

**LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**Minutes**  
**February 21, 2009**

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for a regular meeting on Saturday, February 21, 2009, 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. Marisa Hunt, vice president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, presented devotions based on the devotions from Winterfest. She told a story about a German orphan named Walter. In this story Marisa saw many human manifestations of God's love made known in Jesus Christ. Through this story Marisa saw that God has a plan for everyone. Part of that plan is sharing God's love with others. Marisa led the members of the Synod Council in prayer. The vice president thanked Marisa for leading devotions.

Pastor Sally Gausmann, chair of the Gifts Discernment Committee, introduced Robert L. Haar and Bruce E. Seagrist, who were being recommended by this committee to Synod Council as nominees for the office of treasurer. She said that God has blessed us by providing such qualified individuals who are willing to serve this synod in the office of treasurer. Mr. Haar and Mr. Seagrist introduced themselves to the members of Synod Council and presented their resumes and spoke briefly about how they would serve this synod if elected.

Vice president Ronald Price extended thanks to Mr. Haar and Mr. Seagrist for agreeing to be nominated for synod treasurer and for giving of their time to meet with the members of Synod Council.

**ROLL CALL**

<b>Members present:</b>	Bishop B. Penrose Hoover Thomas E. McKee	Ronald R. Price
	Jon R. Adams Thomas C. Benner Holly Freas-Webster Sara A. Gausmann Richard B. Geib David L. Hefner Mary Anne Kingsborough	Paula L. Murray Timothy W. Sadler Patricia A. Snyder Cody Teitman Marcus W. Thomsen April E. Trout Kim Y. Wittel
<b>Liaisons present:</b>	Kathy Hefner	Marisa Hunt
<b>Staff present:</b>	Melvin E. Dick Pamela B. Drenner Barbara A. Myers	Charlie Roberts Joanne Wilhelm
<b>Members excused:</b>	Lucinda L. Bringman	Allison L. Carlson
<b>Liaisons excused:</b>	Fred W. Bohls	
<b>Staff excused:</b>	David R. Fisher	

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 15, 2008, 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 appoint Donald D. Drenner, the Rev. Fredrica K. Meitzen, the Rev. Albert J. Domines, the Rev. Jean N. Kuebler, and the Rev. Abigail C. Leese, and reappoint the Rev. Edgar Reed, the Rev. Miriam Nicholson, and Larry Showers to the Congregations Together in Mission Planning Committee for a two-year term expiring in 2011;

That the Synod Council appoint the Rev. Lisa Hair to the Committee on Higher Education to fill an unexpired term ending in 2009;

That Lauren Bricker, James Mummert, and the Rev. Matthew J. Lenahan be appointed to the Church in Society Committee for a three-year term, expiring in 2012; and

That Heidi Eshenour be reappointed to the Compensation and Benefits Committee for a second three-year term, expiring in 2012.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council elect to the board of directors of the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania the Rev. Benjamin Leese to an unexpired term, expiring in 2010, and the Rev. Matthew Pensinger to an unexpired term, expiring in 2011.

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

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council continue on "on-leave-from-call" status for one additional year the Rev. Eloise Shanley, until January 14, 2010.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council grant "on-leave-from-call" status to the Rev. Richard Whitesel for a period of one year from December 31, 2008, until December 31, 2009.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council grant "on-leave-from-call – not available for call" status to the Rev. Alan C. Wenrich for a period of one year from January 30, 2009, until January 30, 2010.

Bishop Hoover moved the following motion regarding a Synod Council call:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Richard L. Hair as part-time intentional interim pastor of Lakeside Lutheran Church, Harrisburg, effective February 21, 2009.

Bishop Hoover asked the members of the Synod Council to reserve the dates of October 19-20, 2009, for anti-racism training. This training is being sponsored by the Committee on Church in Society and conducted by trained churchwide staff. This training is being offered to synod staff, members of the

Synod Council and the Committee on Church in Society, and conference deans and secretaries.

Bishop Hoover shared with the members of Synod Council that almost every weekend he has been making congregational visits. These visits are a source of real joy for him. He welcomes other opportunities to visit in congregations.

Bishop Hoover talked about the bishops' visit to the Middle East. One third of the bishops declined to go on this trip; some who did go came back early. The bishop is unsure whether there will be another opportunity to go to the Middle East this year. However, he has spoken to Pastor Richard B. Geib and Pastor Darlis Swan about their time in the Middle East. Also our Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Committee has planned broader conversations with Jewish and Muslim religious leaders.

Bishop Hoover informed the members of Synod Council that Pastor David R. Fisher has assumed his responsibilities as Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission as of February 1, 2009. He is working under a new position description, continuing some of the work that he was doing and adding some other responsibilities. The bishop and staff have reworked the position descriptions of the other members of the Executive Staff and have developed a position description for a new assistant to the bishop. Included in this position are relating to five conferences; serving as staff liaison to the Church in Society, Global Mission, Konde Diocese, and World Hunger Committees; coordinating our Fresh Start and Clergy in Congregations in Transition ministries with the Episcopal diocese staff; and staffing the Synod Assembly Elections Committee. The bishop has had conversations with staff members and others in this synod about this position and those who may have the qualifications to fill it; he also had interviews with potential candidates for this position. He has selected the person that he believes is the right person to fill this position for this synod at this time. This candidate has accepted the position, and the bishop now will bring his recommendation to Synod Council that it call the Rev. Clifton D. Eshbach as assistant to the bishop.

Bishop Hoover moved the following recommendations:

**ADOPTED:**     **That the Synod Council call the Rev. Clifton D. Eshbach as assistant to the SC09.02.07.     bishop, effective April 25, 2009.**

**ADOPTED:**     **That the total compensation of \$61,000 to be paid to the Rev. Clifton D. Eshbach SC09.02.08.     for the period beginning April 25, 2009, shall include an annual payment of \$29,521 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.**

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Linda Lubold, assistant to the treasurer, provided a report of mission support for November and December 2008 and January 2009 and also statements of activities through October 31, November 30, and December 31, 2008. She also provided Merrill Lynch Reports through November 28 and December 31, 2008, and through January 30, 2009, as well as a fourth quarter 2008 investment review prepared by Emerald Advisors, February 12, 2009.

Vice President Price explained that the vast decrease in mission support received in January 2009 from mission support received in January 2008 can be explained by the fact that our new auditor has stated that the treasurer's office must close the treasurer's books at the end of each month instead of keeping the books open for ten days into the new month in order to credit deposits to the previous month. This difference will be noted throughout fiscal year 2009.

**VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The report of the vice president is found in the minutes of the Executive Committee.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The report of the secretary is found in the minutes of the Executive Committee.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee provided minutes of its February 6, 2009, meeting. Vice President Ronald Price led the members of the Synod Council through the minutes. The vice president instructed the council that, if the council wanted to reconsider the Personnel and Whistleblower Policy, the motion to reconsider must come from someone who voted in the affirmative.

**REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL**

**ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE** presented minutes of its November 18, 2008, and its January 8, 2009, meetings, and drafts of a proposed agenda for the 2009 Synod Assembly and the proposed rules of procedure. Pastor David Hefner, committee chair, commented on the minutes and the drafts. Thursday evening will include two forum opportunities, the Necrology service, and an ice cream social. These activities are free and open to all persons; however, pre-registration is necessary. There will be on-line registration available this year. The committee is working to insure that there is a better location for displays, better signage, and two shuttle buses. Pam Drenner is working on recruiting and training a corps of assembly volunteers. Barb Myers is working with Olan Mills to produce a pictorial directory of rostered leaders.

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

**ADOPTED:**     **That the Synod Council recommend the proposed agenda for the 2009 Synod Assembly to the 2009 Synod Assembly for adoption.**  
**SC09.02.09.**

**ADOPTED:**     **That the Synod Council recommend the proposed rules of procedure to the 2009 Synod Assembly for adoption.**  
**SC09.02.10.**

**ADOPTED:**     **That the maximum complimentary package offered for the 2009 be set at \$287.00.**  
**SC09.02.11.**

The complimentary package is available to retired rostered leaders not serving as interim pastors and their spouses; ordinands and spouses; synod staff; lay officers, lay members of Synod Council, and lay members of assembly committees who are not voting members from their congregations; volunteers; and assembly guests.

**CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE** has received a request from the Nominating Committee to consider recommending an amendment to **S10.01.03.** so that the Synod Council youth member would be a confirmed member of a congregation of this synod and under twenty-one years of age at the time of election. This synod also has received notice of proposed amendments to the ELCA governing documents that will come before the Churchwide Assembly in August. No synodical action needs to be taken on these amendments at this time. However, one proposed required amendment specifies that there be both a youth and a young adult member of Synod Council. A

youth is defined as someone who has not reached the age of eighteen before appointment or election; a youth adult is between the ages of eighteen and thirty at the time of election.

**FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE** provided minutes of its November 20, 2008, and its February 12, 2009, meetings, and a draft of the amended Synod Investment Policy for the Endowment Funds. Jon Adams, committee chair, reviewed this information with the members of Synod Council. The committee revised the draft, substituting Barclays Aggregate Bond Index for Lehman Brothers Bond Index. Jon Adams explained that the Russell 3000 represents 98% of all stocks; the indexes were chosen to insure that our investments are quality investments.

Jon Adams moved the following recommendation from the Finance and Budget Committee:

**ADOPTED: That the Synod Council adopt the revised Synod Investment Policy for Endowment SC09.02.12. Funds.**

**GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE** chair, Pastor Sally Gausmann, provided information from this committee about the nomination of treasurer and the search process in which this committee engaged.

Pastor Sally Gausmann moved:

**ADOPTED: That the Synod Council nominate Robert L. Haar and Bruce E. Seagrist for the SC09.02.13. office of treasurer of the Lower Susquehanna Synod.**

#### **REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS**

**LUTHERAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION** liaison, Marissa Hunt, reported that Winterfest was attended by 650 youth and youth workers. The majority of the responses were positive, especially to the new band that was formed by Winterfest alumni. The Lutheran Youth Organization changed its format. It did not elect officers at Winterfest. However, the LYO board will nominate officers on March 1; elections will be held in April or May.

**WOMEN OF THE ELCA** liaison, Kathy Hefner, reported that Fay Nichols was attending the Conference of Presidents in Chicago this weekend. The women have several events planned for this spring.

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

Pastor Melvin Dick reported that Chandler Carriker was commissioned an associate in ministry on January 30; he is serving as Director of Theological Education for Youth at Philadelphia and Gettysburg Seminaries. Pastor Sadie Pounder was ordained on February 13. She has been called as part-time associate pastor of Holy Trinity, Lancaster, on a one-year term call.

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

**COMMITTEE OF DEANS** provided minutes of its January 12 and February 9, 2009, meetings.

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

**RESOURCE CENTER** submitted reports for November and December 2008 and January 2009. Pam Drenner provided information about some of the spin-off events from Congregations Together in Mission.



deaconesses shall require a two-thirds voted by the assembly for adoption;” and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority

vote to change ELCA standards to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships; and

**WHEREAS**, a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and

**WHEREAS**, a decision to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex relationships holds the potential to be very divisive in ELCA synods and congregations and to cause both membership and financial losses for synods and congregations; and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA is seeking ways to make decisions on a consensus basis rather than by close votes; and

**WHEREAS**, a super majority vote – such as a two-thirds majority – would require an overwhelming majority of Churchwide Assembly voting members to make such a significant change to church teaching and practice; and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA Church Council will meet March 27-30 and could change its proposed rules for the Churchwide Assembly to recommend a two-thirds majority for adoption of any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopts its rules for the assembly and could change the required majority for adoption of any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council ask the ELCA Church Council to add the following provision to the rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly: “Any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption.”

Before the vote on this resolution, Vice President Price led the members of the Synod Council in prayer.

There was no further new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. with the praying of the Lord’s Prayer.

Thomas E. McKee  
synod secretary  
2/21/09