made to this requirement only if necessary to meet the requirements of S10.01.01.c.

S10.01.A21. There shall be eight (8) conference representatives, and one (1) at large member as lay positions in the general membership of the Synod Council.

S10.01.02. The Synod Council shall include ~~two~~ **one** youth members, ~~one man and one woman,~~ and ~~two~~ **one** young adult members, ~~one man and one woman.~~ **At least one of the youth or young adult members shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English.** The terms of the youth members shall be two years **and shall expire at the same time.** The youth members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult members

shall be three years **and shall expire at the same time**. The young adult members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible.

Clean copy, if adopted:

S10.01.01. General Membership.

- a. With the exception of the officers, the youth member, and the young adult member, the general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of six rostered ministers, one layperson from each conference of this synod, and a sufficient number of at-large laypersons to ensure at least 60% of the Synod Council is laypersons. The number of conferences and at large members shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution.
- b. The terms for the general membership of the Synod Council shall be staggered so that the terms of two rostered ministers, and approximately one-third of the lay positions, both the conference representatives and the at-large lay position(s) expire each year. None of the general membership of the Synod Council shall be eligible to serve for more than two consecutive terms. The lay position assigned to each conference shall alternate every two terms between man and woman. The at-large position(s) shall also alternate, as needed, every two terms between man and woman to effect a membership with at least 45% men and 45% women.
- c. At least three members of the general membership of the Synod Council shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- d. The general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time. Exceptions may be made to this requirement only if necessary to meet the requirements of S10.01.01.c.

S10.01.A21. *There shall be eight (8) conference representatives, and one (1) at large member as lay positions in the general membership of the Synod Council.*

S10.01.02. The Synod Council shall include one youth member and one young adult member. The term of the youth member shall be two years. The youth member may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The term of the young adult member shall be three years. The young adult member may serve two consecutive terms if eligible.

S.A.21.04.05. Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the amendments to bylaws S.10.01.01. and S.10.01.02. and add continuing resolution S.10.01.A21. to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as enumerated in Section D of the Report on the Constitution.

A 2/3rds Majority is needed for this action.

Secretary Richard described the rationale behind the proposal

The Synod Council as currently configured reflects a time when the synod demographics were significantly different than they are today. In 1995 the synod had 182 congregations, designated into 9 conferences. In 2021, the synod has 146 congregations, designated into 8 conferences.

Each year following the Synod Assembly there are seats that go unfilled, which Synod Council then fills as able. Filling a council that reflected the demographics of 25 years ago is difficult with the demographics of the present day.

In addition, the logistics of gathering and working with a council of 31 persons poses its own challenges, including finding ways for all to be able to participate in conversation and deliberation, rather than feeling they are simply filling a seat.

To that end, we propose realigning the council to more accurately reflect the demographics of our synod today. We can do this by lowering the number of clergy and at large positions in the general membership of the council by a total of eight seats, and by reducing the number of youth and young adult members to 1 each, rather than 2 each (the Model Constitution for Synods calls for 1 youth member, and 1 young adult member, in addition to the general membership of the council).

The desired result will be a council that is more agile, more participatory, and more complete with less chance of perennially unfilled positions, while continuing to have at least 60% lay persons and a representational balance of across the territory of the synod.

The Rev. Serena Sellers, Christ, Kulpsville, spoke in favor of the proposal. While this will decrease the size of the Council, there are many council committees that do the work of the Synod. People who are not on serving on council may be asked to serve on these council committees. As a result, this will not diminish the ability of the Council to do its work, and will give others not on the council, both lay and clergy, the opportunity to join in the work of the Synod.

The Assembly adopted the resolution, 259 yes, 10 no

Secretary Richard thanked the Assembly for their consideration.

Bishop Davenport thanked Secretary Richard for his report.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Bishop Davenport welcomed the Reverend Joseph Klinger, Chair of the Nominating Committee, who presented the report.

Pastor Klinger noted that there are nearly twice as many tickets this year, as we need to elect people to seats that would have been considered last year if the pandemic had not forced the cancellation of the Assembly. There are also some open seats we need to fill, and we need to consider persons to attend the 2022 Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, Ohio.

TICKETS FROM 2019 and 2020

Synod Council

TICKET 1: SYNOD COUNCIL YOUNG ADULT, LAY MAN (One to be elected for a term ending 2022)

NAME

Mr. Graeme Brown

CONGREGATION

Christ Ascension, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared **Mr. Graeme Brown ELECTED.**

TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL YOUNG ADULT, LAY WOMAN (One to be elected for a term ending 2022)

NAME **CONGREGATION**

Pr. Klingler stated that no nominees came through the Committee.

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Nominated from the floor:

Ms. Emily Fowler St. Luke's, Devon

With no other nominees from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 2 closed. She further declared **Ms. Emily Fowler ELECTED.**

TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY (Three Rostered Ministers to be elected for terms ending 2023)

NAME **CONGREGATION**

Rev. Julie DeWerth Good Shepherd, King of Prussia

Rev. Joseph Klingler Redemption, Philadelphia

Rev. Serena Sellers Christ, Kulpsville

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Julie DeWerth, the Rev. Joseph Klingler, and the Rev. Serena Sellers, ELECTED.**

TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME **CONGREGATION**

Ms. Doris Sterner St. Peter, Chester Springs

Ms. Sandra Zimmermann St. John, Phoenixville

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Pr. Klingler stated persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 7.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 4 closed.

TICKET 5: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME **CONGREGATION**

Pr. Klingler stated that no nominees came through the Committee.

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 5 closed. She further noted that responsibility for filling this seat will revert to the Synod Council.

TICKET 6: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME **CONGREGATION**

Mr. Richard Daniels Christ, Oreland

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Pr. Klinger stated that persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 8.
As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 6 closed.
She further declared **Mr. Richard Daniels ELECTED.**

TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Doreen Kinzler	St. John, Mayfair

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 7 closed.

TICKET 8: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Albert Glenn	St. John, Melrose Park

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Nominated from the floor:

Mr. Thomas Salber	Prince of Peace, Philadelphia
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Mr. Salber declined the nomination, noting that another member of his congregation is already serving on Synod Council, thereby making him ineligible.

As there were no further nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 8 closed.
She further declared **Mr. Albert (Bert) Glenn ELECTED.**

Committee on Discipline

TICKET 9: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY (Two Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2026)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno	St. David's, Philadelphia
Rev. Timothy Ness	St. Mark, Clifton Heights
Rev. John Berntsen	Trinity, Perkasié

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 9 closed.

TICKET 10: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2026)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Paul Kenner	Holy Trinity, Wallingford

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 10 closed.
She further declared **Mr. Paul Kenner ELECTED.**

TICKET 11: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2026)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Fern Hagedorn	Tabernacle, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 11 closed. She further declared **Ms. Fern Hagedorn ELECTED.**

Consultation Committee

TICKET 12: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, CLERGY (Two Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Axel Kaegler	St. John, Spinnerstown
Rev. Paul Hagedorn	Tabernacle, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Pr. Klinger stated that persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 15.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 12 closed. She further declared **the Rev. Axel Kaegler and the Rev. Paul Hagedorn ELECTED.**

TICKET 13: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Thomas Salber	Prince of Peace, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Pr. Klinger stated that persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 16.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 13 closed. She further declared **Mr. Thomas Salber ELECTED.**

TICKET 14: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Catherine Carman	Trinity, Perkasio

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Pr. Klinger stated that persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 17.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 14 closed. She further declared **Ms. Catherine Carman ELECTED.**

TICKET 15: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, CLERGY (Two Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2022)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. David Lutcher	Advent, Harleysville
Rev. Julie Bergdahl	St. Michael, Sellersville

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 15 closed. She further declared **the Rev. David Lutcher and the Rev. Julie Bergdahl ELECTED.**

TICKET 16: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2022)

NAME	CONGREGATION
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Pr. Klinger stated that no nominees came through the Committee.

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 16 closed. She further noted that responsibility for filling this seat will revert to the Synod Council.

TICKET 17: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2022)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Carolyn Edwards	Faith, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 17 closed. She further declared **Ms. Carolyn Edwards ELECTED.**

TICKETS FOR 2021
Synod Vice President

TICKET 18: SYNOD VICE PRESIDENT (one lay person to be elected for a term ending 2025)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley	Reformation, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 18 closed. She further declared **Ms. Tracey Beasley ELECTED.**

Synod Council

TICKET 19: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY (Three Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Gary Costa	Peace, (Tohickon) Perkasie
Rev. John Heidgerd	Emmanuel, Souderton
Rev. Nathan Krause	Redeemer, Jamison
Rev. Wayne Shelor	St. John, Phoenixville

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 19 closed.

TICKET 20: SYNOD COUNCIL, CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Pr. Klinger stated that no nominees came through the Committee.	

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 20 closed. She further noted that responsibility for filling this seat will revert to the Synod Council.

TICKET 21: SYNOD COUNCIL, UPPER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Carol Dzurenda	St. John, Spinnerstown

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Pr. Klinger stated that persons not elected on this ballot will be added to Ticket 22.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 21 closed. She further declared **Ms. Carol Dzurenda ELECTED.**

TICKET 22: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Cynthia Moultrie	Christ, Upper Darby
Ms. Gail Penman	St. Mark, Conshohocken

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 22 closed.

TICKET 23: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2024)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Everett Wick	St. Andrew, Perkasie

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 23 closed. She further declared **Mr. Everett Wick ELECTED.**

TICKET 24: SYNOD COUNCIL, LAY WOMAN, YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE (one youth woman to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Kendyll Ward	Trinity, Havertown

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 24 closed. She further declared **Ms. Kendyl Ward ELECTED.**

TICKET 25: SYNOD COUNCIL, LAY MAN, YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE (one youth man to be elected for a term ending 2023)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Damar Wilson	Reformation, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 25 closed. She further declared **Ms. Damar Wilson ELECTED.**

Voting Member to Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, OH, August 8 – 12, 2022

The Bishop and the Vice President automatically attend as voting members. All others need to be elected by the Synod Assembly.

TICKET 26: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, CLERGY (4 to be elected)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno	St. David, Philadelphia
Rev. Mukesh Cheedie	Redeemer, Penndel
Rev. Julie DeWerth	Good Shepherd, King of Prussia
Rev. Axel Kaegler	St. John, Spinnerstown

TICKET 29: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, ADDITIONAL CLERGY, PERSON OF COLOR OR WHOSE PRIMARY LANGUAGE IS OTHER THAN ENGLISH (1 to be elected)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Regina Goodrich	Mediator, Philadelphia

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 29 closed.

TICKET 30: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, ADDITIONAL LAY PERSON, YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT (1 to be elected)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Kendyll Ward	Trinity, Havertown

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

Nominated from the floor:

Mr. Damar Wilson	Reformation, Philadelphia
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With no further nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 30 closed.

Nominees to stand for ELCA Church Council

TICKET 31: NOMINEES FOR ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL – CLERGY (2 to be elected to stand in nomination for a term extending from 2022 – 2028)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Gwendolyn King	St. Stephen, Feasterville
Rev. Serena Sellers	Christ, Kulpsville
Rev. Wayne Shelor	St. John, Phoenixville
Rev. Laura Tancredi	St. Paul, Ardmore

The Synod Assembly may make nominations from the floor.

As there were no nominations from the floor, Bishop Davenport declared Ticket 31 closed.

Bishop Davenport thanked Pastor Klinger for his bringing the Word in worship this morning, and for this report.

Pastor Klinger took a moment to thank the members of his committee for their dedication and hard work to enlist nominees for these numerous slates.

Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel

Bishop Davenport introduced Dr. Addie Butler, Chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, to bring the first report to the Assembly.

Dr. Butler shared these comments about the role of the Committee, and the process it followed. This year, with a one-day assembly, and with the Assembly being held virtually, we had to make some decisions on when resolutions were due, and how to handle resolutions submitted after that date. Reference and Counsel is responsible for assisting the Assembly in dealing with material that does not come to the Assembly through regular reports, committees, agencies, Synod Council, etc. We prepare responses so that memorials and resolutions are handled in an appropriate way by the church in light of its constitution, organization and previous history.

In order to have the time necessary to prepare our responses, this year we determined that resolutions or memorials would not be welcome on the day of the Assembly and set a second, final deadline for such proposals one week prior to the Assembly. Such resolutions, in order to be considered, require a 2/3's vote of the Assembly. This year we had three resolutions received after the original deadline, but before the second deadline.

The committee is able to exercise the following options as it deems appropriate:

1. Recommend adoption of the resolution.
2. Offer a substitute to the original resolution.
3. Recommend that the proposed matter not be adopted.
4. Refer the matter to the appropriate committee(s), boards, agencies, etc. for further consideration.
5. Offer a synodical or Church minute of previous action as a response.
6. Commend the resolution.
7. Recommend no action.

The committee decided to refer two of the resolutions. One is referred to the Synod Anti-Racism Team and the other to the Synod Council. This requires no action from the Assembly until or unless they are brought back to the Assembly next year.

The resolution which is being referred to the Anti-Racism Team is concerned with hate speech and violence which is being directed toward the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in light of the Corona-virus pandemic. The Anti-Racism Team has drafted a statement regarding this issue, and the Team is granted a moment of privilege to read this statement.

Bishop Davenport called on the Rev. Gwendolyn King, co-chair of the Anti-Racism Team, to read the following statement to the Assembly.

I Corinthians 12:26 says: "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it, if one member is honored all rejoice together with it."

We the members of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in Assembly condemn the violence perpetrated against our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) siblings and others of Asian descent. We denounce racism (at all levels), especially at the institutional and systemic level, as a sin against God's order. Racism is an assault on the Gospel of Jesus Christ which calls us to be one. We call for this virulent disease and sin to be dismantled within the ELCA and the larger

society. We lament where we find racism present within ourselves, as individuals and culturally. We commit ourselves to eradicating it, where possible, from our lives. Prejudice, racial profiling, bigotry, discrimination, race-baiting, verbal and physical harassment, hate speech and action, xenophobia, scapegoating and other micro-aggressions against the souls of the children of God, members of God's human family, have no place in God's Kingdom, where we are asked by the Living God to love one another, and have no place in our society. We stand with the Conference of Bishops-ELCA (March 4, 2021) in their affirmation of the Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders-ELCA, who calls the ELCA "to once again unequivocally denounce racism by taking immediate actions to defend, protect and uphold the safety and lives" (March 4, 2021) of persons of Asian descent; fight against racism and apathy; stand against violence and promote the way of Jesus.

As we, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, strive to become the "Beloved Community" God intends us to be, we ask God to help us and for God's Spirit to direct and guide us in this endeavor. April 24, 2021

Following Pr. King's presentation, Dr. Butler continued with the report of Reference and Counsel. She shared that the third resolution the Committee received will be shared with the Assembly if the Assembly so desires. The topic of this resolution is "**Resolution on Immigration and Unaccompanied Minors.**" It requires a 2/3 vote of the Assembly to be brought to the floor for consideration.

Bishop Davenport asked for the vote.

The Assembly voted to allow the Resolution to come to the floor, 246 yes, 19 no.

Dr. Butler continued, placing the following resolution before the Assembly:

Resolution on Immigration and Unaccompanied Minors

WHEREAS, the United States has seen an increase in the numbers of unaccompanied minors at the southern border and being housed in overcrowded living conditions;

WHEREAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services has been a champion for refugees and immigrants for over 80 years;

WHEREAS, our history reflects American Lutherans' immigrant roots and compassionate commitment to welcoming the newcomer;

WHEREAS, we are directed by faith and our national values to welcome the stranger;

WHEREAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services is welcoming and safely assisting unaccompanied minors into the United States;

WHEREAS, the church has welcomed and advocated for the stranger;

S.A.21.04.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to advocate for undocumented minors,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod recommits with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services to advocate for justice for unaccompanied minors,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourage its congregations to voice their concerns to elected leaders and provide safe housing facilities to unaccompanied minors,

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod continue to encourage its congregations to lift immigrants and migrant workers in prayer and lift up and promote World Refugee Day yearly on June 20.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends the Assembly adopt this resolution.

Dr. Butler shared with the Assembly that this resolution will be considered “seriatim,” that is, considering each of the resolved clauses individually, to provide time for careful consideration of each for possible amendment. Dr. Butler then asked for the first “resolved” clause to be placed on the screen for consideration.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to advocate for undocumented minors,

The Assembly was asked if there were any comments or amendments to be presented.

With no amendments proposed, Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

The Assembly adopted the clause, 248 yes, 14 no.

The second clause was placed before the Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod recommits with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services to advocate for justice for unaccompanied minors,

With no amendments proposed, Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

The Assembly adopted the clause, 259 yes, 8 no.

The third clause was then presented.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourage its congregations to voice their concerns to elected leaders and provide safe housing facilities to unaccompanied minors,

With no amendments proposed, Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

The Assembly adopted the clause, 258 yes, 13 no.

The fourth and final clause was then placed before the Assembly.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod continue to encourage its congregations to lift immigrants and migrant workers in prayer and lift up and promote World Refugee Day yearly on June 20.

The Rev. Stephen Godsall-Myers, Christ Orelan, was recognized. He noted that this resolution calls for the promotion of World Refugee Day on June 20th, when June 17th is already set as a Commemoration of the Emmanuel 9, June 19th is the celebration of “Juneteenth.” This is adding one more date in quick succession on which we are asking our congregations to take some action.

There being no other discussion, Bishop Davenport called for the vote on this clause.

The Assembly adopted the clause, 246 yes, 21 no.

Because each clause was passed, and none were amended, the entire resolution stands as adopted.

Bishop Davenport thanked Dr. Butler and the Committee on Reference and Counsel for their faithful service to the Synod.

Address of the Bishop

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley introduced Bishop Patricia A. Davenport, who made the following address to the Assembly,

Greetings Beloved,

Dear Synod! I greet you with deep gratitude for your faithfulness and profound partnership as we have endured together the joys and challenges of this pandemic together.

We have experienced a year filled with anxiety, pain, change, challenges and death. And yet, there have also been times of opportunity, hope, healing, and joy. Yes, we have had 31, 400,026 COVID-19 cases, 569,000 deaths. And the reality is that the number of cases and deaths have increased since I researched the number for both.

People have died from natural causes, other medical diseases, suicides and murders. The cases and deaths from COVID 19 are not restricted to one racial or ethnic group; socioeconomic group; age group or the sexual orientation of a certain group. It has included the health of and led to the death of young and old, Black, white, and brown, rich and poor, the famous and the unknown.

Some of us have experienced the death of family, friends and associates from the virus, or we know of someone whose life was changed by the tragic death of a loved one from COVID. One of the many tragic aspects of this pandemic has been that many persons could not be with their loved ones as they took their last breath because of the isolation restrictions. Many have died without a beloved friend and/ or family member at their bedside to offer them a prayer, a warm smile or a time of hand holding. We are truly thankful to God for the hospital staff that tried to do their best, to connect the dying with their loved ones.

Some used Face Time to connect. Other families left written messages to be read to their loved one, because hearing is the last of our senses to leave us when we are dying. Yes, the efforts of hospital staff was greatly appreciated, but the pain of not being there for our loved ones may take a long time to cope with.

The pandemic has led to countless losses in the lives of many, there has been job loss, housing loss and loss of economic security. In person teaching has led to students who not only miss the benefits of an in-person classroom, but they miss seeing their friends. Fun school activities such as proms did not happen, and college sports were restricted for some time. And dare we talk about the loss of not being able to worship within the walls of our beautiful churches.

We not only missed being in our physical buildings, but we missed doing our various ministries, especially those where we went out into the community and shared the Gospel with others. It seemed extremely odd not to be in church for communion, confirmation, baptisms, weddings or funerals. In the midst of all the change we were experiencing, we saw other events that transformed our world before our eyes.

We watched as Mr. George Floyd died as a police officer, Derek Chauvin, placed his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for over 9 minutes. The public outrage was evidenced by marches and rallies not only locally or domestically, but even internationally.

And then January 6th, 2021, came, and most of us were hoping that a peaceful transition of power would happen as the electoral votes were being finalized. We watched in utter amazement when individuals stormed the Capitol building in protest about the results of the presidential election. 5 persons were killed, including a Capitol police officer. This event that showed the fragile nature of our government was seen across the world with questions asked like, "How could this happen in the United States?"

Let us not forget that even as all of these things are happening, the usual challenges of life continued such as the domestic violence. Statistics show that there was an increase in domestic violence cases during this pandemic. Natural disasters did not stop, we continued to have hurricanes, floods, fires and even snow in Texas that led to a breakdown in the electrical operations of many of the major cities. Residents of Texas were melting snow in order to have water. These natural disasters led to homelessness, which was already increasing because people were being evicted from their home.

I have mentioned the challenge of our buildings being closed, but there have been other issues that have affected us as a synod, for example, congregations in transition, longing to call a pastor or a deacon. Rostered ministers leaving their calls to move closer to family. Our Councils were concerned about the impact the pandemic would have on congregational giving. Will we be able to pay our ministry leaders? Will we have the money needed to offer effective virtual services? Will we be able to continue to offer our various ministries with financial support? Rostered leaders had to think fast and furious on how they would offer virtual services and the reality is that not everyone has the skillset to know how to do that.

In addition, ministry leaders wanted to continue to stay in contact with parishioners and had to develop creative strategies for keeping in touch not only with the sick and shut-in, but how to keep the congregation connected with each other.

And needless to say, family life certainly changed. If someone in the home had to work, the family feared getting the virus from them. How do you keep children entertained in the midst of a pandemic? Who is going to go to do the shopping? What if you are a parent and you need to go out to work. Who will keep the children? How do you stay in touch with an elderly parent who is home alone or in a nursing facility? Who gets to determine who is in charge of the tv remote? What do you do if you cannot afford a computer? And remember, screen fatigue is real. There is such a thing as Zoom call burn out! Screen fatigue is real. Mental illness is real.

Parents juggling working from home, schooling, and meeting family needs.

You know there is so much more, but as I reflect on this time of challenge, I am reminded of an old negro spiritual that gave people strength in the struggle. It says,

"We've come a long way, Lord, a mighty long way/
We've borne our burdens in the heat of the day /
But we know the Lord has made the way.
We've been in the valley and prayed night and day/
And we know the Lord has made the way.
We've had hard trials each and ev' ry day/
But we know the Lord has made the way."

That's it beloved, despite the challenges we know that the Lord has made a way. The Psalmist writes of God in Psalm 73:23-26

Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me with honor. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

This is the Word turning us to our relationship with God, the great I am, is with us, as we are confronted with woes and distraction, I am reminded of Martin Luther's words to defend his belief, "Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me." What calms our anxiety, what has given us the fortitude to keep moving embracing change, challenge and opportunity that results in joy? Yes, God's help.

In spite of 31 million COVID-19 cases, nevertheless, we can proclaim, 24 million have recovered while others are receiving care, the Lord made away in life and death! We have learned to say farewell, at graveside services, live streams and Facebook. Pr. Folks and Pr. King with our Anti-racism Team took this opportunity to use book studies, conversations and trainings to raise awareness of the ills of systemic racism and the need for racial equity in the current divisive climate of our country. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod celebrates, 11 congregational votes to call pastors of which 3 are first call candidates; 6 calls through Synod Council; with an additional 3 congregational calls to take place in the coming weeks all on digital platforms, praise God.

Yes, our Synod Council works very hard on our behalf. We have moved from a perspective of, "We have always done it this way!" to a perspective where we ask the question, "Considering the resources we have at this point in time, how can we do what we have to in new, creative and strategic ways so that all will benefit, and God will be proud?"

With all of the distractions thrown our way, The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has creatively stepped up to the challenge of maintaining the vital ministries that we offer. Hundreds of you have volunteered to make a difference in the lives of people we do not know, heeding the greatest commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself." You have donated your time and resources to bless the least of these among us. We are the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod not only strong, but bright.

Look at the shining ministry we have done despite the darkness of this pandemic. Hear some of our amazing stories: John and Deb purchased two refrigerators to store the food for the E-Meal program at Emmanuel in Souderton. Marge drives in from Little Zion, Telford to pack and hand out food bags. Pr. Heidgerd, members and neighborhood volunteers have distributed 90,000 meals and counting. Pr. Neal and the awesome volunteers at Feast of Justice have distributed over 2 million pounds of food offerings in Northeast Philadelphia. St. Michael's, Kensington is a vital food bank in the community that has increased its outreach. Members of Grace in Mantua partnered with Holy Trinity, Narberth to provide for those food insecure in West Philadelphia. St. Mark's and St. Peter's care for those in West Oak Lane. Welcome Bread has made over 100,000 sandwiches feeding communities in the suburbs and the city. St. Paul's and Tabor partner to provide for the Olney and Nicetown-Tioga area.

Pr. Little and Pr. Steinnagle of the Welcome Church, founding partner of Sanctuary Village, which is a tiny home project for those experiencing homelessness, tell me their ministry is about more than sandwiches. This ministry also focuses on Jesus being at work in their midst. For example, a participant in the ministry, Brother Tyrone, found \$5 and wanted to know how the money could be used to help someone. His \$5 was used as the seed for the I Have A Dream Fund that now blesses anyone in need. Tabernacle, West Philadelphia is a COVID-19 testing and vaccination site. Trinity, Lansdale also, a vaccination site. These ministries are a small sampling

of our 143 ministries making a difference in times like these. Beloved Synod, we have been forced to do things differently, taking into account our priorities in this moment, moving from the world of negativity and apathy, drawing people into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ! We are the Church, using digital platforms to proclaim the gospel, caring for those in need and seeking justice with our hands and hearts.

I pause for a point of personal privilege to offer a debt of gratitude to our Office of the Bishop Staff team for their agility and diligence in working remotely, and a hybrid as CDC permits. Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operation, who keeps me on task with our churchwide matters, in addition to coordinating congregational meetings with council presidents for Call votes, Mr. Martin Schwab our senior account who work with our treasurer, Ms. Janet Neff to assure all our financial responsibility are met. Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, database manager, communications assistant, and synod registrar. Pr. Bob Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Interpretation and Director of Communication who meets weekly with our congregational communicators sharing tech tips to improve our on-line experiences, as well as ensuring our mission is clearly communicated, and critical information updated on our many digital platforms in these fast-paced times, especially, ministrylink.org. Dr. Bill Flippin, Director for Evangelical Mission, working with our Vitality Team and Pr. Penman in creating space for innovative Kingdom building ideas and works with several other teams to align us with the Future Church Design of being new, younger, and more diverse. As we deal with the increase in shootings and murders, Dr. Flippin is working more intently with Heeding God's Call to end gun violence, Pr. Bell, Director of Mobility; Dr. McMullan, Director of Interim Ministry; Pr. Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership, and our Committee of Deans have innovatively provided leadership for and with congregations in transition to assure pastoral coverage. Along with Pr. Neff, our Candidacy Chair, Pr. Sease and our Candidacy Team accompany candidate in our candidacy process, to offer guidance and support.

Please know that in this pandemic we have needed to let some things go as we have taken on new responsibilities dictated by pandemic restrictions. We have decentralized out of necessity, and I have a new appreciation for equipping leaders to be ready when called to serve in any area. Lay members have shared a new understanding of vocation. There is an enhanced realization that we live out our faith not only on Sunday, but each day. The neighbor helping their neighbor with grocery shopping understands in new ways that they were living out their faith in daily life. Some people have come to know that they are essential; they do a job that we cannot do without. They are front line workers of God who have tried to maintain some normalcy to some aspects of our lives, even in this pandemic. Where would we have been without the doctors and nurses and transit workers and teachers and grocery stores worker and all the other frontline workers who were willing to risk their health for our welfare? I am grateful for the saints willing to represent our synod in churchwide meetings with our companion synod, attending meetings related to ecumenical relations and youth ministry.

Beloved, we are people of faith, Hebrews 11: 1 tells us, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." We are the faithful Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; we truly walk together along this road of pandemic life. Not marking time, we are making a difference for the Kingdom of God.

Awesome Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, hold to God's unchanging hands and strive to live out the ELCA tagline, God's Work-Our Hands because that is how we make it through these difficult times: we reflect on the words of scripture that give us strength and we take our strength and continue to serve our neighbor, despite all the obstacles of this pandemic. St. Paul writes,

“What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Romans 8:31-39

Hold to this Word, “we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus.” Beloved, we are one day closer to the other side of this pandemic, praise God! We will hold to God's unchanging hand to gain strength and with that renewed strength, we will continue to show up to serve our neighbor. And thanks to our efforts, God’s love for the world will show out through the Lutheran tribe in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties, causing a ripple effect that will transform lives around the corner and around the globe. Hallelujah! “Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6. Like Martin Luther when he was confronted with things that challenged his faith, we too can proclaim, "Here we stand; we can do no other. God help us."

God give us the strength we need to get to the other side of this pandemic. Give us the skills and desire to help our neighbor. And always know loving God that we are thankful for all you have done to help us through this pandemic, not only helping us as individuals, but blessing our synod with so many dedicated servants who are committed to serving their neighbor, no matter how difficult their lives may come. For these blessings and all the blessings you bestow on us each day, we say thank you and amen!

Portico Benefits Services

Bishop Davenport invited the Assembly to view a video presentation from Ms. Barbara Debski, regional representative from Portico Benefit Services, and thanked Ms. Debski for all the assistance she brings to our Synod. In the video it was shared that Portico is not just an investment organization, it is a ministry. As such, they take a different approach to their work.

Recess

As the Assembly prepared for a lunch break, Bishop Davenport thanked members of the Worship Team for their assistance. This Team is comprised of the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phelps, the Rev. Bryan Penman, the Rev. Jay Mitchell, and the Rev. Lauren Bruno-Heywood.

Bishop Davenport called on Deacon Beth Barkau, who led the Assembly in prayer. The Assembly stood in recess for lunch.

Afternoon Session

Bishop Davenport called the Assembly back into session, inviting Mr. Waverly Alston, Welcome Church, Philadelphia, to begin the session with prayer.

Report on the Committee on Elections

Bishop Davenport called on the Rev. Rebecca Schanely, chair of the Committee on Elections, to lead the Assembly through the first round of balloting.

Ballots were presented for the following tickets. Results will be shared at the Second Report on Elections later this afternoon.

TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN

Ms. Doris Sterner

Ms. Sandra Zimmermann

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly they may vote for one (1) person on this ticket.

TICKET 9: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY

Rev. John Berntsen

Rev. Timothy Ness

Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno

Pr. Schanely asked the Assembly to vote for not more than two (2) persons on this ticket.

TICKET 22: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN

Ms. Cynthia Moultrie

Ms. Gail Penman

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly they may vote for one (1) person on this ticket.

TICKET 26: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, CLERGY

Rev. Joseph Klinger

Rev. Jennifer Phelps

Rev. Marie Sager

Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno

Rev. Julie Dewerth

Rev. Gary Costa

Rev. Nathan Krause

Rev. Axel Kaegler

Rev. Mukesh Cheedie

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly they may vote for up to four (4) persons on this ticket.

TICKET 27: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, LAY WOMAN

Ms. Doreen Kinzler

Ms. Elizabeth Stewart

Ms. Sue Massey

Ms. Cynthia Moultrie

Ms. Sandra Zimmerman

Pr. Schanely noted that Dr. Ellen Conroy, who was nominated from the floor, was deemed ineligible for this ticket as her husband, Mr. Tom Conroy, had already been elected a voting member of the Churchwide Assembly during the nomination process. She instructed the Assembly they may vote for up to four (4) persons on this ticket.

TICKET 30: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, ADDITIONAL LAY PERSON, YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT

Ms. Kendyll Ward
Mr. Damar Wilson

Pr. Schanely asked the Assembly to vote for one (1) person on this ticket.

TICKET 31: NOMINEES FOR ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL – CLERGY

Rev. Wayne Shelor
Rev. Serena Sellers
Rev. Gwendolyn King
Rev. Laura Tancredi

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly to vote for not more than two (2) persons on this ticket.

Pr. Schanely noted that this concludes this round of balloting. Results of these elections, and another round of balloting, will be completed later this afternoon. Bishop Davenport thanked Pr. Schanely for her efforts in this matter.

Report of the Treasurer and Audit Reports

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, was invited to present the Report on the Audit for the past two years, 2019 (Fiscal Year ending 1/31/2020), and 2020 (Fiscal Year ending 1/31/2021).

Ms. Neff began her presentation by noting much of the information had been shared in the pre-assembly session on finances, which is available on video at our Synod website. The Audit Report is available in the Bulletin of Reports. A Summary of these numbers:

**AUDIT REPORT DETAILS
Statement of Financial Position
Highlights as of 01/21/2020 and 01/31/2021**

	1/31/2020	1/31/2021
Total Cash & Investments	\$ 7,407,329	\$ 9,816,378
Total Assets	\$11,735,790	\$13,515,235
Total Liabilities	\$ 130,688	\$ 142,222
Total Net Assets	\$11,605,102	\$13,373,013
Unrestricted	\$ 7,585,980	\$ 9,259,379
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 844,687	\$ 778,242
Permanently Restricted	\$ 3,174,435	\$ 3,335,392

Statement of Activities: Revenue

	02/01/19 – 01/31/20	02/01/20 – 01/31/21
Mission Support	\$1,716,538	\$1,655,732
Other Contributions	\$ 640,453	\$ 542,673
Registration Fees	\$ 135,301	\$ 2,868
Investment Income	\$ 692,506	\$1,368,481
Beneficial interest in Trust	\$ 998,282	\$ 42,178
PPP SBA Grant	\$ 0	\$ 168,073
Proceeds from property sales	\$4,280,946	\$ 516,340
Total Revenue	\$8,464,026	\$4,296,345

Statement of Activities: Expenses

	02/01/19 – 01/31/20	02/01/20 – 01/31/21
Operating Expense	\$1,309,246	\$1,141,137
ELCA Proportionate (50%)	\$ 858,269	\$ 827,866
Property Management	\$ 244,574	\$ 129,286
Distributions to other agencies	\$ 152,656	\$ 91,000
Remit to designated agency	\$ 19,940	\$ 24,932
Mission Expense	\$ 259,008	\$ 150,688
Grants to Organizations	\$ 20,999	\$ 163,525
Total Expenses	\$2,864,692	\$2,528,434

Ms. Neff shared that we have sold some of the properties the Synod has under management from former congregations. With these sales we are in good financial position. This money has strengthened our Fund for Mission, and we are using some of these resources for the Mission portion of our budget.

We are down significantly in Partnership Support from our congregations. We understand that Covid has had its effects on the resources our congregations have.

We have been blessed to receive support in several targeted funds that were part of our mission during the pandemic. Among these are the “Have a Heart” fund to assist with medical expenses of Bishop Stephen Munga of the North Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the “Blessed to Be a Blessing” fund to assist our fellow congregations struggling during the pandemic, and the “All the Saints” appeal, our annual drive to help the ministry of the Synod.

We received a grant from the federal Covid-19 “Paycheck Protection Program” which offered significant assistance.

We have experienced fewer expenses during the pandemic, particularly due to reduced travel costs and fewer expenses for meetings. We have also saved in expenses for maintaining the properties we hold under management. As we have sold them, we no longer have the expenses associated with them.

We have lowered the amount we have given to the seminary, but that amount has been redirected to assist our rostered ministers who struggle to pay the debts incurred from their education.

With that as a review, Ms. Neff asked if there were any questions for her regarding the expenses of the past two years. With no questions raised, she placed before the Assembly the following resolution:

S.A.21.04.07. 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 years ending January 31, 2020 and January 32, 2021.

Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

The Assembly adopted the resolution 264 yes; 0 no

The Bishop thanked Ms. Neff for her report, and called on Mr. Bert Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, to bring the Report of the Finance Committee, and to present the budget.

Report of the Finance Committee and Presentation of the Budget for 2021 and 2022

Mr. Glenn reflected on Pr. Casey’s sermon from the morning. “We can all feel like dry bones.” But as we look at these numbers in the budget, let us remember that they represent people. They represent the ways in which the Spirit breathes life into the work of this Synod on behalf of people who feel dried up, so they might live.

The budget numbers are available in the Bulletin of Reports. A Summary of these numbers:

2021 AND 2022 BUDGET INCOME

	2020 Audit	2021 Budget	2022 Budget
Mission Support	\$1,655,732	\$1,800,000	\$1,750,000
Other Contributions	\$ 542,673	\$ 316,750	\$ 303,000
Registration Fees	\$ 2,868	\$ 181,205	\$ 180,145
Investment Income	\$1,368,481	\$ 406,190	\$ 744,734
Beneficial interest in trust	\$ 42,178	\$ 0	\$ 60,000
PPP SBA Grant	\$ 168,073	\$ 0	\$ 0
Proceeds from Property Sales	\$ 516,340	\$ 0	\$ 0
Total Revenue	\$4,296,345	\$2,704,145	\$3,038,279

2021 AND 2022 BUDGET EXPENSES

	2020 Audit	2021 Budget	2022 Budget
Operating Expense	\$1,141,137	\$1,363,099	\$1,349,682
ELCA Proportionate Share (50%)	\$ 827,866	\$ 900,000	\$ 875,000
Property Management	\$ 129,286	\$ 31,500	\$ 28,000
Distributions to other agencies	\$ 91,000	\$ 93,000	\$ 95,000
Remittance to Des. Agencies	\$ 24,932	\$ 17,000	\$ 17,000
Mission Expense	\$ 150,688	\$ 263,554	\$ 314,438
Grants to Organizations	\$ 163,525	\$ 68,000	\$ 68,000
Total Expenses	\$2,528,434	\$2,738,153	\$2,747,120

These budgets reflect the priorities we have had over the past several years. We support the work of the United Lutheran Seminary. We support Muhlenberg College. We share in the ministry of Bear Creek Camp. We also continue the practice of offering debt relief to our rostered ministers as they work to pay off the cost of their seminary education.

As Ms. Neff noted in her report, these numbers were discussed at the pre-assembly session on finance, which is available in the video on the website.

Mr. Glenn stated that we need to adopt each budget separately, first the budget for the current year, 2021 (Fiscal Year ending 1/31/2022), and then the budget for the coming year, 2022 (Fiscal Year ending 1/31/2023). He then put forward for consideration the following resolution the current year:

S.A.21.04.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the budget for the current year, Fiscal Year ending January 31, 2022, as presented.

Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

The Assembly adopted the resolution 259 yes; 2 no

Mr. Glenn then put forward for consideration the following resolution for the coming year:

S.A.21.04.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the budget for the coming year, Fiscal Year ending January 31, 2023, as presented.

Bishop Davenport called for the vote.

The Assembly adopted the resolution 271 yes; 0 no

Bishop Davenport expressed her sincere thanks to Ms. Janet Neff, Mr. Bert Glenn, and Mr. Martin Schwab, the Synod's Senior Accountant, for their hard work, many meetings, phone conversations, and email correspondence in preparing the proposed budgets. They put in countless hours to ensure we are faithful with our resources, and it is appreciated.

Report of the Vice President

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

Grace and Peace my Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

I hope you had a great lunch and are ready for part two of this Zoom Assembly. It has been good for my soul to see a lot of you on Zoom, because I have not seen some of your faces in a year and a half. You are looking mighty good to me!

For those of you attending for the first time, welcome, and what a way to attend your first one: virtually!

If you read the Bulletin of Reports, you can see that the Synod Council has been busy this year and a half. I thank you for your faithful service.

I want to let the Assembly know, since we have some open seats on the Council, that our meetings now start at 6:00 p.m. rather than 4:00, and that we are meeting on Zoom. Maybe that will help your decision to join us.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Bishop Davenport for her leadership during this year and a half, and her unwavering support of me as Vice President and of the Council. I know of the

thousands of Zoom meetings she has been on, and she has been personally writing notes to our pastors, calling and checking in on them. It has not been easy, but she has been doing it with grace. I must also thank the Synod Staff for all their support, and for doing devotions for the Synod Council meetings. I especially need to say thank you to Sister Yvonne Curtis for making my job easier as Vice President, by helping me throughout the year. Thank you!

I want to recognize our Deans. They have not missed a beat during this pandemic. Even in the midst of the pandemic they find pastors to be called to churches, walk alongside our congregations in transition, and support congregations in difficult times. Which also means that our congregations in transition also keep it moving forward in a pandemic! To God be the Glory!

I know we remember clergy who have passed in the last two years, and recognize we have lost some of our church members, family members, co-workers, and loved ones in the last two years of this pandemic. In times like these I hold strong to the scripture that states “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

I will pause for about 30 seconds of silent remembrance, and then, if you choose, you can call out the name of that person you have lost...

So I must tell you about a week and a half ago when I was praying and asking God “What should I say to the Saints at this Assembly?” I was feeling fearful, outraged, and frustrated over the Systemic Racism in the U.S.

My mind took me to April 11, when Daunte Demetrius Wright, a 20 year old African American man, was fatally shot by police officer Kimberly Ann Potter during a traffic stop in Minnesota, 10 miles from where George Floyd was killed. The following day police said Potter meant to use her taser, but accidentally grabbed her gun instead.

Then fast forward to Tuesday April 20. My stomach was tight as I awaited the verdict, and then as soon as I heard Derek Chauvin was guilty, I felt like it dropped, and then I just felt the tears just rolling down my face.

I say all this to say as an African American woman in this Synod, thank you SEPA Synod for continuing being on the front line for fighting Systemic Racism. The Anti-Racism Team of this Synod does a great job, but we cannot stop here; there is still much, much work to be done to end the ways of racism, injustice, and deadly biases.

Over this pandemic I have had 2 Zoom meetings with church council officers and some members of their councils. I wanted this to be a time for people to speak freely as to how they are doing as lay leaders, how their congregations are doing, their joys and frustrations.

I would like to share and lift up some of the great things our congregations are doing that came forth from those discussions.

St. Mark, Conshohocken – more people are attending online worship than their usual in-person attendance. They have received new members by Zoom. Younger members have been spreading the word via social media, helping teach how to have new local people worshipping with them by Zoom and Facebook. Great job, St. Mark!

St. Peter’s, West Oak Lane, Philly – The average attendance with Zoom and Facebook is 72 to 75 people. They plan to remain hybrid as the pandemic ends. They have also had repairs and improvements made during the shutdown. Way to go, St. Peter’s!

Trinity, Havertown – People who never came to church are joining online now. Way to go, Trinity!

St. Paul's, Ardmore – has installed a livestream system for Facebook and YouTube live. They have about 115 households in their virtual service every week. Virtual worship has given families that might have Sunday morning conflicts the opportunity to worship.

Reformation, Philly – who is in transition and doing pretty good without a pastor, had a good congregational meeting and is looking forward to burning their mortgage next year.

And lastly,

Christ, Upper Darby – They have been Zooming, but they have found that people seem to be more open during the sharing of the prayers. They have been getting to know each other better on Zoom. They have been doing some renovations, also. One of the things that they do that I love and I think is great evangelism piece is they put signs on their lawn for all to see when they walk by and change them once a month. Some of the signs say:

Hope Looks Forward, Be kind to Each Other

You are Loved, God Loves You, All are Welcome! You are Welcome!

This is so brilliant.

I wanted to share some of these churches' successes so you may get some ideas and be encouraged, and to let everyone know that in the midst of a pandemic SEPA is still doing ministry! This proves that the church is not the building, but the people are the church!

Lastly, I want to thank you for your generosity in these crucial times we are living in.

I know some of our churches are not doing so well financially, but you have managed to give to the COVID-19 relief fund, the All the Saints appeal, and the Blessed to be a Blessing fund in addition to your Mission Support.

And speaking of Mission Support, because of you the ELCA was only 3% short of their goal for 2020. That is excellent in a pandemic.

The World Hunger money you send to the ECA that helps millions of people was up by \$1 million from 2019. In a pandemic!

God is such an awesome God, and SEPA you are such a giving people.

We have done so much together and we will get through this together. Together we are SEPA Strong!

I am so proud to be your VP. I count it an honor and a privilege to represent you in so many different arenas.

SEPA Synod, we continue to Move Forward in this pandemic. Hold on; We are SEPA Strong; and we have Faith over Fear!

Thank you and God bless you.

ELCA Churchwide Representative

Bishop Davenport welcomed and introduced our Churchwide representative.

The Rev. Dr. Philip Hirsch is the Executive Director for Christian Community and Leadership.

Dr. Hirsch is working to bring about the revitalization of ELCA congregations in the United States by recruiting, training and supporting leaders. He has a passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and for helping new people find faith and Christian community. He believes the church can and will grow younger and more diverse and that there is nothing more powerful than God's love because it can transform first the human heart and then the world.

He is a brother in Christ and a man of God, and I am glad to present him to you!

Dr. Hirsch began his presentation by sharing a video from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton who described how the Church has learned and grown in this past year, even in the midst of

pandemic. She said the Churchwide organization has continued to walk alongside congregations and synods, and as we near the end of this pandemic, we see a future where God is still doing new things in us and through us, being Church together for the sake of the World. “We know that God has a plan. We are now convinced that God’s plan has a Church.”

Personal Connections

Yes, God’s plan has a Church. Early on I was a pastor in Camden, my wife went to West Chester University, I was confirmed by a former Bishop of yours, the Rev. Roy Almquist, and I worked alongside your current Bishop, Pat Davenport, when we were Directors of Evangelical Mission together. I have been a pastor for 31 years, and am now working in the part of the Church that shapes leaders, starts new ministries, and helps our existing ministries to flourish.

Thank You

I want to start by saying “thank you.” Together we have been able to serve Christ around the world. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has shared \$827,866 with the ELCA last year. This year was, of course, shaped by Covid, but still we as the Church received \$1.8 million.

Different ways to distribute funds

We had a different approach this year as how this money would be distributed. We asked Synods to determine how this would be needed in their area, and then distributed as you saw a need. In SEPA Synod this has gone to food ministries and to support ministries to an among people of color.

World Hunger Challenge

In 14 days we raised over \$300,000 for World Hunger. Several congregations and ministries in Southeastern Pennsylvania were direct recipients of this money, including Christ the King Deaf Church, Feast of Justice, The Welcome Church, Holy Communion, Mediator, and Tabor.

New Mission Partnerships

The Churchwide organization partnered with Southeastern Pennsylvania to start two new missions, the Kairos Communities and The Well.

Mission Investment Fund

The Mission Investment Fund has provided 21 loans to SEPA Ministries, totalling \$6,318,328, and SEPA individuals and congregations have invested \$11,234,013 in the Mission Investment Fund.

Churchwide Boards and Agencies

SEPA provides persons who serve in various Churchwide positions. Those serving include:

- + Ms. Tracey Beasley, ELCA Church Council
- + Mr. Emanuel Alves, Committee on Appeals
- + Pr. Fritz Fowler, Committee on Appeals
- + Mr. Thomas Salber, Committee on Discipline
- + Pr. Raymond Miller, Hearing Officers
- + Pr. Sarah Anderson, Nominating Committee
- + Mr. Frank Roth, Portico Board

The Committee on Appeals is working on updating the document “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” which helps us make sure we have an environment that is safe for everyone, and that there is accountability.

Dr. William Flippin, DEM, is a colleague in the Gospel and shares his time between the Synod and the Churchwide organization.

Youth Gathering

The ELCA Youth Gathering was postponed because of the pandemic, but it will take place this coming year in Minneapolis. Look for registration to open this fall.

Life of Faith Initiative

Congratulations on being chosen to be part of the Life of Faith Initiative, which helps people live their faith in their daily lives, and then learn how to share this life with others.

Future Church: A Movement of God.

We have been together for 30 years as a denomination. We need to continue to grow in how we bring the gospel in a rapidly changing world. We need systems and ministries that can address these changes. For instance, loneliness has increased dramatically, particularly during Covid. Mental health needs have increased, as has hunger. We are a polarized nation. But the church can make a difference in all these areas.

Our Purpose: to activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice, and love.

Our Goal: Share the story of Jesus and the ELCA with a million new people.

Open Doors

To get this started we have a new grant initiative: Open Doors. This initiative is open to all ELCA congregations. We feel a good idea can come from anywhere, and while not all good ideas need money, no good idea should wither due to a lack of funds. There is no set of best practices; we are committed to learning together and from the experiences of congregations. Check the site <https://elca.org/opendoors> for more information.

Again, thank you for your partnership.

Bishop Davenport opened the floor for questions from the Assembly. As there were none, she told Dr. Hirsch that it is our tradition to give a gift to our speakers. Since he cannot be here in person, he should know “The gift is in the mail!”

Dr. Hirsch thanked the Bishop for such generosity, which is something for which SEPA Synod is well known. He concluded by echoing something Vice President Beasley said: “Don’t give up.” We are all tired. May God give us that extra burst of energy to keep going, and to find some rest. Don’t give up on the way God has called you. Keep the faith.

Second Report on Elections

Bishop Davenport called on Pr. Rebecca Schanely to continue the Report on Elections.

Pr. Schanely shared the results of the first round of balloting.

TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN 1 to be elected

There were 226 ballots, 114 votes needed to elect

Ms. Sandra Zimmerman 137

Ms. Doris Sterner 89

Bishop Davenport declared **Ms. Sandra Zimmerman ELECTED**

Pr. Schanely noted that Ms. Sterner’s name will move forward to Ticket 7, Synod Council Lay Woman at Large

TICKET 9: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY 2 to be elected
There were 238 ballots, 120 votes needed to elect

Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno	207
Rev. Timothy Ness	168
Rev. John Berntsen	87

Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno and the Rev. Timothy Ness ELECTED**

TICKET 22: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN
1 to be elected
There were 245 ballots, 123 votes needed to elect

Ms. Cynthia Moultrie	125
Ms. Gail Penman	120

Bishop Davenport declared **Ms. Cynthia Moultrie ELECTED**

TICKET 26: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, CLERGY
4 to be elected
There were 253 ballots, 127 votes needed to elect

Rev. Joseph Klinger	166
Rev. Julie DeWerth	135
Rev. Mukesh Cheedie	133
Rev. Jennifer Phelps	124
Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno	105
Rev. Axel Kaegler	93
Rev. Nathan Krause	97
Rev. Gary Costa	66
Rev. Marie Sager	63

Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Joseph Klinger, the Rev. Julie DeWerth, and the Rev. Mukesh Cheedie ELECTED**

Pr. Schanely stated that the Rev. Jennifer Phelps and the Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno will move forward to a second ballot.

TICKET 27: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, LAY WOMAN
4 to be elected
There were 243 ballots, 122 votes needed to elect

Ms. Doreen Kinzler	199
Ms. Elizabeth Stewart	189
Ms. Cynthia Moultrie	186

Ms. Sandra Zimmerman 172
Ms. Susan Massey 153

Bishop Davenport declared **Ms. Doreen Kinzler, Ms. Elizabeth Stewart, Ms. Cynthia Moultrie, and Ms. Sandra Zimmerman ELECTED**

TICKET 30: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, ADDITIONAL LAY PERSON, YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT 1 to be elected
There were 244 ballots, 123 votes needed to elect

Mr. Damar Wilson 148
Ms. Kendyll Ward 96

Bishop Davenport declared **Mr. Damar Wilson ELECTED**

TICKET 31: NOMINEES FOR ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL – CLERGY
2 to be elected
There were 260 ballots, 131 votes needed to elect

Rev. Gwendolyn King 157
Rev. Laura Tancredi 141
Rev. Serena Sellers 112
Rev. Wayne Shelor 93

Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Gwendolyn King and the Rev. Laura Tancredi ELECTED**

New Balloting

Pr. Schanely introduced the next round of balloting by first noting that the results of the balloting so far have impacted the results of Ticket 19, Synod Council, Clergy. As Ms. Zimmerman was elected to Synod Council on Ticket 4, and since she and Pr. Wayne Shelor are both from the same congregation, Pr. Shelor is no longer eligible for election. Therefore the three remaining candidates may be elected.

TICKET 19: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY (Three Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2024)

Rev. Gary Costa
Rev. John Heidgerd
Rev. Nathan Krause

Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Gary Costa, the Rev. John Heidgerd, and the Rev. Nathan Krause ELECTED**

Pr. Schanely then said that there are three Tickets which remain to be decided. She first placed Ticket 7 before the Assembly.

TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN

Ms. Doreen Kinzler
Ms. Doris Sterner

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly to vote for one (1) person
There were 257 ballots, 129 votes needed to elect

Ms. Doreen Kinzler	137
Ms. Elizabeth Stewart	120

Bishop Davenport declared **Ms. Doreen Kinzler ELECTED**

Pr. Schanely then placed Ticket 26 before the Assembly

TICKET 26: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, CLERGY

Rev. Jennifer Phelps
Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly to vote for one (1) person
There were 267 ballots, 134 votes needed to elect

Rev. Jennifer Phelps	146
Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno	121

Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Jennifer Phelps ELECTED**

Pr. Schanely then placed Ticket 29 before the Assembly. She noted that Rev. Gary Costa has been moved forward from Ticket 26.

TICKET 29: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER, ADDITIONAL CLERGY, PERSON OF COLOR OR WHOSE PRIMARY LANGUAGE IS OTHER THAN ENGLISH (1 to be elected)

Rev. Regina Goodrich
Rev. Gary Costa

Pr. Schanely instructed the Assembly to vote for one (1) person
There were 260 ballots, 131 votes needed to elect

Rev. Regina Goodrich	165
Rev. Gary Costa	95

Bishop Davenport declared **the Rev. Regina Goodrich ELECTED**

Pr. Schanely stated that this concludes the balloting.
Bishop Davenport thanked Pr. Schanely for her hard work and dedication to this important process.

Break

Bishop Davenport then called on Pr. Thomas Rusert, St. Paul's Doylestown to offer a prayer of thanksgiving before the Assembly took a 10-minute break.

During the break videos were shared, including the recognition of the **50th anniversary of ordination** of the Rev. Albert Douglass, and a description of **Sanctuary Village**, a tiny house project in the Holmesburg section of Philadelphia. This project is focused on walking alongside those who are experiencing homelessness by creating a community with wrap around services to assist people to move to a permanent home. Sanctuary Village is the designated recipient of the Synod Assembly offering.

As the Assembly returned to session Bishop Davenport thanked the members of the Synod for their generous support of this important ministry to end homelessness in the City of Philadelphia.

Bishop called on Ms. Catherine Carman of Trinity, Perkasie, to resume our work in prayer. Dr. Addie Butler was then called on to make the final Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel. Dr. Butler brought forward the following Resolution of Thanks.

SEPA Synod Assembly Resolution of Thanks

WHEREAS it is right at all times and in all places to give thanks for God's grace and mercy, and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit that bless the people of God to do God's work with our hands;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT at the end of this thirty-third meeting of this Assembly, we offer our appreciation and thankful applause;

To our own Bishop Patricia Ann Curtis Davenport for her years of service and dedication to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the people of God in this "beloved community" who are members of, and affiliated with, this church;

To our ELCA representative, Reverend Phil Hirsch, Executive Director, Christian Community and Leadership;

To the representatives of all organizations and agencies of the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Synod present here at this Assembly;

To Reverend Jennifer Phelps and the members of SEPA's Worship Committee for the prayers, praise and preaching;

To Reverend Joseph Klinger and members of the Nominating Committee, and Reverend Rebecca Schanely and members of the Elections Committee, for their tremendous work;

To the officers, staff and volunteers of the SEPA Synod who worked tirelessly to make this 2021 Assembly a success. We sincerely appreciate your innovation and creativity used to make our **FIRST** digital assembly possible;

To the United Lutheran Seminary for their unfailing hospitality;

To the IT professionals who operated LUMI, the digital meeting platform used throughout this Assembly;

To all participants from the SEPA Synod who offered their energy, skills and time to prepare for, plan, arrange and participate in this Assembly.

And permit me to extend a personal thank you to the Reference and Council Team members and our consultants:

R&C Team Members

Sis. Alice Bell

Rev. Jenn Casey

Rev. Lauren Heywood Bruno

Rev. Karen Sease

And our consultants:

Rev. Karl Richard, Secretary of the SEPA Synod

Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, Assembly Parliamentarian

Bishop Davenport – And thank you Dr, Butler for your superb leadership again this year!

Final Report of the Registrar

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

Total voting membership, 353; total number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call, 121; total number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament voting, 26; 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, 191; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in the previous total, 57; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 16%; number of lay women voting members, 111; number of lay men voting members, 56; number of lay Synod Council members, 11; number of youth/young adults members, 16.

Total registered (actually in attendance) voting membership, 297; number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call registered, 106; number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament registered, 20; number of ministers of Word and Service under call registered, 4; number of retired ministers of Word and Service registered, 2; number of lay voting members registered, including Lay Council members, youth and young adults, 165; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in previous total, 57; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 19%; total number of visitors and guests registered, 9.

Bishop Davenport thanked Ms. Outterbridge, and announced that the thirty-fourth annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held May 6 & 7, 2020.

Bishop Davenport called forward Ms. Carrie Schwab, our Assembly Coordinator, to be thanked for her incredible work in preparing the Synod for this online Assembly.

Bishop Davenport and Vice President Beasley recognized the outgoing members of the Synod Council: the Rev. Laura Tancredi, Ms. Joyce Maloney, Mr. Philip Tackett, Mr. Henry Geyer, the Rev. Matthew Staniz.

They then welcomed and installed the newly elected members of the Synod Council: Mr. Graeme Brown, Ms. Emily Fowler, the Rev. Julie DeWerth, the Rev. Joseph Klinger, the Rev. Serena Sellers, Ms. Sandra Zimmerman, Mr. Richard Daniels, Ms. Doreen Kinzler, Mr. Bert Glenn, the Rev. Gary Costa, the Rev. John Heidgerd, the Rev. Nathan Krause, Ms. Carol Dzurenda, Ms. Cynthia Moultrie, Mr. Everett Wick, Ms. Kendyll Ward, Mr. Damar Wilson.

Order for the Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Davenport led the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The thirty-third annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

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

Approved by Synod Council, September 23, 2021

MINUTES
of the 166th MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Zoom Meeting
June 17, 2021
6:00 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley invited the Reverend Julie DeWerth to lead the Synod Council in devotions. Pr. DeWerth's reflections were on the topic of "Decision Fatigue," a concern felt by many in these days of ongoing pandemic. Making decisions is more difficult as we do so at a distance from each other. The need to make decisions never seems to end. The continual fluctuation in the status of the virus causes us to change decisions almost as soon as we make them. The use of technology has been difficult to learn and implement. At the same time, the use of technology has made it easier to meet remotely and worship in new ways. But this benefit also has a downside: it is increasingly difficult to end the day, and let work and decisions go for the night.

Pr. DeWerth encouraged the members of Synod Council to remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28 – 30: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." She encouraged members to remember we do not do this work alone. We have each other. We have Jesus.

Pr. DeWerth ended the devotions by inviting prayers for the concerns members are carrying in their hearts, and inviting us to leave them with Jesus.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 166th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 6:15 p.m.

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

SEATING OF SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Two names were brought before the Council to fill open seats. Ms. Gail Penman was presented to fill the seat of Lay Woman at Large, term ending 2022, and Mr. Roland Thompson was presented to fill the seat of Central Philadelphia Conference Representative, Lay Man, term ending 2024.

The Synod Council voted unanimously to seat Ms. Penman and Mr. Thompson, and they were admitted to the Zoom meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Summary of Actions of the 33rd Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod were approved as presented.

The Minutes of the 165th Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were presented. The Reverend Gwendolyn King offered the following amendments:

- page 2 – author of the article is Ted Peters
- page 7 – 5th paragraph, add “We consider this to be sacred work.”
- page 7 – 4th bullet point, the ART “reconnected with” Deacon Torres, rather than brought her back
- page 8 – 2nd paragraph, 2nd line, add “and a member of ART” after “served in SEPA Synod”
- page 8 – paragraph re: George Floyd, add “in congregations and among members” following “interest”
- page 9 – 4th paragraph, add “training/” to “education”

The Synod Council approved the minutes as amended.

SETTING THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley offered two changes to the agenda that had been distributed: a gifts assessment survey and the confidentiality statement will be added to the Vice President and Executive Committee’s Report.

The Synod Council adopted the agenda for the 166th meeting as amended.

MISSION MOMENT

Mr. Collin Grooms, Executive Director of Bear Creek Camp, was the guest for the Mission Moment. He stated that he wanted to share an update on the status of the camp program for this summer, and he will also answer whatever questions members of Synod Council may have regarding the proposal to grant a supplemental right of way to Transcontinental Pipe Line.

Summer Program

Mr. Grooms noted that he began his position at Bear Creek Camp in January of 2020, which means at this point he has been here for 18 months and 0 summers!

The Camp is planning on opening this summer for its youth programs, but it will limit registration to approximately 50% of its capacity. Bear Creek Camp is struggling with the same

issues that the congregations of SEPA Synod are: do we enforce mask wearing or not? in what areas might we insist on masks? should there be singing or not? how dense is too dense for camper's safety? One thing the Camp is blessed to have is a tremendous amount of outdoor space. Still, there are the concerns of sleeping arrangements and eating spaces, and how to keep these areas as safe as possible. Bear Creek has recommitted to its small group focus, and will have 2 leaders for every 10 campers.

The summer staff is composed of 35 of the most outstanding young people. A poll was taken of the Summer Camp leaders as to what is most important for them and the campers. The primary need is building community. Over the past 18 months we have forgotten what it is like to be in a group of more than just a few people. Even a group of 12 to 15 seems huge after such a long time of separation and distancing.

Pastors Erica Wesch and Chris McKinstry came to the Camp to do leadership development with the summer staff. The topic was supposed to be "Lutheran 101," and a chance to go over key parts of the Book of Concord and the Catechism. The actual discussion never formally got there. The staff was more interested in talking about issues of diversity, and their comfort level with and in the ELCA. The conversation ventured into racial diversity and the diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ persons. It was a great conversation of how to be welcoming of all who might come to the Camp.

Mr. Bert Glenn asked what a 50% limit means for the camp's capacity.

Mr. Grooms said that 100% capacity would be 220 campers. The camp is limiting enrollment to about 130.

Pipeline

The Synod Council had been provided paperwork describing the proposal to grant an additional right of way to Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC. While the Camp is jointly owned by Northeastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania Synods, the authorization for this action lies with SEPA Synod, as it holds the deed. The resolution before the Council reads:

S.C.21.06.01. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the proposed Supplemental Right of Way Agreement of 2021 between the Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation (the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America f/k/a Eastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America) and the Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC, and authorizes the following corporate officers to execute the said agreement on behalf of the Synod, as title holder of the land leased to the Camp Corporation, with proceeds to be utilized for the purposes of the Camp Corporation: the Rev. Patricia A. Davenport, Bishop, and the Rev. Karl M. Richard, Secretary, of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Mr. Collins noted that the Camp has approximately 3,000 acres. The easement is located on the northern portion of the property. We will be giving rights to approximately another 25 feet along an existing pipeline easement.

Mr. Glenn said that it is difficult to tell from the map where the pipeline is relative to where the activities of the Camp occur. Could we get some clarification on this?

Mr. Grooms shared that very little activity happens where the pipeline is. Because a pipeline already exists, and this will be a 25 foot extension of this space, there will be no practical impact on the programming of the Camp.

Mr. Glenn: Is the pipeline above ground or buried?

Mr. Grooms: It is buried. We will not notice it. The companies monitor the pipelines from the air. They are responsible for clean-up if there is a leak.

Mr. Glenn: Is there any concern or opposition from the community?

Mr. Grooms: The community is aware that this is happening, has accepted this. Part of our reality is that if we do not take this opportunity to sell the right of way, the Pipeline company will take it by the power of eminent domain. Because this is going along the path where there is already a line, we are receiving less complaints than we may have if it was a new pathway.

The Reverend John Heidgerd asked what happens if we say “no?”

Mr. Grooms replied that, according to Mr. Blake Marles, attorney for the Camp, we would be pushed to yield the land through eminent domain and would not get nearly as much, if anything, in exchange for the easement.

Mr. Adam Clark asked if there is a written disaster evacuation plan. What if there is a disaster?

Mr. Grooms said we have not received a written plan from the company, but Mr. Marles has said that this is covered as part of the arrangement.

Mr. Clark: with all the hacking that has occurred, what is the worst-case scenario if such an event were to happen?

Mr. Grooms: I do not have an answer to that question. This pipeline is not part of the critical gasoline distribution infrastructure that impacted the Southeast portion of the United States.

The Reverend Serena Sellers: Is there is an existing evacuation plan for fire or other emergencies at the Camp?

Mr. Grooms: There is, and it has been coordinated with the first responders in the area.

Mr. Grooms brought his comments to a close by saying he believes we have negotiated the strongest agreement we can. He added that this easement will not impact the Camp in any appreciable way. Even construction should not be an issue. The construction has not yet begun on the last easement granted, and there is no certainty when construction will begin on this easement. The company is procuring the land for future expansion.

Mr. Richard Daniels asked if the Camp would receive the money now, or only when construction starts.

Mr. Grooms: We will receive the money when we enter the agreement. The Board of Bear Creek Camp is determining how it will be invested.

Mr. Glenn: If they choose not to build, do we need to return the money?

Mr. Grooms: No, the money will be the Camp's regardless of the pipeline's construction.

Vice President Beasley thanked Mr. Grooms for his presentation and asked him to remain in the Zoom waiting room while the Synod Council deliberated and voted on the proposal.

Vice President Beasley then asked if there were any further questions from the Council on what had been presented.

Pr. King asked if Bishop Davenport and Secretary Richard had any further comment, as they are in the resolution as signers on this agreement.

Bishop Davenport: You all have asked wonderful questions. Mr. John Gordon, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's attorney, and the lawyers for Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the Camp who have been involved in this process have done their due diligence. They feel it is fine to go forward with this arrangement, and that we are covered from exposure. I am comfortable because they are comfortable.

Secretary Richard expressed comfort with the agreement also. This easement will not interfere with the functioning of the Camp. If we do not enter the agreement, we are likely to lose the land through eminent domain. If the easement is granted through eminent domain, we will not get the resources for the Camp. I would prefer to receive the cash for the ministries in exchange for land we will need to yield anyway, rather than not receive the resources for the ministry.

Mr. Everett Wick shared two points. One, there are miles of pipeline across the nation, and the ruptures are few. There is more damage to our environment by burning the gas than there is from problems with the pipelines themselves. Two, when it comes to the benefits of the money received, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Mr. Clark: I am in favor of the agreement, but I do believe we need an emergency plan if there is anything that goes wrong with the pipeline. With the recent infrastructure hacks, I worry for the kids. I would like an emergency plan for the safety of the children.

Pr. Sellers: I wrestle with the ethical issues regarding using fossil fuels at all. I hope we are moving away from fossil fuels to renewables. If you build a pipeline, you make further capacity for fossil fuels. But since this transition is not going to happen quickly, and we are going to need fossil fuels for now, then it makes sense to build where pipelines already exist rather than cut new lines across undisturbed land. Cutting across fresh geography may also impact our neighbors through eminent domain even more dramatically than this agreement will.

Pr. Heidgerd asked the Secretary, "Do we have any role or responsibility to dictate emergency plans to Bear Creek Camp?"

Secretary Richard: We do not. The only issue before us today is the resolution regarding the right of way.

With no further questions, Vice President Beasley called for the vote.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Mr. Grooms was let back into the meeting and was told the resolution had passed. Mr. Grooms expressed his gratitude to the Synod Council. Vice President Beasley thanked Mr. Grooms for his presence at the meeting and wished him well with the upcoming summer camp season.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop Davenport commented that she has been reviewing the biographies of the people serving on this council. She continues to be impressed by the skills and talents represented in this body. The questions asked in the previous conversation show just how good this team is, and she is grateful to all who serve on the Synod Council. She then highlighted some pieces from her written report, including the following:

Synod Assembly

The Synod Assembly went well. This event took a tremendous amount of coordination and investment of time and of resources. Thank you to all who made that happen so well, including staff, Synod Council, and ALL the teams that took a role in particular aspects of this event. Particular thanks are given to Ms. Carrie Schwab, our Assembly Coordinator, who worked to keep all the people and parts connected so well.

Care for Rostered Ministers and Lay Leaders

Please continue to keep our rostered ministers and lay leaders in prayer as we continue through this pandemic. We are not on the other side yet, and the stress on our leaders only continues to grow, even as the pressures and expectations change. We have offered, and Synod Staff have hosted, various opportunities to deal with the stressors of these days. We hosted:

- a meeting with Dr. Tim Babinchak, retired chief of infectious diseases at Thomas Jefferson University, who shared pertinent information in lay terms for how we can move to in-person worship
- a three-part workshop for Rostered Ministers on leading through trauma with “LeaderWise,” and
- a three-session program, “Journey through Grief,” with Ms. Sylvia Havlish of Lutheran Congregational Services, for lay leaders and rostered ministers.

We are looking to host an upcoming program on suicide, which will be available for lay and rostered persons.

This continues to be hard. Be kind to your rostered ministers. Give them time off: an extra day, an extra week. We need to be mindful of all the trauma and all the struggles they are dealing with.

Committee of Deans

The Committee of Deans, the interim pastors, and stated supply preachers of our Synod have been working to keep our congregations covered, engaged, and moving forward in this time of ongoing pandemic.

ADLA

The African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) has taken up the task of reviewing the Authentic Diversity Strategy of the ELCA to determine how we might live into this strategy. Included in the conversation is the question of reparations.

Conference of Bishops

Nothing has slowed for the Conference of Bishops or Presiding Bishop Eaton during the pandemic. Topics both ecclesial and political occupy the work of the Conference, as the Church strives to speak a word to the society on issues of climate change, immigration, racism, and economic justice. Within the Church we deal with these issues plus issues of ministry, including how these issues impact our congregations and synods, and how to provide leadership to congregations, including discussion of Synodically Authorized Ministers.

At the most recent meeting of the Conference of Bishops, the Conference zoomed with Bishop Azzar of the Holy Lands to hear what is happening with Israeli-Palestinian tensions, and to offer prayer support during the ongoing upheaval between Israelis and Palestinians.

Bishop noted that our Social Statements are good, but we need also to act.

Region 7

Bishop Davenport said the Region 7 bishops are a good support group for her. She was blessed to be able to attend the installation of Bishop Christopher deForest of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Bishop was also a speaker/preacher via video at the New England and Upstate New York Synod Assemblies.

Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity Advisory Team

This team continues to work diligently to move forward in issues of diversity and inclusion in the ELCA. In the midst of this work there continue to be signs of the difficulties facing Black and brown persons in this Church. As an example, the Reverend David Maddox was removed from the Roster of Ministers of the ELCA, as he did not receive a call after 3 years. It is painful that this would happen, that as we say we want to be younger and more diverse, we have a young Black man fall from the roll due to lack of call.

We celebrate that Juneteenth has become a federal holiday, but now let us do the work of Micah 6 – to love mercy, act justly, and walk humbly with God.

Bishop Davenport then opened the floor for comments or questions.

Mr. Everett Wick: Our bishop is a very busy lady, and we should do all we can to support her and be kind to her as well.

Ms. Emily Fowler: Bishop, your motto has been “I show up.” I just want to affirm that you do. You show up. Thank you.

VP Beasley: when did this information on Pr. Maddox get voted on?

Bishop Davenport: It was not. It is ELCA policy that if you do not get a call within 3 years, you fall off the roster unless there is an appeal for an extension.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice President Beasley noted that the Council has the report. She asked if there are any questions. As there were none, she moved on to the Confidentiality agreement. It is the expectation that each member of the Council will fill this out and return it to the Synod's Director of Operations, Ms. Yvonne Curtis, by the next day.

Also included in the packet of information was a gifts assessment sheet. It is requested that each Council member pick their three preferred committees on which to serve and rank them in order of preference. It is asked that this document be returned to Vice President Beasley via email within the week. These will be used in the assignment process for Synod Council Committees.

Executive Committee

The Vice President then moved to the election of members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Bishop, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, and 3 members of the Synod Council: on lay man, one lay woman, and one clergyperson. The Executive Committee generally meets at noon on a Thursday, and has been meeting by Zoom. She began with the position of lay man and asked for nominations.

Ms. Emily Fowler nominated Mr. Everett Wick. Mr. Wick was asked if he would be willing to serve if elected. Mr. Wick replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Doreen Kinzler nominated Mr. Bert Glenn. Mr. Glenn declined the nomination.

With no other nominees, nominations were closed, and Vice President Beasley declared **Mr. Wick elected.**

Vice President Beasley then asked for nominations for the lay woman position.

Mr. Glenn nominated Ms. Cheryl Detweiler. Ms. Detweiler accepted the nomination.

Pr. Sellers nominated Ms. Cynthia Moultrie, who declined the nomination.

With no other nominees, nominations were closed, and Vice President Beasley declared **Ms. Detweiler elected.**

Nominations were then opened for the clergy position.

Ms. Fowler nominated Pr. King. Pr. King accepted the nomination.

Pr. Heidgerd nominated Pr. Joey Klinger. Pr. Klinger accepted the nomination.

Ms. Sandra Zimmerman nominated Pr. Dwight mason, who declined the nomination.

Nominations were then closed. A vote was taken vis Zoom poll, and **Pr. Gwendolyn King was elected.**

Vice President Beasley expressed her gratitude for being re-elected as Synod Vice President. She noted that this is her final term, as the constitution limits the Vice President to 3 consecutive terms. We will need to work to raise up a new person to be the Vice President.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Actions on the Roster

Secretary Richard brought forward the following actions on the Roster.

On Leave from Call Request

S.C.21.06.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Janet Peterman, first year, effective June 19, 2021.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

From his written report, Secretary Richard noted that an electronic vote of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council was held to convey **an Invitation to Extended Service to the Rev. Brendan Galvin to serve at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Doylestown, PA beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. This invitation is renewable annually by Synod Council.**

The Synod Council voted with 23 yes, 0 no votes, to extend this invitation. The resolution was conveyed to Bishop John Scholl of the United Methodist Church for action at their Annual Conference.

Information not requiring action

Death:

The Reverend Luther M. Johnson, June 7, 2021

Removal from the Roster:

The Reverend David Maddox, effective December 31, 2020

Items from Reference and Counsel not brought before the Synod Assembly

Secretary Richard relayed updated information on two items brought to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, but which were not deemed in order to bring before the Synod Assembly.

One was a proposal to speak out against violence and hatred directed toward Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, which has been growing since the pandemic. The action taken was to refer this to the Anti-Racism Team, and the Team was invited to read statement to the Assembly affirming our standing against such acts of hatred and violence.

The second was a proposal about gun violence, particularly in the City of Philadelphia. The Committee on Reference and Counsel sent the resolution to Synod Council for action. Bishop Davenport, Vice President Beasley, and the Executive Committee have referred the concern to Dr. William Flippin, who has been working on behalf of the Synod on the concerns noted in the proposal through the “Heeding God’s Call” initiative. We have also invited Mr. Thomas Salber, the author of the proposal, to join in the work of Heeding God’s Call.

Pr. King asked if the statement from the Anti-Racism Team, or a summary thereof, would be included in the minutes of the Synod Assembly.

Secretary Richard stated that it would be.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee, presented the report.

Mission support from congregations is down by about \$10,000, but this is not a huge percentage of our budgeted number. The shortfall is not surprising with the ongoing pandemic, and it may rebound over the remainder of the fiscal year.

We have had good performance in our investments and we have had fewer expenses than we budgeted, and so our current ratios of income and expenses are good.

We have a new permanently restricted fund, which was received from Grace, Norristown as it ended its ministry. The fund was a trust Grace had, which already had a set of restrictions. We receive it with those provisions as a permanently restricted fund. The purpose of the Fund is to aid ministry in Montgomery County.

Vice President Beasley asked if there was a difference in why we are keeping this as a separate fund, rather than placing it in the Fund for Mission.

Mr. Glenn stated that when we receive cash, it is unrestricted and can be used as we choose. Since this was received as a restricted fund, we are obligated to keep it as such, following as best we can the dictates for which it was established.

Mr. Glenn stated that the Finance Committee had met and reviewed the financial statements, and found them to be in good order.

Seminary debt relief was extended to 18 clergy, with the money being sent directly to the lender each person owed.

Mr. Glenn pointed out that the guidelines for the Fund for Mission were enclosed with his report. There has been a thought that the Fund might be used as an endowment, with a limit of 5% of the value of the Fund being set for use. This percentage is already in the documents, and so we do not need to make this change at this time. The Finance Committee will continue to consider if there are any changes that might be good to recommend in the use of these monies, but for now the Finance Committee wants to wait and see how this plays, as the Trustees of the Fund for Mission have recently resumed meetings.

The Trustees did meet recently, for the first time in quite a while. There is approximately \$100,000 available at this time. Dr. Flippin has suggested that some of this money might be used for our African Descent congregations. Pr. Penman, Chair of the Vitality Team, may have ideas for its use in the work of the Vitality Team.

The Synod has been working to renegotiate the rental agreement with the Seminary. In a meeting between Bishop Davenport, President Erwin, and other representatives of the Synod and the school, there has been an agreement to reduce the rent from \$80,000 to \$40,000 per year. Bishop has suggested that we may wish to increase our annual donation to the Seminary in the next fiscal year.

Pr. Heidgerd asked a question about the Fund for Mission. To clarify, it is not an endowment, but it is capped at 5% of the value, unless there is a need?

Mr. Glenn: Yes. We can access more than 5%, but if we choose to do so, Synod Council needs to approve it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Investment Committee

Mr. Dave Ehret reported on the Investment Committee. The investments are up by approximately 9%. Our total portfolio is just under \$10 million.

The \$161,000 received in trust from the former Grace, Norristown, has been placed in the T. Rowe Price Science and Technology Fund, where we have been getting a good return on investment.

Regarding the use of this restricted trust, the following conversation ensued.

Pr. Sellers: Is there any mechanism by which these trust funds for Montgomery County are released?

Mr. Ehret: Not to my knowledge.

Pr. Sellers: Should this be referred to the Finance Committee to propose parameters?

Mr. Glenn: Pr. Penman of the Vitality Team may be helpful in this regard.

Mr. Wick: We should review what the trust already says about the distribution of these funds. We may wish to consult the Deans of Upper and Lower Montgomery Conferences about its use.

Pr. Heidgerd: We should include the Dean of Upper Bucks in these decisions to distribute the funds as well. There are 3 congregations in Upper Bucks Conference that are in Montgomery County.

Pr. Sellers: It seems that in its role of oversight, the Synod Council ought to provide a plan for the use and oversight of this money so as to minimize competition and conflict between the Conferences.

Secretary Richard agreed with Pr. Sellers that the Synod Council is the body with overall responsibility for the Funds owned by the Synod, and as such, should set and oversee the parameters and distributions of this Fund as well.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business that needed action, but Pr. Serena Sellers asked for, and was granted, a moment of personal privilege. She expressed her sincere thanks that Sanctuary Village was the designated recipient of the Synod Assembly offering this year. The expenses for building materials have gone through the roof during the pandemic, and this money is greatly needed.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Richard Daniels noted his address is incorrect in the Roster. He provided the correct address.

Vice President Beasley shared the good news that Bishop Davenport is being honored by the American Bible Society and Forum Philly. The invitation reads:

*This Juneteenth, **American Bible Society** is teaming up with **Forum Philly** to recognize local heroes of faith who embody the freedom and justice of God's Word. As a person who proclaims the freedom of God's Word in Philadelphia, we would like to honor and recognize you for your impactful ministry.*

Congratulations, Bishop!

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 with reflection and prayer by Dr. Flippin. He noted that this day, June 17, is the commemoration of the Emmanuel 9 where nine people gathered for Bible Study this night six years ago at Mother Emmanuel AME Zion Church in Columbia, SC, and as they closed their eyes in prayer, a Lutheran Christian named Dylan Roof, took their lives. We gather in the midst of this reality. We cry out – have mercy on us. We feel far from you. And distant. But today we also have hope, and the charge to stand for justice and act for change.

The next meeting of the SEPA Synod Council will be September 23, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., and will be held via Zoom.

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

Approved by Synod Council, September 23, 2021

MINUTES
of the 167th MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Zoom Meeting
September 23, 2021
6:00 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley invited Ms. Emily Fowler to lead the Synod Council in devotions.

Ms. Fowler began with reading from the 8th chapter of Mark, in which Jesus' challenges his disciples to take up the cross and follow him.

Ms. Fowler reflected on her time when she was a student at Susquehanna University, particularly on her Senior year. That was in 2019, pre-covid, and pre-Zoom. In that year she took a course that focused on such persons as Soren Kierkegaard, who posed the question "Are you a Christian?" and a related query, "How does one become a Christian?"

For Kierkegaard, the answer of how one becomes a Christian seems simple. "Be like Christ." The difficulty is, what does that mean? As with most things philosophical, one question leads to another, which raises yet another. Kierkegaard's basic point is that it is impossible to fully be like Christ. Taking up the cross is not just difficult; it is impossible. But it is still worth the effort to strive to do so.

How can we be like Christ? How can we take up the Cross? It may be a simple as getting vaccinated and wearing a mask for the sake of the vulnerable. As Jesus stood for and with the

forgotten and vulnerable, so can we. Taking up the cross may look a bit different in 2021, but take up the Cross. Be a Christian; follow Christ, every day.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 167th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 6:12 p.m.

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, confirmed a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the 33rd Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod were approved as presented.

The Minutes of the 166th Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

SETTING THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley offered one addition to the agenda that had been distributed: consideration of Ms. Pia Graham for the open seat of Upper Bucks Conference Representative. The Synod Council adopted the agenda for the 167th meeting as amended.

SEATING OF SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBER

Information about Ms. Pia Graham was brought before the Council to fill the open seat of Upper Bucks Conference Representative, Lay Woman, term ending 2024.

The Synod Council unanimously approved seating Ms. Graham. She was then invited to join the Zoom meeting.

MISSION MOMENT

The mission moment was a presentation of the ministry of Lutheran Settlement House.

Mr. David Chiles, Executive Director, brought greetings to the Synod Council, and then gave a brief history of Lutheran Settlement House. LSH was formed in 1902 by immigrants who wanted to live out their faith in this, their new home. They began working for and with the people in disadvantaged neighborhoods, bringing tangible assistance as needed and as they were able. This mission continues to this day in programs to address domestic violence, homelessness, senior ministries, and issues of food insecurity.

Those who come to LSH do so at a critical moment in their lives. They may be fleeing an abusive partner, dealing with a lack of food, be without a home, or experiencing the struggles of aging, either personally or of a family member. They come to LSH and receive support. We meet them where they are, and strive to bring them stability to stave off future concerns. When we see a neighbor in need, we are filled with love for them. When we are filled with love, we are not about judging, we are about caring and meeting their needs, so they may know transformation to a new way of being.

We want to grow our partnership with the Lutheran community so that we can make a greater impact in our work while keeping our historic ties to this community of faith.

Mr. Bert Glenn asked Mr. Chiles if Lutheran Settlement House is still based in Fishtown, and whether they have more than one site.

Mr. Chiles: Yes, we are still in Fishtown, and we also have a site at 10th and Lehigh. There is also one other site, the location of which is not disclosed, which is a shelter for those fleeing abuse.

Bishop Davenport thanked Mr. Chiles and LSH for the assistance given to at least one of our congregations dealing with an issue of domestic violence. It is truly important work.

Mr. Chiles said LSH is grateful whenever we can enter into partnership to make a difference in the lives of those who are struggling. He then introduced Ms. Vashti Bledsoe, Bilingual Domestic Violence Program Director, to describe more fully some of the programs offered through Lutheran Settlement House.

Ms. Bledsoe echoed what Mr. Chiles had shared; LSH has many programs to assist our neighbors. In addition to those listed by Mr. Chiles, LSH also has transitional housing programs. The goal is to help families become self-sufficient by the time they complete the program.

Ms. Bledsoe described the realities faced by some of the people that they are serve. We have people serving time in Riverside correctional because they have been arrested for actions of the abusive partner, or sometimes for defending themselves from their abuser. We bring services to them in their incarceration.

We love to meet with congregations. When we do, we often meet people who are surprised by how prevalent domestic violence is. It is no respecter of income or neighborhood. We begin our conversations with encouragement that we work on how we deal with those who are victims. First, let us believe them from the start, and not have them close down for more years.

It is important to know we do not have the goal of breaking up families. Rather, our goal is to bring healing and hope when we can. Congregations often want to hide from the reality of domestic violence, and how prevalent it is. It is difficult to acknowledge and confront. The fear is that it brings a stain on the congregation as well, damaging its image as an ideal community. But the reality of domestic violence is true and it is messy. Being a neighbor, showing love, means looking at this honestly and confronting it directly.

The reality is that abuse happens to men as well as to women. We deal mostly with women, but we help men also. 95% of reported abuse happens to women, while 5% is reportedly experienced by men. It is likely more prevalent among men than the statistics indicate, but men are reluctant to report out of a sense of shame associated with being an abused man. We do not expect you to know about all this issue, but we want to be a resource and a partner with you in this work. We need to show the love of Christ by caring for these concerns. We are working toward a city-wide spiritual training program for leaders of communities of faith.

Ms. Fowler: Thank you for this hugely important work.

Bishop Davenport: We are so grateful to you. We do not shy away from this. We go forward in the name of love. Your passion for this ministry overflows. Thank you for your witness and the gift that you are.

Vice President Beasley: I am grateful for LSH's witness to the Lutheran presence. Ms. Beasley encouraged members of the Council that if your congregation is not involved with Lutheran Settlement House, have them come to your site and learn about what this team is doing. Vashti Bledsoe, thank you for your time, and we keep you in our continuing prayers!

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop Davenport conveyed her appreciation for the members of the Synod Council.

"I am grateful to see all of you on the screen. Our membership sees that the work of ministry has NOT stopped because of pandemic or flood or anything. The work of this church continues. And I am truly grateful to all of you who make this happen!"

ELCA

Bishop Davenport shared that since our last meeting she had the opportunity to preach at Churchwide Chapel service, which she sees as an honor with the long list of talented preachers we have in the Church.

Bishop was also able to attend the virtual Memorial Service for Mr. Bill Horne, who died during his tenure as ELCA Vice President. We thank God for such a strong, faithful, and dedicated leader of color as we still strive to be more diverse as the Body of Christ.

Upstate New York Synod hosted a conference focused on the questions, "What I preach," "Why I preach," and "How I preach." Our Bishop joined Presiding Bishop Eaton and retired Bishop Michael Buke as presenters. She found it interesting to explore the ways in which the Holy Spirit works in each person to craft the message of the Gospel.

Bishop Davenport also attended the "Solidarity and Sacred Silence Interfaith Prayer Vigil" for Afghanistan. This was an on-line service offered by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. Though on-line, these events also take time for preparation; just attending the event does not always convey the amount of work behind the scenes. In this event there was a chance to learn about, and pray for, those affected by the ongoing turbulence in Afghanistan, while recognizing that many refugees may be coming here and will need our support.

Ecumenism

Bishop continues her meetings and conversations with the Religious Leaders Council. A current issue of concern and opportunity is the request from the City of Philadelphia to assist with evacuees from Afghanistan who will be arriving in our area.

Mr. Shane Claiborne and the group "Red Letter Christians" extended the invitation to Bishop Davenport to read, "What, to the Slave, is the Fourth of July," by Mr. Frederick Douglass. This non-denominational Christian group brought together people from around the country on July 3rd to raise issues of racial justice.

Bishop Davenport then asked members of her staff to share what they are doing as a part of the Office of the Bishop.

Communications

The Reverend Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Mission Interpretation, shared several items that have been happening in the area of Communications. There has been a weekly Zoom meeting of congregational leaders dealing with communications. We have had regular meetings with Dr. Tim Babinchak, an infectious disease specialist, who is a member of St. John's in Coatesville.

A special guest will be coming soon to the Communicator's program.

It has been rewarding for Pr. Fisher to make these connections at the intersection of communication, the virus, and ministry. As a result of these gatherings we also have gained some volunteers for the Assembly and other tasks in the Synod.

Pr. Fisher noted the primary messaging vehicle for the Synod is "MinistryLink." We have an open rate of 42% for our communications, which may sound low, but is actually quite strong for religious organizations.

On the MinistryLink resources tab we have on information on Covid-19 to help advise congregations. We have been doing a good deal of production work on YouTube, and have been posting information and help tips. There is a great deal of information available online. We have invested significant resources in digital equipment, which was used for this year's Assembly. We are working on how we can use this equipment for the upcoming Rostered Minister's Equipping Event, and how we might use it for the 2022 Synod Assembly.

Vocations and Advancement

The Reverend Karen Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations and Leadership/Mission Advancement then gave an update on what is happening in her areas of responsibility.

Pr. Sease began with the area of Vocations and Leadership.

She recently posted a video about her own sense of call. She noted that God calls us to many things: family, employment, even the voting booth. Some people have a particular calling to rostered ministry in the ELCA. We have about 30 people who are at some point in their journey to determine if rostered ministry is that to which God is calling them. As people go through the process, some discover they are not called to this. "Success" for candidacy is not getting people to the position of Pastor or Deacon, but the proper determination of where each is being called by God to use the gifts God has given.

Statistics of our Synod with regard to Mobility/Vocations:

We have 42 congregations in transition, without settled pastoral leadership

We have 30 candidates and 42 openings; the numbers do not add up.

We need you as Rostered Ministers and lay leaders to work to raise up leaders for the work of the Church. Pr. Sease noted for the Rostered Ministers that this is a part of the ordination vows.

There is a Leadership crisis, and the need is great, but God will provide, as you assist in raising up people for leadership in the Church. We can start by identifying and inviting people around us to consider this call.

Pr. Sease then turned to the Mission Advancement portion of her portfolio, noting two events that are approaching which deal with stewardship and encouragement of disciples to learn to share with gladness and generosity.

First, we are preparing for our “All Saints Appeal,” with the theme, “Shall we Gather at the River,” from the hymn of the same name. There is a line in this hymn that says, “gather with the saints at the river, that flows by the throne of God.” We recognize we need to gather as Saints across this 5 County region to do the work of ministry.

We also are planning for our Stewardship Extravaganza, which will be taking place in January of 2022. More information will be coming soon, but please mark your calendars.

Pr. King asked a question about mobility. 42 congregations in transition is a significant number. Are there any that are closer to calling a settled pastor versus those that are just beginning this process?

Pr. Sease: Naturally there are congregations at various stages in the process. Currently there are 8 congregations with names of candidates to interview.

Mr. Bert Glenn: How does the process of pastors coming from other synods play into our filling these positions, and are we angering these other synods by taking candidates?

Pr. Sease: Sometimes their home synods are upset, but mostly they want their pastors to be in the proper call also. We receive paperwork from the Churchwide office of ministers interested in coming to our synod. We have a process by which Deans will interview them to gain a sense of the persons interested in coming to our Synod. We then consider the gifts they list and how they might match with the needs of the congregations we have in transition. If there is a match, we submit their names for consideration.

Pr. Dwight Mason: following up on Mr. Glenn’s concern about tension between synods, New Jersey Synod and SEPA Synod are working closely together to fill each other’s needs. For instance, I am “on loan” the New Jersey Synod to assist as a bridge pastor with a congregation for a year.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice President Beasley noted the minutes of the Executive Committee were included in the materials distributed for this meeting. Before entertaining questions on those minutes, Ms. Beasley presented the proposed Committee Assignments to the Council.

Committee Assignments

Vice President Beasley noted that the list of Committees does not include the Administrative Committee. We are working to revision how this team might be configured. In the meantime we are having volunteers take on some of the functions this committee has performed.

The assignments to the Committees of the Synod Council are proposed each year by the Bishop and the Vice President. Chairs of the Committees are members of the Synod Council. Several Committees have provision for members in addition to the members of the Synod Council.

This year we have several new chairpersons. Mr. Tackett had been the chair of the Audit Committee, but he is no longer on the Synod Council. Pr. Serena Sellers had been the chair of the Constitution Committee, but with her work with Sanctuary Village she has declined this role. Mr. Ehret had been the chair of the Investment Committee, but he has declined the position this year. New chairs include Ms. Cynthia Moultrie for the Audit Committee, Pr. Gary Costa for the Constitution Committee, and Pr. John Heidgerd for the Investment Committee.

The Synod Council was asked to consider the following motion:

S.C.21.09.01. 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.

Synod Assembly Theme

Vice President Beasley then moved to the topic of a theme for the 2022 Synod Assembly. She noted that there were several options presented for members to consider, or members may make other suggestions. We are beginning this process now, because so many other pieces need to fit together around whatever theme is chosen. Pr. Jennifer Phelps, who coordinates worship for the Assembly around the theme, compiled the ideas of the Synod Council. Some of the comments included:

- Mr. Glenn – likes the theme of Community
- Pr. Sellers – also likes “community,” not just our own, but the community beyond who we are
- Mr. Richard Daniels – re-establishing community after Covid has torn it down is the way we need to go.
- Pr. Phelps, referencing a message from Ms. Sandra Zimmerman – Hope and Strength for Tomorrow, as We have been Changed
- Vice President Beasley – I like Hope for Tomorrow, because we are still in the midst of this pandemic.
- Pr. Phelps also suggested – SEPA Strong, Still Together
- Pr. Nathan Krause – If we are SEPA Strong, this is why we are – we are doers; we are walking the walk, not just talking the talk.
- Mr. Adam Clark – I like the theme of “Victory in Christ” – partly because I am an optimist, and partly because I hope that by then the virus will be contained.
- Pr. Gwendolyn King resonated with the 1st and the 4th suggestions on the list – God’s presence in fear and trouble, and Hope for Tomorrow. She is living in the Hope of Christ, not in the midst of the unknown.
- Pr. Heidgerd – relates to themes of community. We have drifted apart from each other in the pandemic. We have an opportunity, with 42 congregations without settled pastors, to find new ways to work beyond our own buildings.

- Mr. Everett Wick – It seems we are starting at the wrong end. If we start with a review of our congregations’ request for aid, that might be what we present on, focusing from there on what our strengths are to meet those needs.

Bishop Davenport thanked the members for their ideas and brainstorming. She noted there will be a logo contest based on the theme, and the Synod Council will get to choose the logo.

Pr. Phelps was asked if she had what she needed at this time. She said she has recorded the ideas, and the ones in the “chat,” and has plenty to work with.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Actions on the Roster

Secretary Richard presented the following Actions on the Roster. As explanation Secretary Richard noted that there are some persons for whom we are making two changes. This is due to timing of when we received the paperwork from the rostered ministers, and what we need to track to have them assigned to the proper roster for the time of its duration. For instance, when a rostered minister completes a call, that minister needs to request on-leave from call status. When we receive their paperwork, we can assign them to the proper roster. When an interim pastor completes service at that site, they need to move back to the on-call roster until such time as they are called to another interim assignment. We are at the nexus of personal accountability of the rostered minister, and the corporate responsibility of the Synod and the ELCA.

On Leave from Call Requests

S.C.21.09.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Kathrine Steinly, second year, effective August 17, 2021.

S.C.21.09.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Dwight Mason, third year, effective August 26, 2021

S.C.21.09.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Katherine Cartwright Knodel, first year, effective March 31, 2021

S.C.21.09.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Heidi Roderick-Schnaath, first year, effective April 5, 2021

S.C.21.09.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King, first year, effective July 7, 2021

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolutions.

Requests to move from Active Roster to Retired Roster

S.C.21.09.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Kristie L. Chandler, effective August 1, 2021

S.C.21.09.08. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Kristine Peterson, effective July 1, 2021

S.C.21.09.09. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. David Deal, effective October 1, 2021

S.C.21.09.10. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Dolores E. Littleton, effective November 1, 2021

S.C.21.09.11. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to Deacon Beth A. Barkhau, effective December 1, 2021

S.C.21.09.12. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Gerald Tancredi, effective January 1, 2022

S.C.21.09.13. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Julie B. Bergdahl, effective January 1, 2022

S.C.21.09.14. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Wayne D. Moritz, effective November 1, 2021

S.C.21.09.15. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Carol Steinhart, effective March 1, 2021

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolutions.

Renewal of Invitation of UCC Minister to serve and ELCA Congregation in SEPA Synod

S.C.21.09.16. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve renewal of entry rite, Invitation to Extended Service, to the Rev. Dr. Karyn L. Wiseman at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Huntingdon Valley, PA, beginning October 1, 2021, until September 30, 2022. (This call requires an annual report to the Synod Bishop for the length of the call. This invitation is renewable annually by the Synod Council.)

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Renewal of Call to Specialized Ministry

S.C.21.09.17. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one-year, renewable call to the Rev. Sabrina LaBelle as Protestant Chaplain at Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, PA, beginning August 1, 2021, to July 31, 2022

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Calls to Interim Ministry

S.C.21.09.18. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Wayne Shelor to interim ministry at St. John's, Phoenixville beginning September 1, 2020 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Shelor resigns this call, whichever comes first.

S.C.21.09.19. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Katherine Cartwright Knodel to interim ministry at the Lutehran Church of the Resurrection, Yardley, beginning July 12, 2021 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Cartwright Knodel resigns this call, whichever comes first.

S.C.21.09.20. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Heidi M. Roderick-Schnaath to interim ministry at Christ's, Oreland, beginning August 22, 2021 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Roderick-Schnaath resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolutions.

Information not Requiring Action Transfers

Pastor Thaddeus Book *to* Grand Canyon Synod, effective January 1, 2021
Pastor Russell Crouthamel *from* Northwestern PA Synod, effective March 1, 2021, called as pastor of St. Mark's, Pennsburg
Pastor Charles Romanowski (retired) *to* New Jersey Synod, effective April 28, 2021
Deacon Laura Book *to* Grand Canyon Synod, effective April 29, 2021
Pastor Sarah Aasheim *from* Northwestern PA Synod, effective June 4, 2021, called as pastor of Grace, Glenside (Wyndmoor)
Pastor Christopher L. Weidner (retired) *to* Metro DC Synod, effective July 7, 2021
Pastor Bradley Burke *to* Virginia Synod, effective July 11, 2021
Pastor Bruce Thorsen *to* Northern Great Lakes Synod, effective July 27, 2021
Pastor Joshua Sullivan *to* New England Synod, effective August 16, 2021
Pastor William Coleman *from* Northwestern PA Synod, effective September 1, 2021, called as pastor of St. Paul's, Telford
Pastor Eric Reimer *to* Upstate New York Synod, effective September 1, 2021
Pastor Robert Matthias (retired) *from* Lower Susquehanna Synod, effective September 3, 2021

Deaths

These three lay leaders served their congregations, synod, churchwide, and internationally. They are listed for their honor of their contributions to the beloved community.

Mrs. Phyllis Linn – February 3, 2021

Mrs. Janet Weachter – July 23, 2021

Dr. Lois Leffler – August 6, 2021

Synodical Administration for Trinity, South Philadelphia

Secretary Richard described the situation at Trinity, South Philadelphia, and that the leadership of that congregation has made the request that the Synod take over administration of this ministry.

Background:

Trinity, South Philadelphia, has a long history in our Synod, and for many years it was a flagship congregation. Over the past several decades, Trinity's strength and security have waned. This decline has occurred for many reasons, but regardless, at this point Trinity has dwindled to a point where it is struggling to continue as a viable congregation in our Synod. The congregation now averages fewer than 15 in Sunday worship.

On July 19th, the leadership of the congregation asked for the Synod to assume administration of the congregation, in line with S13.25.

The intent is to enter this administration to see what can be done to reorganize and rejuvenate Trinity Church. This congregation is not only historically significant; it is also the only remaining Lutheran Christian presence in this region of Philadelphia. There are many families with children who could benefit from receiving the Gospel of Christ, and by being served in Christ's name.

The following resolution is presented for the Synod Council's deliberation and vote:

S.C.21.09.21. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council authorizes the Office of the Bishop to assume administration of Trinity Lutheran Church, 18th and Wolf Streets, South Philadelphia, in accordance with S13.24. of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, effective as of the date of the passage of this resolution.

The floor was opened for discussion.

Pr. Phelps: Is the congregation friendly to this motion?

Vice President Beasley: yes, they are in favor of this.

Ms. Moultrie: What is the hoped for outcome?

VP Beasley: the hope is to reinvigorate the ministry. There are many families in the area. We won't know what is possible until we get in. The Administrative Council will walk alongside the members of Trinity to see if ministry can happen. We believe there is a lot of potential.

Mr. Clark: Sometimes getting the people of a congregation to do the work of evangelism is very difficult. If the Synod tries to help the church and the people do not go along, what is the next step, or if they do and fail, what is the next step?

VP Beasley: we need to take one step at a time, sweet Jesus. We need a steady supply pastor, and then a bridge pastor to come in, and then take baby steps. Start praying that we can get a bridge and steady supply there, and we will worry about "what if" when and if we need to. Right now, let's deal with what we need now for this time. Lord, bring the right leadership.

We may start with door hangers, not even conversation. This congregation is 172 years old. A witness needs to continue there.

Mr. Clark: I know of other congregations that are facing similar concerns, and I worry for them.
Bp. Davenport: You are right to have these concerns. We are optimists, but we are also realists. If nothing happens, we will follow the process to close. But for now, we are doing as Vice President Beasley has said to strive to keep the ministry active.

Pr. Sellers: Adam, I think there was a presupposition in what you said that the Synod will come in and tell them what to do. We are not doing that. We are coming alongside to help them to determine what they are wanting to do, and what they are able to do.

Pr. Costa: I am reminded of Jesus' passion prediction that he will undergo suffering, die, and rise on 3rd day. Jesus rebukes Peter for setting his mind on human things not divine things. The greatest tragedy may not be the closing of a congregation, but the missed opportunity to do ministry. May this ministry die so a new ministry can begin here. One Step at a Time, God can do amazing things, even in the midst of what seems to have died.

As discussion concluded, the vote was called.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Treasurer Janet Neff was unable to attend this meeting. Mr. Martin Schwab, SEPA Synod's Senior Accountant, presented highlights from her report.

In the General Expenses portion of the budget:
Mission support from congregations is above budget by \$19,000
Investment income is up by over \$225,000
Expenses are under budget

The Temporarily Restricted portion of the budget has a surplus of \$27,000

The Mission portion of the budget shows a surplus, but this is due to high performance of our investments, and in particular, the sale of a property held under management. Without the sale of the property, there would be a deficit of nearly \$26,000.

The Restricted portion of the budget also shows a surplus as we have received a trust fund from the former Grace, Norristown. This money is earmarked for use by congregations in Montgomery County.

Our overall ratios of assets to liabilities are very good.

In August the Synod received a gift of \$10,000 from St. Mark's, Pennsburg. The Synod Council is the body to decide how this gift will be used.

Bishop Davenport suggested that \$5,000 go to the Bishop's Fund to assist rostered ministers in times of hardship. This Fund is usually supported by offerings from ordinations and

installations. As there have been few of these since the pandemic, this fund could use support at this time when the hardships for ministers are particularly high.

She further suggested that the other \$5,000 be used for the Rostered Ministers Equipping Event. This event is usually paid for by ministers and their congregations, but we would like to provide this event this year for free as an act of support for our rostered ministers.

S.C.21.09.22. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council authorizes the \$10,000 gift from St. Mark's, Pennsburg, be used in equal measure for the Bishop's Fund and the Rostered Minister's Equipping Event.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Mr. Schwab asked members of the Synod to review their congregation's giving, and if they have any questions about these numbers, to let him know.

Mr. Glenn noted that the Finance Committee has not met since the last meeting of the Synod Council, and as such the Committee does not have a separate report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Investment Committee

Mr. Dave Ehret reported on the Investment Committee. As of August we added nearly \$550,000 to the portfolio from the sale of the property of the former Grace, Norristown. He noted that the Investment Committee now has a new Chair, Pr. Jon Heidgerd, and so in the future he will be making this report. Mr. Ehret thanked Mr. Schwab for his assistance with the work of this committee.

Year to date we have an investment gain of \$1,901,278 or about 17%.

Total Investment Portfolio - \$11,004,765

Constitution Committee

Pr. Costa, new chair of the Constitution Committee, shared that he has received a word from Trinity, Fairview Village, that they are beginning the process of revising their constitution. When the Committee has received the revisions, and conducted its review, he will bring this to the Synod Council.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Clark will send updated contact information for the Synod Council Roster.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

Announcement – the Synod Staff will be returning to the office on October 6 so that they can pack to move to the Brossmann Center. The offices will be on the 3rd floor, West Wing, the same floor where President Guy Erwin's offices are located.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m. with prayer by Pr. Costa.

The next meeting of the SEPA Synod Council will be December 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., and will be held via Zoom.

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

Approved by Synod Council December 9, 2021

MINUTES
of the 168th MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Zoom Meeting
December 9, 2021
6:00 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley invited The Reverend Gary Costa to lead the Synod Council in devotions. Pr. Costa used as inspiration for his reflections the devotion for this day from Liberty Lutheran Services' Advent devotional book. The verse for the day was 2 Corinthians 8:8, *"I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others."*

Pr. Costa noted that there is a difference between acting out of command and acting out of love. For instance, a child cleaning their room under command shoves all the clutter in the closet and closes the door. A child cleaning their room out of love will truly clean it; if you look under the bed, you'll see that nothing is hiding there.

Generosity is not measured in dollars; it is measured in the amount of love given and received. The generosity of Jesus was a gift, not from command, but from love. Do not grow weary. Do not fall into a trap that you are generous because you feel you have to give. Instead, remain in the place where you act because of the love you have received, and which you then need to share with the world.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 168th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 6:11 p.m.

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, confirmed a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the 167th Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

SETTING THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley put forward two changes to the Agenda; to move the Forward Together in Faith presentation to after the Mission Moment, and to place the Report of the Constitution Committee after the Secretary's Report.

The Synod Council adopted the agenda for the 168th meeting as amended.

MISSION MOMENT

The Reverend Dr. Larry Smoose of the Synod's Generosity Team presented the Mission Moment. Dr. Smoose shared an overview of the upcoming Extravaganza 2022 Stewardship Event, the title of which is "Stewardship and Vitality in the NOW Normal".

This event was originally planned for January 22, 2022, but with the surge of the omicron variant of the coronavirus, it has been rescheduled for June 18, 2022. All the Keynote presenters and Workshop leaders are on board with the new date. This will be a hybrid event, with space for people to attend in-person at Trinity, Lansdale, and others able to attend on Zoom.

The Extravaganza is a significant event. Keith Mundy, who has previously served as the Assistant Director for Stewardship Ministry of the ELCA, said our last Extravaganza was one of the largest such events held in the ELCA.

The two Keynote presenters will be the Rev. Dr. Louise Johnson, currently serving as Executive for Administration in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, having previously served as President of Wartburg Seminary, and in the development office at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and the Rev. Dr. Soong-Chan Rah, professor of Evangelism at Fuller Theological Seminary. Dr. Rah was recommended by Dr. William Flippin as one who will bring an appropriate spiritual and ecclesial response to our present-day realities.

Workshop leaders will include:

- Ryan P. Burge, author of The Nones
- Dave Daubert, author of The Hybrid Church
- Doug Powe, Jr., author of Re-vitalizing Urban and other struggling Congregations
- Tiffany Chaney – pastor/developer of Gathered by Grace, reaching out to 18 – 40 year-olds in Montgomery, AL, and Director of Development for Baptist Health System.

The Generosity Team is working to keep this event very affordable. Rather than \$200 for a comparable event elsewhere, the fee to attend will be \$40. The desire is to make it possible for as many people as possible, especially lay people, to participate. Much of the expense has been covered through a grant of \$12,000 from the Stewardship of Life Institute, support from Thrivent Financial, gifts from SEPA congregations, and the host church, Trinity, Lansdale, providing space and logistics.

Support from the Larry House Fund has made it possible for seminarians to attend for free. Larry House served the Seminary for many years in the Development office, and his wife established this fund, held jointly by United Lutheran Seminary and the SEPA Synod, to continue his work of supporting the development of leaders for the church.

Dr. Smoose called on the Reverend Karen Sease, Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy, Mobility and Interim Ministry, and Mission Advancement, to describe the support our Synod staff will provide to make this event possible. Pr. Sease noted we have enlisted a huge number of volunteers to make this program work, particularly as it is a hybrid event. Pr. Bob Fisher is providing technical expertise. Ms. Cynta Outterbridge is coordinating registration. We may need two different registration platforms, one for in-person, one for on-line participants.

Dr. Smoose noted that on the day of the Extravaganza members of the Synod Generosity Team will be present to guide, coordinate, and lead people to the proper workshop rooms. Bishop Davenport will be preaching.

Dr. Smoose shared that we want to get the word out about the Extravaganza. Pr. Fisher and the communications team are doing great job, but it is hoped that Synod Council members will share the word. He then asked if there were any questions.

Pr. Gwen King: You said the in-person portion will be limited; do you know how many will be able to attend?

Dr. Smoose: probably 150

Pr. King: Can you say again who provided the \$12,000 grant?

Dr. Smoose: "SOLI" – Stewardship of Life Institute

Vice President Beasley thanked Dr. Smoose for his presentation.

FORWARD TOGETHER IN FAITH

Ms. Ellen Daneke presented the report on the distribution of grants from the Forward Together in Faith fund.

The FTIF team reviewed 22 grant applications requesting \$171,687 for the 2021-2022 grant year. There was one application which was denied because they are not a congregation, agency or person, affiliated with SEPA. The application was submitted from a church in Uganda.

In 2021, congregations were, and are, still dealing with covid and covid protocols. Some of the grants this year are to continue to assist congregations with improving or expanding their presence using technology. We also have many congregations/agencies looking to do new and innovative ministries as well as equipping leaders and parishioners.

We are excited and thankful for the opportunity to award 21 grants for a little over \$91,000. Applicants will be notified of the decision and the amount of the grant being awarded, in December. Synod Council will be notified of the recipients and amounts, after the above communication goes out. Checks will be mailed the beginning of January 2022.

Total Grants Being Awarded for 2021, (funds distributed in 2022) - \$91,065

Amount given by area of focus:

Networking	\$ 5,057	Communicating	\$15,162
Innovating	\$35,423	Equipping	\$35,423

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop Davenport shared first and foremost her thanksgiving to Jesus that we now have Pr. Stacey-Kyle “Skyle” Rea on staff as our Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult, and Spiritual Formation. This is an important position in our Synod, and in the life of the Church. We are fortunate to have someone with Pr. Rea’s experience, and even more so, her passion, for bringing youth to Jesus.

The position of Director of Evangelical Mission remains open, but it has been posted. The hope is to have this position filled in the first quarter of 2022.

Bishop Davenport noted that her report is filled with the things that have occupied her time since the last Synod Council Meeting, including her participation in the Welcoming Event for Bishop Julius McAllister, Sr., Presiding Prelate and Mother Joan Marla McAllister, Episcopal Supervisor of the First Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church, and that she preached at the installation of Dr. Guy Erwin as President of the United Lutheran Seminary.

She commented that rather than reviewing what has been shared in her written report, she would prefer to hear the questions the Synod Council has about the ministry before us.

Mr. Bert Glenn: You reference in your report the reality of “the Great Resignation.” At the last Synod Council meeting Pr. Sease noted that we have 42 congregations in need of pastors. Are these retirements? Or have pastors just had enough?

Bp. Davenport: They are leaving for many reasons. Some are moving to new ventures, some are end of year retirements, some had enough of the stress of the pandemic, and some are leaving to be closer to family, some of which is also pandemic related. Yet, while we have seen a huge loss, we are also seeing a large increase in the number of persons in candidacy. Like after 9/11, at this time some are feeling the call to enter the ministry to make a difference.

Mr. Glenn: Is this resignation common across the synod?

Bp. Davenport: Unfortunately yes, this is being seen across the country.

Pr. Gwendolyn King: Do you have a move in date yet for moving to the new offices?

Bp. Davenport: No, not a hard date; we are waiting for some renovation work to be completed. Currently we are hoping it will be AFTER Christmas!

Pr. Serena Sellers: I note you have stepped back from some areas of leadership in the ELCA. Is this self-care, or is there some other reason?

Bp. Davenport: It is partially self-care, and partially intentional. In order to live into our goal of becoming newer, younger, and more diverse, we need to make room for other bishops of color, and to develop more leadership. When I have been in these meetings I have thought “there should be others. What about Bishop Curry, Bishop Ortiz, and Bishop Malpica?” We need to make room for others, so we live into the diversity we claim we want to have.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Vice President Beasley noted the minutes of the Executive Committee were included in the materials distributed for this meeting. Vice President Beasley noted that she accompanied Bishop Davenport to the installation of Dr. Erwin as the President of United Lutheran Seminary.

The Vice President Asked members to be sure to reply to the chairs of their respectively assigned committees. Each person on the Synod Council is also on a Synod Committee, and for the work of the church to be completed well, it is important that all reply in a timely fashion when contacted by their committee chairperson.

Vice President Beasley commented on the reality that there are many congregations in leadership transition. Since last meeting she held another Zoom conference with lay leaders. There were 30 participants, and about 90% of them were in congregations in transition. There is a lot of anger, and a lot of unhealthy feelings as we continue in the pandemic. She is aware there is a lot of frustration in our congregations, and she was glad to have a chance for lay leaders to meet without pastors present so they could speak freely and air their frustrations without concern. Please remember to pray for our pastors and leaders in this difficult time, but also pray for our congregations.

Bp. Davenport thanked Vice President Beasley for hosting this conversation, and said she is pleased that those who gathered felt supported. The lay leaders have said they would like to gather again for further conversation.

Mr. Glenn: Do you plan to have another session?
V.P. Beasley: Yes, I hope to offer one each month.

Agenda for 2022 Synod Assembly

Attention was then turned to consideration of the Agenda for the 2022 Synod Assembly. Ms. Beasley noted the document had been shared in the packet of materials. As it comes from the Executive Committee is comes as a motion. After a second, the Agenda was adopted as presented.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Richard's report began with consideration of a Synodical Appointment, Term Call to St. John, Hatboro. As part of the consideration of this call, the Synod Council entered **Executive Session**.

Results of the consideration in Executive Session:

S.C.21.12.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a two-year Term Call by Synodical Appointment at St. John, Hatboro, to the Reverend Stratford (Bo) Cuthbert Bannister, V, effective January 1, 2022, extending to December 31, 2023, under the Protocol for a Pastor Serving a Congregation under Synodical Appointment of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Actions on the Roster

Calls to Interim Ministry

S.C.21.12.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the **Rev. Gwendolyn King** to interim ministry at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (Havertown) beginning October 11, 2021, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor King resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

S.C.21.12.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the **Rev. Elaine Quincey** to interim ministry at St. Peter's Lutheran Church (Pottstown) beginning December 1, 2021, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Quincey resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Renewal of Term Call

S.C.21.12.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. David Bruner as Pastor of Adult Discipleship and Intergenerational Mission (PADM) at Paoli Presbyterian Church, Paoli, Pennsylvania. This renewable term call is effective January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. This call requires an annual report to and meeting with the synodical bishop for the length of this call.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Renewal of Call to Specialized Ministry

S.C.21.12.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a renewable call to Specialized Ministry to the **Rev. Margaret J. Ainslie** as Director of Pastoral Care at Doylestown Hospital beginning February 27, 2022, to February 26, 2023. This call requires an annual report to and meeting with the synodical bishop for the length of this call.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

On Leave from Call Requests

S.C.21.12.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Dr. William Flippin, first year, effective September 1, 2021.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

S.C.21.12.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend on leave from call status to the Rev. Susan K. Ericsson, first year, (disability) effective November 1, 2021.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Requests to move from Active Roster to Retired Roster

S.C.21.12.08. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Stephen A. Keiser, effective January 1, 2022

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

S.C.21.12.09. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend retired status to the Rev. Ronald P. Wesemann, effective January 1, 2022
The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Recording of email vote to extend call for Synod Staff position.

As part of the Actions on the Roster, Secretary Richard announced the results of the email vote to call Pr. Skylle Rea to be the Assistant to the Bishop, and includes the results here for the record.

On November 9 and 10, 2021, the SEPA Synod Council was asked to consider and vote on the following resolution:

S.C.21.12.10. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Stacey-Kyle Rea as Assistant to the Bishop for Youth and Young Adult Discipleship beginning December 1, 2021. This position is co-terminus with the synodical bishop.

The Synod Council replied with 26 yes, 0 no votes. The resolution is adopted.
Congratulations, Pastor Rea!

Information not requiring action

Death:

The Rev. Richard (Dick) Hess, October 24, 2021

Amendments to the Constitution of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Secretary Richard put before the Synod Council several resolutions to amend the Constitution of the Synod by adding and/or modifying various Continuing Resolutions. The first proposal deals with procedures for the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The proposed change sets a deadline for when submissions to Reference and Counsel may be received and still be presented for consideration at the Synod Assembly. The proposal is to set the deadline a week in advance of any one-day Assembly, in order to provide sufficient time for Reference and Counsel to do the necessary research to make appropriate recommendations to the Assembly regarding affirming, defeating, or referring the actions of a particular resolution. To that end, the Council was asked to consider the following:

S.C.21.12.11. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council adopt the following amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA regarding deadlines for submissions to Reference and Counsel:

Proposed additions are underlined, deletions are ~~struck through~~.

S7.32.A01. *The Synod Assembly shall be governed by the following Rules of Procedure:*

1. Rule Regarding Distribution

The distribution of any materials that do not come to the Assembly through regular reports, synod committees, agencies, institutions, or Synod Council must be approved by the Committee on Reference and Counsel. Therefore, no

materials may be distributed to the Assembly without the prior approval of Reference and Counsel.

2. Rule Regarding Resolutions Not Meeting the Deadline for Reference and Counsel

The assembly, by a two-thirds vote, may grant permission for consideration of a resolution that a voting member wishes to bring to the floor, but which has not met the imposed deadline of the Reference and Counsel Committee. If the assembly is one day, whether in person or virtual, any resolution not meeting the original deadline MUST be submitted one week prior to the assembly AND be granted permission for consideration by the two-thirds vote as indicated above. NO RESOLUTION WILL BE CONSIDERED PAST THIS DEADLINE.

4. Rules for Dealing with Memorials and/or Resolutions Submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel

- (1) The deadline for submitting memorials and/or resolutions to the Committee on Reference and Counsel shall be one month before the opening of the Synod Assembly.*
- (2) The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall publish all memorials and/or resolutions, submitted by the deadline, at the synod website no later than two weeks before the opening of the Synod Assembly.*
- (3) The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall make available to Synod Assembly voting members when they register at the Synod Assembly electronic copies ~~hard~~ ~~copies~~ of all memorials and/or resolutions, submitted to the committee by the deadline, and the committee's recommendations. For in person assemblies the committee will make available hard copies at the site.*

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

The next set of proposed amendments regard service in various capacities in the Synod. Secretary Richard noted that about five years ago the Executive Committee had proposed, and the Synod Council had concurred, that because of the level of responsibility, time commitment, and role of oversight in each of the following positions, one could serve either on Synod Council, as Dean of a Conference, or on Candidacy Committee, but not on more than one at a time. This has been reflected in the nomination letter each year. When this had been proposed, a set of continuing resolutions had also been drafted, but it appears that they were either not formally adopted, or if adopted, their adoption was not recorded. Secretary Richard brought these proposed amendments to the Council for adoption so that our Constitution and our practice are aligned. He pointed out that there are two proposed resolutions, which state the same thing, but which will be placed at two separate sections. The reason for this is to ensure they are easily accessible, as one who has a question about nominations may not think to check the section about the deans, and one who is interested in the parameters of a dean may not think to look also in the section regarding nominations. The following was placed before the Council:

S.C.21.12.12. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council adopt the following additions to the Constitution, bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA:

S9.08.01.A21. No person may serve concurrently in more than one of the following positions in this synod: member of the Synod Council, dean of a conference, and member of the Candidacy Committee. Election or appointment to one of these positions shall constitute resignation from the others.

S12.01.11.A21. No person may serve concurrently in more than one of the following positions in this synod: member of the Synod Council, dean of a conference, and member of the Candidacy Committee. Election or appointment to one of these positions shall constitute resignation from the others.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

Affirmation of Board Members for Liberty Lutheran Services

We have received a request from Dr. Luanne Fisher, President and CEO of Liberty Lutheran Services, that the SEPA Synod Council affirm the election of members of that board for a second term, consistent with their practice and the bylaws of that organization. These persons were elected by the Liberty Lutheran Board at its September 21, 2021, meeting. To that end, Secretary Richard put before the Synod Council the following resolution:

S.C.21.12.13. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the following people to serve on the Board of Directors of Liberty Lutheran Services: Beverly Bortz - *Christ's Lutheran, Orland*, Paul Engstrom - *Christ's Lutheran, Oreland*, Robert Keddie - *Gloria Dei Lutheran, Huntingdon Valley*, David Stettler - *St. Peter's Lutheran-Lafayette Hill*, and Evan Speece - *St. John Lutheran, Blue Bell*.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Bert Glenn: I do not understand why we would need to do this. If it is their board, and they have voted for these people, what is our role in this? Are we giving a Synodical imprimatur without much information or background?

Pr. John Heidgerd: I have a similar feeling to what Mr. Glenn has. What level of vetting do we do of these candidates that would warrant our affirming them?

Pr. Serena Sellers: I believe it is an historical vestige of when the Social Ministry Organizations and the Synod were more closely tied, and we provided more financial support than we do now. As these are supposed to be active members of our congregations, this is more like reading the banns at a wedding. "If anyone has reason to object" is the basic point, to ensure that these people are indeed members in good standing of one of our congregations.

Pr. Heidgerd: Do we know if they are members in good standing?

Vice President Beasley: I also have a problem affirming people that I know nothing about. Also, I do not know of boards where you have more than one person from the same congregation serving at the same time. And I wonder about people of color or language other than English; is there such representation on this board? Do we have a say in this?

Secretary Richard: What I shared with Vice President Beasley is similar to what Pr. Sellers has said. I did not have time to get a copy of their constitution prior to this meeting, and so I do not know the specifics of the relationship. One thing I am curious about is that we recently made significant changes to the description of the relationship between the Social Ministry Organizations and the Synod, and I am not sure what our ties are anymore. I had sent the proposed revisions to each of the SMOs, asking for feedback in light of current understandings and arrangements. It is my understanding that these relationships have been formally severed, due in large part to state requirements for funding streams, and that our relationship is, as Pr. Sellers noted, more historical in nature.

Dr. Luanne Fisher has indicated that their constitution calls for the Synod Council to affirm these members. I do not know if that is still needed, but according to their documents it is still a part of the process. If we still have a role to play in approving board members, we may need to revise our recent amendments.

Bishop Davenport: We do the same thing with the United Lutheran Seminary, and so, as Pr. Sellers said, it is just a part of what we have done.

V.P. Beasley: Why do we do this with some, and not with others? We do not have this provision at Lutheran Settlement House.

Bp. Davenport: It depends on their constitution.

Sect. Richard: It may be that Lutheran Settlement House has updated its constitution more recently than Liberty Lutheran Services.

Pr. Heidgerd: Bishop, is it the same with the Seminary as it is with Liberty Lutheran? It is my recollection that with the Seminary, the Synod has a role to review and recommend candidates to the Board, rather than ratify persons others have nominated.

Sect. Richard: It is a different process with the Seminary. It is my sense that the process was different when we had a closer tie with our SMOs, providing both more money and more people. Still, I do not remember ever vetting candidates to their boards. It was a method for the Social Ministry Organizations to let us know who the persons are that are serving, so that we could be aware of our connections with the SMO, and so if we wanted to know what was happening at the organization, we had board member with whom we have a contact.

Pr. Heidgerd: It is, however, a liability issue. If we approve their board members and there is some misconduct, then we are open to liability. I think there is a good reason for us not to approve this.

Mr. Glenn: I agree with Pr. Heidgerd with the liability concern. Could we do something less than approve, and perhaps acknowledge receipt of their action to seat these board members?

Sect. Richard: I am sympathetic to that. "Affirm" is different than "approve." Do I sense "affirm" is still too strong for your comfort?

Pr. Heidgerd: Yes. I think we should turn this back, and say we do not affirm, and let them deal with whatever constitutional issues this raises for them.

Mr. Glenn: We also want to be clear that we are not *dis*-approving them, or claiming that these are not good people. We just do not see the need for us to have a role in their placement.

Pr. Sellers: I understand the desire not to approve, and the liability concerns expressed. I also have more knowledge than most of the historic, supportive, and wonderful relationships we have with our SMOs, and while they may need to change their constitutions, I like Mr. Glenn's suggestion that we acknowledge receipt and recommend that they adjust their constitution so that they no longer require Synod Council approval. This is kinder than saying "no, we do not approve; do what you have to do." This feels a bit disrespectful of the truly supportive and good relationship we as a Synod have had with Liberty Lutheran over the years.

Pr. Nathan Krause: I also worry that receiving this and turning it back would be disrespectful of a partner in ministry, and may give the impression that we no longer want to have a relationship. It may convey, "We no longer care about the work you do." Instead, I think we should be saying the opposite. We do care about this relationship, and we want to increase our involvement in what you are doing. For instance, The Manor at Yorktown is next to the congregation I serve, and when Liberty Lutheran bought it, they never even thought to make contact with the local congregation, asking how we can partner. The problem is we are having less of a tie than we should have. I do not understand why this is an issue.

V.P. Beasley: I do not think we are saying we want to reject this, but that we need to change the wording. How can we affirm, when we know nothing about the candidates? Can we change this wording?

Sect. Richard: I have concerns, as do Pastors Sellers and Krause, of what this says to our ministry partner. As for changing the wording, I believe "affirm" is the wording in their by-laws, and so we would not be able change that word. My preference would be to acknowledge that we have received this, and before we affirm this, we would like to have more information as to what their process is, what their documents say, and why it is important for us to affirm board members.

Pr. Gwendolyn King: I am much more comfortable with an acknowledgement of receipt than I am with an affirmation, especially in light of our commitment as a Synod to inclusion of persons of color, persons whose primary language is other than English, and LGBTQIA persons. We have statements that respond to that, and I do not know where Liberty Lutheran stands on this. They likely hold similar commitments, but until I know, I am uncomfortable with a vote of affirmation. It is not just about what they do, but how that work is carried out.

Pr. Joseph Klinger: Do they need this affirmation right away? Can we table this and get the information we need, and consider this at our next meeting?

Sect. Richard: This would be an option. They are already appointed, and have been serving since September, and so I would presume we can wait on this.

Pr. Klinger: could we also ask that they be the Mission Moment, so that we can hear directly what it is that they do?

V.P. Beasley: Yes, we can do this.

Bp. Davenport: I am all about maintaining relationship. I have been around long enough to know that this is not just rubber stamping. It is about relationships. Some of the choices before us would give the impression that we no longer care about this relationship, and so I agree with Pr. Klinger that we table this, and seek more information and understanding.

Mr. Everett Wick: Merely approving their board members seems to be just a formality. A relationship doesn't depend on approving or not their members. Other actions, such as inviting them into our meeting, will do more to build the ties. I am in favor of tabling until we have more information.

Pr. Krause: Will we continue to cut ties? We recently approved action of the Bear Creek Board. How is this different?

Pr. Heidgerd: Let me clarify my position. My comments were not to cut ties, but to remove formalities that expose us to liabilities we do not need.

Mr. Adam Clark: With regard to the issue of Bear Creek, there was an issue of eminent domain, and if we did not endorse, the pipeline would have won anyway, and we would not have received anything from the transaction. We had no other real choice.

Pr. Krause: Just a different type of liability.

Pr. Sellers: We are not talking about beginning, or ending, a relationship. We are *in* a relationship, and I do not want to see us damage a relationship we already have.

Sect. Richard: We have different relationships with each of these institutions: the seminary, the camp, and each of the SMOs. As there are unique aspects to each of these relationships, perhaps it would be best to table this until we can gather more information.

Pr. Klinger: I move we table this until the next meeting, and that in the meantime we gather more information, and invite a representative from Liberty Lutheran join us for our next meeting.

The Synod Council approved the motion, and the resolution is TABLED.

2022 Housing Allowances for Rostered Ministers on Synod Staff

The housing allowances for the staff were shared in the information sent to the Synod Council. Secretary Richard put forward the following resolution to affirm the allowances to fulfill provisions in the tax code.

S.C.21.12.14. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the 2022 housing allowance for Bishop Patricia Davenport, Pastor Robert Fisher, Pastor Violet Little, Pastor Stacey-Kyle Rea, 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 adopted the resolution.

Resolution from the Reconciling in Christ Task Force

Secretary Richard shared that the following resolution comes from the Task Force, and was received Monday. Some time was needed to gain some understanding of what is being proposed, and so the Synod Council did not receive this item until late in the week.

He read the background to the Council, as all may not have had time to see it. The desire of the Task Force is to enact new provisions that have been adopted by ReconcilingWorks for those congregations and synods who have been granted status as Reconciling in Christ organizations. SEPA Synod had been recognized back in 1995, and there have been changes to the expectations of ReconcilingWorks since then which we have not yet implemented. To that end, the Task Force brings the following resolution to the Synod Council for comment, so that if there are revisions to be adopted, they can be completed in time for presentation to the Synod Assembly. Ms. Gail Penman, a member of the Synod Council, is also a member of the Task Force.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adopt the following welcome statement:

We, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA, rooted in Jesus' gospel of liberation, unconditional love, and hospitality, welcome all into fellowship and community. This welcome includes those who have traditionally been marginalized in society inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, physical or mental ability, or station in life. As God's beloved, we are committed to the work of racial equity and to the pursuit of justice in our communities. We encourage all of our congregations to this work of the gospel, creating safe spaces for their members to bravely be their full selves. We celebrate and affirm all of God's children just as they are with all of their differences and gifts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod provide annual financial support to ReconcilingWorks, as required by ReconcilingWorks guidelines;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod commit to providing resources and equipping programs for congregations and leaders throughout the synod, to financially support these initiatives, and to regularly evaluate the inclusivity of the ministries of the synod;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above resourcing, equipping, and evaluating be done through the creation of an Inclusive Communities Committee at the synodical level.

Respectfully Submitted,

The SEPA Reconciling in Christ Task Force,

The Rev. Alina S. Gayeuski and The Rev. Jay C. Mitchell, Co-Chairs

Pr. King shared her appreciation for the work of the Task Force. She expressed her desire to not undermine the work done, but she has many concerns regarding the wording of the Welcome Statement. If this is to be a truly welcoming statement, then each of the “categories” listed could use expansion. She said she has many suggestions.

Pr. King stated that some of the areas that could use strengthening are in the area of being the Beloved Community, welcoming people of color and all ethnic and racial backgrounds. We should also encourage all our congregations to embrace the work of the Gospel by welcoming the stranger.

If this is not the appropriate time, is it possible to share her concerns and suggestions with Ms. Penman to take to the Task Force?

Ms. Penman said that she and the team would welcome any and all suggestions for consideration.

Mr. Glenn shared that he is fully supportive of the direction you are taking, but as the chair of the Finance Committee, what financial support are we being asked to commit to this? It is important to know, as we are building the budget for presentation at the Assembly.

Ms. Penman shared that there is no explicit number, just an encouragement to lend financial support.

Mr. Glenn stated that it would be most helpful to have a number suggested for inclusion in the budgeting process.

Bp. Davenport noted that the ReconcilingWorks website suggests \$50 per individuals, \$75 for organizations, and \$1,000 for a lifetime gift.

There was also some questioning regarding the make-up and expenses associated with the establishment of the proposed Inclusive Communities Committee.

Pr. Sellers shared that we, and the Task Force, recognize there is a need for revision, and further discussion would be better done after revisions can be made from this input.

Sect. Richard agreed, noting that the Task Force was not asking for action at this meeting. They are seeking input, so that a refined resolution can be submitted next meeting to garner Synod Council's affirmation prior to the Assembly.

Constitution Committee

The Reverend Gary Costa, chair of the Constitution Committee, stated that the Committee is working with six congregations that are revising and updating their constitutions. Of these six, there are two congregations whose constitutions have been reviewed, and are ready to be approved by the Synod Council. These include Church of the Trinity, Fairview Village, and Grace, Royersford. He moved that the Council adopt the following resolution:

S.C.20.12.15. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the changes to the constitutions of Church of the Trinity, Fairview Village, and Grace, Royersford.

The Synod Council adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, felt unwell and needed to leave the meeting early, so Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant for the Synod, asked if anyone had questions about her written report. He also shared that we are doing well, with unrestricted investments approximately double what we had budgeted. This is due to the performance of our investment funds, and receipts from the sale of the property of the former Grace, Norristown, and because our expenses continue to be lower in the ongoing pandemic.

Mr. Bert Glenn, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, presented his report.

The Committee met in November and reviewed the role of the committee with the new members. The Committee also reviewed the financial reports and found no issues or irregularities.

The Finance Committee was informed that the Fund for Mission Trustees had met, and authorized a grant of \$15,000 to Grace, Broomall, to supplement a mission pastor. This is a partnership with Temple, Havertown.

The Committee learned of the action of the Executive Committee to form a team to review the Fund for Mission Guidelines. The Finance Committee wonders if there should also be discussion of policies and procedures for other funds the Synod holds. Among these funds are St. Petri-Hope money, targeted for congregations in NE Philadelphia, a fund received from the former Grace, Norristown, designated for congregations in Montgomery County, and the Fisher Trust, to assist congregations in Bucks County with building/property issues.

Would it be good to have the Synod Council set some protocols for these funds? Unlike the Fund for Mission and Forward Together in Faith funds, it does not appear as though there are clear parameters for their usage.

Bp. Davenport noted that we need to have flexibility to access funds, but that does not mean there should not be any oversight.

Pr. Sellers noted that some Conferences have more structure than others. Consideration of such structures may be helpful in considering the allocation of such funds.

Sect. Richard shared that the Task Force to review the Fund for Mission Guidelines is schedule to meet on January 11, 2022.

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Pr. John Heidgerd, Chairperson of the Investment Committee, shared the report.

A meeting has not yet been called, but Pr. Heidgerd has been reviewing the investments. We have nearly \$11 million in assets under management, including \$550,000 added from the former Grace, Norristown.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Pr. Joseph Klinger noted that responses have been slow to the open seats available. Please be intentional in considering, and inviting, people to be placed in nomination. We are looking to be intentional in seeking persons of color, primary language other than English, and LGBTQ persons.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. with prayer by Pr. Stacey-Kyle Rea

The next meeting of the SEPA Synod Council will be February 17, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., and will be held via Zoom.

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

Approved by Synod Council February 17, 2022

MINUTES
of the 169th MEETING
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Zoom Meeting
February 17, 2022
6:00 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley welcomed the Synod Council at 6:00 p.m. and invited the Reverend Serena Sellers to lead the Council in devotions.

Pr. Sellers shared a screen with several words for the Council to see. She asked which one resonates most for you as the Work of the Church?

Evangelism, Gospel, Relationship

Mission, Spirituality, Service

Stewardship, Faith, Discipleship

Council members were encouraged to share their word in the chat feature of Zoom.

Pr. Sellers used as a focus of her reflections the words of Psalm 91:

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, My refuge and my fortress; my God in whom I trust.” ...

Because you have made the Lord your refuge ... no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

The words of this psalm bring comfort to many of us, but they may be heard differently by the people with whom Pr. Sellers works in Philadelphia and her efforts with Sanctuary Village. She shared the testimony of two people who have no shelter, and their experience living without a home.

One person, a woman, described life as one of danger: of rape, of theft of the few things you have, of violence. Another person said when you become homeless you lose any identity. You lose all of who you were, and you cease to exist.

“Because you have made the Lord your shelter, no evil shall befall you.” Is this true? If shared with those living on the street, would they believe it? Would they feel protected? What role do we, as the Church, have to do to make these words real for those without a home?

The second person shared that when you live on the street you go into survival mode. You go into a kind of shock. You need someone to walk alongside you and show you a way out. The Welcome Church helped them find this way out. I am bi-racial; both native American and Black. I am also 3rd gender, part of the transgender community, feeling both man and woman, but they did not make me feel judged. They showed me love.

The Church is making the word of God true. And this is our task. Whatever word you use to describe it, this is what the church is about. Pr. Sellers closed with prayer that we might live into the faith given to us, and that we might reveal the truth of God’s word wherever we go, and in all we do.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 169th meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 6:19 p.m.

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, confirmed a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the 168th Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved with one addition: on page 15, Report of the Treasurer and Finance Committee, “unrestricted investments approximately double what we had budgeted.”

SETTING THE AGENDA

Vice President Beasley noted that the Forward Together in Faith Team submitted a written report, and will not need time to present. We will move the report of the Reconciling in Christ Task Force to follow the Mission Moment.

The agenda was approved as amended.

MISSION MOMENT

Vice President Beasley welcomed Dr. Luanne Fisher, President and CEO of Liberty Lutheran Services, to present the Mission Moment. The Synod Council had requested the opportunity to hear from Dr. Fisher. At the December meeting the Council was asked to consider affirming members of the board of Liberty Lutheran Services, and many members had questions regarding our relationship with Liberty, and our role in affirming its board. Vice President Beasley noted that she was yielding much, if not all, of her time as there is much Dr. Fisher wishes to share with the Council.

Dr. Fisher began by sharing that she has been involved in Lutheran Social Ministry for many years. She began on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday back in 1977, when it was not yet a holiday, and she began at the Germantown Lutheran Home back when it was still "Lutheran."

She came to tell the Synod Council about Liberty Lutheran Services. With much to share, she used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the highlights.

There are four outcomes she has for tonight's presentation:

- Share overall information about Liberty Lutheran Services
- Share ELCA Guidelines and Liberty Lutheran Services bylaws
- Receive affirmation for Liberty Lutheran Board members
- Receive affirmation for Liberty Lutheran Board members serving on the Illumin Board

Affiliation:

The ELCA has two different levels of affiliation. Category 1 is the stronger of the two. In Category 1 affiliation 51% of board members need to be Lutheran. Liberty Lutheran Services has been Category 1 for many years.

Liability:

Even with this higher level of affiliation, Category 1 Social Ministry organizations are responsible for their own operation. As shown in Liberty Lutheran's bylaws, neither the ELCA nor the Synod is responsible for any debts or issues involved with the operation of the organization.

Qualifications of Directors (Board members):

In selecting members, the concern is first and foremost what skills does the person bring to the team. We try to be balanced in age. We consider the person's experience. We consider the diversity of candidates, and their community activities. 51% must be Lutheran, members of either the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. The Missouri Synod would like there to be 30% membership that is LCMS, but this has not been possible, as there are not many LCMS congregations in this area. The Lutheran members of the

Board must be affirmed by the SEPA Synod of the ELCA, or Eastern District of the LCMS, as appropriate.

This affirmation has not come before the Synod Council for some time because thirteen or fourteen years ago a change was made to Liberty Lutheran Services bylaws, extending the number of three-year terms one might serve from three (3) to six (6), and as a result we have not had new members to bring before the Synod Council for affirmation. When a person has been reelected to a successive term that person has not been submitted to the Synod Council, as they had already been previously affirmed.

Mission:

A member of the Synod Council, Pastor Jenn Phelps, has previously served at Liberty Lutheran, and was instrumental in crafting our mission statement:

“Liberty Lutheran faithfully accompanies individuals and families facing life-changing situations through an empowering approach honoring the well-being and choices of older adults.”

“Faithfully accompanying” is a Lutheran principle that is the basis of this mission.

The organizations under the Liberty umbrella include:

Artman Lutheran Home, Paul’s Run, The Hearth at Drexel (Mary J. Drexel Home) The Village at Penn State, The Manor at Yorktown, The Becoming Center, Liberty at Home, Lutheran Children and Family Services, Lutheran Congregational Services, and the Liberty Lutheran Foundation.

History:

Liberty Lutheran Services was established twenty-one years ago. We have over 1,100 employees. We serve in the 14 counties of Northeast Pennsylvania Synod and the 5 counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Our organizations are much older than Liberty Lutheran Services is. The Hearth, formerly known as Mary J. Drexel Home, was incorporated in 1887. Each organization has a deep history and identity, with roots in our Lutheran tradition.

Our vision:

“That God’s creative and redeeming love in Christ is being lived out in our ministry with those who are in need, so that relationships based on justice, mercy, health, and wholeness are being strengthened among those who need to be lifted up and those who are led to share their gifts.”

We place a high emphasis on our staff, and when we have training, we focus not just on what it is to be Lutheran, but that Jesus was all about relationships. That is what we focus on in our work.

Board membership make-up

The Board is 32% women, 68% men. 11% are people of color.

Religious affiliation: 16% are not Lutheran, 72% are ELCA, 11% are LCMS

Two congregations have more than one member on the board. They are Christ, Oreland, and Upper Dublin, Ambler. There are strong historical ties to both of these congregations, and they have been very involved in the work of Liberty Lutheran Services for many years, organizing significant fundraisers and other programs in support of our mission.

Support for Liberty Lutheran includes:

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod	\$ 54,052 (congregations and synod)
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod	\$107,616 (congregations and synod, plus trust gift)
ELCA donations Response)	\$114,411 (much for support of Lutheran Disaster Response)

Liberty Lutheran is the designated agency for LDR in this area. There have been numerous times when LDR has responded to hurricanes and floods in this region.

Liberty Lutheran also provides lay Eucharistic Visitor Training and Bereavement Ministry.

Our strategic intent:

“To create a world-class, multi-service organization which will be a leader and model for how faith-based communities can develop and provide quality services.”

Within this intent, we do not focus our branding on “Liberty Lutheran Services.” We focus on our specific ministries, such as Paul’s Run or The Hearth, highlighting the local and specific ministry of each.

What can you expect from Liberty?

First and foremost, transparency. We want you to know what is going on in our organization.

We do this through communication to our employees, our board, and our constituents.

We are consistent with Lutheran values, which means we are about serving our community, we are about love for our neighbors, we are about being a bridge organization. That is evidenced in our bridge identity with support from both the ELCA and the LCMS, but we are bridge to different constituencies. We are ecumenical. We serve the church and the world. We serve old people and young people. We make the connections that need to be made to care for those who need care. We have the Lutheran understanding of seeing work as vocation

We want to be seen as a world class organization, which means we strive for excellence in Internal Customer Satisfaction, caring for our staff with integrity; excellence in External Customer Satisfaction, being sure we are providing exceptional care to those we serve; excellence in innovation; excellence in financial position; and excellence as a faith-based organization.

Executive Team – Diversity

Our Executive Team has more diversity than our Board. The Executive Team is the leaders of the organization. Where the Board is 11% persons of color, the Executive Team is 23%. The Executive Team is also 69% female, 31% male. We have a long history of promoting women, and we ensure they are paid equally with the men.

New Affiliation Possibility

We are exploring the possibility of affiliating with Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries, and with Garden Spot, a Mennonite affiliated ministry. The new organization has not received all necessary approvals yet. If it goes through, it will be called “Illumin.” The Mission Statement will be, “We will create authentic community, guided by the way of Christ, where all people are encouraged and supported to live lives of purpose and impact.”

The bylaws will be very similar to those of Liberty. We will continue to be a Category 1 affiliated organization, and there will be no liability on the part of the Synod or the ELCA for the operation of Illumin.

Recommended Board members to Illumin from the Liberty Lutheran Services Board include: Pr. Fred Hopke, St. Paul's, Glenside; Mr. Frank Roth, St. Paul's, Ardmore; Mr. Evan Speece, St. John's. Blue Bell; Mr. David Stettler, St. Peter's, Lafayette Hills; and Ms. Pam Steitz, Upper Dublin Lutheran, Ambler.

Dr. Fisher then asked for questions or comments.

The Rev. Dr. Jenn Phelps asked about the anticipated timeline for the new "Illumin" venture. Dr. Fisher: we are not sure. We are oping by June, but there are things that need to go through the office of the State Attorney General.

As a result, the Synod Council does not need to act on these Board recommendations if the Council would prefer to wait. It can happen after we receive formal approval.

Pr. Phelps: Will the new venture change much of how things operate locally, or will things continue as they are, but under a different banner?

Dr. Fisher: I do not anticipate it changing much locally, but we cannot fully know at this time. Certainly, our local agencies will continue, and so those connections will remain.

Pr. Sellers: I know you have diversity information in what you presented to us. Is there any consideration of gender diversity in either hiring, or Board leadership, or other organizational leadership?

Dr. Fisher: we have many women in our leadership, in that we have more men on our board, but more women in organizational leadership. I think we are pretty good at including gender diversity across the organization.

Pr. Sellers: My question is really more if there is any LGBTQIA representation.

Dr. Fisher: We specifically sought out a person who is gay to serve, but after six months, she said she wasn't comfortable serving on a board where she was the only gay person. We have not actively sought out LGBT persons of late. We do realize our board has gotten older, and so we are focused on getting people who are younger. For instance, Fred Hopke, our Board chair, is 80 years old. We are most specifically seeking people in their 40s or younger.

Pr. Gwendolyn King: Thank you for being with us and sharing this information with us. How far back does the affirmation by Synod Council of Liberty's Board selections go? Is it part of the past, and part of the tradition, or is it because you are 51% Lutheran? Can you give some clarity for us in that process?

Dr. Fisher: The affirmation of Board members by the Synod Council is an ELCA rule. It is what the ELCA expects of us as a Category 1 affiliated organization. By the way, the LCMS has the same rule. When we have a new board member, we need to have them affirmed by the Council or the District. I do not send a name to you if it is a re-election, as the Synod Council has already affirmed that person. As a result, you have not been asked to affirm people for a while, as there have been no brand-new members for some time.

Ms. Emily Fowler: Building on Pr. Sellers question about LGBTQIA participation, do you have any plans to increase this diversity? Do you help people who are LGBTQIA? Are there any struggles you are experiencing when you are helping people of that orientation?

Dr. Fisher: In all our communities we have people who are LGBTQIA. I have been in conversation with a group of LGBTQIA women about helping them to start a community. We have sometimes heard from people who do not wish to be in a community that does not have LGBTQIA people, and they would be more comfortable together. I believe we are open to helping all people who come to us. We do not have a specific plan, but we actively work to care for all people, regardless of their orientation.

Pr. Sellers: Would it be helpful to you if the Synod Council is aware of people with your desired competencies to make suggestions of who might serve, and if so, how might this best happen?

Dr. Fisher: We would welcome that. We begin in the Spring to consider candidates for the fall elections. We currently have four people whose terms are ending. We would be open to your suggestions. Is there a mechanism from your end that would be best? Who might be the best contact person?

Vice President Beasley: I can be that contact person. I have names who have already come to my mind that I can suggest to you, so you may use me as that contact.

Pr. King: Do your bylaws have a percentage of persons on the board that should be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English?

Dr. Fisher: No, we do not have a set percentage.

Pr. King: I ask because the Synod and the ELCA look to that kind of direction, and so how do you move forward in that direction if there is no "requirement" to do so?

Dr. Fisher: It only moves in that direction if we choose to move in that direction. The ELCA has not required this of us. But as I have said, we have tried on several occasions to bring other folks in, even though it has not had the outcome we had hoped. I am grateful to have the input of Vice President Beasley to assist us in this effort.

Mr. Richard Daniels: With regard to "Illumin," will each of the three organizations retain their prior independence? Or is this a merger into a new organization, with the three prior organizations ceasing to exist?

Dr. Fisher: It is neither one. It is an affiliation with the three organizations coming together with a parent over all three organizations.

Mr. Daniels: How does that help the three organizations?

Dr. Fisher: For one, it provides more career opportunities for staff. People can be trained to move from one part of the organization to another. Another is economy of scale, as we can reduce redundant expenses. We will be able to serve more people in different areas. For instance, the ministries in Allegheny are among people in some of the poorest regions in the state, and they will then have access to more resources to make a greater impact.

Pr. Phelps: Beyond leadership and board members, how can congregations be supportive of the work of Liberty Lutheran?

Dr. Fisher: They can volunteer. We strive to be local, so we can use local help. For instance, when we bought the Manor at Yorktown in 2018, I knocked on the door of Redeemer Jamison, and said, “we are here, what can we do together to help the community?” We can use volunteers for the work of LDR. Many congregations are already helping with the “mud buckets” and other aspects of this work.

Vice President Beasley thanked Dr. Fisher for her presentation, as Dr. Fisher took her leave from the meeting.

Vice President Beasley stated she believed the majority of the questions raised in December by the Synod Council had been addressed by Dr. Fisher’s presentation. Are there any further questions or points that anyone wishes to raise?

Pr. Sellers: I am pleased that Liberty Lutheran has chosen to be more affiliated than less so with the Synod. And knowing that the rule of approval is one that comes from the Lutheran Services in America and not this individual organization, and is not easily changed for them, makes it easier for me to say yes, we can affirm the board members they have put forward. But it also creates an opportunity for us to offer names and encourage greater diversity on their board.

Mr. Bert Glenn: I concur with Pr. Sellers, and believe that using “affirm” rather than “approve” is more helpful language for us.

VP Beasley: I believe “affirm” is the language we have before us. Am I correct, Secretary Richard?

Sect. Richard: Yes, the language says “affirm.”

Pr. King **MOVED that the Synod Council bring back from the table the resolution from the December 2021 meeting for consideration.**

Following a second by Pr. Sellers, the motion **PASSED**, and the following resolution was brought for consideration:

S.C.22.02.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the following people to serve on the Board of Directors of Liberty Lutheran Services: Beverly Bortz-Christ’s Lutheran, Orland, Paul Engstrom-Christ’s Lutheran, Oreland, Robert Keddie-Gloria Dei Lutheran, Huntingdon Valley, David Stettler-St. Peter’s Lutheran-Lafayette Hill, and Evan Speece-St. John Lutheran, Blue Bell.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Reconciling in Christ Task Force

Pastor Alina Gayeuski and Pastor Jay Mitchell, co-chairs of the Task Force, were present to address questions that had been raised by the Synod Council at its December 2021 meeting, and to present the current, refined resolution to the Synod Council.

Pr. Mitchell began the presentation.

You received the report last meeting. There were three questions that came to us since then.

1. How much support should the Synod provide for ReconcilingWorks
2. Questions regarding the wording of the Welcome Statement

3. Questions regarding the makeup of the Inclusive Communities Committee that would be created to assist the Synod in living into the Welcome Statement.

We tried to address these in our revised report, and we are happy to answer questions today. As for the first question, we did not put an exact number in the resolution, as we wanted the Synod to have flexibility in this matter. If in any given year the Synod can give more, that is great, if the Synod has to scale back that may also be the case. We do suggest \$2,500 as what seems to us a fair “synodical” level of support. Still, this is a suggestion. We recognize it is the role of the Synod Council to determine this amount.

As for the second question, there were questions about language which we have tried to address. In the 5th “Whereas” we have clarified that the designation of Reconciling in Christ was achieved by action of the Assembly in 1995. At that time the only action needed was to say we wanted to do this, and that was the action taken.

There were some questions raised regarding language within the Welcome Statement itself, particularly concerning racial language and inclusion of marginalized people. We as the task force agree with the concerns, and realized after it was raised that we had not, in fact, included such language when we thought that we had.

We took the suggestions, some specific, some more general, and considered them, and the needs of the statement from the perspective of ReconcilingWorks, and we have included edits to the statement. We are trying to have this statement as concise as possible so that it can be posted and read quickly without it being an extended thesis paper.

The last question regarded the final resolved of the motion, asking for clarification of this Committee. We have added an addendum to the proposal which outlines what this committee would do, and how it might function. It will oversee the implementation of the Welcome Statement, in part by coordinating the various offerings we have already in place, such as the In God’s Image Event and the Pride event that occurs in the Spring, as well as other events that we would like to implement for the Synod. We will be better able to plan if we have authorization and a budget line with which to work.

The process to move forward is to request the Synod Council to endorse this resolution, and then have it presented to the Assembly, if Council concurs.

Mr. Graeme Brown: the 3rd whereas reads “the ministry of Jesus and committed to his disciples.” Should that read “the ministry of Jesus and commitment to his disciples?”

Pr. Mitchell: the language there is talking about the ministry of Jesus, and the *ministry* is committed to the disciples.

Pr. Sellers: Would this be an appropriate time to offer suggested edits?

Pr. Gayeuski: Yes, we would welcome them so we can have this acted on.

Pr. King: First, thank you for your work. Your timeline was helpful for me to get a sense of how long you have been working, and your goals in this process. I have some suggestions that I hope will be viewed as “friendly amendments,” that I feel will strengthen the Resolution.

In the Welcome Statement, where it says “inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, racial or ethnic background, physical or mental ability, or station in life,” I would like to change the “or”s to “and”s. The reason for “and” is to recognize the intersectionality of those particular aspects, rather than an either/or relationship between them.

Pr. Mitchell welcomed this as a friendly amendment.

Pr. King: Then further down in the document, where it says “We encourage all of our congregations to this work of the gospel, creating safe spaces for their members to bravely be their full selves...” I propose “We encourage all our congregations to” then add the word “engage” “in this work of the gospel, creating safe spaces for” then strike ~~their members~~ and insert “all people” “to bravely be their full selves.” This makes it broader, by moving beyond the congregations to include all people. You had mentioned above that it is to welcome all into fellowship, and this would make a more consistent statement. I suggest “engage in” because we want people to actually be involved in this work.

Pr. Mitchell: I do see this as a friendly amendment, including the word “engage,” but to give background, we crafted this resolution recognizing that it is needed for the sake of those who have been marginalized, and often hurt, by the church. We did not want to overcommit congregations to anything. As a statement of the Synod, this statement says that at the Synodical level, at Synodical events, meetings, and gatherings, all are welcome and can expect to be treated as so. But we cannot make that happen at the congregational level. We can, as a Synod, say what we will do as a Synod. To give the impression that what we say has thereby made every congregation a safe place is beyond what we can promise in this statement.

Pr. King: I understand, but the line is stating that we encourage our congregations to engage in this work. The congregations do not have to follow through, but I believe we are able to say we encourage them to do this work.

Pr. Mitchell: I believe we can encourage them, but I am describing why we went from “all people” to members, as we do not have full control over how far this can be implemented. The Council can choose what language it wishes; I am simply describing the reasoning behind our choices.

Pr. King: My final suggestion is a small word change, in the sentence above the one we have been discussing, “we are guided by the Holy Spirit, committed to the work of racial equity, called to the pursuit of racial justice in our communities.” I would propose “throughout our communities.” I am seeing “throughout” as a way to, again, broaden the statement.

Pr. Gayeuski: Thank you Pastor King, I have made those changes and posted them in the chat. Please check if they match what you have proposed.

VP Beasley: As we make these changes, I just want to be sure that Brother Brown’s question has been fully addressed.

Pr. Mitchell: I agree, and we want to be sure to catch these concerns.

Pr. Sellers: I also want to be sure we address the concern of Mr. Brown in the 3rd whereas, and here is my suggestion if this fits with what you intend:
“Whereas the ministry of Jesus and his disciples is centered on the marginalized, welcoming the outcast...”

Pr. Mitchell: we could remove “committed to” and it may be more clear. The focus is on the ministry being Jesus’s, and Jesus committing it to his disciples, in order to center on the marginalized, etc.

Without the “committed to” it would read,
“WHEREAS, the ministry of Jesus and ~~committed to~~ his disciples is to center the marginalized, welcome the outcast, and love all people,”

Pr. Sellers: That makes much more sense.

Sect. Richard: I have a few questions for clarification, if I may. The first: Am I correct in assuming this change to the third whereas is a friendly amendment, so no vote is needed?

Pr. Mitchell: yes, we are fine with this.

Sect. Richard: Second, we are in agreement with the first proposal to change “or” to “and?”

Pr. Mitchell: correct

Pr. King: with the appropriate changes to the grammar that this will necessitate.

Sect. Richard: Are we OK with the change of “in” to “throughout?”

Pr. Mitchell: yes

Sect. Richard: then the only one in which I sense a question is the one to add “engage in” and change “members” to “all people.” While Pr. Mitchell has indicated a willingness to go along with what Synod Council feels on this, if this is something that the Task Force approves, it is a friendly amendment, which does not need our action. If it is “whatever the Council chooses,” then we need to vote on whether we agree with the language Pr. King proposes, as she does not yet speak for all of us.

Pr. Mitchell and Pr. Gayeuski agreed that this also is a friendly amendment.

Sec. Richard: Vice President, those were my questions, and the document as amended is ready for action, if there are no more amendments.

VP Beasley: It is fine to go forward.

Pr. King asked if we need to bring this from the table for consideration.

Sect. Richard: We do not need to bring this from the table. At the last meeting it was brought for our input and comment, not for our action, and so the proposed resolution as amended is what is now before us.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, we are encouraged by the prophecy of Micah to “Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8);

And WHEREAS, we are taught in Paul’s letter to the Galatians that “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28);

And WHEREAS, the ministry of Jesus and his disciples is to center the marginalized, welcome the outcast, and love all people;

And WHEREAS, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod is committed to living into our discipleship by providing a welcome rooted in God’s welcome to all people and by advocating for the vulnerable;

And WHEREAS, one way that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod has sought to offer this welcome has been through our designation as a Reconciling in Christ (RiC) Synod which was achieved by the Synod met in Assembly in 1995;

And WHEREAS, as of 2020, ReconcilingWorks has requested additional commitments to retain RIC status - including the creation of a formal welcome statement, commitment to racial equity, and financial support of their work in the church;

S.C.22.02.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adopt the following welcome statement:

We, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA, rooted in Jesus' gospel of liberation, unconditional love, and hospitality, welcome all into fellowship and community. This welcome includes those who have traditionally been marginalized in society inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, racial and ethnic backgrounds, physical and mental abilities, and stations in life. As God’s beloved, we are guided by the Holy Spirit, committed to the work of racial equity, and called to the pursuit of justice throughout our communities. We encourage all of our congregations to engage in this work of the gospel, creating safe spaces for all people to bravely be their full selves. We celebrate and affirm all of God’s children just as they are with all of their differences and gifts.

Be it further RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod provide annual financial support to ReconcilingWorks, as required by ReconcilingWorks’ guidelines;

Be it further RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod commit to providing resources and equipping programs for congregations and leaders throughout the synod, to financially support these initiatives, and to regularly evaluate the inclusivity of the ministries of the synod;

And be it further RESOLVED that the above resourcing, equipping, and evaluating be done through the creation of an Inclusive Communities Committee at the synodical level.

Sect. Richard called for the vote:

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Logo Contest

The winner of the logo contest for the Synod Assembly is Ms. Nicki Young, director of children, family, and youth ministry at New Hanover Lutheran Church. She has chosen to give the \$250 prize to New Hanover's Vacation Bible School.

Anti-Racism Training

They have developed a curriculum for Rostered Leaders to complete. Pr. King will speak on this.

Pr. King: the program has begun. There are nine modules that the leaders will complete on their own, and then at a future date, when it is safe to do so, we will gather in-person to further the education that has begun. This is the first round of this new procedure, and we hope it will be a positive one. We have chosen Context, Connection, and Conversation as the three main areas of focus. Context focuses on history and the question of "how did we get here?" If this works as intended it will make it easier for Rostered Ministers, and others such as this Council, to embark on this journey.

Bp. Davenport: this work is so important because racism is hurting the church and the broader community, and we want to take this step of Kingdom Building on purpose, for a purpose, so that we can one day be the Beloved Community.

ELCA Talks at the Table

Please take the opportunity to view this program hosted by Pr. Nicolette Peñaranda, Program Director for the African Descent Ministries. In this program she is not just lifting up our current leaders, but also encouraging other leaders.

Religious Leaders Council

We continue the work to dig deeper in the issues that impact our communities, including the reality of the "Great Resignation." We in the Church, or in SEPA Synod, are not immune from the "Great Resignation." But there is some good news even in the midst of this struggle. Pr. Karen Sease has an update for us.

Pr. Sease: I have some numbers for you. In 2022, in January, one call vote was scheduled, and has occurred, and the pastor has accepted the call. We have four call votes scheduled for February, and there are several more congregations that are very close to scheduling their call votes. This is very good news, and represents a great deal of effort on the part of your Deans, the call committees, the congregation councils, and all who participate in this process of discernment. This will remove many congregations from our transition list.

Also, in January we "entranced" one candidate, and are expecting to "approve" another candidate soon, which would put this person in the mobility process. I have also had conversation with two other people inquiring about entering the candidacy process, and so there are more new leaders on the way.

Bp. Davenport: Praise God and Hallelujah!

Showing Up

I speak often of the importance of showing up. Dr. Fisher this evening showed us places where we can show up and help Liberty Lutheran. It is important that we show up, and it is important

as to what we say when we do. For instance, I was at a meeting of the Deaconess community, and I mentioned Dr. John Hougen and his great work with Zones of Peace. Then, when I was at a meeting of the Religious Leaders Council, Dr. Hougen told me the Deaconess Community sent them a check for \$14,000, simply because I shared their story. I did not make a request; I did not submit a proposal. I just told the story, and they wanted to come alongside this work.

I want to thank Dr. Susie Folks, the chair of our Anti-Racism team. She attended “Racial Reckoning Work” with me, a conversation in which we were extended an invitation to host a gathering to ensure that Philadelphia has a significant role and contribution to this work of dismantling racism and building the Beloved Community. I am excited to be a part of this effort.

Please check the Link of the worship we did with our siblings in Israel.

Black Clergy of Philadelphia

There are various committees that do important work in our area. There is a Health Committee, a Criminal Justice Committee, a Political Action Committee, an Education Committee, and an Adult Education Committee, each of which address issues directly affecting our communities.

Youth Ministry

We are living into our baptismal vows. We lift our voices for justice because it is part of our baptismal covenant. I ask Pr. Skylie Rea to share how we are living into these vows with our efforts from cradle to grave, and with our youth and young adult ministries.

Pr. Rea: I just returned from the ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza. This is the largest youth ministry event in the ELCA. The Youth Gathering has been canceled for 2022. Some have asked if the next Gathering will be in Minneapolis, and the answer is no. There will be a March Madness style event to announce where the next Gathering will be held,

With the cancelling of the Gathering was also the cancellation of the MYLE and the Table events. The planning team for MYLE is putting together an alternative to this that will be held at the same time, and we are looking to see what we can do as SEPA Synod.

The biggest thing that happened at the extravaganza is that Pr. Regina Goodrich was celebrated, winning the best award you can receive in Youth Ministry, the Tom Hunstad Award, affectionately called “the Tommy.” It is presented each year to someone who has had a significant impact on the children, youth, and family ministry in the ELCA. Pr. Goodrich has done marvelous things, particularly with the Multi-Cultural Youth initiative. She is a well-respected person in the ELCA. She is the first African American to win this award.

Bp. Davenport: Another first for SEPA Synod. But there is a second “first,” in that we are the first synod to have two winners of the Tommy award! Ms. Susan Pursch was the first.

Vaccine Awareness

Fun Times magazine has asked me to lend my face and my voice to vaccine promotion, and so if you see my face on a bus, that is indeed me. We want to continue to push the vaccine even as cases go down, because in neighborhoods of poverty the vaccination levels are still quite low.

Pr. Fisher will share about our new Covid-19 protocols.

Pr. Fisher: Yes, we have put out new information of what we are recommending. The last posting was in the peak of the omicron variant, and we are definitely in a better place now. We want to thank all our people for the faithful work they have been doing throughout the pandemic.

There has been much learning and growing in the past two years. We can start to take our foot off the brake, but we can't quite put it on the gas.

I spoke by email with our friend Dr. Tim Babinchak, who wants to remind us that singing is a congregational choice, based on who we are trying to protect. But as we make such choices, we need to consider all the mitigating factors that can be taken into account as we care for each other.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Service

Thank you, Vice President Beasley, for coordinating this wonderful service for us again in partnership with our siblings in Southeast Michigan. We had a wonderful preacher in Dr. Gladys Moore. The link is available for you to experience this service. Thank you, Vice President Beasley!

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

My report is in your packet. Unless there are questions, we will move to the Report of the Secretary.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Actions on the Roster

Call to Interim Ministry:

S.C.22.02.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Rev. Wayne R. Shelor to interim ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church (Fairview Village) beginning February 1, 2022 and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Shelor resigns this call, whichever comes first.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Request to move to Retired Roster:

S.C.22.02.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant retired status to the Rev. Dwight Mason, effective May 1, 2022.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Information Not Needing Action

Death:

The Rev. John Jorgenson December 24, 2021

Fund for Mission Proposals

A Task Force had been convened to review the use of the Fund for Mission resources. The report is before you. The Task Force found the use of monies from the Fund to be appropriate, but feels there needs to be steps taken to clean up some of the process for the allocation of these funds. To that end there is the following resolution placed before the Synod Council, which comes from the Task Force, with input from the Fund for Mission Trustees.

S.C.22.02.05. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the following changes to the Guidelines of the Fund for Mission:

that the date determining the amount of funds available be changed from February 1st to January 1st, and
Be it further resolved that the Team that makes proposals to the Board of Trustees be changed from the Evangelical Outreach Team to the Vitality Team, and
Be it further resolved that the Synod Vice President and Synod Secretary be added to those who are Trustees of the Fund for Mission.

Mr. Glenn, chair of the Finance Committee and a Trustee of the Fund for Mission, spoke to the resolution. The Executive Committee wanted a review of the use of the fund, which led to the Task Force. The change of the date for determining the amount of the 5% of the Fund which is available is to make it possible for the Trustees, when they meet in January, to have an accurate number with which to work. The Task Force thought it would be helpful to include the Vice President and the Secretary as part of the Trustees. I am happy to answer any questions if there are any.

With no questions, Sect. Richard called for the vote.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Treasurer Janet Neff shared that our Mission Support is \$7,000 over what we have received this far in 2020. The rest of the information is in the written report, but she wanted to highlight information concerning the Fund for Mission and the Mission portion of our budget.

Fund for Mission

Some information regarding the Fund for Mission for those who may not know: Whatever the balance of the Fund is from the previous year, 5% is available for use for mission purposes. A part of this is used for the Mission portion of our budget, and the remainder is available for use for projects recommended by the Vitality Team.

Ms. Neff shared some of the types of money we received for the Mission portion of the budget. We get grants from the ELCA for Mission Congregations such as the Welcome Church. Last year we received \$56,000 from these grants.

We also receive grants from the ELCA for non-mission congregations that have applied for assistance. That amount was \$7,000.

In addition to this we have investment gains. We have Forward Together in Faith investment income. We have the St. Petri-Hope investment income.

Last year we had the sale of a building, the former Grace, Norristown.

We have mission partners, some contributions, and a trust that we have for mission.

All those sources amounted to about \$1,200,000.

Treasurer Neff then shared what expenses we have in the Mission portion of the budget.

The Forward Together in Faith Grants are run through this portion of the budget. This amounted to \$87,000 in grants.

We have congregational support, which includes conference support, new creation, building capacity training, and pastoral support. We spent \$17,000 in this area.

In Global Vision we spent \$1,000.

In mission congregations, salaries and benefits we spent \$57,000.

In Vitality Outreach we spent \$21,000. \$15,000 went to a new ministry in Grace, Broomall, and \$6,000 to a venture in Kensington and Roxborough. These were made in response to the request of the Vitality Team.

We have support for the Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult, and Spiritual Formation salary, which was \$17,000, and the expenses for that ministry, which was \$13,000. We support Mission Congregations with about \$67,000, which includes The Well for \$9,000, Grace, Broomall for \$25,000, Kairos Communities for \$8,000, The Welcome Church for \$17,500, and New Creation for \$7,900. Total expenses come to a little over \$280,000.

We have a certain amount (5% of the Fund) available from the Fund for Mission, some of which is then allocated to this Mission portion of the budget.

The Trustees are limited to the 5%, but if Vitality Team should have a proposal that would require more than that amount, such as a request for a new Mission Developer, the request can be brought to the Synod Council for consideration.

Beyond this information about Fund for Mission, Treasurer Neff concluded her remarks by stating that we are in a good financial position, even with the volatility in the markets.

Mr. Bert Glenn then presented the Report of the Finance Committee. As usual, the Committee reviewed the Financial Reports, and found no issues with them. The Committee also reviewed the budget for the next fiscal year, which begins February 1, 2023. The process starts with Synod Staff, particularly Senior Accountant Martin Schwab, creating a preliminary budget. This is then reviewed by the Finance Committee, and then presented to the Synod Council. The Synod Council then considers the budget and approves a budget to be presented to the Synod Assembly for adoption.

The packet of materials you received has the proposed budget in it. It is in the document that has the financial reports dated January 31, 2022, and the far-right column has the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Glenn shared he will not go over all the entries, as they track pretty consistently with our previous budget, but there are two areas to highlight. One is that there is a new entry, \$2,500 for ReconcilingWorks, at the request of the Task Force and agreed to by the Bishop, and the second is the amount for Seminary Debt relief, which has decreased from \$50,000 to \$25,000, but the line is still in the budget.

There have been a few modest adjustments to the budget reflecting the finance staff's best estimations of income and expenses.

Mr. Glenn welcomed any questions regarding the proposed budget. With no questions raised, the following resolution was placed before the Synod Council:
S.C.22.02.06. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2023, for presentation to the Synod Assembly for its adoption.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Investment Committee

Pr. John Heidgerd, Chair of the Investment Committee, shared that the written report is before the Synod Council, and includes the performance of the portfolio through 2021, with an ending total balance of \$11,078,232. Pr. Heidgerd stated that, as Treasurer Neff had mentioned, January's balance, due to the activity in the market, has declined by about \$600,000, but that should start picking up again in February. He then asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Glenn asked about the thoughts behind the Committee's consideration of going with professional management.

Pr. Heidgerd: The portfolio has grown from about a million dollars four years ago, to 11 million dollars now. There is some exposure we bear by not having a seasoned professional looking at these funds. We are doing an RFP to see what might be available. This does not commit us to using a management company, but it seems prudent to see what is out there.

Mr. Glenn: Do you have any guess as to what the cost of that might be?

Pr. Heidgerd: It will depend on the model of cost: whether a percentage of the portfolio, or on time, or by a fixed fee. This is part of what will be requested in the RFP.

Constitution Committee

Pr. Gary Costa shared a verbal report. He has met with Pr. Sellers and Pr. Ray Miller about the scope of the work of this committee. In terms of work, there have been a couple of inquiries, but no paperwork yet. These include Redeemer, Penndel, and God's Love, Newtown.

There is pending activity with Saints United, Grace, Hatfield, and Christ, Upper Darby.

And finally, the Committee has completed all the necessary work to recommend the approval of the constitutional revisions for two congregations: Trinity, Lansdale, and St. John's. Melrose Park.

S.C.22.02.07. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution of Trinity, Lansdale, and be it further RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the revised constitution of St. John, Melrose Park.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Nominating Committee

Pr. Joseph Klinger, chair of the Nominating Committee, noted we are still needing people for several positions. As of this meeting we have no nominees of color. We have one nominee who is openly LGBT+. If you know of people who would be willing to serve, please reach out to them. We need lay people. We have received many clergy nominations but are short on lay nominees. Please help!

Forward Together in Faith

You have the written report for information.

OLD BUSINESS

Bp. Davenport reported on the search for a Director of Evangelical Mission. While it cannot be publicly announced who is filling the position, she shared that we will have *two* people share this position. We are waiting for final paperwork and approval from Churchwide, but we will soon have in place one African National, and one member of the LGBTQIA+ community sharing the DEM position, while also continuing in their respective congregations. We are being innovative and creative in how we meet the needs of the Church in these changing times.

NEW BUSINESS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m. with prayer by Pr. Robert Fisher.

The next meeting of the SEPA Synod Council will be April 7, 2022, at 6:00 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 7, 2022