

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Minutes
April 26, 2008

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for a regular meeting on Saturday, April 26, 2008, 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 at 9:00 a.m. Pastor Paula Murray presented devotions, using a meditation she developed on the authority of the Church based on Matthew 28:16-20 and Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession. Pastor Thomas McKee led the members of the Synod Council in prayer.

ROLL CALL

Members present:	Bishop B. Penrose Hoover Thomas E. McKee	Ronald R. Price
	Jon R. Adams Allison L. Carlson Eric H. Crump Holly Freas-Webster Sara A. Gausmann Richard B. Geib Carrie E. Gross	David L. Hefner Melissa H. Hoffman C. Dee Lockman Paula L. Murray Timothy W. Sadler Cody Teitman
Liaisons present:	Kathy Hefner	
Staff present:	Melvin E. Dick Pamela B. Drenner	Barbara A. Myers
Members excused:	Thomas C. Benner David L. Ritterpusch	Kim Y. Wittel
Liaisons excused:	Fred W. Bohls	Brandt Zimmerman
Staff excused:	David R. Fisher Charles R. Roberts	Joanne Wilhelm

MINUTES

Pastor Richard B. Geib moved:

ADOPTED: That the minutes of the March 1, 2008, meeting of Synod Council be approved as distributed.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop B. Penrose Hoover provided a written report.

Bishop Hoover moved the following committee appointments:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council reappoint to the Global Mission Committee S. Christine Mummert to a second three-year term, expiring in 2011, and appoint Jillian Forbes, April Trout, and Rebecca Reid for a first three-year term, expiring in 2011;

That the Synod Council reappoint to the Committee on Higher Education the Rev. Guy S. Edmiston to a second three-year term, expiring in 2011;

That the Synod Council reappoint to the World Hunger Committee Thomas Benner to a second three-year term, expiring in 2011, and appoint the Rev. Samuel L. Schmitthener and G. Ronald Couchman to a first three-year term, expiring in 2011;

That the Synod Council reappoint to the Candidacy Committee Lois Strause for a second five-year term, expiring in 2013; and

That the Synod Council appoint the Rev. Darlis J. Swan to the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs Committee for a first three-year term, expiring in 2011, and appoint her to be this synod's ecumenical representative to LARC.

Bishop Hoover moved the following additions to the "on-leave-from-call" list:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council grant "on-leave-from-call status" to the Rev. SC08.04.21. Thomas D. Hartman, for a one-year period, effective June 1, 2008, to June 1, 2009 and to the Rev. Elizabeth L. Lartz, for a one-year period, effective July 1, 2008, until July 1, 2009.

Pastor Geib explained to the members of Synod Council that the reason Pastor Lartz is being granted "on-leave-from-call" status is that the congregation she is called to serve, the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Harrisburg, is closing June 29, 2008.

The bishop moved the following approval for retirement:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve the retirement request of the Rev. SC08.04.22. Daniel M. Long, effective April 1, 2008.

Bishop Hoover moved the following Synod Council calls:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council issue a call to the Rev. Peter S. Bergstresser to serve SC08.04.23. as intentional interim pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wertzville Road, Enola, effective May 1, 2008, until May 1, 2009.

The bishop shared that this congregation has had some difficulties with some of its past pastors. However, the congregation seems well located for mission, and the congregation's leadership seems ready for the challenge. At this time its plans for expansion of the building are on hold.

Pastor Timothy Sadler asked about the length of the call in the contract and stated that it is generally understood that an intentional interim will not serve any more than two years.

If an intentional interim serves longer than two years in a congregation, this pastor is really something other than an intentional interim.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council extend the call of the Rev. Eric Anderson to serve as SC08.04.24. intentional interim pastor of Faith United Parish, Dillsburg, until April 30, 2009, or until a new pastor is called.

Pastor McKee explained that this parish comprised of Barrens United, Dillsburg; St. John (Franklin), Dillsburg; and Emmanuel, Franklinton has completed its congregational profile and is currently in a call process.

Bishop Hoover provided an update on his ministry. He is currently visiting in conferences. Typically the bishop's day in a conference looks like this: a morning meeting with rostered leaders; individual appointments in the afternoon; and concluding the day a Bible study mostly, but not exclusively, for lay members of the conference. He is in congregations almost every Sunday, preaching and presiding usually at special services for events like an anniversary or dedication. The bishop enjoyed celebrating Passover with his daughter Heidi and her family in New York last weekend. He has hosted the LARC bishops. This summer he and his wife, Pastor Sharon Hoover, plan to visit in the Konde Diocese. He will be doing a series of eight Bible study sessions on the book of Romans monthly throughout the year, beginning in September, at the Wittel Farm.

Bishop Hoover stated that he continues on the road to recovery and that he is doing well. Each week he continues to be part of a group counseling session.

TREASURER'S REPORT

ParenteRandolph provided drafts of the year-end financial statements, including a statement of activities, for fiscal year 2007. These financial statements cannot be completed until the information being held by authorities is released to us and the Synod Assembly decides whether the miscalculation of social security allowance for ordained staff is a financial liability. Linda Lubold, administrative assistant to the treasurer, provided a transition budget report showing the cost of the transition in the treasurer's office. She also provided a statement of mission support for the two months ended February 29, 2008, and February 28, 2007; a list of congregations that have provided mission support statements for 2008; and a list of congregations that have not provided mission support statements for 2008. Melissa Hoffman, chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, led the members of the Synod Council through these reports and answered questions on these reports.

Pastor Geib suggested that those members of Synod Council who relate to a conference call those conference congregations that have not submitted a mission support statement.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Ronald Price directed the members of the Synod Council to his report in the April 14, 2008, minutes of the Executive Committee.

The vice president also reported that he, Bishop Hoover, and Secretary McKee met with Nicholas Lamberti, a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, New Cumberland, to answer the many

questions he had about what transpired in the treasurer's office. The vice president noted that although Mr. Lamberti did not agree with all the answers given, that the vice president believed that Mr. Lamberti left satisfied knowing that his concerns were heard and that his questions were answered.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pastor McKee distributed lists of congregations that have not submitted their congregation report for 2007 or certified their voting members to the 2008 Synod Assembly. He announced that the registration letters for the 2008 Synod Assembly were mailed, and he explained that the lay members of the Synod Council, who are not otherwise voting members, receive complimentary packages for the entire assembly. The secretary informed the members of Synod Council that reports for the Bulletin of Reports are due April 28 and that the Bulletin of Reports will be placed on the Web site soon after that due date. The assembly mailing will go out the week of May 12. He reminded the members of Synod Council that Synod Council will have a reorganizational meeting on June 14 at noon in the private dining room at Messiah College. The secretary announced the two hearings on the proposed Statement on Human Sexuality that will be held on the territory of this synod: the first one will be held on Saturday, May 17, 9:00 to noon, at St. Peter Lutheran Church, Neffsville, Lancaster; the second will be held on Saturday, September 20, 9:30-11:30, at the seminary. He also announced that a Region 8 Global Mission Event will be held on May 23-24, 2008, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee provided minutes of its April 14, 2008, meeting. Vice President Ronald Price led the members of the Synod Council through the minutes.

The vice president explained the need for opening a special account to hold any restitution that this synod would receive from Barry Herr. Members of the Synod Council questioned why the IRS and other creditors would possibly take precedence over this synod when it was this synod's money that was taken; the vice president answered that our legal counsel cautioned us that it was indeed possible that the court may award to others the money given to this synod in restitution; therefore the restitution money would need to be segregated from other synod funds until the final decisions about the distributions of these funds are made by the court.

Mr. Price moved **EC08.04.05.** on behalf of the Executive Committee:

ADOPTED: That a Mission Plus fund be opened to hold restitution funds received from **SC08.04.25.** Barry R. Herr.

The vice president reported that he had contacted Douglas Herr as he agreed to do at the Executive Committee and explained to him that this synod was requesting a change in our Merrill Lynch financial advisor for his protection and for ours. The vice president thanked him for his service to this synod. Jon Adams noted for the record that he is responsible for another Merrill Lynch office and has nothing at all to do with the synod's Merrill Lynch accounts.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL

ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE provided minutes of its February 29, 2008, meeting. Pastor David Hefner, committee chair, provided an overview of the work of the Assembly Planning Committee and announced that assembly plans were progressing well. The committee will meet on May 6 at Messiah College.

AUDIT COMMITTEE provided minutes of its April 9, 2008, meeting. Melissa Hoffman reviewed these minutes with the members of Synod Council. She noted that Hamilton and Musser with whom this synod had contracted to do the 2007 audit exercised its option to decline to perform our audit. This firm recommended that this synod seek auditors with a greater name recognition that would be able to command trust and respect in our congregations. The committee is in the process of receiving proposals from other auditing firms. Melissa Hoffman also reviewed suggestions that the committee was offering concerning changes in the composition of the Audit Committee to make the committee more independent.

The vice president addressed the issue of underpayment of ordained staff due to miscalculation of social security benefits. He distributed a sample salary letter that illustrated that the salary approved by Synod Council for ordained staff included base salary, housing allowance, and social security offset instead of base salary and housing allowance with the social security offset added as a benefit as Synod Council originally adopted when the social security benefit was given to ordained staff. The vice president indicated that the way the letters are now composed show that only base salary and housing allowance comprise the adopted salary and that the social security offset is shown as a benefit. There was quite a bit of discussion about how this error could have happened and how it could have continued for so many years. Some additional suggestions for other safeguards were listing individual salaries in the budget and including in the budget a separate social security line item.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE provided minutes of its April 17, 2008, meeting. Holly Freas Webster, chair of this committee reviewed the minutes. She noted the two amendments that were made to our synod constitution automatically because of actions at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

On behalf of the Constitution Committee, Holly Freas Webster moved the following recommendations to Synod Assembly:

ADOPTED: To amend our synod's bylaws by deleting S10.07.07.b. and by adding the SC08.04.26. following bylaw as S11.01.02. (and renumbering the subsequent bylaw provisions):

S11.01.02. The Audit Committee shall consist of five members, at least two of whom should be Certified public accountants and all of whom shall have accounting or related financial management experience. In order to maintain its independence, no officer of this synod, member of Synod Council, member of the Finance and Budget Committee, or synod staff member shall serve on this committee. The committee may invite others as necessary to provide information necessary for the conduct of its work. The primary purpose of this committee is to assist the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of this synod's accounting and financial reporting, internal control, and audit functions. The committee's authority, responsibilities, and duties are further described in its charter as adopted by Synod Council.

ADOPTED: To amend S9.07 of our synod's constitution to read:
SC08.04.27.

S9.07. The Synod Council shall nominate at least ~~one~~ two persons for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

To amend our synod's bylaws by adding a new bylaw **S8.51.01:**

New **S8.51.01.** *The vice president, secretary, and treasurer of this synod may be elected to no more than three consecutive terms.*

There was discussion about whether this bylaw provision would apply to the current officers. Bishop Hoover suggested including an enabling resolution stating that this bylaw would apply to all officers elected to a first term after the 2008 Synod Assembly.

ADOPTED: To amend our synod's bylaws by adding a new bylaw **S8.51.01:**
SC08.04.28.

New **S8.51.01.** *The vice president, secretary, and treasurer of this synod may be elected to no more than three consecutive terms. (EnRes: This bylaw applies to all officers elected to a first term after the 2008 Synod Assembly.)*

FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE provided minutes of its April 10, 2008, minutes and also a proposed budget for fiscal year 2009. Melissa Hoffman, committee chair, reviewed the minutes.

Melissa Hoffman moved on behalf of the committee:

ADOPTED: That the 2009 percentage of synod benevolence sent to the ELCA for
SC08.04.30. churchwide ministries be decreased from 52.5% to 50%.

It is the goal of the Synod Council to increase overtime the percentage of synod benevolence sent to the ELCA to the original 55%.

Melissa Hoffman reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2009. She noted that the salary and benefits portion of the budget allows only for three assistants to the bishop and no salaried treasurer. The \$10,000 stipend for the treasurer appears elsewhere in the budget as does a purchase of service line that would provide for the bishop to contract with an individual to provide services that would support the bishop's office.

Melissa Hoffman moved the following recommendation to Synod Assembly:

ADOPTED: That the proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 be adopted.
SC08.04.31.

Melissa Hoffman reported that the Finance and Budget was asked by Synod Council if there were internal funds available from which to borrow to pay what is owed to ordained staff due to the miscalculation of social security benefits. The Finance and Budget Committee identified undesignated, unrestricted funds in a Merrill Lynch account that could be used for this purpose.

Melissa Hoffman moved on behalf of the Finance and Budget Committee:

ADOPTED: **That the Lower Susquehanna Synod use unrestricted funds presently held by Merrill Lynch, up to the balance in the account, to compensate affected ordained staff underpaid by a miscalculation of the social security allowance and corresponding pension.**
SC 08.04.32.

Jon Adams requested that all members of Synod Council receive the report of Emerald Investments. Secretary McKee will send this report with the minutes.

GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE provided minutes of its April 23, 2008, meeting. Pastor Sally Gausmann, committee chair, reviewed the minutes for the members of Synod Council. This committee recommended that this synod not elect a treasurer until the 2009 Synod Assembly. The committee cited the following reason for this decision. The proposed constitutional amendments will not be decided until the assembly. The records necessary to conduct an audit are still in the hands of authorities so that no audit can be conducted at this time. While we have interviewed some excellent candidates, no candidate has all the qualifications specified. The additional year will allow this synod to define better the expectations for the treasurer. The constitution gives the bishop authority, with the approval of the Executive Committee, to appoint an acting treasurer until a treasurer can be elected by Synod Assembly. Because there is a good system in place, there is no crisis that forces this synod to move quickly to fill this position.

Pastor Gausmann moved the following recommendation to the Synod Assembly:

ADOPTED: **That the Lower Susquehanna Synod delay the election of a treasurer until the 2009 Synod Assembly.**
SC 08.04.33.

REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS

WOMEN OF THE ELCA liaison, Kathy Hefner, reported that the women's organization is preparing for its annual assembly, which will be held June 27-28, 2008, at St. Paul Lutheran Church, York Street, Hanover.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

DIRECTOR FOR YOUTH MINISTRY, Charlie Roberts, provided a written report for Spring 2008.

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP, Pastor Melvin E. Dick, announced that Pastor David Fisher is working with the committee planning the ordination service at Synod Assembly. There is the possibility that there will be three candidates ordained at the assembly. Bishop Hoover is hosting a tea for retired rostered leaders, their spouses, and widows and widowers of rostered leaders at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, York, on May 1. The Bishop's Convocation is scheduled for September 12, 2008, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Lancaster. The speaker will be Dr. John Hoffmeyer, a professor at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He will speak on vocations. The Conference Deans' and Secretaries' Retreat is scheduled for October 28, 2008, at Camp Nawakwa. Pastor John Spangler will be the presenter; the subject is crisis communication.

RESOURCE NETWORK DIRECTOR, Pamela Drenner, provided monthly reports for the Resource Center for February and March 2008. She announced that Dauphin County Chapter of Thrivent has given \$1,000 to the Resource Center for the purchase of new resources.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES FOR THE MINISTERIUM

COMMITTEE OF DEANS provided minutes of its February 11 and April 14, 2008, meetings.

REPORTS OF THE SYNODICAL MINISTRIES FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE RESOURCE NETWORK

CATECHUMENATE liaison, Pastor David Hefner, stated that the committee is wondering whether there is sufficient interest and support for this committee to continue. He asked if members of Synod Council could provide names of places where the catechumenate is working well. The name of First Lutheran Church, Carlisle, was offered. St. Jacob Lutheran Church, Glenville, has had a successful catechumenate.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES FOR MISSION

REPORTS OF THE AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS RELATING TO THIS SYNOD

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT GETTYSBURG: Pastor Thomas McKee reported that the seminary has agreed that, because of the difficulties that this synod is going through, the Crossroads Campaign will not be initiated in 2009, but will be scheduled for 2010 or 2011.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Pastor McKee reported that Synod Council has received a letter from Pastor Karen Minnich-Sadler requesting that she be allowed to resign from the roster of ordained pastors of the ELCA. She desires to expand the scope of her ministry. She expressed her appreciation to the Synod Council and synod staff for the support provided to her through the years. Pastor McKee stated that Pastor Minnich-Sadler has served this synod well as pastor and intentional interim pastor.

Pastor McKee moved:

ADOPTED: That Synod Council honor the request of Pastor Karen Minnich-Sadler to SC08.04.30. resign from the roster of ordained pastors of the ELCA and approve her removal from this roster without prejudice and with appreciation for her service to this church.

ADJOURNMENT

Pastor David Hefner moved:

ADOPTED: That Synod Council be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Thomas E. McKee
synod secretary
4/29/08

01/19/2008