

in the Mirror. Mr. Fidler distributed materials and extended an invitation to everyone (men and women, clergy and lay) to meet with Brett Clemmer for an informal meeting on Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Penn Harris Radisson Hotel on Routes 11 and 15 in Camp Hill. It will be a time of informal discussion with one of the country's leaders in developing men's ministries. To register, please contact Fred Bohls at 717/732-5050.

Vice President Price then thanked Joe Fidler for providing the ministry highlight.

Before beginning with the items on the agenda, Vice President Price asked permission to add some additional conversation from the Audit Committee to the agenda approved by the Synod Council Executive Committee. He then took the opportunity to apologize to the Synod Council for releasing the letters about the bishop's residential rehabilitation treatment synod wide without first releasing them to members of the Synod Council so they would be prepared for conversation with those persons who had questions or concerns. The vice president also expressed hope that we would finish our business no later than noon so those who planned to attend services for Pastor Tom McKee's father would have time to do so.

C. Dee Lockman moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve the minutes of the November 10, 2007, meeting.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 4, 2008, meeting of the Executive Committee were distributed.

Vice President Price then commented on the concern of the Executive Committee regarding their responsibilities as the bishop returns to office. The Executive Committee will have additional conversation with the bishop to determine the direction for establishing accountability. The first such meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 29, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. in the Synod Office. The vice president then referred to the section of the minutes that indicated that Pastor McKee was to be in touch with Terry Lieb of Diakon Family Life Services to see if he could provide counsel to the Executive Committee and the staff to help with the bishop's return to the office. Vice President Price shared with the council that Terry Lieb did in fact meet with these groups and the bishop on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He met first with the officers, then with the Executive Committee, then with the bishop, and finally, with the staff.

Vice Chair Richard Geib moved **EC08.01.01.** on behalf of the Executive Committee:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council call the Rev. Melvin E. Dick, the Rev. SC08.01.01. David R. Fisher, and the Rev. Thomas E. McKee as assistants to the bishop for Bishop B. Penrose Hoover.

Pastor David Ritterpusch expressed the concern of some members of the York Conference that the Synod's current staffing lacks diversity – same age, same gender – no women. He mentioned the concern about the diminishment of contact with conferences if the current staff cannot be expanded to include another assistant.

Bishop Hoover indicated that although calls were being extended to individuals it did not necessarily mean that his "staffing plan" is finalized. Job descriptions will be adjusted. Contact with conferences will be a high priority and will not be put on the back burner.

Pastor Sally Gausmann indicated that she is happy with the staff that is in place; however, she had some concerns about the structure that had been being worked on by the Transition Team and the groundwork that had been laid by the Mission Committee over the last years and whether those things were being kept in mind as we move forward.

Pastor Richard B. Geib then moved recommendation **EC08.01.02.** on behalf of the Executive Committee:

ADOPTED: That the treasurer of the Lower Susquehanna Synod be a stipendiary SC08.01.02. position.

Pastor Gausmann asked how many hours we expected this volunteer to work. It was explained that with the change in structure in the treasurer's office, it is a little soon to predict just how much time may be necessary.

Melissa Hoffman then asked about oversight of Linda as she assumes more responsibility. How will a very part-time treasurer provide this oversight? Melissa said she will meet with Linda to determine how she may be of help. She asked to be given another month to help determine how this can happen and how much time we may be asking a volunteer to provide.

Pastor Tim Sadler asked how we could get more feedback from throughout the synod. He suggested a Special Synod Assembly be held to get input from voting members. Pastor Paula Murray suggested that perhaps conferences could hold conversations with the Finance and Budget Committee, the Audit Committee, and the Executive Committee. Pastor Sadler expressed concern that voting members don't often come to Conference Assemblies. Pastor Murray then suggested that there are many venues to get things done and that there are practical limits as to what can be accomplished in the next six months.

Jon Adams then took us back to the devotions for the day regarding authority and chaos. He indicated how this relates to this synod at this time; that now is the time for strong leadership in this synod. The Synod Council needs to move and take the lead to get things done. Pastor Murray indicated she felt that we are in a time of transition, not a time of chaos.

Melissa Hoffman said she felt we need to distribute better information to the masses about exactly what has happened over the last six months. She feels we need to provide more detail. She offered to help write something; perhaps several members of Synod

Council could attend meetings around this synod to explain what has been done to deal with all the issues before us over these past months.

It was suggested that perhaps we offer a Question and Answer Guide that can be used at Conference Assemblies so there is consistency in interpreting the events of the last six months. Members of the council could send questions they have been hearing from others and questions they feel are important to be answered to Melissa. She would gather them, begin to create responses to them, and bring a draft to the March 1 Synod Council meeting.

There also should be produced a bulletin-ready summary that could be sent to congregations to help members of all congregations understand what has happened over the past six months. Allison Carlson said she feels that pastors need to take the lead in sharing information with their congregations.

Pastor Dave Fisher said he believed there needs to be a real focus on consistency. He expressed concern over whether people are feeling there is chaos or transition or is there a more deep-seeded issue. He believes that perhaps there is division among Synod Council members over these issues and that perhaps there needs to be discussion. He also believes that the bulletin-ready piece needs to have a lot of history attached when dealing with the issues related to the office of treasurer. The Lower Susquehanna Synod has been seen as having the “Cadillac” of treasurers’ offices.

Pastor Murray believes that the bulletin needs to differentiate between what is going on in the synod office and what is going on in the synod. A lot has been going on in the synod for a long time now. Pastor Geib suggested that fear generates anxiety and that this printed piece needs to generate confidence. Pastor Gausmann suggested that while differentiating we need to recognize other issues and how they interconnect. Pastor Sadler said we need to make sure we remind people that we all are the synod.

Vice President Price then mentioned how he appreciated the open discussion and how we need to do more of the same at future meetings.

We then talked about who would create these documents. Melissa Hoffman offered to receive questions by email. Then perhaps she, Pastor Tom McKee, and Pastor David Ritterpusch could meet to provide answers.

It was then mentioned that perhaps there could be forum opportunities at Synod Assembly for persons to meet with members of the Synod Council, Finance and Budget, the Audit Committee, and perhaps the bishop. There is some concern about putting the synod and Barry Herr’s reputation in jeopardy if the forum is not very carefully conducted. This matter will be discussed again at the March 1 meeting of Synod Council.

We then moved to the Personnel Committee minutes. Jon Adams brought recommendation **PC08.01.01**, from the Personnel Committee:

ADOPTED: That the proposed position description for synod treasurer SC08.01.03. including a stipend of \$10,000 and reimbursement for mileage be adopted; also that the temporary position description for secretary of synod and assistant to the bishop, the Rev. Thomas E. McKee also be adopted.

There was some further discussion about the number of hours a volunteer treasurer would be required to provide. How was the number of hours determined in order that this stipend figure would be reached? Joanne Wilhelm explained that the position is considered voluntary and that the stipend does not relate to the number of hours but rather to the appreciation for the skills that the person would be required to bring to the position.

At this time, Joanne Wilhelm, Pastor Dave Fisher, and Pastor Mel Dick were excused from the meeting.

Jon Adams discussed recommendation PC08.01.02 proposed by the Personnel Committee.

A discussion was held concerning the additional work that the “entire” synod staff has undertaken over the past seven months. It was unanimously agreed that the synod has been blessed to have such an understanding, flexible, and collegial staff that has had the best interest of the Church at heart during this transition time.

Vice President Price agreed that the entire staff did in fact accept additional responsibilities and that they performed these responsibilities under confusing circumstances. He also stated that Pastor McKee, Joanne Wilhelm, and Linda Lubold accepted a particularly high degree of additional work due to their particular positions within the synod office. A discussion followed centering on the possibility of recognition bonuses. Due to the unbudgeted expenses that the synod has experienced, it was agreed that we needed to be financially realistic about our financial situation. Ron expressed the opinion that he believed the staff would support bonuses for Pastor McKee, Joanne Wilhelm, and Linda Lubold since the staff has expressed their individual concern and thanks for the extra work that these individuals have assumed.

Pastor Dave Hefner moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council tender to Pastor Tom McKee, Joanne Wilhelm, and Linda Lubold one extra week paid vacation and one extra week paid compensation as an expression of gratitude for the care, work, and effort they displayed during this time of synod transition.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Melissa Hoffman gave an overview report of the financial situation of the synod. Melissa pointed out that Mission Support through December 21, 2007, showed a percentage

decrease of 3.7%. A discussion followed centering on the current economic condition nationally and if this 3.7% decrease may be a result of such conditions. It was agreed that regardless of the cause, this decrease needs to be turned around.

A combined Budget Report/2007 Transition Budget Report was also shared. This report showed an unbudgeted amount of \$128,579.27. Melissa explained that \$118,044.07 of this budget described as treasurer's transition cost were monies used in the transition in the treasurer's office and its daily functioning. This information was highlighted so that it would be understood that the cost of installation of Bishop Hoover came to \$10,535.20.

NEW BUSINESS

Pastor David Ritterpusch then brought before the council some urgent issues from the Audit Committee. The synod's new auditors need a declaration of outstanding financial responsibilities by the synod no later than January 31, 2008. The concern is has the Synod Council created a 2007 financial responsibility for the synod as a result of **SC07.09.88. That the ordained pastors who have experienced financial harm through the improper calculation of social security benefits by this synod and the amount of their loss be identified and that disclosure be made to and consultations relative to restitution be held with those individual.** This action was taken by Synod Council on September 15, 2007.

In reviewing the Synod Council action it was determined the wording was such that it does **not** bind this synod to a specific amount of money in a specific year.

There was some discussion about the make-up of the Audit Committee and the need for it to be a committee totally independent of persons who were in any way connected to leadership on the Synod Council, the Finance and Budget Committee, and the officers.

The bishop then asked for some time to discuss his treatment and rehabilitation. He told the council that he has been in residential treatment at Marworth in Waverly, Pennsylvania, and that he is currently in intensive outpatient treatment at Mazzitti and Sullivan in Harrisburg. He also is attending AA meetings. He indicated that his recovery must take priority over everything else. He is feeling good and feels confident he can manage recovery with God's help and that he will be able to do as good a job as possible with the gifts God has given him for this important position to which he has been called. He is open to discussion about his illness at any time. No questions are out of bounds. He is looking forward to our ministry together.

Joanne Wilhelm
director for administration
Ronald R. Price
synod vice president
01/19/2008