

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop's Report Virtual Synod Council Meeting December 9, 2021

“So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

ELCA

We will not grow weary; we continue to meet weekly in the Conference of Bishops to discuss pertinent topics happening across the ELCA i.e. "Great Resignation," which is putting a strain on leadership. We have shifted from our formal meetings to informal discussions led by a bishop or a Home Area leader to address a particular concern raised by one or two bishops, sexual misconducts are up, we are having Ms. Barbara Keller to address the group. Ms. Keller serves as the ELCA Consultant for Prevention of Sexual Misconduct. These meetings are in addition to our COB formal meetings held three times a year to complete our fiduciary responsibilities.

The Authentic Diversity Advisory Team and African Descent Strategy Team continue to meet; however, I have made a conscious choice to step aside to allow new leadership to enter this important and relevant work. I yielded my seat to open space for us to reflect the Future Church Design of newer, younger, and more diverse. I now support each group more on a consultant basis as needed.

I continue my work with Muhlenberg College, Deaconess Community and Stewardship of Life Boards which continue to meet regularly to assure forward motion.

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Ecumenism

Religious Leaders Council of Philadelphia continue to meet monthly focusing on supporting leadership and members in these ongoing pandemics. We have shared information on COVID protocols to assure that we are encouraging practices that keep leaders and laity safe as the variants continue to grow.

Pr. John Hougen is broadening his work with **Zones of Peace** from organizations to include congregations, “Zones of Peace Partners”. We would like to give the Synod Assembly offering to this organization, Pr. Hougen noted, if the offering went to Zones of Peace we could award it to one of the new partnerships in our Pilot Program within the synod. The advantage of giving it to Zones of Peace would be to lift up the various

ways gun violence is being addressed - preventive and responsive. The advantage of giving directly to one agency listed below that it would create a closer bond between the synod and that agency that could lead to other kinds of partnership in the future.

- Heeding God's Call is a good choice.
- CeasefirePA has been nominated to be recognized as a Zone of Peace, but the recognition is still in process. They might also be considered.
- Mothers in Charge is a Zone of Peace and very dramatically and effectively responds with compassion to those affected by gun violence and also has several programs which reach women in prison, returning citizens, those in need of employment etc.
- Victim Witness Services of South Philadelphia offers a comprehensive set of services to victims and witnesses and works with the DA on restorative justice for offenders.

I attended 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. I was privileged to welcome them on SEPA behalf as we continue our goal of building relationship with our historic Black churches.

I also, attended via Zoom the **Baha'is** of the greater Philadelphia area to commemorate the centenary of the passing of Abdu'l-Baha, the eldest son of Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i Faith.

Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. Colossian 3:23-24

Synod

I remain ever so grateful for our committed Office of the Bishop staff; we continue to serve the Lord with joy and gladness amid the challenges we remain hope filled. We are extremely happy to announce the addition of our new team member, the Rev. Stacey-Kyle Rea, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth and Young Adult Discipleship. Pr. Rea come with a wealth of experience in working with youth and young adults, and even more she has a passion for drawing them into a deeper relationship with Christ in daily life. We have posted the position for Director of Evangelical Mission, trusting to have a leader in place in the first quarter of the new year.

I am ever mindful of our Rostered Ministers and our laity as the pandemic tends to bring out the best and at times the worst in us. I mentioned that across the globe we are seeing the "great resignation", we are experiencing a large number of congregations in transition which puts additional work on our office staff, Committee of Deans, Interims, Bridge and Supply pastors.

United Lutheran Seminary was finally able to install, President Guy Erwin in a weeklong celebration, I had the privilege and honor to preach at the Festival Service Installation. It was well attended by faculty, staff, and students, signaling to me the appreciation for President Erwin leadership.

Our **Rostered Minister Equipping Event** was a great success, we were hosted by three congregations: Little Zion (Telford), Upper Dublin (Ambler), St. James (Limerick), and our partners at United Lutheran Seminary. Our excellent tech teams at each location allowed us to live stream and interact with colleagues on a digital platform. Each participant received a “swag bag” and lunch was provided at each site. This was a three-day event with the third day to be used for the rostered ministers selfcare, meditation, a massage, a book, a hike, etc.

I met with Bishop Rev.Dr. Msafiri J. Mbilu and Acting Secretary, Rev. Godfrey T. Walalaze of the **North Eastern Diocese of Tanzania**, our companion synod by way of Zoom, it was great to meet him face to face even on a digital platform. We, Rev. Perucy Butiku and I, spent time on introductions, and updating on the happenings in our countries and ministries. We plan a second meeting for our entire staffs and a third with our Companion Synod team, which is still forming.

ACTIONS ON THE ROSTER

Call to Interim Ministry

I recommend 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.

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.

I recommend 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.

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(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.

Renewal Term Call

I recommend that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council renew the call to **Rev. David Bruner** as Pastor of Adult Discipleship and Intergenerational Mission (PADM) at Paoli Presbyterian Church, Paoli, Pennsylvania, a full communion partner congregation (8.72.11 Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Church in America). 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.

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Renewal – Call to Specialized Ministry

I recommend the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a renewable call to Specialized Ministry to **the Rev. Margaret J. Ainslie** as Director of Pastor Care at Doylestown Hospital effective 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.

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.

Request to move from Active Roster to On Leave Roster

Pastor William Flippin 1st year beginning September 1, 2021

Pastor Susan K. Ericsson 1st year beginning November 1, 2021 (Disability)

Request to move from Active Roster to Retired Roster

Pastor Stephen A. Keiser beginning January 1, 2022

Pastor Ronald P. Wesemann beginning January 1, 2022

Information Not Needing Action

Death

The Rev. Richard (Dick) Earl Hess October 24, 2021

Bishop's Activities

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6

Ordinations: 2

Installations: 1

Worship Services: 9 In-person 16 on-line

Celebrations (video or zoom): 6

Video Messages: 2

Synod Meetings: 10

Individual Meetings with Staff: 14

Rostered Leaders: Zoom: 12 Telephone calls:15

Lay Leaders: Telephone calls: 8

Full Staff Meetings: 2 Telephone calls: 14

Deans Meetings: 2

ELCA

- Region 7 Bishops: 9
- Stewardship of Life Institute Board: 1
- Conference Of Bishops (COB): 2 Formal 8 weekly
- COB Exec. Committee: 2
- Deaconess Community Board: 1 Executive Committee 2
- Muhlenberg College Board: 1
- Churchwide Staff: Telephone calls 7

Ecumenical/Interfaith Meetings: Zoom: 4 Telephone calls: 2

Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity: 2 Nominating Committee: 1

Confidential Meetings/Investigations: Zoom: 0 Telephone Calls: 0

Hospital/Sick/Pastoral Contacts: 7

Funerals/Memorials: 4

Days Off: 14

Medical Days: 0

Vacation Days: 0

The Rev. Patricia A. Davenport, Bishop