

**LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**Minutes**  
**February 20, 2010**

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for a regular meeting on Saturday, February 20, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the United Church Center, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Vice President Ronald R. Price called the meeting to order. Lucinda L. Bringman presented devotions, centering on the theme of being in community. She read from Romans 12 and from the writings of Marva Dawn. She led the members of the Synod Council in prayer.

Pastor Walter May, Executive for Synodical and Constituent Relations, Synodical Relations Section, was present to conduct the consultation between the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council and the Evangelical Church in America. He brought greetings from the Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, who had just returned from an ecumenical journey. He thanked the members of the Synod Council for their leadership and acknowledged that this is a difficult time for Synod Councils and staff. He stated that economic conditions and the churchwide decisions have merged to create a perfect storm. Receipts to the ELCA are 1.2 million below where they need to be. The ELCA churchwide organization has seen a reduction of 62 staff positions, 41 of which were filled with persons whose service was terminated. This staff reduction will certainly make a difference in the services that the ELCA will be able to offer. New mission starts, missionaries, Directors for Evangelical Mission, and Disaster Relief staff were not cut. Pastor May shared with the members of the Synod Council grants that were given to this synod's congregations since the beginning of the ELCA.

Bishop Hoover told Pastor May that most of the problems do not center in the ability of the ELCA to deliver services. The differences we have center in agreeing on a core understanding of the Word of God and the ecclesiology of this church.

Pastor May spoke about the valuable service that the synod vice presidents provide to this church. He expressed his appreciation to our vice president, Ron Price, for his fine service.

Tom Brenner spoke about the conflict the churchwide decisions have brought to his congregation, and asked what tools are available to help address that conflict, especially Bible studies that could be led by unbiased lay leaders. Pam Drenner shared some resources prepared for the Book of Faith Initiative that address the whole issue of the interpretation of scripture.

Vice President Price thanked Pastor May for coming for this consultation and presented him a weaving by the Family Heirloom Weavers as a memento of this visit to our synod.

Vice President Price took this opportunity to thank Barb Myers for her 26 years of service to this synod, serving with Bishops McCarney, Edmiston, Hendrix, and Hoover. Barb will be retiring February 24, 2010. Barb talked about the changes she has seen during her years of service and about some of the highlights of her time with this synod.

Pastor Cliff Eshbach presented the Ministry Highlight on his recent trip to the Konde Diocese. Traveling with Pastor Eshbach on this trip were Pastors Judy and Tom McKee, Judy Garber, and Judy's niece Rachel Lauber. Pastor Eshbach proclaimed that he was dramatically transformed by this trip. Bishop Israel Peter Mwakyolile in his eight years in office has made dramatic changes in the Konde Diocese. He has placed in positions of leadership qualified persons. The church in Tanzania is a greater social force than the church in the United States currently is. The church in Tanzania provides 60% of all social

services offered in the country. Bishop Mwakyolile has identified three areas of concentration: education, health care, and agriculture. The diocese is in a very rural area and could easily be the bread basket of the nation. We, as a synod, have provided scholarships to Manow Lutheran Secondary School, scholarships for pastors' children, and education in the United States for pastors and other leaders of the church. St. Paul, York, has been an example of an effective companion congregation with its relationship to Mpuguso congregation. This relationship has blossomed among the lay leaders of both congregations. They are working together to build a youth hostel where the Mpuguso congregation can accommodate young women coming to the Mpuguso area for schooling. St. Paul, York, has been a leader in providing scholarships for pastors' children. They recently have partnered with Trinity, Lancaster, to continue providing such scholarships; they continue to look for other partner congregations to provide additional scholarships. We as a synod also support Itete Hospital and its dispensary in Tukuyu while the German church supports Matema Hospital. Bishop Mwakyolile has also requested that this synod consider donating a tractor that could be used in the diocese's agriculture efforts.

Pastor Eshbach announced that a companion congregation event will be held on Saturday, May 22, 2010, at Camp Kirchenwald. This event will try to simulate what it would be like if you travelled to Tanzania and what life is like for members of companion congregations. Twelve representatives of this synod will travel to Tanzania in July, visiting in companion congregations and touring the institutions of the diocese. In October Pastor Eshbach will return to Tanzania for a consultation with the bishop and his staff and with their other partners. On the agenda will be the sustainability of the Konde Diocese during times of economic stress, a report from all the partners on the projects they are supporting, and a discussion of human sexuality.

Pastor Eshbach provided an update on Swamp Lutheran Church. The fire was caused by a malfunction in the electric panel box in the office and education area. The entire office/education area was destroyed. The church building was saved, but suffered great smoke and water damage. Pastor Denny Trout lost the memorabilia of his 40 years of ministry. The congregation was offered a temporary office by one of its members. The congregation will worship on a rotating basis at the other congregations of the Cocalico Area Lutheran Ministries.

**ROLL CALL**

<b>Members present:</b>	Bishop B. Penrose Hoover Thomas E. McKee  Thomas C. Benner Lucinda L. Bringman Holly Freas-Webster Elizabeth D. George Robert H. Getz, Jr. David L. Hefner Mary Anne Kingsborough	Ronald R. Price Bruce E. Seagrist  Paula L. Murray Timothy W. Sadler Patricia A. Snyder Marcus W. Thomsen April E. Trout Alexis Witt Kim Y. Wittel
<b>Liaisons present:</b>	Fred W. Bohls	Kathy Hefner
<b>Staff present:</b>	Melvin E. Dick Pamela B. Drenner David R. Fisher	Clifton D. Eshbach Barbara Myers Joanne Wilhelm
<b>Members excused:</b>	Judy K. Collins	Sara A Gausmann

**Liaison excused:** Kirsten Youse

**Staff excused:** Charlie Roberts

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 21, 2009, meeting of Synod Council were approved as distributed.

**BISHOP'S REPORT**

Bishop B. Penrose Hoover provided a written report.

Bishop Hoover moved the following appointments and elections:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council elect to the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania Roger Smith for a first three-year term, expiring 2012;

That the Synod Council elect to the Board of Directors of Lutheran Social Services of South Central Pennsylvania Donald A. Wissner to fill the unexpired term of Eddie Dunkelbarger, expiring December 31, 2010;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Candidacy Committee the Rev. Walter D. Carlson and the Rev. Dione M. Klepetka for a first five-year term, expiring in 2015; and

That the Synod Council appoint to the CTIM Steering Committee Douglas West and Jane West for a first two-year term, expiring in 2012.

Bishop Hoover moved the following motions concerning "on -leave-from-call" status:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council retain "on-leave-from-call" status the Rev. Eloise Shanley until January 14, 2011.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council retain "on-leave-from-call-not-available-for-call" status the Rev. Alan C. Wenrich until January 30, 2011.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council grant "on-leave-from-call" status the Rev. Sandra R. Mackie, effective February 14, 2010, until February 14, 2011.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council request that the Conference of Bishop grant a two-year extension on "on-leave-from-call" status for Celia Domines, AiM, until December 1, 2009; and for Karin E. Pejack, until May 31, 2012.

The bishop moved the following approval for retirement:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council approve the request of Barbara K. Schmitthenner, diaconal minister to retire, effective December 31, 2009.

Bishop Hoover moved the following Synod Council calls:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council extend a call to Ellen D. Doughty, diaconal ministry candidate, to serve as part-time chaplain with Pinnacle Health Systems in Harrisburg, effective upon her consecration, for a period of three years.  
**SC10.02.07.**

(This call is a three-year term call contingent upon Ms. Doughty receiving ecclesiastical endorsement as a chaplain from the Office of Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education Unit of the ELCA.)

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council extend a call to the Rev. Doris Nolan as chaplain at Luthercare at Spang Crest Manor and Luther Acres, effective January 4, 2010.  
**SC10.02.08.**

(Pastor Nolan has received the necessary chaplaincy endorsement for this position.)

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council renew for an additional one year its call to the Rev. Richard L. Hair as part-time intentional interim pastor of Lakeside, Harrisburg.  
**SC10.02.09.**

Bishop Hoover moved the following approval of a resignation from the roster.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council approve the resignation of the Rev. Timothy J. Kielley from the roster of ordained ministers of the ELCA, effective January 22, 2010.  
**SC10.02.10.**

(Bishop Hoover read a letter that will be sent to all rostered leaders, the council of St. Paul congregation, and the Synod Council, detailing the events that led to this resignation. The bishop answered questions from members of the Synod Council about this resignation.)

Bishop Hoover moved the following approval for the removal of congregations from the roster of congregations of the ELCA.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council approve the removal of the congregations of the McConnellsburg Lutheran Parish (St. Paul Lutheran Church, McConnellsburg; St. Paul Lutheran Church (Big Cove Tannery), McConnellsburg; and Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Mercersburg) from the roster of congregations of the ELCA, effective February 20, 2010, for non-compliance to the provisions of their constitutions.  
**SC10.02.11.**

Bishop Hoover introduced the subject of staffing the synod office in light of the retirements of Barbara Myers and Pastor Melvin Dick. Pastor Clifford Eshbach, supported by a contractual agreement with our Web master Douglas West, will assume responsibility for communication within our synod. Bishop Hoover announced his intention to call a new person to serve as Assistant to the Bishop with responsibilities for mobility, leadership development, ministry support, deans, worship, and specialized care for rostered leaders and with liaison relationships to five conferences. He presented as his choice for this position the Rev. Virginia J. Cover. Pastor Cover was ordained on August 24, 2007, and has served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg, from August 1, 2007, until the present. A native of Frederick, Maryland, and a graduate of Shepherdstown University and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, she is married to Curtis Glidewell.

Bishop Hoover moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council issue a call to the Rev. Virginia J. Cover as assistant to the bishop, effective May 10, 2010.  
**SC10.02.12.**

**ADOPTED:** That the total compensation of \$56,300 to be paid to the Rev. Virginia J. Cover for the period beginning May 10, 2010, shall include an annual payment of \$19,500 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.  
**SC10.02.13.**

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Bruce E. Seagrist submitted written reports through December 31, 2009, including reports of mission support, Merrill Lynch earnings, schedules of financial positions, unaudited statements of activity, and combined budget reports. The treasurer shared a new report that included a comparison of mission support receipts each year from 2002 through 2009, a decrease of 8.94%. He pointed to the decline in support over that time period. The new report also included an investment history for the period January 2009 through December 2009. Investments total \$1,763,105. Also included in this report was report on the embezzlement. The total embezzlement was \$1,164,450. The expenses incurred by this synod were \$261,650. Restitution thus far is \$497,863; insurance proceeds are \$656,346. Mr. Seagrist anticipated that unrecoverable funds amount to \$271,891.

The treasurer stated that currently all obligations are being paid and that all mission support has been remitted to the ELCA. Mission support for 2009 equaled \$3,588,900, a decrease of 8.94%. However, the staff members were prudent stewards and held the line on spending. The treasurer continues to work on the investments. The Immanuel Lutheran Church Fund has been relinquished to the Upper Susquehanna Synod, for the care of Old Immanuel Church and Cemetery. The report of the independent auditor, MaherDuessel, for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2009, was reviewed. In its report, the independent auditor reported its inability to form an opinion about the permanently restricted net assets until their classification has been identified. Because this synod does not report expenses by their functional classification, this information has not been included in the accompanying financial statements. Mr. Seagrist announced that following this Synod Council meeting, the report of the independent auditor will be placed on the Web site. Mr. Seagrist announced that all congregations of this synod have had their sales tax exemption renewed through a blanket exemption submitted by this synod. All congregations soon will receive notice of this renewal.

Mr. Seagrist discussed the dishonesty bond that insures all congregations of this synod with \$10,000 coverage. Last year we wrote to our congregations, explaining that after April 2010 this synod may not be able to offer this coverage. However, Brotherhood Insurance has now offered dishonest bond coverage of \$25,000 to this synod and all its congregations for \$10,760, which is within our budgeted amount for this insurance.

Mr. Seagrist moved:

**ADOPTED:** That this synod provide through Brotherhood Mutual a dishonesty bond in the amount of \$25,000 to all congregations of this synod.  
**SC10.02.14.**

### **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Vice President Price moved the following task force appointments.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council appoint the Rev. Shawn Berkebile, the Rev. Newell Embley, the Rev. Kirk Kerns, and the Rev. Richard Jorgensen to the Task Force for  
**SC10.02.15.**

**Implementation of the Formation Recommendations.**

**That the Synod Council appoint the Rev. Jean Kuebler, Larry Young, John Brenner, the Rev. Irvin Straw, and the Rev. Larry Hummer to the Task Force on Protocol For Maintaining the Assets of Congregations.**

The vice president shared an e-mail from Pastor David Hefner, questioning his ability to remain on Synod Council in light of the Churchwide Assembly decisions and the understanding that as a synod we must uphold and follow these decisions. It was the concurrence of the Executive Committee that especially at this time we need all voices on Synod Council. Bishop Hoover addressed the council reminding the members of the amendment that was adopted at the Churchwide Assembly that this church find a way to provide for those who hold a different opinion. It is the intent of this church to live together as an inclusive body in spite of the disagreements that we have. We are currently struggling with the trust factor. It is only as we continue to talk and work together honestly and openly that we can truly trust.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Pastor Thomas McKee referred to his report in the Executive Committee minutes. The congregation reports and the bishop's confidential reports have been mailed and are being returned. Assembly information has been mailed to all congregation, rostered leaders, committees, agencies, and institutions. Congregations have begun to return their certification cards for lay voting members. The Nominating Committee has met and all slates are full except the slate for a young adult (18-30 years) member of Synod Council.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Vice President Price reviewed the February 8, 2010, minutes of the Executive Committee.

Pastor McKee gave background information about the Friendship Fire Hall in Windsor Park, York County. The estimated value of this building at 639 N. Franklin Street is \$107,340. The current deed states that if the York Town Craft Guild would leave the facility, the facility would revert to the Lower Susquehanna Synod to give to a Lutheran congregation in York County. Our attorney, Lawrence Abrams, has stated that according to the PA statue on modification of charitable gifts, the Lower Susquehanna could list or sell the property outright. If the PA Guild would convey the firehouse property to York Guild, the deed could retain the words, "should the Grantee dissolve or divest itself of title to the property, the property shall be conveyed to the Lower Susquehanna Synod." However, the York Town Craft Guild is asking this synod to give up the right to obtain this property for a nominal amount. This would insure that the York Town Craft Guild could sell the building and recoup some value on any improvements that it made to the firehouse. If it could not recoup the cost of improvements, the Guild could not make any improvements, and the firehouse would deteriorate. Therefore, if this synod finally does receive the building when the York Town Craft Guild leaves, the building most likely would be in poor shape, in need of many repairs, and difficult to sell. If the York Town Guild is willing to pay all legal costs involved in removing this synod's name from the deed, the Executive Committee recommends that the Synod Council act to remove the name of the Lower Susquehanna Synod from the deed and to grant York Town Craft Group full ownership of the firehouse.

Lucinda Bringman moved:

**ADOPTED:**     **That the Synod Council approve the divestment of any rights that the Lower**  
**SC10.02.16.**     **Susquehanna Synod may have to the former Friendship Fire Hall to the York**  
                          **Town Crafts Guild, contingent upon the York Town Craft Guild agreeing to pay all**

**legal costs associated with removing this synod's name from the deed.**

**REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL**

**ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE** provided minutes of its December 9, 2009, and its February 16, 2010, meetings along with copies of the proposed agenda and rules of procedure. Pastor David Hefner, chair, reviewed the actions of the committee.

Pastor Hefner moved the following recommendations on behalf of the Assembly Planning Committee.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council recommend the proposed agenda to the 2010 Synod Assembly for adoption.  
**SC10.02.17.**

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council recommend the proposed rules of procedure to the 2010 Synod Assembly for adoption.  
**SC10.02.18.**

**ADOPTED:** That the complimentary package for the 2010 Synod Assembly be set at \$150 for commuters; \$212 for residents; and \$274 for those needing preassembly dinner and lodging.  
**SC10.02.19.**

**ADOPTED:** That one half of the assembly offering be designated for Marie-Claire Charles, a Haitian student who graduated from the Institute Univers and who is studying at Harrisburg Community College under the sponsorship of youth and adult leaders of the Lower Susquehanna Synod; and that one half of the assembly offering be designated for student scholarships at Manow Lutheran Secondary School, a school of the Konde Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

The members of Synod Council concurred that they would not need to have lunch with their reorganizational meeting on June 12, 2010, following the adjournment of the Synod Assembly.

**CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE** will meet to review the amendments made to the Model Constitution for Synods by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

**FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE** provided minutes of its December 17, 2009, meeting.

**GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE** met on Friday, January 22, 2010, at 9 a.m. to seek possible nominees to fill the slate of the Nominating Committee.

**MISSION COMMITTEE** chair, Lucinda Bringman, told of the recent trip that Bishop Hoover, Pastor Fisher, Ron Price, Pastor Beth Schlegel, and she made to Chicago. They joined with representatives from ten other synods to discuss the role of the Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEMs). The words that were often used to describe mission were messy and goeey. One frame to a Power Point presentation they saw asked, "What is involved in a synod vision?" A vision for synod mission must grow from the grassroots. Two examples of grassroots mission are the Latino ministry being grown by the Gettysburg Conference, and the Sudanese ministry coming out of Tree of Life, Harrisburg, fostered by an emerging worshiping community of mostly Sudanese immigrants and a TEEM candidate Del-Akech-Del. Both of these could be new start ministries that would help to bring life to this synod. A concern with emerging ministries is the issue of trust, trust between congregations and trust between congregations, this synod, and the ELCA. The role of the

DEMs was compared to a mid-wife, a scout, and even to Metamucil. If we engage properly in mission, we become like a stage. We lift up and support an important story, but we are not noticed, we do not call attention to ourselves, and we do not detract from the story. What is the story of Jesus that we lift up in this place?

### **REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS**

**LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION** liaison, Fred Bohls, reported to the Synod Council that the annual gathering of Lutheran Men in Mission (LLM) will be held on May 8, 2010, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill. The program will be an LLM-version of “No Man Left Behind.”

**WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA** liaison, Kathy Hefner, reported that the synodical unit is in desperate need for leaders. At their convention in June they will be electing a president, secretary, and treasurer as well as other board members.

**LUTHERAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION** liaison, Kirsten Youse, submitted a written report. Recently the LYO served at the synod-wide youth event, Winterfest. The theme was “Living Simply,” and the youth explored our relationship with God and his creation, the world in which we live. Participants also learned about how we can take better care of the world. This was a great learning and serving experience for LYO members. In the upcoming months, the youth plan on visiting Peter’s Porch and serving there.

### **REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF**

Pastor Mel Dick, assistant to the bishop, reported that the next scheduled ordination service will be Friday, April 16, 2010, at Christ Lutheran Church, York. He also stated that we are in the middle of the February First Call Assignment Process. We will learn on Tuesday which first call candidates will be assigned to this synod.

Pam Drenner, Resource Network Director, reminded the members of the Synod Council about CTIM, which will be held on Saturday, March 13, 2010, at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Hanover. This is a Book of Faith event. Deadline for reservations is Friday, February 26, 2010.

Pastor David Fisher, assistant to the bishop and DEM, announced that Del-Akech-Del, leader of the Sudanese worshipping community, has been approved as a TEEM candidate. Del will be instrumental in helping this worshipping community develop. Pastor Fisher hopes that we will develop partner congregations, like our companion congregations with congregations in the Konde Diocese, to provide support for this worshipping community. Pastor Fisher also announced that a stewardship workshop, “Make it Simple,” will be held on April 10, 2010, at Trindle Spring Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg. He hopes that this will be a pilot workshop that will be offered in other areas of this synod.

### **REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES FOR THE MINISTERIUM**

**Committee of Deans** provided minutes of its November 9, 2009, and its January 11, 2010, meetings.

**Compensation and Benefits Committee** provided a summary report of the information the Synod Assembly requested that this committee provide. As of December 31, 2009, there were 174 pastors currently serving under full-time call to congregations. The committee has usable salary/housing data for 119 of these, or for 68%. Of those 119 pastors, 81 are at minimum for their ordained years of service, or again 68%. The committee is considering a one percent increase for 2010. It is also considering changing the grid so that there will be less categories, each representing multiple years of ordination.

**REPORTS OF THE SYNODICAL MINISTRIES FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE**

**Resource Network** provided monthly reports for September 2009 through January 2010. Included was an overview of resource network office activity for the same period.

**CTIM Steering Committee** provided minutes of its November 17, 2009, meeting.

**REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES FOR MISSION**

**Audit Committee** provided minutes of its December 4, 2009, meeting as well as the report of our independent auditor, MaherDuessel, Certified Public Accountants.

**Committee for Synodical Worship** liaison, Lucinda L. Bringman, submitted a Synod Council report form written January 14, 2010.

**REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE** provided minutes of its February 5, 2010, meeting as well as a preliminary slate of nominees.

**REPORTS OF AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS RELATING TO THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no further unfinished business to come before the Synod Council.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to come before Synod Council.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Thomas E. McKee  
synod secretary  
2/22/2010

