

**Report of the Synod Council to the Thirty-first Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, May 4-5, 2018**

Included:

1. Minutes of the 145<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 6, 2017
  - Approved by the Synod Council June 8, 2017
2. Minutes of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*For Such a Time as This: Reforming Hearts through Racial Justice* May 5-6, 2017
  - Approved by the Synod Council September 14, 2017
3. Minutes of the 146<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, June 8, 2017
  - Approved by the Synod Council September 14, 2017
4. Minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, September 14, 2017
  - Approved by the Synod Council December 7, 2017
5. Minutes of the 148<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, December 7, 2017
  - Approved by the Synod Council February 22, 2018
6. Minutes of the 149<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, February 22, 2018
  - Approved by the Synod Council April 5, 2018

**MINUTES**  
**of the 145<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**St. John's Lutheran Church, Blue Bell, PA**  
**April 6, 2017**

The Reverend Sarah Stobie, host pastor, brought greetings and described the ministry of St. John's, which included ideas for outreach and connection with the community. As it was Pr. Stobie's birthday, the Synod Council sang to her.

The Reverend Julie DeWerth, Dean of the Lower Montgomery Conference, led the Synod Council in devotions.

Vice President Beasley called the 145<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SEPA Synod Council to order at 4:41 pm

Ms Lisa Hand was introduced to the Synod Council, and was put forward by the Executive Committee to fill the open position of Lay Female at Large, term ending 2019. Ms Hand described her work and service at Silver Springs- Martin Luther School to the Council.

The Council unanimously voted to elect Ms Hand as Lay Female at Large to the Synod Council. She then took her place with the Council.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 144<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council were approved with a correction from Mr. Rod Rothermel regarding the Investment Committee.

### **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda as presented.

### **BISHOP'S REPORT**

#### **Thank you to Synod Council members**

Bishop Burkat began her report by thanking Mr. Rod Rothermel and Ms Sue Massey for their time on the Synod Council. They are each completing their second term, and are not eligible for re-election. Mr. Rothermel has served as Chair of the Investment Committee, and Ms Massey as Chair of the Finance Committee. Both have been on Synod Council during some of the most challenging times our Synod has faced as we significantly reworked our structure due to declining finances.

Bishop Burkat also thanked the other members of the Council whose terms are coming to an end, and who may run for re-election. These members include Ms Tracey A. Beasley, Mr. Wynne Fisher, Mr. Don Gleiter, Ms Lucille Hall, Pr. Jane Marston, Mr. Henry Strobel, and Pr. Bryan Penman. The Bishop

encouraged those who might be willing to serve again to submit their forms prior to the Synod Assembly for consideration.

### **“Coming Together” Event**

This was a great program as people across faith traditions gathered to learn from each other how to lead both our congregational leaders and our people in these troubled times. It coincidentally happened at the time of the desecration of the Mount Carmel cemetery. This afforded us the opportunity to make a united, public statement against hatred and violence. At the conclusion of the event a press conference was held, showing support across faith traditions as we stand together against such acts of destruction and division.

### **Congregational Officers’ Event**

The event went very well. Presentations were made by the Reverend Brad Burke, Assistant to the Bishop for Youth, Young Adult and Spiritual Formation on the “Brave New Church” initiative, by Mr. Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Interpretation and Communications on ways to engage in communications more effectively, and by the Reverend Larry Smoose, Chair of the Stewardship Team on the status of the Synod and ways in which congregations can make stewardship a priority in their setting. Presentations were also made by Vice President Tracey A. Beasley on the Forward Together In Faith Campaign and Director of Operations Ms Yvonne Curtis.

### **Chrism Service**

This annual event which includes the renewal of ordination and commissioning vows and the disbursement of oil blessed for Chrism, Confirmation and healing will be held at St. Peter’s, Lafayette Hill. We are returning to St. Peter’s this year as we await the return to health of Pastor William Vanderslice of Christ, Oreland, which hosted the service last year. A specific invitation has been made to our Deacons (the new designation for Minsters of Word and Service) as well as to Pastors of the Synod. Congregational assisting ministers are also welcome to attend to be blessed in their service.

### **St. Michael’s Germantown**

Pr. Violet Little of the Welcome Church and Mr. Bill Nolan of KenCrest toured the site of St. Michael’s, Germantown to assess its appropriateness for use by the Social Ministry Organizations of the Synod. The structure itself, the available parking, and the amount of repairs needed to bring the site into compliance render this site a poor option for our SMO’s. As it is too expensive to renovate or rebuild, we will need to sell the property. Mr. Martin Schwab has been directed to begin this process.

### **Seminary Update**

The search committee for the first president of the United Lutheran Seminary is moving along very well. The Committee expects to present a candidate to the Board at its meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup>, with the President beginning his or her service as of the July 1<sup>st</sup> start of the new seminary. There is a video about United Lutheran Seminary at the website: [newschooloftheology.org](http://newschooloftheology.org)

Bishop Burkat shared that there are 15 synods which will support this new school – those of Regions 7 and 8. At the Conference of Bishops Bishop Burkat called on each synod to raise up 2 candidates for ministry per year. Doing so will go a long way to filling our Church's leadership needs for the future.

The new president of the United Lutheran Seminary will be with us for the September meeting of the Synod Council.

### **Actions on the roster**

#### ***Specialized call:***

**S.C.17.04.01. 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 under Unusual Circumstance, renewable on an annual basis, as Spiritual Director to the Rev. Leslie M. Richard for a period of one year effective June 1, 2017.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution. (As this vote involved his wife, Secretary Richard abstained)

#### ***On Leave from Call requests:***

**S.C. 17.04.02. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Margaret Ainslie on leave from call status, 5<sup>th</sup> year, effective June 30, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

#### **Conference of Bishops Extension Approval CB17.03.01**

The Conference of Bishop approved on leave extensions for The Rev. Harold Evans; The Rev. Bruce J. Thorsen; The Rev. Kristine A. Peterson; The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King; and The Rev. Wende Blead as provided in bylaw 7.31.16.d in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, extension of on-leave-from-call status, renewable by the Synod Council on an annual basis up to a maximum of two years.

#### ***On Leave from Call Extension Requests:***

**S.C. 17.04.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Harold Evans on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year extension, effective April 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C. 17.04.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Wende Bleam on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year extension, effective June 16, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C. 17.04.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Kristine Peterson on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year extension, effective July 14, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C. 17.04.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Bruce J. Thorsen on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year extension, effective September 15, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C. 17.04.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Gwendolyn King on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year extension, effective October 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

***Retirement:***

**S.C. 17.04.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants The Rev. Robert B. Todd retirement status effective July 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

Information Not Requiring Action

***Transfers:***

The Rev. David A. Genszler from Northeast Ohio Synod effective February 24, 2017

The Rev. Thomas M. Lang to Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod effective February 27, 2017

The Rev. Benjamin Thomas Nathan Krey to North Carolina Synod effective March 15, 2017

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Vice President Beasley discussed the process for the election of a bishop, which had been approved at the February meeting of the Synod Council. She stated we will be looking for people from across the Synod to fill the three teams. A form to be posted on MinistryLink for people to express their desire to serve, indicate the team for which they would like to be considered, and provide information to assist the Executive Committee in the selection of the team members.

Vice President Beasley then put forward names of persons the Executive Committee recommends to chair the teams:

**S.C. 17.04.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the appointment of Ms Patricia Robinson and Ms Julie Kinzel as co-chairs for the Transition team.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C. 17.04.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the appointment of Ms Tracey Beasley as chair of the Discernment Team.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

The Executive Committee is awaiting a response from the person being considered to chair the Committee on Bishops Election. The availability and willingness of the person was not known prior to this meeting. An electronic vote will be given to the Synod Council to ratify a chair person prior to the Synod Assembly so that the names of those leading the three teams can be announced to the Assembly in May.

Vice President Beasley was in Chicago at the time of the most recent African Descent Lutheran Strategy Team meeting. She expressed some concern over the interaction between the Church Council and the African Descent Lutheran Strategy Team regarding the resolution passed at the Churchwide Assembly last August. The Church Council seems to have approached the ADL Strategy Team stating that African Descent Lutherans deserve an apology. But it appears that the Church Council has asked the ADL Strategy Team and the Multicultural Desk to write the apology to the African Descent community so that the Council can then vote on it. If this is what is being asked, it seems insensitive at best.

Discussion ensued regarding this situation. It was decided that Ms Susan Pursch and Pr. Jane Marston would draft a letter from our Synod Council to the Church Council expressing our support for the African Descent Lutheran Association, and our concern of the apparent response to their resolution by the Church Council. The Reverend Patricia Davenport, Director for Evangelical Mission and Vice President Beasley will be consulted on the background of this concern to ensure the letter is addressing the issue appropriately.

A draft of the letter will be presented to the Synod Council at the June meeting. This will allow it to be reviewed and edited as needed by the September meeting of the Synod Council, to be presented to the October meeting of the Church Council.

## **MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility, shared the Mission Moment for the Synod Council.

Pr. Bell shared a paper which summarized much of the work of the Deans and the process for mobility. She described the position descriptions of the Deans and the Director of Mobility. She also thanked Synod Staff for all they do with the process.

Pr. Bell noted one of the most important things we can do is to pray for congregations seeking leaders, and for candidates in the process. One may think all is going well, and then things fall through, but we pray that the Spirit will work through the process.

The process is not instantaneous, nor is it uniform in its timing. It can take as little as six months, or as long as two and a half years. The variations depend on the concerns in a congregation or ministry setting, the diligence with which the ministry site works the process, the availability of candidates with appropriate gifts for that setting, and the speed with which interviews and assessments can be made. With call committees having many members, all of which are volunteers, the timing can be difficult.

A resource you have to hear more about what is happening in any particular Conference is the Dean. As Synod Council rotates through different areas of the Synod, the host Dean could perhaps give an overview of what is happening in that Conference, and which congregations are seeking leaders.

The Synod Council thanked Pr. Bell for her presentation.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Secretary Richard brought to the Synod Council a proposal from the ad hoc committee that was reviewing the Synod Constitution regarding Continuing Resolution S7.32.A01.3.c. This continuing resolution deals with ensuring our desired minimum level of diversity on Synod Council, at Churchwide Assembly, and on other committees, boards, or task forces which we empower. A concern had been raised that our current wording may not be an effective way to attain our goal. Discussion ensued over the proposal. The intent of the proposal was affirmed, but the consensus was that the proposal as written does not move us forward in a way that is an overall improvement over what we currently have.

The proposal was withdrawn, and another attempt will be considered in the future.

## **TREASURER AND FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant for the Synod, shared some reflections from the reports that had been distributed.

He noted that we cannot see any trends yet, as we are only reviewing the first months in the fiscal year. With that being said, it is good to note that February mission support is up \$11,000 from last February, and March mission support is up \$20,000 from last March

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Administration Committee**

On behalf of the Administration Committee, Vice President Beasley asked Synod Council members to please sign up to help at the Assembly. We will need assistance welcoming Voting Members and guests to the Assembly and signing them in. We could also use help distributing materials to the Assembly during the sessions. If you have not already filled out a registration form as a Voting Member or a guest to the Assembly, please do so if you are planning to help.

### **Audit Committee**

Ms Susan Pursch, chairperson, noted the hard work of the Audit Committee, and is pleased to announce that we have a clean audit. Ms Pursch particularly thanked Mr. Martin Schwab for his fine work, which made the audit process go very well. This is due not just to his assistance in the audit process itself, but because of the faithful way in which he works all year to keep our books in good order. Many thanks to Martin for his efforts!

Ms Pursch noted that we are pleased to have Tait Weller as our accounting firm. They have worked well with us and for us.

Ms Pursch noted we are in good financial shape because of two primary reasons: 1. the sale of two properties, and 2. the Forward Together in Faith campaign.

The Committee has three hopes as we move forward:

1. That when the Forward Together in Faith campaign is finished, we continue some kind of campaign to support the Synod as Partnership Support decreases
2. That we encourage Stewardship efforts to be heightened and supported.
3. That as we approach the time when the lease for the Synod Office space is up in Dec 2018, a group be created to look at this prior to a new Bishop being given this issue without information and recommendations.

Bishop Burkat affirmed the sense of the 1<sup>st</sup> hope, but noted that this will need a development office to be effective.

Mr. Rod Rothermel affirmed the 3<sup>rd</sup> hope, noting that the prepaid rent provided to the Seminary will end in December 2018. We have not needed to pay this for several years, but we will need to in the future.

Ms Pursch, on behalf of the Audit Committee, moved the following:

**S.C. 17.04.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve that the Audit report be presented to the Synod Assembly for its reception.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

#### **Constitution Committee**

Pr. Jane Marson, chairperson of the Constitution Committee, brought forward two congregational constitutions for approval by the Synod Council.

**S.C. 17.04.12. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregational constitution for Redeemer Lutheran Church, Jamison.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C. 17.04.13. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregational constitution for Grace Lutheran Church, Mantua.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

#### **Forward Together in Faith**

Vice President Beasley shared a Power Point presentation on the current status of the Campaign. Key summaries from that presentation include:

**Campaign goal: \$2,500,000**

(Gift to ELCA campaign, \$250,000 – Remaining in SEPA, \$2,250,000)

Gifts and Pledges to date: **\$ 508,624**

To raise by 2018: **\$1,991,376**

#### **Expenses related to the Campaign**

Campaign Startup Investment: **\$ 221,331**

Investments Aligned to Pillars of  
the Campaign to date: **\$ 30,704**

**Participation by Synod Leaders:**

Staff/FTIF Team: (15/17) **88.23%**

Synod Council: (28/28) **100.00%**

Deans: (9/10) **90.00%**

**Participation by Congregations:**

Synod Council: (6/26) **23.00%**

Overall: (25/154) **16.23%**

**Investment Committee**

Mr. Rod Rothermel made the report. The Committee has been meeting by email. As the market is growing, we are increasing the rate at which we are investing.

Bishop Burkat thanked Mr. Rothermel for his work in turning our portfolio around.

**Nominating Committee**

Pr. Regina D. Goodrich stepped down from the chair for health concerns. Pr. Laura Tancredi has been named the new chair of the Committee. She presented the report of the Nominating Committee, stating the persons who will be placed before the Assembly for consideration.

A question was raised, based on the number of persons in nomination, if it is a goal to only have one nominee per open position. The answer is no. We need at least one per position, but not necessarily only one. We have two positions, Lay Male Youth and Lay Female at large, for which we were not able to find nominees. If there are no nominations from the floor of the Assembly, then the Synod Council will have the authority to fill the open positions.

**OLD BUSINESS** – None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Donald Gleiter asked if there has been thought to beginning meetings earlier?

Vice President Beasley responded that it is not possible to meet earlier because of work schedules.

Vice President Beasley thanked all who have served on Synod Council, and looks forward to seeing everyone at the Assembly.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm

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

*approved by Synod Council as amended, June 8, 2017*

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

*For Such a Time as This:*

*Reforming Hearts through Racial Justice*

**May 5-6, 2017**

**Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse  
Telford, Pennsylvania**

**Friday Morning, May 5, 2017**

**Service of Holy Communion**

Worship began at 9:35 am, and featured a hymn, “Now is the Time,” which was written especially for this Assembly by Mr. Paul Friesen-Carper. The hymn was inspired by the Assembly theme “For Such a Time as This: Reforming Hearts through Racial Justice” and the Christian imperative to stop racism.

In her sermon Bishop Claire S. Burkat clearly stated that this is not an easy topic, but a critical one for people of faith to engage. When the topic for the Assembly was announced she said,

“Some white folks raised their eyebrows because they knew this would be a risky conversation. This is not a feel-good topic. Their raised eyebrows meant: Really? You’re going to make us talk about this? Now? Are we ready for this?”

Some Black folks and other folks of color raised their eyebrows, too, but for different reasons. Their raised eyebrows meant: Really? Can we *trust* this process? Or will this burden us once again with having to tutor white folks? Or, worse, gloss over the painful truths of our experience? Are we ready for this?”

And so Bishop Burkat addressed the Assembly, “Are we ready for this? I have no doubt that we are.”

Bishop Burkat declared “The work of racial reconciliation cannot wait. And now is the acceptable time to take on this issue.”

“We are on this Emmaus road together, even when the sinfulness of our hearts and our society makes us stumble. We are on this road together to disrupt the system of evil by having the courage to address the complexities of race, class, and ethnicity. We are on this road together to proclaim that Christ changes everything. We are on this road together to make it plain: resurrection is borne out of cross-shaped pain that is transformed by God into new life. There *is* hope. We *can* change. God *can* make a way where there is no way.”

Within the service was the Installation of Deacon Rachel M. Bailey as Chaplain at Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care of Pennsylvania, and a Welcome to the Roster for twenty-nine additional members of the three former lay rosters as they were admitted to the new roster of Ministers of Word and Service. They are now conferred the title of “Deacon.”

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

At 11:06 a.m. Bishop Burkat and Vice President Tracey A. Beasley led the Order for the Opening of the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Bishop Burkat welcomed all those attending the Assembly, both Voting Members and visitors.

The Bishop expressed thanks to those who served as members of the worship team and those who prepared for this Assembly, namely: The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Ollikainen, Chairperson, and members of the Assembly Worship Team: The Rev. Bryan Penman, the Rev. Linnea Clark, Mr. Andrew Long, and the Rev. Linda Manson; Musicians: The Rev. Linnea Clark, Mr. Drew Long, and Ms Yvonne Lembo; Prayer pause leaders: The Rev. Dr. Charles Leonard, Deacon Rachel Bailey, the Rev. Marcia Bell, Ms. Raine Bedeaux, Ms Joy Grace, the Rev. Christopher McKinstry; Saturday morning worship leaders: the Rev. Carlton Rodgers and the Rev. Erika Strobel; more than 50 people who are serving as worship assistants at various times throughout the Assembly including: Communion assistants, ushers, readers, pray-ers, water sprinklers, anointers and Silver Springs - Martin Luther Choir and staff; Mr. Paul Friesen-Carper who wrote the hymn “Now is the Time” especially for this year’s Synod Assembly; The Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose who supplied the wine for Communion and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Coatesville for again providing the font

Bishop Burkat introduced some particular guests to the Assembly: Ms Judith Roberts, Director for Racial Justice for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, attending our Assembly both as our keynote presenter and ELCA Churchwide Representative; Ms Prairie Rose Seminole, Director for American Indian Alaska Native Ministries with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, Director for Evangelical Mission in Metro NY Synod, and National President of the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) ; The Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, parliamentarian; Ms Barbara Debski, Portico Benefit Services; and Mr. Gerry Lauro, of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

Bishop Burkat recognized and thanked the Synod Officers; members of the Synod Council; the Deans; the Rev. Christian McMullen, Director of Interim Ministry; the Rev. Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility; Deacon Allison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy; and the Rev. Donna Wright, chair of the Transitional Ministry Team

The Bishop then invited those rostered leaders who were new to the Synod since our last Assembly to come forward and introduced themselves. One of these, the Rev. Lydia Posselt, was recognized for receiving the Lutheran World Federation Young Preacher Award. Pr. Posselt will be preaching at the Lutheran World Federation as it gathers in later this month.

### **Report of the Registrar:**

Ms Cynta Outterbridge, Registrar, reported that the total number of voting members was 441, the total number of voting members registered was 407, and the number of voting members needed for a quorum was 221. Bishop Burkat declared a quorum.

### **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*. 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 29<sup>th</sup> annual assembly on June 9, 2016.

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

### **Report of 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 2016 Churchwide Assembly. He then presented for approval the following amendments as recommended by the Committee to review the Synod Constitution and endorsed by the Synod Council.

## **†S18.12. AMENDMENTS**

Secretary Richard explained that amendments that are adopted by the Churchwide Assembly but not required "may be adopted by the Synod Assembly on a majority vote at one assembly under †S18.12."

Secretary Richard shared that the following are in sections that are not marked with a †, but include language that is necessary to keep consistent with the newly required provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, and also include grammatical corrections which bring us in line with the Model Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions for Synods. Also included are sections S14.30., 33., 34., 42. and 47., which are new and delineate further the expectations and responsibilities for Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) as they are called ministers of this Church.

He presented the following resolution, which the assembly adopted:

**S. A. 17.05.01 Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments, as well as grant permission to correct language regarding the new roster language in sections which may have been inadvertently omitted from the following: (A majority vote at one Synod Assembly is required)**

**S7.22.** ~~The~~ This synod may establish processes that permit retired ~~ordained~~ rostered ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers ~~on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above.~~ The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, 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. ~~above.~~ If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ~~leaders~~ ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

**S7.24.** ~~Ordained ministers~~ Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters ~~of ordained ministers~~ of this synod. ~~Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod.~~ Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant an ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ~~ordained~~ minister's service in a congregation of this church.

**S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four year term.

**S10.03.** The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

...

d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service ~~and of other official rosters~~, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.

e. Issue letters of call to ~~ordained-rostered~~ ministers and ~~letters of call to associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

...

**S11.11.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ~~ordained~~ ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

**S13.11.** When a ~~pastor or when an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

**S13.12.** A congregation under financial obligation to its former ~~pastor or associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

#### **Chapter 14.**

#### **~~ORDAINED MINISTERS AND LAY ROSTERED MINISTERS~~**

#### **S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament**

**S14.013.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**S14.014.** 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.

**S14.015.** Each ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**S14.127.** No ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. ~~An ordained 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 of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

**S14.215.** All ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

**S14.30. Official Rosters of Laypersons Ministers of Word and Service**

**S14.33.** The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**S14.34.** Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**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 of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

**S14.47.** All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

**Amendments to Bylaws from previous Churchwide Assembly Action**

Secretary Richard then brought forward the following changes to bring our Constitution in line with the Model Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions for Synods. They reflect actions from a previous Churchwide Assembly which were not incorporated into our Synod's Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions.

He presented the following resolution, which the assembly adopted:

**S. A. 17.05.02** **Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments to Sections S8., S10., S13., and S14.:** *(A majority vote at one Synod Assembly is required)*

**S.8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for**  
**S8.42.f. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. ~~Giving of corporate surety in the amount determined by the Synod Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefore shall be paid by this synod.~~** Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

†**S10.02.** **The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

**S13.40. Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities**

**S13.41. Authorized worshipping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.**

~~S14.29. The provisions in the churchwide documents and such provisions as may be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit governing associates in ministry shall apply in this synod.~~

### **Amendments to Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions related to Synod Council**

Lastly, Secretary Richard brought forward the following changes to the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, the intent of which is to properly re-align segments of the Synod Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions that are related to Synod Council.

He presented the following resolution, which the assembly adopted by the required 2/3rds vote:

**S. A. 17.05.03 Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments to Sections S6. S9. And S10.:**

*(A two-thirds majority vote at one Synod Assembly is required)*

~~**S6.04.D10.** — *The Synod Assembly shall elect two Synod Council youth representatives, one female and one male, and two Synod Council young adult representatives, one female and one male. At least one of the youth or young adult representatives shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English. The terms of the two youth representatives shall be two years and shall expire at the same time. The youth representatives may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult representatives shall be three years. The young adult representatives may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. Those nominated for the young adult representative positions and not elected shall be added to the nominees for the Synod Council “at large” positions.* (moved to S10.01.02)~~

#### **S9.08.01. Synod Council**

**a. The nominating and election process for the 24 persons, ~~not including the four officers of this Synod and the two youth and the two young adult representatives, elected as members of Synod Council~~ members of the Synod Council shall proceed in a manner that will ensure the composition of the Synod Council meets the requirements set forth in Chapter 10 of this constitution. ~~shall proceed in a manner that will assure that at least three members so elected will be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English, (moved to S10.01.01.c) nine of the 24 elected members shall be ordained ministers and 15 shall be lay persons. (moved to S10.01.01.a) Terms for members other than the youth member shall be for three years (moved to S10.01.02) and shall be arranged so that the terms of three ordained ministers, three conferences and two at-large lay members expire each year. (moved to S10.01.01.b) None of the 24 elected members shall be eligible to serve for more than two terms consecutively. (moved to S10.01.01.b) Terms of office for the~~**

~~youth members shall be two years, (moved to S10.01.02) and for the young adult members, three years, subject to a two-term limitation. (moved to in S10.01.02)~~

~~b. Representatives of congregations in~~ Each conference whose lay position is up for election shall meet prior to the Synod Assembly and shall nominate at least one layperson from their conference for the Synod Council position, one nominee per conference to be elected by the assembly at the annual meeting. Every conference may nominate laypeople for the at-large lay positions. (new) Normally, these nominations will take place at a full assembly of the conference. (new, language borrowed from S7.24 and S12.01.05) These lay seats assigned to conferences shall alternate every six years (or two terms) between male and female Council members. (moved to S10.01.01.b) The Nominating Committee shall receive these nominations from the conferences to include in its report. Voting members at the annual meeting of the assembly may nominate from the floor persons from the assigned conferences for election to the Synod Council. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (new, language borrowed from S9.05 thru S9.07)

~~c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each minister of Word and Sacrament and lay at-large position up for election. (new, removes implied need to nominate people for positions not 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. Balloting for the conference lay positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to represent conferences shall be added to the at-large ballots. Balloting for at-large lay members shall be by male and female panels; (moved to S9.08.01.e) each year a male and female at-large lay representative shall be elected. (moved to S10.01.01.b) Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (new, language borrowed from S9.05 thru S9.07)~~

~~d. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each youth and young adult position up for election. (new, repeats pattern from previous provision) Additional nominations may be made from the floor. (new, language borrowed from S9.05 thru S9.07)~~

~~e. Balloting for the~~ The election of conference lay positions shall be completed before balloting for at-large positions begins. Nominees not elected to represent conferences 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. (new, repeats pattern from previous sentences) Nominees not elected to the young adult positions shall be added to the at-large ballots. (moved here from S6.04.D10, language changed to match previous sentences) Balloting for at-large lay positions shall be by male and female panels. (moved here from S9.08.01.c).

~~d f. No nomination for Synod Council shall be made if that nominee's congregation already has a member on the Synod Council or if a member of a congregation has already been nominated, provided, however, that no nominee shall be ineligible if the Synod Council member from that congregation is an officer of this Synod and/or one of them is a Synod Council youth or young adult member. The Synod Council may make exceptions to this~~

~~requirement in order to promote greater diversity and/or inclusivity. (moved to S10.01.01.d)~~ If a nominee is ineligible or becomes ineligible for a position on the Synod Council, as defined in †S10.01 and related bylaws, that nominee shall be removed from the ballot.

**S10.01.01. General Membership (new, best term we could find to describe the “other members”, as listed in †S10.01)**

**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 32 members: four officers (as set forth in 8.01. of the Synod Constitution), two youth (a youth is defined as a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment to service), two young adults (voting members of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service), (already defined in †S10.01) and 24 other members (nine ministers of Word and Sacrament, and 15 lay members). one layperson from each conference of this synod, and six at-large laypersons, three male and three female. (more clearly spells out the conference and at-large positions than was previously stated)** ~~The Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time, provided, however, that two or three members of the same congregation may serve on the Synod Council concurrently if one of them is either an officer of this synod and/or one of them is a Synod Council youth or young adult member. (moved to S10.01.01.d)~~

**b. The terms for the general membership -other than the youth member shall be for three years and of the Synod Council shall be arranged staggered (language borrowed from †S11.05) so that the terms of three ministers of Word and Sacrament, three conferences approximately one-third of conference lay positions, and two at-large lay members positions, one male and one female, (moved here from S9.08.01.c) expire each year. None of the 24 general membership of the Synod Council shall be eligible to serve for more than two terms consecutively consecutive terms. (moved here from S9.08.01.a) These lay seats The lay position assigned to each conferences shall alternate every six years or two terms between male and female Council members. (moved here from S9.08.01.b)**

**c. At least three members of the general membership so-elected of the Synod Council will shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. (moved here from S9.08.01.a)**

**d. The general membership of the Synod Council shall consist of no more than one member of the same congregation at the same time, provided, however, that two or three members of the same congregation may serve on the Synod Council concurrently if one of them is either an officer of this synod and/or one of them is a Synod Council youth or young adult member. (moved here from S9.08.01.d; simplified based on the whole section only referring to the general membership) The Synod Council may make exceptions to this requirement in order to promote greater diversity and/or inclusivity Exceptions may be made to this requirement only if necessary to meet the requirements of S10.01.01.c. (moved here from S9.08.01.d)**

**S10.01.02.** The Synod Assembly Council shall elect include two Synod Council youth representatives members, one male and one female, and two Synod Council young adult representatives members, one male and one female. At least one of the youth or young adult representative members shall be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English. The terms of the ~~two~~ youth representatives members shall be two years and shall expire at the same time. The youth representatives members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. The terms of the young adult representatives members shall be three years and shall expire at the same time. (new, describes current practice) The young adult representatives members may serve two consecutive terms if eligible. (moved here from S6.04.D10) ~~Those nominated for the young adult representative positions and not elected shall be added to the nominees for the Synod Council “at large” positions.~~ (moved to S9.08.01.e)

## **Final Result**

### **S9.08.01.** Synod Council

- a. The nominating and election process for the members of the Synod Council shall proceed in a manner that will ensure the composition of the Synod Council meets the requirements set forth in Chapter 10 of this constitution.
- b. Each conference whose lay position is up for election shall nominate at least one layperson from their conference for the position. Every conference may nominate laypeople for the at-large lay positions. Normally, these nominations will take place at a full assembly of the conference. The Nominating Committee shall receive these nominations from the conferences to include in its report. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each 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.
- d. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each youth and young adult position up for election. 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.
- f. If a nominee is ineligible or becomes ineligible for a position on the Synod Council, as defined in †S10.01 and related bylaws, that nominee shall be removed from the ballot.

### **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 ministers of Word and Sacrament, one layperson from each conference of this synod, and six at-large laypersons, three male and three female.

b. The terms for the general membership of the Synod Council shall be staggered so that the terms of three ministers of Word and Sacrament, approximately one-third of conference lay positions, and two at-large lay positions, one male and one female, 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 and female.

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.

**S10.01.02.** The Synod Council shall include two youth members, one male and one female, and two young adult members, one male and one female. 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.

Secretary Richard thanked the Assembly for their consideration.

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

The Rev. Laura Tancredi, Chair of the Nominating Committee, made the report.

### **Synod Council**

**TICKET 1: SYNOD COUNCIL, VICE PRESIDENT** (One lay person to be elected for a term ending 2021)

The Committee nominated Ms Tracey A. Beasley. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Beasley elected.

**TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY** (Three to be elected for terms ending 2020).

The Committee nominated the Rev. Sarah Srobie and the Rev. Lydia Posselt. Nominated from the floor were The Rev. Serena Sellers, the Rev. Christopher McKinstry, and the Rev. Norbert Hahn. Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 2 closed.

**TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Ms Elizabeth Young. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Young elected.

**TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Ms Sandra Zimmerman. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Zimmerman elected.

**TICKET 5: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Mr. Burt Glenn and Mr. Henry Geyer. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 5 closed. Persons not elected on this ticket shall be added to Ticket 8

**TICKET 6: SYNOD COUNCIL, YOUTH, LAY MAN** Voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election. (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The Committee presented no nominations. There were no nominations from the floor.

Synod Council will be responsible for filling this position

**TICKET 7: SYNOD COUNCIL, YOUTH, LAY WOMAN** Voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election. (One to be elected for a term ending 2019)

The Committee nominated Ms Raine Bedeaux. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ms Bedeaux elected.

**TICKET 8: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee nominated Mr. Donald Gleiter. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Ticket 8 closed.

**TICKET 9: SYNOD COUNCIL, AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2020)

The Committee presented no nominations. There were no nominations from the floor.

Synod Council will be responsible for filling this position

**Committee on Discipline**

**TICKET 10: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY** (Two to be elected for a term ending 2022)

The Committee nominated the Rev. Moses Dennis and the Rev. Lynette Chapman. There were no nominations from the floor.

Bishop Burkat declared Pr. Dennis and Pr. Chapman elected.

**TICKET 11: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY WOMAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2022)

The Committee nominated Ms Charlene Jenkins. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Ms Jenkins elected.

**TICKET 12: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MAN** (One to be elected for a term ending 2022)

The Committee nominated Mr. Thomas Salber. There were no nominations from the floor. Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Salber elected.

Bishop Burkat thanked Pr. Tancredi, who was only recently named chair, for her report, and Pr. Regina D. Goodrich for her work as chair of this Committee earlier in the year.

### **Bishop's Address to the Synod Assembly**

Vice President Beasley introduced Bishop Burkat to the Assembly. "She loves Jesus and fights for the Church. Thank you for fighting for us and for loving God!"

### **A Vision for the Appointed Time**

For Such a Time as This – What time is it? The Appointed Time!!

As Bishop Burkat leaves office, there are many things that need to happen in this time:

We are celebrating 500 years since the Reformation. We are now at a time of Reformation of all we know as the Church. And it is coming whether we are ready or not!

+ Our Church needs to rally around a vision of how Christ is making himself known in this time.

A Reformation of the Church has been launched, whether we like it or not.

We need to stop worrying about the decline in the church's attendance – those who are here WANT to be here. We need to align ourselves with Christ and move forward.

+ We need to celebrate the Spirit in the lives of the people!

Too often we celebrate the history of our congregations, marking the terms of the pastors and the dates and size of the building projects. We need to look at the movement of the Spirit in the people of our congregations.

We need a portable vision, a portable faith, where we are working for Christ in the world.

We need to be collaborative and ecumenical, putting Christ first, and denominational identity lower.

We need to develop vibrant, visionary communities of faith, that move out into our neighborhoods in the power of the Spirit for the sake of others, not to build our membership.

+ We are an aging church

Never a time in history when 6 generations are living at the same time!

The oldest 3 generations planted the church of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; now the youngest 3 generations need to take hold of this brave new church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We need to intentionally raise up younger leaders, and more diverse leaders, including persons of color, for the future of the church.

+ Brave New Church

We need to find ways to engage the world, and particularly the younger generations, in new and different ways.

The Brave New Church initiative is designed to do just that. Through forums, podcasts, and blogposts conversations are being held between a diverse gathering of lay and clergy who are striving to find ways to approach this new time with fresh and innovative ideas.

+ Racial Reconciliation

We need to address the issues of racism and inequality all around us and within us.

We need to learn to truly listen to each other, and make our homes and congregations safe places for all people.

We need to make friends with someone who does not look like us, and be blessed in this!

Bishop Burkat concluded with these remarks – “The vision is this. I want us to arrive at next year’s Synod Assembly and be able to look back on the work we have begun here and say – yes, God’s work of reconciliation is being done here.

**You** are the ambassadors of Christ’s reconciliation. And **now** is the acceptable time.”

**United Lutheran Seminary**

The Rev. Dr. J. Jayakiran Sebastian, who is Dean of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and will continue in this role as the new United Lutheran Seminary begins, was joined by Leah Woehr-Grande, a member of final graduating class of LTSP from our own synod to share reflections on the coming United Lutheran Seminary. A video was presented.

**Portico Benefits**

Ms Barbara Debski, representing Portico Benefit Services, shared a video about the work of Portico and the work they do for leaders on the ELCA.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Leonard, Director of Contextual Education and Associate Professor of Practical Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, led the Assembly in prayer before the lunch break.

*The Assembly recessed for lunch.*

**Friday afternoon, May 5, 2017**

Deacon Rachel Bailey led the Assembly back into session with prayer.

**Report of the Committee on Elections**

The Rev. Rebecca Shanely, Chair of the Committee, made the report

Two ballots were distributed, Ticket 2, Synod Council, Clergy and Ticket 5, Synod Council, Lower Montgomery Conference Representative, Lay Man. On Ticket 2, the Assembly may vote for no more than three. On Ticket 5 the Assembly may vote for one.

The Rev. Gwendolyn King was recognized, and she asked if the biographies for the clergy nominated from the floor had been distributed.

When it was recognized that they had not been, Pr. Shanely declared that we would not count this ballot for Ticket 2, but will present a fresh ballot at a later time.

The Ballot for Ticket 5 was completed, and the pages collected the ballots for tabulation.

### **Report of the Treasurer**

Ms Janet Huber Neff, Treasurer of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, presented the Treasurer's Report and the Audit Report.

She referred the Assembly to the financial reports which had been distributed in the Bulletin of Reports. She noted the following items:

With regard to our Statement of Financial Position, assets vs. liabilities, we have significantly more assets than liabilities. Ms Neff noted we had contributions from sources other than congregational Mission Support that assisted with this. These sources included gifts to the Forward Together in Faith Campaign, Grants from the ELCA, undesignated and designated income, and income from trust funds. We also received money from selling the property of the former Redeemer, East Falls.

Congregational Mission Support has been decreasing over the years. In 2011, we received \$2,254,000 from congregations, where in 2016 we received \$1,851,000. 79 Congregations maintained or increased their financial support of the Synod.

Ms Neff described some of the places the money is used, pointing out that we do a great deal with the resources we have.

She shared that the Auditors found no concerns with our financial reports for the past fiscal year. She moved that the Assembly adopt the following resolution:

**S. A. 17.05.04 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly receives as information the report of the auditors of the synod's financial statements for the fiscal year ending 2016.**

Discussion followed.

The Rev. Lisa Jefferies, pastor of Emmaus Road, noted the decrease in Mission Support, and asked if there is any indication how many giving units this represents. Are there fewer giving units? Or are the regular givers contributing less?

Ms Neff replied that both are true. There are fewer congregations, and some of the continuing congregations are in the midst of building campaigns, or are adding staff or programs, and this sometimes affects what they are able to share with the Synod.

The Rev. Dr. Larry Smoose, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, commented that yes, congregations are experiencing financial struggles, but the “easy way” of dealing with this is to cut support to the Synod and the broader Church. We encourage congregations to model good stewardship practices for their members, placing resources where it is part of our vision.

As there was no further discussion, the vote was taken.

The Assembly adopted the resolution.

### **Consideration of the Budget**

Ms Sue Massey, Chair of the Finance Committee, joined Ms Neff to present the proposed budget for 2018.

Ms Massey shared that these continue to be times of financial uncertainty in many of our congregations. But she has had something running in her mind: “The Lord will provide. But the Lord needs us to be faithful.” And with this, she has focused on the verse from scripture that says “Do not worry about your life, for the Lord knows what you need.” With this assurance, and this challenge, she is convinced we can do the work before us as a Synod.

Ms Massey shared via Power Point presentation the basics of the budget.

Total anticipated receipts from all sources:	\$2,716,175
Total anticipated expenses in all areas:	2,775,327
Anticipated deficit	\$ (59,152)

Ms Massey put the following resolution before the Assembly:

**S. A. 17.05.05 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly adopts the 2018 budget as presented.**

The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.

Bishop Burkat thanked Ms Neff and Ms Massey for their faithful work with our finances.

### **Keynote Presentation**

Ms Judith Roberts, ELCA Program Director, Racial Justice was the Keynote speaker.

Ms Roberts said she was glad to be back in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

She commented she is standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Her grandfather, CC Bryant, was president of the NAACP and was active in the work for civil rights. But for Judith, he was a person of faith - willing to lay down his life for his friends. She is very proud that there is a marker to commemorating him on the Freedom Trail in Mississippi.

Ms Roberts noted she has several desired outcomes for this time together.

1. That we learn some common language for talking about racial equity and inclusion
2. That we gain an understanding of different levels of racism
3. That we consider next steps in confronting racism

To make this time most effective we will all:

- Need to participate
- Listen well for deep understanding

- See other's points of view
- Be fully present

We are joined in our Baptismal covenant. We are joined in, and by Jesus. Jesus' justice was always interpersonal. In his justice work Jesus included people, challenged people, confronted people, and advocated for people.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a Social Statement – Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture. The work of the church in Racial Justice is informed by this statement. We are involved in many Ethnic Specific ministries. Among the efforts we are making, the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice is a ministry where white people are working to meet the needs of ending racism and joining people together.

Ms Roberts cited two websites, <http://colorlines.com/> and <https://www.raceforward.org>, that members of the Assembly may find helpful. The Women of the ELCA also has excellent information and materials available.

Ms Roberts then directed the Assembly in conversation. She asked members to turn to one another in groups of two or three. She encouraged members to tell their own stories, while listening deeply to the stories of our neighbor. The structure for this conversation was

- Describe your racial or ethnic background
- Who were your people growing up – those “inside your fish bowl”
- Who were people outside your bowl – those with whom you did not come in contact

Following the time of sharing, Ms Roberts asked, “What is Race? Is Racism real? Race is a human made construct, but racism is very real.” She noted that if you can keep people separated by social construction – by color and ethnicity – then we create a way in which some are considered inferior or superior. When it comes to the science behind race, color is only about how we can be protected by the sun. In genetic studies we all have one particular marker as human beings, and we have migrated all over the world.

In these social constructs we have committed crimes against humanity. The “Doctrine of Discovery” was a construct that was sanctioned by the church, and used to allow the taking of land, or selling of persons, because “we” (white Christians) are the true humans, and “they” (native Americans, Africans, other people of color) are inferior.

Often people will say “I don't see color.” The problem is not seeing color. To say “I don't see color” becomes a way of either denying the reality of your experience, or denying the reality of the life situation of the person before you. The problem is not seeing color, it is a problem how we use color to keep others down.

The work for Racial Justice is not just a Civil Rights Movement issue, or something that happened “back then.” We are still seeing accumulated privileges for whites and accumulated disadvantages for persons of color. We are called to the ongoing work for equity, love and justice. In Galatians 3:28 Paul writes, “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.” Or In the

words of Cornell West, “Justice is what love looks like in public.” Parents are our first teachers. What happens at home is critical in forming both our identity and how we view others.

There are different levels of racism. There is racism on the Micro level. This is the effects of racism that are internalized and interpersonal. And there is racism on the Macro level. This is racism that is corporate and structural. Privilege and oppression are two sides of the same coin.

Institutional racism is discrimination within institutions where there are unfair policies and practices that lead to inequitable opportunities based on race.

Structural Racism is racial bias across institutions and society; the cumulative and compounded effects of an array of factors that systemically provide advantages based on race

What can you do?

Be active in racial healing. Create support groups. Get involved in mentoring and counseling. Build relationships with people who are not like you. Reach out and celebrate historically black churches. Take a stand. Take action. Be about the work of racial reconciliation and racial justice.

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

As the biographical information for those nominated from the floor had been made available, the Rev. Rebecca Shanely had the pages distribute fresh ballots for Ticket 2, Synod Council, Clergy. The Assembly was instructed to vote for no more than three persons. When the balloting was completed Pr. Shanely had the pages collect the ballots for tabulation.

### **Recognition of Anniversary Celebrants**

The Bishop recognized those rostered leaders who are celebrating significant anniversaries of their ordination or consecration.

Those celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

- The Rev. David Deal
- The Rev. Edward Neiderhiser
- The Rev. George Loewer
- The Rev. John W. Carlson
- The Rev. Richard Connor, Sr.
- The Rev. Rodney S. Kopp

Those celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

- The Rev. Barbara Barry Bailey
- The Rev. Donna M. Wright
- The Rev. Mark R. Singh-Hueter
- The Rev. R. Don Wright
- The Rev. Violet Little

The Bishop then recognized congregation that are celebrating significant anniversaries (100 years and above, in 25 year increments) this year.

- 225<sup>th</sup> Immanuel Lutheran Church (Somerton), Philadelphia
- 175<sup>th</sup> Trinity Lutheran Church, Philadelphia
- 150<sup>th</sup> St. John Lutheran Church (Mayfair), Philadelphia
- 125<sup>th</sup> Trinity Lutheran Church, Perkasio
- St. Mark Lutheran Church, Conshohocken
- 100<sup>th</sup> Zion Lutheran Church, Bristol
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Southampton

The Rev. Kris Chandler noted that Trinity Lutheran Church, Fort Washington, is also celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

The Rev. Bryan Penman noted that St. Mark, Conshohocken is not celebrating their 125<sup>th</sup> this year; he was also contacted by the ELCA, but the date the Churchwide office has is incorrect.

### **Stewardship Word**

The Rev. Mukesh Cheedie was invited forward to share information with the Assembly. He noted that there are three pastors which have been trained by the ELCA to assist congregations in the areas of stewardship and discipleship. Congregations are invited and encouraged to reach out to these individuals. They are very willing to work with you. The three pastors that received this training and designation are the Rev. Karen Sease of Grace, Pottstown and the Rev. Timothy Ness of St. Mark, Clifton Heights in the area of stewardship, and the Rev. Mukesh Cheedie in the area of discipleship.

The Rev. Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility and interim pastor at Trinity, Perkasio, led the Assembly in prayer. The Assembly was then dismissed to forums and dinner.

*The Assembly recessed for forums and dinner.*

### **Friday evening, May 5, 2017**

Bp. Burkat announced that Floyd, the sexton and a faithful member of the Franconia Mennonite Center, died this morning as he was setting for our event. His wife Monique also works here. Floyd was a great man of faith, very well loved, and we give thanks to God that he has claimed his baptismal promise. He has been our “go to” guy for the past 18 years that we have been coming here.

The Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey led the Assembly back into session with prayer.

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

The Rev. Rebecca Shanely shared the results of the previous balloting:

Ticket 2, Synod Council, Clergy	
Total Ballots cast -	369
Total Valid Ballots cast -	369
Total Invalid Ballots -	0
Ballots needed to Elect -	185

The Rev. Christopher McKinstry	259
The Rev. Lydia Posselt	234
The Rev. Serena Sellers	208
The Rev. Norbert Hahn	173
The Rev. Sarah Stobie	172

Bishop Burkat declared Pastors McKinstry, Posselt, and Sellers elected.

Ticket 5, Synod Council, Lower Montgomery Conference, Lay Male

Total Ballots cast -	317
Total Valid Ballots cast -	316
Total Invalid Ballots -	1
Ballots needed to Elect -	159

Mr. Henry Geyer	173
Mr. Albert Glenn	143

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Henry Geyer elected.

Pr. Shanely stated that Mr. Albert Glenn would move forward to Ticket 8, Synod Council, Lay Male at Large.

The ballots for Ticket 8 were distributed at this time. When the balloting was completed, the pages collected the ballots for tabulation.

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

The Rev. Raymond Miller presented the following resolution, which the Committee on Reference and Counsel recommended for adoption:

#### **Support of Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees**

**Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Social Statement “For Peace in God’s World” states that “through the cross of Christ, God calls us to serve the needs of our neighbor, especially of those groups and individuals who suffer and are vulnerable” (pg. 6) and that, on the basis of our faith, “we pledge to continue our church’s historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants” (pg. 21).;**

**Whereas the ELCA Social Message on Immigration states that even though we “recognize the obstacles and difficulties our church and society face in welcoming newcomers” (pg. 1), those difficulties only “deepens our belief that ‘all people are God’s creatures, sinners for whom Christ died’ and our responsibility to respect the human dignity of all” (pg. 1);**

**Whereas the ELCA Social Message on Immigration continues by stating that “immigration, refugee, and asylum policies express who we are as a nation, influence the nation’s future character, and affect the lives of millions of people. We encourage our**

**members, in light of our history and our ministry with newcomers, to join with other citizens in our democratic society to support just laws that serve the common good” (pg. 6);**

**Whereas Lutheran Children and Family Services, Pennsylvania’s largest refugee resettlement program, had to shut down in 2016 due to “unpredictable state and local funding, coupled with reimbursement that didn’t cover the true cost of service contributed to mounting deficit,” as stated on Lutheran Children and Family Services’ website;**

**Whereas Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) has issued statements strongly opposing the Trump Administration’s actions regarding refugees and migrants, stating that these actions “prevent us from undertaking life-saving work during the most critical time for refugees and displaced persons in human history.”;**

**Whereas ELCA Presiding Bishop, the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, issued a pastoral message in response to “President Trump’s refugee executive order” urging “ELCA congregations into learning, prayer and action on behalf of those who seek refuge on our shores”; and**

**Whereas the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Synod is a leader in the ELCA in working on behalf of our neighbors in need; now,**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod:**

- 1. reaffirm the ELCA Social Message on Immigration;**
- 2. follow the guidance of ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton by recommending resources for learning and faithful guidance about immigration and refugee services to ministers and congregations;**
- 3. urge ministers, congregations, and members to use their Christian freedom to act on behalf of neighbors, including immigrants and refugees; and**
- 4. urge ministers, congregations, and members to contact elected officials concerning their beliefs related to immigration and refugee policies.**

The Rev. Tyler Rasmussen, Trinity, Pleasant Valley, addressed the Assembly on behalf of the Upper Bucks Conference expanding on the reason for the resolution, taking a stand against the current policies that are working against our neighbors.

Mr. Tom Salber, Prince of Peace, Philadelphia, spoke in favor of the resolution: I totally support this. We have a flagship ministry in our congregation related to this issue – “Welcome Home” which is helping with refugee resettlement.

The Rev. Lynette Chapman, Trinity, Quakertown, proposed an amendment to the Resolution. She stated, “We have discovered the LIRS has composed a similar resolution which was not completed in time for this Assembly. We would like to amend our resolution to include some of LIRS’s language.”

Pastor Chapman moved to amend by addition to the 3<sup>rd</sup> resolved – “offering welcome and hospitality, and to support the work of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other similar ministries;”

The Assembly adopted the Amendment.

Deacon Beth Barkhau, Reformation, Media, moved to amend points 3 and 4 of the resolution by substitution: Urge ~~ministers~~ pastors and deacons, congregations and ~~members~~ all God's children

The Assembly adopted the Amendment.

Mr. Robert Warner, Good Shepherd, Southampton, asked for a point of clarification. He stated he is being asked to vote to affirm something he does not know about.

It was shared that the supporting documents are available on the app the Synod used to post the Assembly materials.

The resolution as amended was placed before the Assembly for a vote:

**S. A. 17.05.06 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod:**

- 1. reaffirm the ELCA Social Message on Immigration;**
- 2. follow the guidance of ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton by recommending resources for learning and faithful guidance about immigration and refugee services to ministers and congregations;**
- 3. urge pastors and deacons, congregations, and all God's children to use their Christian freedom to act on behalf of neighbors, including immigrants and refugees, offering welcome and hospitality, and to support the work of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other similar ministries; and**
- 4. urge pastors and deacons, congregations, and all God's children to contact elected officials concerning their beliefs related to immigration and refugee policies.**

The Assembly adopted the resolution.

### **Introduction of Candidates for Rostered Ministry**

Deacon Allison Wilcox, Director of Candidacy, thanked the members of the Candidacy Committee, noting particularly those members who are departing the committee.

Mr. Fred Renigar, chair of the Candidacy Committee, introduced the candidates. Before his introductions he shared some that nationally there is a great shortage of clergy in the church. Last year the whole ELCA only graduated 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the clergy we need for the number of congregations that are in search of leaders. Mr. Renigar asked the Assembly to speak about this need, keep your hearts and eyes open, speak with your pastor about persons with gifts, and raise up leaders from your congregations.

He then introduced the following persons. Ms Shirley Keiter was not able to be present.

- + Shirley Keiter – from SEPA Synod – assigned to SEPA Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and service
- + Deacon Rachel Bailey – from SEPA Synod – chaplain at Seasons Hospice of PA, just installed as a Minister of Word and Service

- + Louis Tillman, IV – from Southeast Synod – assigned to SEPA Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and sacrament
- + Micah Krey – from SEPA Synod – assigned to DE/MD Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and sacrament
- + Leah Woehr-Grande – from SEPA Synod – assigned to East-Central Wisconsin Synod, awaiting a call to the ministry of word and sacrament
- + Pastor Chris Glod – from SEPA Synod – visitation pastor at Trinity Lansdale, Minister of Word and Sacrament

**Evening Prayer** was led by members of the Synod Assembly Worship Team

*The Assembly recessed for the evening.*

**Saturday morning, May 6, 2017**

### **Worship**

The Rev, Carlton Rodgers, Tabernacle, Philadelphia and Dean of the Central Philadelphia Conference, and the Rev. Erika Wesch, Little Zion, Telford led the Assembly in worship. They led those gathered in a time of deep reflection and confession around the ways in which we all harm our neighbor and play a role in the ongoing racial tension in our society. Anointing stations were available for individual prayer and absolution as participants felt moved to receive such anointing. The choir from Silver Springs – Martin Luther School provided a moving anthem as part of the worship experience.

### **Report of the Vice President**

Bishop Burkat introduced Vice President Tracey A. Beasley, and commented on how good it is for Tracey to be with us this year, after she was unable to attend our last Assembly due to illness. Bishop Burkat also informed members of the Assembly that Ms Beasley had been on the ballot at the Churchwide Assembly for Vice President of the E.L.C.A. While she was not elected, she made us proud, as she serves the Church well every day.

Vice President Beasley began by thanking the Assembly for re-electing her as our Vice President.

She extended thanks to two people who have been a tremendous help to her as Vice President of the Synod, Bishop Claire Burkat and Ms Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations of our Synod. And she expressed her thanks to Bishop Burkat and Ms Susan Pursch for their support, guidance, and advice as she was being considered for the position of Vice President of the E.L.C.A.

Ms Beasley also thanked the Synod Council. She noted there are 62 pages of the Synod Council report – “We have been BUSY! Talk to them about what we have been about!”

Ms Beasley thanked all the sites that hosted the Synod Council this year for their hospitality, support, and food! Thank you to the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia; St Andrew Lutheran, Perkasio; Living Word Lutheran, Roslyn; University Lutheran, Philadelphia; and St. John Lutheran, Blue Bell.

She also thanked all the Deans, particularly those who hosted the Council on their territory, and especially Pr. Julie DeWerth, who was with us three times this year!

Vice President Beasley stated “Ministry can’t be just about the building. Look at all we have done this year, and seen this year.” She then went on to highlight several innovative ministries that have occurred across our Synod in this past year.

Pr. Tom Russert of St. Paul’s, Doylestown, has been offering free prayer in a coffee shop on Thursdays. There are 300 – 650 people in Starbucks each day. How many of them can we minister to in a day? We need to take ministry beyond the walls. What about in a movie theater, a gym, a barber shop?

Ms Beasley quoted Psalm 150 – “Praise the Lord, praise God in the sanctuary, let everything that has breath praise Lord!”

Every Thursday for 20 years at 5:00 pm Holy Communion, Philadelphia has hosted Jazz Vespers. The point of jazz vespers is to see that God reaches us where we are!

St. Mark, Conshohocken has been holding “Dinner Church” every Thursday. They gather in the auditorium, not even in the sanctuary! They read scriptures and talk about how the Word of God speaks to their everyday life.

SEPA Synod, we feed the hungry! Spirit and Truth worship center provides a meal each week at the Life Center of Delaware County. It costs \$120 to feed 70 people. You can help them to do this!

In a collaborative approach to service, Grace, Philadelphia, and Holy Trinity, Narberth, come together to distribute meals to the homeless.

When it comes to the work before us, “God has a plan, and SEPA, you are it!” “Let all that has breath, Praise the Lord. Hallelujah!”

Following her celebration of the work we do in this Synod, the Vice President noted that next year we will be electing a new Bishop to lead us in ministry. She gave a review of the process for the election of the new Bishop.

There are three teams that will be a part of our process; a Transition Team that will develop a Ministry Profile of the Synod; a Discernment Team that will determine a prayer-filled way to consider what types of gifts/skills might be helpful to meet the needs referenced in the Profile, and raise up names of people who might possess such gifts; and a Team that will run the actual process of the election at next year’s Assembly.

The Synod Council has appointed chairpersons for each of these teams:

Transition – Ms Pat Robertson and Ms Julie Kinzel

Discernment – Ms Tracey A. Beasley

Committee on Bishop Election – Ms Christine Simpson

People who have an interest in serving on one of these teams are encouraged to submit their name and information to Vice President Beasley by May 10<sup>th</sup> for consideration by the Executive Committee.

Ms Beasley encouraged us all to be in prayer throughout this year as we move forward in this process to discern who will be our next Bishop. She then asked the Rev. Patricia Davenport to pray for our current Bishop, Claire Burkat, and the process we are entering.

### **SEPA Anti-Racism Team**

The Rev. Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission for SEPA Synod, introduced the Synod's Anti-Racism Team for a presentation.

The Rev. Dr. Susie Folks began the presentation by sharing two videos which show the depths of systemic racial bias in our own area. One was on housing practices in Levittown, PA from 1947 – 1951, in which there was a deliberate and intentional exclusion of persons of color from purchasing homes in this new “ideal” community. The second was a video on racism today, displaying how “Racism is Real.”

Dr. Folks continued the presentation, noting that at the 2011 Synod Assembly we passed a resolution in which we said, “this Synod will claim and practice an anti-racism mentality, and actively seek full participation in its ministries, and train in anti-racism training.”

She challenged us all to consider how we are living out this resolution. The Anti-Racism Team is willing to go to congregations to help them address these issues. Are you going to live out your baptismal covenant with God? Are we going to work on this not? Sometimes we hear and cry, and then go to lunch. It is fine to go to lunch, as long as after lunch, we do something!

### **Report from the Church-wide Office of the ELCA**

Ms Judith Roberts presented the Church-wide Report to the Assembly. She began by sharing a video from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton which included, among other points, that the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment is not just don't kill, but do not harm your neighbor! We are called not to “do no harm,” but also to help our neighbor in every possible way.

Ms Roberts noted that the Lutheran movement is a world-wide movement. This became clear to her at a time when she was in Wittenberg, Germany, and heard the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Malaysia making a presentation. Our focus on the free gift of grace has been proclaimed and received around the world. We are celebrating 500 years of this movement.

We are a Church in three expressions – Congregations, Synods, and the Church-wide Organization. Your giving supports all these expressions. Congregational partnership support given through SEPA Synod and shared with the Church-wide Organization came to over \$900,000 this past year. Thank you for that gift!

As we commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, there are many resources available. For more information congregations may see the website [ELCA500.org](http://ELCA500.org). Rick Steves

has also made a video of Luther and the Reformation which is available for all congregations as they explore again some of the actions that led to where we are today.

The ELCA is engaged in a strategic initiative entitled, “Called Forward Together.” The directions of this initiative include ways for us to be a thriving church spreading the Gospel to all people. We are Called Forward Together to be:

1. A church equipping people
2. An inviting church
3. A visible church
4. A well governed church, connected and sustainable

Some of the areas to which your offerings have been directed include:

Leadership Development and a reworked candidacy process have been a focus of the Church-wide organization.

Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations have also been a priority. It was wonderful to witness the ongoing development of Lutheran-Catholic relations, culminating with the joint prayer service in Lund, Sweden, at which Pope Francis worshipped and prayed with members of the Lutheran World Federation. Lutheran Muslim relations have been highlighted, and the ELCA has made rapid response to anti-Muslim bigotry. Relationships with Historic Black Church organizations, particularly with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, have been an area of intentional conversation and cooperation.

AMMPARO – Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities – is an initiative aimed at caring for so many in our society who are among the most vulnerable.

The ELCA Foundation works to help with gift planning for fueling future ministry. Yvonne Lembo works in SEPA Synod for the Foundation.

We are engaged in theological discernment, and are considering issues related to Women in Ministry, and we are working to develop a social message on Human Rights.

The “Always Being Made New” Campaign has, after three years, raised \$113 million. As part of this Campaign we have been strengthening the World Hunger Appeal. In 2016 \$21.9 million was contributed to this important work. From SEPA Synod over \$29,000 has been given to the World Hunger Appeal. It is important to note that in addition to the World Hunger Offerings each year, SEPA synod will be sharing 10% of our Forward Together in Faith Campaign with the ELCA Campaign.

We as a Church continue to work to build resilient communities through sustainable development and health –system resourcing.

We are expressing our concern and support for the deaf community. SEPA Synod’s own Christ the King deaf church provides cell phones for deaf inmates at Graterford prison.

We continue to support and encourage the Young Adults in Global Mission program. We encourage and provide missionary sponsorships. The International Women’s leaders program supports 100 global women in short or long term educational and networking opportunities.

These are just some of the many ways we work together as Congregations, Synods, and the Church-wide Organization to make an impact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As an encouragement to rostered leaders, Ms Roberts also made an appeal that they attend the first Rostered Ministers gathering in Atlanta, GA this August. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Dr. James Forbes, and Rachel Held Evans will be among the featured speakers.

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

The Rev. Rebecca Shanely shared the results of the previous balloting:

Ticket 8, Synod Council, Lay Male at Large

Total Ballots cast -	221
Total Valid Ballots cast -	221
Total Invalid Ballots -	0
Ballots needed to Elect -	111
Mr. Albert Glenn	139
Mr. Donald Gleiter	82

Bishop Burkat declared Mr. Albert Glenn elected.

Pr. Shanely stated that this concluded our elections for this Assembly. She thanked her team for all their dedication in preparing, distributing and tabulating the many ballots.

### **Forward Together in Faith**

The Rev. Timothy Johansen of Temple, Havertown shared information about the ongoing Forward Together in Faith Campaign. He began by sharing a video regarding the Campaign. Pr. Johansen said “It is a fun and exciting time to be the church. It is hard, but there is also growth.”

He noted three different eras in the life of the Church:

1. The glory days of the 1950s when “everyone” went to church!
2. The 80s and 90s, a time when things were dwindling, but if we only keep going maybe things will get better. We were asking the wrong questions, but were supported by money from the good old days.
3. Today, when things are noticeably different. We are in a time when we are asking the right questions, but now our financial resources and partnership support are diminishing.

The Forward Together in Faith Campaign will give us the money to fund these new ideas.

This Campaign has four areas of focus: Networking; Communicating; Equipping; Innovating. We are already using gifts to the Campaign to empower congregations in these areas.

- Networking – DeafCAN by Christ the King Lutheran Church of the Deaf

- Equipping – MAP study (Ministry Assessment Profile) allows leaders to identify what the needs are for ministry in their congregational context
- Communicating – We need to revisit how we share the story outside the church walls, especially through up to date websites and interactive social media. The Communications team has people ready to come and do a communications assessment in your congregation.
- Innovating- Together as a synod we can plant new worshipping communities in the areas of the greatest missional need. This campaign will also provide grants to support creative, collaborative and innovative planning by congregations with ideas that can be shared throughout the Synod and the ELCA.

Bishop Burkat and the campaign teams have worked hard to raise funds to make this endowment a reality for future generations. This will be a parting gift from our bishop as she leaves office next year. We can make this happen as we share generously.

Pr. Johansen thanked all congregations and people who have pledged or given to the appeal. He encouraged people and congregations to make a significant gift, one that would “take your breath away,” to breathe new life into the ministry we do in Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. He then had pledge cards distributed so that all can make a “pledge that will take your breath away.”

### **SEPA Anti-Racism Team – second presentation**

The presentation began with a Video from the Rev. Dane Skilbred, formerly of Trinity, Lansdale, in which he read a poem “Guilt to Love.”

Ms Jane Bischoff from Prince of Peace, Philadelphia, and member of the Anti-Racism Team spoke, citing words from our Order of Confession and Forgiveness. We confess “what we have done, and what we have left undone.” It is precisely what we have left undone that we must address. The ELCA is the least diverse denomination in the nation. And we are not just the least diverse of any other protestant group, but the least diverse of ANY religious group.

We would never identify ourselves as racist. But we are not aware of how much implicit bias we carry around. We need to confess that we are a white culture that has built our society on the backs of people of color – the African, the Native peoples from whom we stole this land. We need to confess that we turn a blind eye to the inequity in incarceration. We don’t have racism without racists! WE are responsible for what we do not know, for what we have left undone. We need to develop diverse cultural relationships; we need to give up our rugged individualism.

The Rev. Christopher Weidner then spoke. He shared a song about a little bird that he sang every morning to his children, and now to his grandchildren. When he sings it, they know he is nearby. When he sings it, they know it is a new morning.

He said, “I wake up, beginning to open my eyes to the unknown effects of privilege and realize I am being called to wake up and begin this new day with more awareness and open eyes to the needs of others. I can’t wake up on my own. I need a “little bird.” We need each other to wake us up. To do this well, we need the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints. Let us hear the bird sing to us, and wake up, Church.”

The Rev. Dr. Susie Folks stated that when the team was reconstituted it was given the name Racial Justice Team, but they still claim the name Anti-Racism Team, because that is the work they are about. "Please call on us to come to your congregation and we will work with you!"

### **Vote to extend session**

Bishop Burkat shared with the Assembly that there was minimal work left before them. She asked if it would be agreeable to the whole to extend the business of the day, and conclude with lunch, rather than follow the Order of the Day approved as we began our time together.

The Assembly voted to extend the session.

### **50 year anniversary celebrations**

Four pastors have reached the milestone of the fiftieth anniversary of their ordinations. Two of them, the Rev. Fredrick Hopke and the Rev. Ralph E. Peterson were not able to be with us at the Assembly. Bishop Burkat expressed her thanks for their service.

Bishop Burkat invited the Rev. Roy Almquist, former Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, to address the Assembly.

Bishop Almquist came forward, and invited his wife, Shannon to join him. Reflecting on 50 years he quipped "the greatest thing is to live that long!" He said "The clichés are all true." He then shared how a few of these clichés played out in his ministry. "Sometimes you get the bear, and sometimes the bear gets you." Sometimes ministry is just good luck. But sometimes the work is affected by what you bring to the congregation. "93% of success is showing up regularly." "They don't care what you know, until they know that you care." "You must join the system." You have to see yourself in the pew. If you see the congregation as "them" you will never be successful. "You are only as good as the people around you." My best partner is the woman next to me, my wife, Shannon.

Bishop Burkat invited the Rev. Robert Linders, who has served St. Paul's Doylestown for 40 of his 50 years of ministry, to address the Assembly.

Pastor Linders was pleased to invite his daughter Brooke to join him as his wife Debbie was in Florida. Then he addressed the assembly

"What do I say to encourage those younger than I am when the news says the church is on its last legs? Here are a few thoughts. A preacher who is not a pastor is remote. A pastor who is not a preacher is petty. Get into the people's homes. It is the personal touch that gets people connected. Then read a lot. Write early in the week. Religious language is as out of place in a sermon as botanical languages is out of place in the garden. One needs to make the message of the Gospel understandable for the people of today."

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

### **Resolution of Thanks**

The Rev. Raymond Miller brought forward the following resolution, which was adopted by acclamation:

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 which bless the people of God to do God's work with our hands,

**S. A. 17.05.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we offer our appreciation and thankful applause:**

**To our keynote speaker and ELCA Churchwide Representative, Ms. Judith Roberts;**

**To Ms. Prairie Rose Seminole from the Churchwide Office, who led a forum on the "Doctrine of Discovery;"**

**To this Synod's Anti-Racism Team for its vital leadership;**

**To the Franconia Mennonite Church for their unfailing hospitality;**

**To all participants from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who offered their energy, skills, and time to prepare for, plan, arrange, and attend this assembly;**

**Let us express our immense gratitude.**

#### **Synodical Organization of the Women of the ELCA**

Ms Joy Grace, member of St. Matthew, Springfield and Synodical President of the Women of the ELCA, shared the numbers of the ingathering received at the Assembly.

There were 588 quilts, 310 personal health care kits, 268 school kits, 14 fabric kits, 48 baby kits, 42 blankets and afghans, 50 soaps donated by the congregations of the Synod.

Bishop Burkat led a prayer of thanks and appreciation for the ingathering.

Ms Grace expressed her thanks for the tremendous support given to this effort.

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

Ms Cynta Outterbridge presented the final report of the registrar.

**Total voting membership, 488;** total number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call, 175; total number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament voting, 16; total number of ministers of Word and Service under call, 11; total number of retired ministers of Word and Service voting, 5; total number of lay voting members certified, including council members, youth, and young adults, 279; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in the previous total, 71; percent of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 15%; number of female lay voting members, 120; number of male lay voting members, 106; number of youth/young adults members, 15.

**Total registered (actually in attendance) voting membership, 424;** number of ministers of Word and Sacrament under call registered, 149; number of retired voting ministers of Word and Sacrament registered, 18; number of ministers of Word and Service under call registered, 6; number of retired ministers of Word and Service registered, 2; number of lay voting members registered, including council members, youth, and young adults, 249; total number of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" in previous total, 71; percent

of "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" of total voting membership, 17%; total number of visitors and guests registered, 75.

Bishop Burkat thanked Ms Outterbridge, and announced that the thirty-first annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be held May 4 & 5, 2018.

### **Recognition and Installation of the Synod Council**

Bishop Burkat thanked the following outgoing members of Synod Council: Mr. Wynne Fisher, Mr. Donald Gleiter, Ms. Lucille Hall, Pr. Jane Marston, Ms. Sue Massey, Pr. Bryan Penman, Mr. Rod Rothermel, and Mr. Henry Strobel, and installed those members who had been elected at this Assembly.

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

Bishop Burkat led the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The thirtieth annual Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

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

*Approved by Synod Council, September 14, 2017*

**MINUTES  
of the 146<sup>th</sup> MEETING  
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL  
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA  
June 8, 2017**

The Reverend Dr. Norbert Hahn, host pastor, brought greetings and described the ministry of Immanuel, which is a bilingual worship community that is working on building stronger connections with the area community.

Bishop Burkat announced a prayer request for the Reverend Dr. Richard Stewart. Dr. Stewart fell while travelling in Namibia, injuring his leg which then became infected. He remains overseas during this time of healing.

The Reverend Dr. Paul Sorcek, Dean of Lower Bucks Conference, led the Synod Council in devotions.

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley called the 146<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SEPA Synod Council to order at 4:22 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 145<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council were approved with following corrections from Vice President Beasley: on page 5, paragraph 2, she clarified it was the African Descent Lutheran Strategy Team, not the African Descent Lutheran Association that was discussed. She also wanted to be clear that it was for the ADL Strategy Team meeting, not the Church Council meeting, that she was in Chicago, and that the ADL Strategy Team and the Multicultural Desk were asked to write the apology to the African Descent community.

## **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda with the addition of a report on the Forward Together in Faith Campaign following the Treasurers Report.

## **BISHOP'S REPORT**

### **Re-election of Synod Vice President**

Bishop Burkat thanked Vice President Beasley for serving again as vice president.

### **Newly Elected Synod Council Members**

Bishop Burkat welcomed each of the newly elected synod council members.

### **2017 Synod Assembly**

Bishop Burkat noted the time and effort it took to plan an Assembly on the theme of racial justice, resulting in eleven times when people had a chance to interact on the topic of racial justice throughout the Assembly.

### **Updates on the Sale of Properties**

Bishop Burkat noted that the properties of the former First, Collingdale and the former St. John's, Pottstown have both been sold, and the property of the former St. Michael's, Germantown has been listed for sale.

### **Northeastern Diocese of Tanzania Trip**

Bishop Burkat noted that she, along with the Reverend Brad Burke, Assistant to the Bishop, and Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations, will be traveling to Tanzania later this month. As the Bishop will be away, the Synod Council needs to appoint an acting Bishop in her absence.

**S.C.17.06.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoint the Reverend Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission, as acting Bishop during the time while Bishop Burkat is in Africa.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

### **United Lutheran Seminary**

Bishop Burkat said that she has invested a lot of time and energy to help the seminary get to this point. She is glad that we have gotten to the point where we are, and she'll be welcoming the new president of United Lutheran Seminary when she returns from Tanzania.

### **Actions on the roster**

The motion to call the Reverend Suzanne Marie Spaulding to serve at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Ferndale, has been postponed due to the postponement of the vote by St. Luke's.

*Calls to Interim Ministry*

**S.C.17.06.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Arlene Greenwald to interim ministry at Messiah Lutheran Church in Downingtown, PA beginning May 1, 2017, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Greenwald resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C.17.06.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend J. Christian McMullan to interim ministry at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Lafayette Hill, PA beginning July 1, 2017, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor McMullan resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

*On Leave from Call*

**S.C.17.06.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Suzanne M. Rigg on leave from call status, 3rd year, effective June 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

*Retirement Requests*

**S.C.17.06.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Richard M. Connor retirement status effective June 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C.17.06.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Barbara Berry-Bailey retirement status effective July 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C.17.06.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Gerald W. Faust retirement status effective July 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C.17.06.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Karl D. Krueger retirement status effective July 1, 2017**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C.17.06.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Kathie Afflerbach retirement status effective July 1, 2017**  
The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

**S.C.17.06.10. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Paul H. Neff retirement status effective November 1, 2017**  
The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

### **Information Not Requiring Action**

#### *Transfers*

The Reverend Marjorie J. Neal to Florida-Bahama Synod effective May 19, 2017

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Vice President Beasley welcomed the new Synod Council members and thanked those members who helped at Synod Assembly.

She would like the Synod Council to know that we will be aiming to start on time in the future, and reminded them of the attendance requirements as stipulated in the Constitution. She also noted that the Executive Committee is requesting all Synod Council members to sign a confidentiality sheet. In addition, she noted that it is a practice that all chairs of committees of the Synod Council be on Synod Council.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Patricia Davenport spoke on the theme of Synod Assembly on racial justice. She noticed that the Assembly opened people up to repentance and reconciliation, as well as prayer, giving people the opportunity to open up and speak to pain and regret they had been carrying for years. Pastor Davenport also noted that the history of racism that helped people see how we got to where we are, particularly the local history, opened people up to ask for and receive forgiveness from one another. She noted hopes that the Kingdom of God will be strengthened in our Synod through our growing diversity.

Ms. Emily Fowler asked what the purpose of the Synod's anti-racism team is. Pr. Davenport said that it is to open up the people of our congregations to the other.

Multiple members of Synod Council noted that the people in their congregations very much appreciated the topic and the way the conversation was handled. It was noted that this topic was not a one-time thing, but a launching point for the whole Synod to address the issue more deeply and fully going forward. Pr. Davenport noted that the Synod Council will have anti-racism training and that the Churchwide body recommends that every Synod revisit this issue every two years.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Pr. Tyler Rasmussen noted Pr. Karl Richard's apology for his absence at today's meeting. He then brought forward the following resolutions from the Secretary's written report.

To affirm the email poll which had been taken between the last meeting of the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly regarding appointment of a chairperson for the Committee on Bishop's election,

**S.C.17.06.11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirm the appointment of Ms. Christine Simpson as Chair of the Committee of Bishop Elections.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

To fill an open position on the Synod Council not filled at the Synod Assembly,

**S.C.17.06.12. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council appoint Nicholas Jacob Gentile as Lay Male Youth Representative on the Synod Council, term ending 2019.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

## **TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Janet Neff, Treasurer, highlighted that we have an increase in our mission support at this point in the year. She also noted the sale of properties and unrealized investment gains, among other items noted in her written report. In the expenses related to the Forward Together in Faith Campaign Ms. Neff clarified that the recipient of the \$2,000 scholarship was St. Mark's in Conshohocken.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Forward Together in Faith**

Vice President Beasley gave updates on the campaign, noting that our current campaign total is \$581,909. Bishop Burkat noted that we are about a year behind where we projected ourselves to be at this point, but many congregations are just now making 3-year pledges even though the campaign formally ends next year.

## **COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS**

Vice President Beasley described the committees of the Synod Council with the assistance of people on Synod Council who have been on those committees in the past. She invited the members of Synod Council to fill out a form marking their top three requests of committees on which they would prefer to serve.

### **Executive Committee**

The following people were nominated and accepted the nomination as lay male representative: Mr. Emanuel Alves. The Synod Council elected Mr. Alves.

The following people were nominated and accepted the nomination as lay female representative: Ms. Susan Pursch, Ms. Sandra Zimmermann, and Ms. Lisa Hand. The Synod Council elected Ms. Hand.

The following people were nominated and accepted the nomination as pastor representative: Pr. Christopher McKinstry, Pr. Laura Tancredi, Pr. Serena Sellers, and Pr. Lydia Posselt. The Synod Council elected Pr. Tancredi.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter**

At the April 2017 meeting this Synod Council made a motion to send a letter to the Church Council in regards to the apology to the African Descent community. The African Descent Lutheran desk and the Multicultural desk has asked that we hold off on our letter and let them try to handle the matter on their own first.

### **Election of the Bishop**

Vice President Beasley asked Bishop Burkat and the rest of the Synod Staff to excuse themselves so that the Synod Council could discuss the process for the election of the next Bishop.

After the staff removed themselves from the meeting, the Synod Council received the recommendations from the Executive Committee of persons appointed to fill the three Teams for the process for the Election of a Bishop. Discussion of the process and the configuration of the appointees followed. The following resolution was then presented for action by the Council.

**S.C.17.06.13. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves the appointment of the following people to the Teams for the Process for the Election of a Bishop:**

**to the Transition Team: Ms. Julie Kinzel and Ms. Patricia Robinson as co-chairs, Dr. Addie J. Butler, Pr. Lynette R. Chapman, Pr. James Goodyear, Pr. Paul H. Neff, Mr. Doug Perry, Ms. Karen Paulus, and Pr. Donna Wright;**

**to the Discernment Team: Ms. Tracey A. Beasley as chair, Mr. Emanuel Alves, Pr. Fritz Fowler, Pr. Regina D. Goodrich, Ms. Susan Pursch, Pr. Daniel Spigelmyer, Ms. Karen Strobel, and Ms. Sandra A. Zimmermann;**

**to the Committee on Bishop Elections: Ms. Christine Simpson as chair, Pr. Kay Braun, Ms. Joanne Carlson, Pr. Jennifer Casey, Ms. Cheryl Detweiler, Pr. Carolann Hopcke, Mr. William Irwin, Mr. Bruce W. McCollough, Mr. George Romasco, Ms. Lisa Helmel Thomas, Mr. Tom Salber, and Ms. Nancy M. Stevens; all for a one year term.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

At this time the staff was invited to rejoin the meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Unfinished Business**

Bishop Burkat provided details to the Synod Council on the proposed pipeline going through Bear Creek Camp, noting that only a mile of the pipeline will go through the camp and will do so along the route of an existing pipeline.

**S.C.17.06.14. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approves a pipeline right-of-way agreement between the Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation and the PennEast Pipeline 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. Claire S. Burkat, Bishop, and the Rev. Karl M. Richard, Secretary, of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**  
The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Tyler Rasmussen, Synod Council Member  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

*Approved by Synod Council, September 14, 2017*

**MINUTES**  
**of the 147<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia, PA**  
**September 14, 2017**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley welcomed the Synod Council at 4:00 p.m., and called on the Reverend Serena Sellers, pastor of Christ Lutheran, Kulpsville to lead the Council in devotions.

Pr. Sellers based the devotions on a passage from Lamentations. Sharing many pictures from the news she showed images of hurricanes, earthquakes, gun violence and the commemoration of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Who are we to address these needs? Children of the Most High God!

Vice President Beasley called the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SEPA Synod Council to order at 4:18 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 146<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved as presented.

The minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly were approved as presented.

## **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting with the following changes: we will consider Ms. Pamela Garozzo as the nominee for the open position of Lay Female at Large, and the Mission Moment will come after the Secretary's report, rather than before.

The name of Ms. Pamela Garozzo was then placed before the Council for consideration. Ms. Garozzo was able to give some words of introduction and describe her skill set and interest in serving on Synod Council. Vice President Beasley then asked her to step out while the Council voted.

**The Synod Council approved Ms. Garozzo as Lay Female at Large without objection.**

## **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Claire S. Burkat highlighted the following items in addition to the items in her written report:

### **Bishop's Convocation**

This annual event for Rostered Ministers is scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Bear Creek Resort and Conference Center, Bear Creek PA. Bishop Burkat is very excited about the topic, "On the Road, Together," and the presenters, as we explore how to meet the changing needs of society with the timeless message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Scholarships are still available, but the deadline to apply for one is September 25<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to encourage the rostered leaders in your sphere to register early to be a part of this annual event.

### **Reformation Event**

The primary event the Synod is sponsoring for the 500<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Reformation is entitled "Together in Hope," and is taking place October 21<sup>st</sup> at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale. The presenters will be the Rev. Dr. Donald McCoid, Bishop emeritus of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and Assistant to the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, and Dr. John Borelli, Special Assistant to the President for Interreligious Initiatives at Georgetown University, and former Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Preaching at a joint prayer service will be the Rev. Dr. Peter Donohue, Augustinian Fryar and President of Villanova University. The focus of the day is to promote healing for those on both sides of the ecumenical divide. Rostered ministers are encouraged to attend and invite their parishioners, particularly those for whom the divisions between Catholic and Lutheran communions have been particularly painful.

### **Synods in Crisis**

Bishop Burkat then stated the Council has her report, and has been able to read it, but there is a concern that has been on her heart that she feels needs more discussion than what she wrote. She

shared her heart has been going out to the many synods for whom disasters have been a reality as of late. Eleven of our sixty-five synods are currently impacted by natural disasters. Hurricanes, flooding, wildfires and drought have been devastating the lives of fellow members of the body of Christ. Please pray for these sisters and brothers. But how can we help? What can we as a synod do to reach out with care and concern? LDR deals with many issues, but is acting for the region, not specifically for the synods in that region.

The Bishop opened the floor for discussion. Among the ideas raised were the following:

Bishop Burkat: At a minimum, we can send a letter from our Synod Council expressing our support and offering our prayers.

The Reverend Patricia Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission, asked if we could bless each synod with a tangible gift of \$1,000. It is not a large gift compared to the concern, but shows tangible action in addition to our prayers.

Pr. Serena Sellers stated that after Katrina a clergy exchange occurred, where pastors from outside the region went in to give the local pastor a brief time off, allowing them to breathe, hear the Word, and be refreshed. Would there be money to support this?

Vice President Beasley suggested that we have certain congregations chosen and promoted through the Synod as collection sites where we could receive funds from people driving past, without having to leave their cars to support Hurricane Relief.

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, said we do have funds to help these synods, depending on what we choose to do.

**Ms. Susan Pursch MOVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod send \$1,000 to each of the affected synods, along with a letter from the Synod Council expressing our support and offering our prayers.**

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

Bishop Burkat asked for people to draft a letter for her to review and send on behalf of the Synod Council. Pr. Serena Sellers and Mr. Albert Glenn agreed to do this.

#### **President Latini, United Lutheran Seminary**

We were blessed to have President Theresa Latini of the United Lutheran Seminary with us. President Latini was originally scheduled to be at the Gettysburg campus on this day, but plans changed, and she was able to bring greetings to the Synod Council.

Dr. Latini shared some of her story. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). She has served as a professor and administrator at two different seminaries, one of which was Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. She has served as a pastor in Presbyterian congregations, and as a spiritual care provider to persons with developmental disabilities. As a professor she taught in the areas of Pastoral Care and Conflict Resolution. She is excited to be here at ULS to teach how to bring the love and healing of Christ to a broken and fractured world.

The very nature of how the United Lutheran Seminary has been constructed lends to this kind of work. From a history of division, two schools have come together to be unified, even as there remain distinctive sites for learning. We have a commitment to raising up public leaders who are public theologians.

Dr. Latitni shared we have an enrollment of 75 new incoming students this year. This is stronger than any combined enrollment of the predecessor schools for many years. There are more residential students on the Philadelphia campus than in a long time. The new “no tuition” initiative has been a significant factor in this reality.

Bishop Burkat interjected that 13 or 14 of the new enrollees are from SEPA Synod.

Ms. Susan Pursch expressed her concern that in light of this increased enrollment we do all we can to ensure there are calls for these persons as they enter the Church for service.

Bishop Burkat noted that there are over 900 unfilled calls across the ELCA. There are places to serve, though we may not be able to place them all in our area.

Pr. Sellers made the observation that there are many retirements happening as baby boomers reach that time of their life. This tuition initiative makes it possible for people to afford to go to first call parishes, because the debt load will be more manageable in light of comparatively low compensation in these settings.

Bishop Burkat thanked Dr. Latini for her presence and her sharing. She then prayed for President Latini and the United Lutheran Seminary.

### **Actions on the Roster**

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, shared some information regarding the roster that had been received from the Reverend Wm. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the ELCA. Secretary Boerger has been reaching out to all 65 synods to clarify questions regarding dates of persons moving to different calls or different roster status. Essentially, the date of the change needs to be the date of occurrence, regardless of when the Synod Council meets to vote on these changes. Secretary Boerger realizes that this results in synod councils often having to approve changes that have already occurred, such as for calls to Interim Ministry, or moves to “on leave from call” status. This can make councils uncomfortable. However, the change needs to be based on the time of the occurrence so the rostered minister can be in the proper category, and so the appropriate expression of the Church is responsible for that minister. For example, when a person leaves a call and moves to “on leave from call,” the previously served congregation or ministry site is no longer the responsible agency for the minister, but they are still under the authority and oversight of some expression of the Church, be that the Synod or the Church-wide Organization. The process does require some trust that the persons in the call process are working faithfully, and that the ministers in transition are accountable to, and receiving care from, the proper agency. Any concerns resulting from a call or roster status change is handled by the synod bishop, and when necessary the Secretary of the ELCA.

Secretary Richard then presented the actions on the roster.

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

*Invitation to a UCC Minister to Serve an ELCA Congregation in SEPA Synod*

**SC 17.09.01. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve entry rite, Invitation to Extended Service, for the Reverend Suzanne Marie Spaulding at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Ferndale, PA beginning September 1, 2017 until August 31, 2018. *This invitation is renewable annually by Synod Council.*

*Extension of Non-stipendiary Call*

**SC 17.09.02. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a non-stipendiary call to Reverend Dr. Anita Baly as pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Plymouth Meeting, PA beginning August 13, 2017 to April 30, 2018.

*Call to Specialized Ministry*

**SC 17.09.03. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one year renewable call to Specialized Ministry to the Reverend Ghislaine Cotnoir beginning May 15, 2017 to May 14, 2018

*On Leave from Call Requests*

**S.C.17.09.04. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant the Reverend Marissa Krey on leave from call status, 1st year, effective February 27, 2017

**S.C.17.09.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant the Reverend Raymond A. Miller on leave from call status, 1st year, effective June 1, 2017

**S.C.17.09.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant the Reverend Daryl Nelson on leave from call status, 1st year, effective September 1, 2017

*Retirement Request*

**S.C.17.09.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grant the Reverend Rodney Kopp retirement status effective November 1, 2017

**Information not requiring action**

*Transfers*

The Reverend Dane Skillbred to Southwestern Minnesota Synod, effective May 1, 2017  
The Reverend David Lose to Minneapolis Area Synod, effective July 1, 2017

### ***Deaths***

The Reverend David Percy, July 22, 2017  
The Reverend Thomas Sauerman, June 21, 2017

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

### **ADLA Convention**

Vice President Beasley shared that she was heavily involved with the National African Descent Lutheran Association Convention which was recently held in Philadelphia. The Assembly was held jointly with its counterpart in the Episcopal Church, USA, the National Union of Black Episcopalians. There were many logistical challenges with the Convention, but it was an amazing gathering. She expressed her deep appreciation to Bishop Burkat and the people of Holy Communion Lutheran, Philadelphia, for their assistance and hospitality.

### **Update on the Process for the Election of the Bishop**

Vice President Beasley stated that the Transition team has met twice already, and are working on the Synodical Profile. They are working well together, and moving forward in their task.

The Discernment Team has also met, and is making progress on their portion of the process. They plan to have a series of Bible Studies beginning in February. They are also working on ways to keep the process surrounded in prayer. Synod Council members are encouraged to have their congregations pray for this process regularly in their worship services.

### **Synod Office Space**

Ms. Beasley noted the Executive Committee is aware that we need to consider the Synod Office space, as the lease with the Seminary will expire just about the time the new bishop takes office. It is important to have a sense of options for space prior to the new bishop's starting date. To that end, the Executive Committee would like to have people on a property team that have some professional experience in real estate, be that as realtors, lawyers, or other skills. Please let Vice President Beasley know if you have a suggested person for this team.

### **Synod Committees**

Ms. Beasley referenced the list of persons placed to serve on the various Synod Council committees. She asked the Council to affirm the appointments as presented.

**S.C. 17.09.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the appointments to the Synod Committees for 2017-2018 as recommended by the Bishop and Vice President.**

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

Ms. Beasley encouraged the various committees to meet with their chairpersons over dinner to get acquainted with each other and review their tasks.

### **Farewell and Thank You for Bishop Burkat**

Ms. Beasley asked the members of the Synod Council to mark Sunday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 on their calendars as the date for Bishop Burkat's farewell reception. The event is planned for the Crystal Tea Room in Philadelphia. Tentative price is \$150.00, which will include a gift.

### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard thanked the Reverend Tyler Rasmussen for filling in last meeting as Pr. Richard spoke at his daughter's Baccalaureate service. He then brought forward the following item from his written report:

#### **Appointment of Board Member to Silver Springs – Marin Luther School**

The Synod Council needs to affirm members to serve on several of our Social Ministry Organization boards of directors. Silver Springs – Martin Luther School has submitted the following request:

**S.C. 17.09.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council affirms the appointment of Ms. Jodi S. Donahue, St. Luke's, Devon and the Reverend Janice Vogt, pastor of Grace, Norristown to the Board of Directors of the Silver Springs – Martin Luther School, each for a term of three years, beginning October 26, 2017, the Reverend Janice Vogt, pastor of Grace, Norristown, as an officer of the Board of Directors of the Silver Springs – Martin Luther School (secretary), for a term of one year, beginning October 26, 2017, and Mr. C. Andrew Krepps, Jr., Trinity, Lansdale as an officer of the Board of Directors of the Silver Springs – Martin Luther School (chairperson), for a term of one year, beginning October 26, 2017.**

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

### **MISSION MOMENT**

Ms. Ellen Daneke, chair of the Forward Together in Faith Campaign, shared an update on the Campaign. She reviewed the goals of the Campaign and the purpose for it. She also reminded the Council that the Forward Together in Faith Campaign is the way in which we as a Synod have decided to support the ELCA's financial campaign, by pledging 10% of our commitments to the ELCA's campaign. The overall goal of the Campaign is \$2.5 million, with \$250,000 going to the ELCA.

Currently the team is focused on gaining commitments from congregations. To date, 6 of the 26 congregations represented on the Synod Council have given gifts or made pledges. It would be good to receive commitments from all of these congregations, as they are leadership churches by virtue of having members on the Synod Council.

Overall, 48 of 154 congregations in the Synod have made commitments. This is 31% of our congregations.

As of this date, the total pledged or given by congregations and individuals is \$603,504, which is 24% of our total goal for the Campaign. This leaves us with \$1,896,496 to raise by 2018, the desired end of the Campaign.

We have incurred costs related to the Campaign of \$228,784.

We have made investments aligned with the Campaign of \$34,395.

Members of the Forward Together in Faith Team will be contacting your congregation to elicit your help and support. Please help the Campaign by approaching your leadership and explaining the goal and the need with them.

Ms. Susan Pursch inquired what will happen if we do not make our goal. Will we pro-rate the support to the four categories?

Ms. Daneke affirmed that this is correct. The intent is to have each of the areas supported to some degree. This includes the ELCA Campaign. Whatever gifts are given to the Forward Together in Faith Campaign, 10% of them will go the ELCA Campaign.

Bishop Burkat commented that a prime concern is that we have only a third of our congregations supporting the Campaign, and from them we have received a little less than a third of our goal. When we get into the congregations and explain what we are doing, the people have responded. We need about 70% of our congregations to participate. When an Ambassador has gone, we have received a response.

Pr. Serena Sellers asked if it is possible to have the list of supporting congregations. She feels she can then go to her Conference and praise those congregations that have supported the Campaign, and encourage those who have not. This may be a way for each of us to share the story and garner support.

Bishop Burkat said this information could be made available.

## **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Ms. Janet Neff highlighted the following from her submitted report:

To date, Partnership Support from congregations is above what we have budgeted. Referring to Unrestricted Revenues that are noted in her report, she pointed out that we have revenues that are greater than budget because of the sale of properties and some other gifts received.

This year we were in a positive position after the Synod Assembly. This was made possible by changing our fee structure, and by addressing some other issues around the Assembly.

The Assembly offering resulted in \$4,408 given to Racial Justice.

Ms. Neff said that we are, overall, in a positive position. Referencing the Statement of Financial position, which she described as “a snapshot of where we are,” we have assets of \$2.3 million, and liabilities of less than \$100,000.

We do need to address our pre-paid rent to the Seminary for our office space, which is listed on the Statement. This is decreasing, and will not last much more than six months following election of new bishop.

Ms. Neff also noted that the numbers in her report for the Forward Together in Faith Campaign are different from those presented by Ms. Daneke this evening, but her report contained the numbers she had received as of August 31<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Daneke has more current figures.

Referring to congregational giving, Ms. Neff encouraged members to be leaders in this regard as well as leaders for the Campaign. Members should check their congregation’s response in her reports, compare intended giving versus actual gifts made, and encourage faithful support of our Synod.

Ms. Susan Pursch asked what our financial situation would be if we had not sold two properties.

Ms. Neff responded that the sale of the properties brought \$150,000 to our Unrestricted Revenues. She reviewed that when we sell a property, 15% of the sale price goes to Unrestricted Revenues. We then reimburse the costs incurred by the Synod for maintaining all the properties we have under management, and the remainder of the receipts goes to the Fund for Mission.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Constitution Committee**

Pr. Tyler Rasmussen, chair, reported that twenty congregations are in the process of revising their constitutions. He noted that members should encourage congregations to contact the Constitution Committee at the beginning of the process, rather than at the end. This way the Committee can help ensure a smooth transition from the previous document to the renewed one. This can avoid congregational committees needing to revise a document they have already taken to the congregation, thinking they had it in order and ready for approval.

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, chair, reported that the investments are performing well, and the Committee is able to monitor them in light of the parameters previously set by the Council. We have been experiencing a good return, averaging about 10% over this past year. The chair does remind the Synod Council that past performance does not guarantee future earnings. The Committee has an additional \$300,000 that they are ready to invest. We currently have approximately \$1.55 million under management in our Vanguard accounts, and approximately \$1.31 million under management in T. Rowe Price.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

The Reverend Bradley Burke, Assistant to the Bishop, was closed the meeting with prayer. The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

The 148<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be December 7, 2017, 4:00 p.m., St. Peter, Hilltown.

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

*Approved by Synod Council, December 7, 2017*

**MINUTES  
of the 148<sup>th</sup> MEETING  
of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL  
of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
St. Peter Lutheran Church, Hilltown, PA  
December 7, 2017**

At 4:05 p.m. Vice President Tracey A. Beasley gathered the Synod Council together. She noted that Bishop Burkat would not be in attendance as she was at an event at Luther Seminary with Pastors Brad Burke and Chris McKinstry. She then invited the Reverend Joseph Varsanyi, host pastor, to bring greetings.

Pastor Varsanyi welcomed the Council to St. Peter, and shared some information about the congregation. St. Peter is part of Synod's "Cross Gen" program. Sunday school has come out of Sunday school and now Christian Education has taken a whole new direction. Things are intentionally left on walls so the groups who use our space can see what we have been learning about God. There are also some quilts displayed, as this is a ministry of several women of the congregation.

The Reverend Carolann Hopcke, Dean of the Upper Bucks Conference, distributed a book that describes the congregations of the Conference. Pastor Hopcke then led the Synod Council in devotions, based on readings of Advent and Christmas.

Vice President Beasley called the 148<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to order at 4:21 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council were approved with one alteration by Vice President Beasley regarding her suggestion for support of sister synods in crisis.

### **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 148<sup>th</sup> meeting with the following changes: the Treasurer's report will follow the Secretary's Report.

### **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Vice President Beasley noted that the Council had received the Bishop's Report in the packet for the meeting. Ms. Beasley shared that the gifts to the various Synods in crisis were greatly appreciated by the receiving Synods. Ms. Beasley also expressed her thanks to the Synod Council for taking this action. Several of the Synods decided to "pay it forward" by returning the check sent to them, and requesting that the gift be added to that of the Florida-Bahama Synod to assist with the devastation in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria.

### **Actions on the Roster**

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, then presented the actions on the roster.

#### *Call to Specialized Ministry*

**S.C.17.12.01 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council extend a one year renewable call to Specialized Ministry to Deacon Rachel Bailey as part-time Chaplain at Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care of Pennsylvania in King of Prussia effective December 8, 2017 to December 7, 2018**

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

#### *On Leave from Call Requests*

**S.C. 17.12.02 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants Deacon Allison Wilcox on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective October 28, 2017**

**S.C. 17.12.03 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Sozinho Alves on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective December 1, 2017**

**S.C. 17.12.04 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Christopher Weidner on leave from call status, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, effective December 7, 2017**

**S.C. 17.12.05 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Linda Manson on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective January 1, 2018**

Mr. Adam Clark of Zion Lutheran, Olney, asked about the request for Pastor Sozinho Alves, who is the pastor of Zion, Olney. Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations, clarified that Pastor Alves is serving under contract to Zion Olney. His call was to another agency, and the status in his called position is what has changed.

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

***Retirement Requests***

**S.C. 17.12.06 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Richard Zuber retirement status effective January 1, 2018**

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

**Information Not Requiring Action**

***Transfers***

The Reverend Marissa Krey to North Carolina Synod effective November 3, 2017

The Reverend David Penman from Virginia Synod effective September 28, 2017

The Reverend Nathan Preisinger from Upstate New York Synod January 22, 2018

***Resigned from the E.L.C.A. Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament***

Mr. David Lembo effective November 6, 2017

***Deaths:***

The Reverend Edward W. Uthe, November 23, 2017

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

Vice President Beasley referenced the good news in the report from Bear Creek Camp, provided by Mr. Daniel Scharnhorst, Executive Director of the Camp. Attendance has been steadily increasing since 2012, with 2017 reflecting an increase in camper attendance of 68% over this five year period.

**Bishop's Retirement Celebration**

The date of the Bishop's retirement celebration is Sunday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The price has come down from what was previously reported. It will now be \$115.00 per person, rather than \$150.00. There will also be a cook-out at the Seminary on the day before, Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will not be a charge for the cook-out.

**Report on the Process for the Election of the Bishop**

**The Committee on the Election of the Bishop**

Vice President Beasley will be meeting December 8<sup>th</sup> with Ms. Christine Simpson, chair of the Committee on Bishop Elections to go over the process for the election at the Synod Assembly.

### **The Transition Team**

The Transition Team has distributed via e-mail and MinistryLink, the Synod's website, a questionnaire to assist them with the Synodical Mission Profile they are compiling. The deadline for completing the questionnaire is tomorrow, December 8<sup>th</sup>. All Synod council members are encouraged to participate in this, if they have not already done so, and are asked to encourage members of their congregations to do so as well.

Discussion was held regarding the questionnaire. Some members offered suggestions as to what may have been helpful to ask. Vice President Beasley noted that at this time, the questionnaire is out in the form it is. The Transition Team took great care to ask the questions they felt were most helpful for the information they need for the Profile. There will be other times in the process when other questions can be raised.

The Vice President noted that the Synod Staff is also helping the Transition team to compile some of the data the Transition Team has needed. The Synodical Mission Profile will be reviewed and released as soon as possible upon completion.

### **The Discernment Team**

The Discernment Team is discussing how they will post materials on the internet. There may be a particular "tab" on the Synod website, or there may be a link to a separate website designated for this process. Mr. Robert Fisher, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications, is being consulted for the best practice to employ.

Forms for potential candidates will not be posted on Sharepoint. Neither will they be posted on any other site until the discernment process reaches the appropriate stage. To maintain a sense of fairness there is a need to be sure that persons on Synod Council, particularly the clergy, do not have access to the forms any earlier than the rest of the Synod.

There will be a Synod-wide Bible Study on February 10<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This study will be held at twelve sites across the Synod, using the same passages and questions at each site. The session which will be held at the United Lutheran Seminary's Brossman Center will be live-streamed so that those who cannot attend physically can have the opportunity to listen in to the conversation at one of the sites.

The Study will discuss types of leadership qualities seen in Scripture, and consider the types of leadership that might be most helpful for our Synod at this time.

At the end of the Study there will be a description of how names of persons who might have the needed gifts to be bishop may be raised. Those persons need to be asked by the presenter if they are willing to have their names placed before the Synod for consideration, and if so, they will be asked to fill out a form for posting. Names of all pre-identified candidates will be submitted to Vice President Beasley.

The Reverend Sarah Anderson-Rajarigam asked if the names will be placed on the E.L.C.A. website for viewing across the Church, or just on our Synod website. Ms. Beasley responded they would go only on our Synod website.

Mr. Albert Glenn stated that it is his understanding that anyone can participate, but that this study will be especially relevant for those who will be Voting Members at the upcoming Assembly. How is this going to be shared and the invitation be made? Ms. Beasley said that the Team is working with Mr. Fisher to find ways to get the notice out to the entire Synod.

She concluded her comments by asking that we keep the Teams, and the Synod in prayer as we go through this time of discernment.

### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard stated that the action the Council took last meeting to affirm Ms. Pamela Garozzo was not possible, as there is already a general member of the Synod Council from Ms. Garozzo's home congregation. The Executive Committee had not picked this up prior to submitting her name, and with apologies and regrets notes that we need to find another person to serve as Lay Female at Large.

In addition to this, he shared the Reverend Lyzette Rios Sanchez is no longer eligible to serve on Synod Council due to inability to attend the required number of meetings as described in the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the SEPA Synod.

The Nominating Committee has been asked to seek suitable persons to fill these open positions on the Synod Council.

### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, has made contact with the CFO of the United Lutheran Seminary to investigate the possibility of extending the lease for the Synod Offices for a year. There has not yet been response, but if the terms are favorable this may take some pressure off the next Bishop, ensuring a site for the offices for a year and four months, rather than only four months.

In her report she noted that as of the end of October we were in a good financial position due to an increase in unrestricted revenues, and a decrease in unrestricted expenses. The increase in income was from increased partnership support (\$13,400), better than anticipated returns on our investments (\$189,370), and a larger than anticipated returns from the sale of two properties (\$15,400). We now have only one property under management, the former St. Michael's, Germantown.

Ms. Neff highlighted that the Finance office and the Finance Committee continue to seek ways to effectively use resources on hand to keep the operations funded. An example she used was the use of designated monies for Candidacy that are used to help offset the cost of this portion of our budget.

### **Forward Together in Faith**

Ms. Neff reported that to date the amount pledged and or given to the Campaign is \$609,239

Expenses related to the Campaign and disbursements in line with the Campaign's objective's total \$268,455.

Ms. Susan Pursch stated that she is pleased that we are being clear on how we use the proceeds from the sale of properties, but she expressed concern that since there is only one property remaining to sell, we cannot count on continued revenue from this source. Without money from the sale of properties we would be \$106,000 short in this fiscal period.

Ms. Neff responded that this is part of why we continue to put such income into the Fund for Mission so that we can have another source of funds for the "Mission" portion of our budget. This also requires us to re-evaluate how we use these funds, and determine if a particular mission continues to be worth our support.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Marcia Bell, Director of Mobility and the Reverend Christian McMullen, Director of Interim Ministry, presented the Mission Moment to the Synod Council. Pastor Bell began the presentation, which was discussion oriented in nature.

Pastor Bell said she had been asked to present on "congregations at risk." She modified what she would share by asking the Deans to provide her with a list of congregations with 40 or fewer worshippers in regular attendance. She noted that this is not a hard and fast definition of a congregation "at risk." Some of these smaller congregations are very stable in terms of financial resources, type of ministry staffing, and activity in their communities. Other larger congregations may have deeper financial concerns, and be more "at risk" than congregations that have fewer active worshippers. Some congregations have done very well with a part-time pastor, while others have shared pastoral or administrative staff to keep expenses manageable.

She then discussed aspects of the transition process for congregations seeking a pastor. She noted that we as a Synod are very committed to Interim Ministry as part of this process, but that this can take various forms. Some congregations have a full-time Interim Pastor; some have a part-time Interim Pastor that may also be working with another congregation; some congregations have an Interim Consultant, with a bridge pastor caring for the pastoral concerns of the congregation. We now have lay persons who have been through the interim training who serve as such consultants.

Mr. Albert Glenn asked if there is a resource to share with congregations as to the different types of options that are available so congregations can look ahead to different ways in which a transition might be approached, and relieve some of the concern congregations have about the process.

Pastor Bell said that there is not such a list, but it would be nice to have one. There are many resources, including some leaders who are helping congregations to turn things around. But there is currently no one in the Synod office tasked with the role of compiling such a resource.

Pastor Christian McMullen shared that one resource is the MAP study. This study can help a congregation assess its strengths and passions, allowing them to focus their energy and mission.

Success varies depending on how invested the congregation may be in engaging the process. This MAP was not originally designed for this time of transition, but has worked well in some congregations as part of this process.

Ms. Pursch asked if what we are currently seeing is a typical number of congregations in transition.

Pastor Bell said that it is. While things can always change, we are fairly consistent in the number of congregations in the process at any given time.

Pastor Bell went on to say that common questions include: Why do we need an interim? Why does it take so long? I work for Boeing. If I resign tomorrow there is another person on the line the very next day. Why not with pastor?

Pastor Bell said that we constantly have to remind people that this is a relational position, not simply a business position. Therefore it takes a different process, and often more time than replacing a person in other occupations.

Pastor McMullen then took lead in the conversation. He shared a handout that outlined the process. He shared that it is pretty straightforward, until you try to fill out the Ministry Site Profile. This is a strong part of the process, and the questions in it are deep. This is why it takes time. The history of a congregation is significant, but it does not seem important until you go through how the history has affected the ministry and decision making in the congregation.

He shared that our Interim Ministers gather for quarterly consultations, which are like continuing education events. All are expected to attend. This is a chance to hone skills, compare notes, and work to make good choices for the congregations in which they are serving, as congregations vary greatly.

Ms. Pursch asked how many trained interims we have.

Pastor McMullen responded that we have about 15. This number is a bit fluid, as there are some trained interims who are backing off, but can be called in from time to time as needed.

The Reverend Serena Sellers, who has served as a n Intentional Interim Pastor, shared that it is difficult to grasp that all these numbers are in flux all the time. It includes people who are doing interims in neighboring synods, or that we bring in from other synods. It is hard to say “do we have enough interims?” Not every interim is appropriate for every congregation.

Ms. Pursch inquired as to how many synods have such a network?

Pastor McMullen replied that he did not know exactly, but that there are not many. We are a good Synod for this practice because of our relatively compact geography.

Pastor Bell shared that we are among the longest standing Synods to use an Interim Ministry Network as part of our process. We go back in this process about 30 years. Pastor Bell shared that her first call was with an Interim as a mentor.

The Synod Council expressed their thanks to Pastors Bell and McMullen for their presentation.

The Executive Committee will discuss how often we will have a report such as this given to the Synod Council.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Finance Committee**

Mr. Albert Glenn, chair, reported that when the committee last met they reviewed the continuing resolutions in the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the SEPA Synod to clarify their roles and responsibilities. They also reviewed the financial statements with the treasurer.

### **Constitution Committee**

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, chair, reported that the committee is working with twenty congregations that are revising their constitutions. He anticipates that two will come to the next meeting of Synod council for ratification.

### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, chair, noted that the Committee has not met since August, but he provided an update on the funds we have under management. He noted as a regular disclaimer that past performance is no guarantee of future results.

As of October 31<sup>st</sup>,  
Vanguard Funds - \$1,655,311  
T. Rowe Price Funds - \$1,103,835  
Mission Investment Fund - \$300,000  
Waiting to be invested - \$50,000

Investments have demonstrated a return of about 12% over the past year.

### **Administration Committee**

The Administration Committee presented that draft of the Agenda for the May 4-5, 2018 Synod Assembly. It was noted that the Agenda includes times of prayer by the Discernment Team throughout the Assembly to guide the process for the Election of a Bishop.

It was noted that the prayer at 12:25 p.m. on Friday will be led by Bishop Donald Kreiss, who serves our partner synod, the SE Michigan Synod.

On Friday at 2:00 p.m., the Finance Committee chair needs to be changed from Ms. Sue Massey to Mr. Albert Glenn.

It was suggested that the areas for balloting be made more clear and consistent throughout the document, so that is more apparent which ballot is for the Election of the Bishop and which is for

General Balloting, and to be sure the number of the Ballot for the Election of the Bishop is clear and correct.

There were questions regarding the timing of the distribution of the biographical material for those who are nominated for Bishop on the First Ballot. The Agenda calls for this information to be available prior to the Third Ballot. The question was raised as to why it would not be available prior to the Second Ballot. Vice President Beasley stated that this came from the Handbook from the E.L.C.A. regarding the process for the Election of a Bishop, and is a portion of the process that we have not followed correctly in the past.

### **Nominations Committee**

As the Reverend Christopher McKinstry, chair, was not able to be present at this meeting, Secretary Richard reviewed the letter which was sent to Rostered Ministers and Congregations regarding the needs for other positions beyond the Bishop. We will be electing people to Synod Council, to the Committee on Discipline, and to the E.L.C.A. Churchwide Assembly in August of 2019.

If members of Synod Council know of persons that would be strong candidates for these positions, please approach them and encourage them to be in nomination.

If there are Synod Council members whose term is expiring, are able to serve a second term, and are willing to serve again, please let the Nominating Committee know. There is no automatic renewal; one needs to be willing to stand in nomination for a second term.

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

Ms. Ellen Daneke shared a handout updating the progress of the Campaign. With the Campaign planned to be complete by the May Synod Assembly, we are quite far behind where we wished to be.

To date, we have received 24.5% of our goal of \$2.5 million. 57 of our 154 congregations and worshipping communities have made a pledge or a gift. This is 37% of our churches.

The goal at this point was to be at 70% of our congregations, or 107

Synod Leadership that has pledged or given to the Campaign is 47 out of 57 persons/families  
Synod Council Congregations that have pledged or given is 10 out of 29.

Of the \$613,219 pledged or given to date, we have had expenses for the campaign of \$228,784, and we have made investments aligned with the campaign of \$34,395

We still need to raise \$1,886,781 to reach our \$2.5 million goal.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Vice President Beasley stated that we are still trying to form a team to assess the needs of the Synod for Office space. So far one person has been recommended for this team. If you know of

someone with experience in real estate and finances who might be a good choice for this team, please let Vice President Beasley know.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Bill Harp, Synod Staff, thanks everyone for going through the process of getting on the new data base system. The old system is no longer supported, and the ELCA notified us of this free option to use the system the Churchwide Organization uses.

The Reverend Serena Sellers asked that the thanks of the Synod Council be conveyed to Mr. Bill Harp for all his efforts on this project.

The Reverend Dwight Mason expressed his thanks to Ms. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Operations, for the step by step email getting us to the site of tonight's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m. with prayer by Pastor Christian McMullen.

The 149<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be February 22, 2018, 4:00 p.m., Grace, Broomall.

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

*Approved by Synod Council, February 22, 2018*

**MINUTES**  
**of the 149<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**of the SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**Grace Lutheran Church, Broomall, PA**  
**February 22, 2018**

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley welcomed the Synod Council, and thanked the Reverend Leslie M. Richard and the people of Grace for hosting. Vice President Beasley noted that Pastor Richard is not only the pastor of Grace, but also the Dean of the Delaware Conference, and she invited Pr. Richard to share words of welcome and lead the Council in devotions. Pr. Richard distributed a booklet which gave an overview of the ministries of the congregations in the Delaware Conference, and led devotions based on the Lenten theme of surrendering to God's will, making use of a provocative litany called "God said no."

Vice President Beasley called the 149<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council to order at 4:27 p.m.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 148<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Synod Council were approved as presented.

## **SETTING THE AGENDA**

The Synod Council adopted the Agenda for the 149<sup>th</sup> meeting as presented.

## **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Claire Burkat commented that it was good to be back with the Council after having missed the last meeting.

### **Update on Metro NY Synod**

Bishop Burkat shared with the Synod Council the news that Bishop Rimbo has stepped down from service, and resigned from the E.L.C.A. Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament following an affair with an adult. Metro NY is grieving; please keep this Synod in your prayers. The Reverend Donald McCoid, formerly Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, will serve in Metro NY as Interim Bishop for a year. Metro Synod will hold an election for a new bishop at its Assembly in May, 2019. The Church is intentionally taking its time in this matter. The Region 7 bishops will meet soon, and welcome Bishop McCoid.

Bishop Burkat said she is proud of the way our Church speaks truth to power, not just to those beyond us, but to those among us. We need to be courageous and act with moral authority.

### **First Call Theological Retreat**

First Call theological education is a constitutionally mandated process for those new to rostered ministry. It takes place in January of each year. In the past this has been a Regional event, and has been held over a four day period. With changes in the Regional structure of the Church, and a decrease in available funding, this process has been given to Synods to do on their own. We had our event as an overnight retreat held at Crossroads in New Jersey. This made the event significantly less expensive. The Reverend Brad Burke, the Reverend Chris McKinstry, and a team of SEPA Synod leaders organized the retreat, trying to incorporate practical and helpful segments that will benefit our first call leaders, and help them to build a mission plan for their ministries.

### **Anti-Racism March on Washington**

Presiding Bishop Eaton has called on the Church to participate in a March in Washington D.C. to take a stand against racism. The event, which will be held April 3<sup>rd</sup> through April 5<sup>th</sup>, is motivated by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This is a very quickly planned event. We in SEPA Synod are planning to participate in one day of the event, April 4<sup>th</sup>. We are looking to charter a bus that can hold 55 people.

Ms. Emily Fowler asked if this event was only for rostered leaders. Bishop Burkat said that it is open to any who wish to participate. Ms. Fowler suggested she may be able to get many of her classmates from Susquehanna University to participate. She will see about coordinating a bus from her campus.

### **Actions on the Roster**

The Reverend Karl M. Richard, Secretary, presented the actions on the roster.

*On Leave from Call Extension Requests to ELCA Conference of Bishops:*

**S.C.18.02.01. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Reverend Margaret Ainslie be granted a second extension for *Study Leave*, and that Deacon Suzanne Rigg be granted her first *On Leave From Call* extension from the ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council request approval of these extensions from the ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

*Calls to Interim Ministry:*

**S.C.18.02.02. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Katherine Cartwright Knodel to interim ministry at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, PA beginning February 15, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Cartwright Knodel resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S.C.18.02.03. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Wayne Shelor to interim ministry at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Exton, PA beginning March 1, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Shelor resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

**S.C.18.02.04. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council call the Reverend Donna M. Wright to interim ministry at Grace Lutheran Church in Pottstown, PA beginning March 12, 2018, and extending until a pastor is called by the congregation or until Pastor Wright resigns this call, whichever comes first.**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted these resolutions.

*Retirement Requests:*

**S.C.18.02.05. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Daryl C. Nelson retirement status effective February 1, 2018**

The Synod Council unanimously adopted the resolution.

*On Leave from Call Requests:*

**S.C.18.02.06. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend Louis Tillman, IV on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective December 16, 2017**

**S.C.18.02.07. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council grants the Reverend David Maddox, II, on leave from call status, 1<sup>st</sup> year, effective January 1, 2018**

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

### **Information Not Requiring Action**

#### **Transfer**

The Reverend Robert Holum from Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod effective January 8, 2018

The Reverend Linda Hatcher to South Carolina Synod effective January 9, 2018

The Reverend Karen Sease to New Jersey Synod effective January 15, 2018

#### **Deaths**

The Reverend Paul H. Howells, which occurred January 23, 2018

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

Vice President Tracey A. Beasley presented an update on the process for the Election of the Bishop.

#### **Transition Team**

Pastors Donna Wright and Paul Neff are present from the Transition Team, and will present the Synodical Mission Profile during the Mission Moment. The Profile is completed and has been posted to MinistryLink.

#### **Discernment Team**

The Bible study led by the Discernment Team was held at 11 sites around the Synod on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Study at the United Lutheran Seminary was live streamed on the internet, and a recording of it has been saved and posted on MinistryLink.

Vice President Beasley asked how many of the Council were able to attend one of these sessions, and was pleased to see that most had. She invited comments from the Council regarding their observations and learning.

The Discernment Team is encouraging members of congregations to make Prayer Bracelets for each person attending the Assembly. These bracelets will be used to assist the Assembly to keep this process surrounded in prayer, and will make a connection between the congregations of the Synod and the Synod gathered in Assembly.

When Bishop Burkat had first been elected prayer stoles were distributed to those present at the Assembly, which Bishop Burkat said was a powerful part of the process. These prayer bracelets are hoped to be a similarly powerful symbol, and are a way to emphasize the theme of the Assembly, which is "Come, Holy Spirit."

Now that the Profile has been posted, and the Bible Study has been completed, people are welcome to fill out the Pre-Identification forms to lift up persons who may have the skills or gifts

to serve as our next Bishop. These forms are on MinistryLink under the Assembly tab. Four forms have been received so far. Vice President Beasley will be contacting those persons who have been identified to see if they are willing to fill out the information form and have their names posted on the website. If so, they will be directed to fill out the form, which will be returned to the Vice President for posting.

A question was raised to clarify who may raise up a name. Did one have to attend a Bible study to pre-identify a person? The Vice President said that anyone can raise a name; it was not a requirement to have attended one of the studies to do so.

Vice President Beasley stated that all names and related information will be removed from the website by April 4<sup>th</sup>. None of the persons who may be pre-identified are in nomination at this point. No one is nominated until or unless they receive a vote on the first ballot in the Ecclesiastical Balloting process at the Assembly.

The Reverend Serena Sellers asked if the names of those who decline to be pre-identified would be made known to the Synod.

Ms. Beasley said no, because such persons may be willing to be considered if they receive a vote at the Assembly, but not wish to have their names out prior to the Assembly.

### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Richard noted the extensive Rules of Procedure for the upcoming Synod Assembly. He noted that most of the procedures are from constitutional provisions, and include provisions of who is eligible to be a Voting Member, some of the requirements for the positions up for election, and the extended process for the Election of a Bishop.

One item in particular that he brought to the attention of the Council is the final provision, which calls for Assembly registration to be closed 30 minutes prior to the anticipated time for each ballot for Bishop. This will ensure that the number of persons eligible to vote can be verified vis a vis the actual votes cast on each ballot. This provision was added at the request of the Reverend Wm Chris Boerger, Secretary of the E.L.C.A., who will be our Churchwide representative overseeing our election process.

Members of the Synod Council suggested this provision be posted prominently to the Synod prior to the Assembly. This may help minimize questions and animosity at the time of the Assembly, by allowing people to be aware they need to plan carefully when they arrive at the Assembly, particularly if they may be coming late to the meeting.

Vice President Beasley stated that when it comes to the balloting process for the Election of a Bishop we still need eight more counters. We could particularly use more persons of color, or persons whose primary language is other than English.

### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Ms. Janet Neff, treasurer, made her report, referencing her written information previously submitted to the Council. She noted that Mr. Albert Glenn, chairperson of the Finance

Committee will be presenting the Budget for 2019 at the Assembly. She will share with the Assembly reports from the past year, and updates and adjustments we need to make with regard to this current fiscal year.

An Agreement of Sale is in process for the property of the former St. Michael, Germantown. This is currently our last property under management. The anticipated sale price is \$650,000, of which 15% of the net proceeds will go to the general operations of the Synod.

We anticipate receiving \$30,000 from the Hauenschild Trust, which is \$10,000 less than we originally thought.

The market has been performing well, so we have had good receipts from our investments.

At this point we are in line with our budget.

Overall position at the end of Fiscal Year 2017 was a positive \$243,000.

Mr. Albert Glenn, chairperson of the Finance Committee, shared the following: The Committee reviewed the financial statements, and all seemed in order. He noted the Synod's fiscal year runs from February 1 – January 31.

The Finance Committee has asked the United Lutheran Seminary what might be possible with regard to extending the lease the Synod has with the school. This is now in the hands of another team.

He stated the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 does not yet include numbers for office space, as this issue is not yet resolved and we have no firm estimates for this expense.

Bishop Burkat interjected that now that there is more money in the Fund for Mission, we will expand the process for grants from this fund that may include more than the Trustees. The Reverend Pat Davenport, Director of Evangelical Mission, is working on a process for this.

Ms. Janet Neff stated that if there is any change to the process for using money from the Fund for Mission it will need to come to the Synod Council for approval, as the Council was the body that originally authorized the Fund for Mission.

Mr. Glenn stated that we will want to be prudent on how we use these funds, as there is no guaranteed source for increasing the Fund for Mission, particularly as we sell the last of the properties we have from previously closed congregations.

Mr. Glenn presented the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 to the Council. He noted it matches fairly closely to the FY 2018 budget. It includes a 2.5% increase for salaries, and has a slight increase to the line for the Office of the Bishop because of the costs associated with the transition to a new bishop.

Mr. Glenn, on behalf of the Finance Committee, offered the following motion:

**S.C.18.02.08. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 for presentation to the Synod Assembly for its adoption.**

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

### **MISSION MOMENT**

The Reverend Paul Neff and the Reverend Donna Wright, members of the Transition Team in the process for the Election of the Bishop, were welcomed to present the Profile to the Synod Council.

They shared that there were three segments to their approach: who we have been, who we are, and where we hope to be. The goal was identification and celebration, not blame, guilt or judgement over what was discovered.

The audience for the report is two-fold: members of the Synod with an interest in who and what we are to be used for ministry options and planning, and pastors who may be considering if they are being called to be Bishop of our Synod.

The Profile has been posted on MinistryLink and includes a Power Point summary of the Profile, as well as many supporting documents for review and or analysis.

Included in the Profile is demographics of the five county area that defines our Synod, detailed information regarding the size and diversity of our congregations, and the number and ages of pastors and deacons in our Synod.

There is a description of the position of the Bishop from the constitution and other sources. The role of the Committee of Deans is described as they are, in effect, deployed staff.

The Profile also includes financial assessments of our Synod and our congregations' resources, and where we are in our support for the E.L.C.A. and other ministries. There is also information about the Forward Together in Faith Campaign.

The full Profile adds to what is in the Power Point summary such things as staffing structure, and much more complete trends.

Pastors Neff and Wright went into some detail for the Council so the members would feel adequately informed of the Profile, so they can help explain it to others.

Vice President Beasley presented a certificate and letter of thanks to each pastor for their faithful and diligent work on behalf of our Synod. The other members of the Transition Team will be given a similar certificate and letter.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Six members of the Synod Council have not yet given or pledged to the Campaign.

13 of 29 Synod Council congregations have made gifts or commitments.

Gifts and pledges to date: \$ 726,420

Yet to raise to meet goal: \$1,773,580

Administrative costs associated with the Campaign: \$ 228,784

Outlays related to the Goals of the Campaign: \$ 34,395

#### **Constitution Committee**

The Reverend Tyler Rasmussen, chairperson, reported that four congregations have completed their constitutional revisions, and brought the following resolution to the Synod Council:

**S.C.18.02.09. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council approve the congregation constitutions as amended of St. Paul's, Telford; Good Shepherd, King of Prussia; St. Andrew's, Perkasi; and Family of God, Buckingham.**

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

#### **Investment Committee**

Mr. David Ehret, chairperson, shared that as of December 31, 2017, the

Total Investment Portfolio stood at \$3,091,056

The gain for the year ending December 2017 was \$402,304 amounting to a 15% gain for the year. As always, he noted that past performance is no guarantee of future earnings, but the Committee will continue to monitor the funds to optimize their production.

#### **Administration Committee**

The Administration Committee presented a revised draft of the Agenda for the Assembly, which the Synod Council approved.

Members of the Synod Council were encouraged to register for the Assembly if they are not already registered as Voting Members from their congregations.

Members were reminded that their assistance will be needed at the registration tables to welcome and sign in people who come to the Assembly.

#### **Nominations Committee**

The Reverend Christopher McKinstry, chairperson, shared that they are filling the needed slates of candidates for presentation to the Assembly. The Committee is still seeking in particular a Minister of Word and Sacrament for the Committee on Discipline and lay persons as Voting Members to the Churchwide Assembly. Vice President Beasley and Bishop Burkat said they will try to encourage attendees at the Congregational Council Leaders gathering in March to consider running for open positions.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Albert Glenn repeated his request from last meeting that the Synod create a resource of options for congregations to review and consider prior to times of crisis. Such a resource might include options for full time, part time, bi-vocational, or collaborative arrangements for pastoral ministry and coverage. It may also include steps and options in the transition process that may

include an Intentional Interim pastor, a bridge pastor with an Interim Consultant, or other possibilities to prepare a congregation for how the transition might take place.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Susan Pursch noted that the Audit Committee will need time on the agenda of the April meeting of the Synod Council to present the results of the Audit.

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m. with prayer led by Pr. Donna Wright.

The 150<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council will be held April 5, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Reformation Lutheran, Philadelphia.

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

*Approved by Synod Council April 5, 2018*