

**LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Draft Minutes
May 20, 2021 via Zoom**

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2021, by Zoom, as the coronavirus pandemic persists. Acting Vice President Jennifer R. Lau called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Stacy Schroeder led us in devotions, with a guided meditation by Becca Anderson “Consolation, Comfort, Calm”. We were invited to consider various iterations of “The love of God _____ me” (soothes, comforts, consoles, etc.). She led us in prayer.

ROLL CALL

Members present:	Bishop James S. Dunlop	Jennifer R. Lau
	Beth A. Schlegel	Joseph M. Stepansky
	Matthew B. Best	Kay A. Hinkle
	Meredith Killian Askey	Debra K. Barrett
	Stacy L. Schroeder	Stella Ludwig
	Carlotta “Chucki” C. Strevig	Molly K. Haggerty
	Jack M. Horner	Daniel P. Picone
	Michael R. Zeigler	Jillian E. Riddle
	James F. Druckenbrod	Gretchen S. Ierien
Staff present:	Deborah M. Clark	Dana J. Blouch-Hanson
	Carla S. Christopher Wilson	Richard E.T. Jorgensen
	Marsha L. Roscoe	
Liaisons present:	Lois Griffiths (WELCA)	
Members excused:	Zachary J. Weiss, Brian A. McClinton	
Members absent:	Theodore D. Wolfe	
Staff excused:	Elizabeth G. Martini, Charles R. Roberts III	

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting Vice President Jennifer Lau introduced the Consent Agenda.

Pastor Jack Horner moved:

ADOPTED **That the Consent Agenda be adopted:**
SC21.05.26.

That the minutes of the April 24, 2021, Synod Council meeting, be approved.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Konde Diocese Committee the Rev. Clifton D. Eshbach for a 1st three-year term, expiring 2024; the Rev. Dione M. Klepetka for a 1st three-year term, expiring 2024; the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown for a 1st three-year term, expiring 2024; and the Rev. Angela F.S. Hammer as consultant.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Synod Worship Committee the Rev. Mark W. Oldenburg for a 2nd three-year term, expiring 2024.

That the Synod Council appoint to the World Hunger Committee Jerry Bennett for a 1st three-year term, expiring 2024; Lisa Dubay for a 1st three-year term, expiring 2024; Fay Nichols for a 2nd three-year term, expiring 2024; and the Rev. Maureen L. Seifried for a 2nd three-year term, expiring 2024.

That the Synod Council appoint the Rev. Jennifer L. Toburen to the Homelessness and Affordable Housing Task Force.

That the Synod Council elect to the board of directors for Luthercare James Smarilli for a 1st three-year term effective June 15, 2021 and expiring April 30, 2024; Donald Murray for a 1st three-year term effective June 15, 2021 and expiring April 30, 2024; Pastor Hans Becklin for a 1st three-year term effective June 15, 2021 and expiring April 30, 2024; Todd Stewart for a 2nd three-year term effective May 1, 2021 until April 30, 2024.

That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call status to the Rev. Molly K. Haggerty, effective June 7, 2021.

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Steven R. Bowser, effective July 1, 2021; and the Rev. Clifton D. Eshbach, effective July 1, 2021.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS

Bishop James Dunlop moved:

ADOPTED: SC21.05.27. That the Synod Council call the Rev. Pamela J. Carnes, as Intentional Interim Pastor for Memorial Lutheran Church, Shippensburg, effective May 20, 2021 until May 19, 2022 or until the congregation has called a permanent pastor.

The bishop explained that Pastor Carnes has been serving for a while, initially with the possibility of being called. Both she and the congregation discerned that a call would not be pursued. Pastor Carnes is a trained intentional interim pastor, so it is appropriate for the Synod Council to issue this call. Doing so will retain her as a rostered minister.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

ADOPTED: SC21.05.28. That the Synod Council renew its call to the Rev. Linda P. Shank to serve as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, New Bloomfield, under the terms of synod administration, for one additional year, effective June 3, 2021 until June 2, 2022, or until the congregation can meet to regularize the call.

The bishop explained that Pastor Shank has been serving, but this congregation simply has not been able to meet during the pandemic to hold a call vote.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

ADOPTED: SC21.05.29. That the Synod Council remove Deacon Jarrod Jabre from the roster of ministers of Word and Service, effective May 20, 2021.

Bishop Dunlop explained that Jarrod has not been practicing ministry for the past four or five years. He was originally called to the Lutheran College Washington Semester as course creator and lecturer. Debbie Clark's legwork discovered that he is not serving in the Metro DC Synod and is currently working in the commercial sector. A letter requesting a response in order to be retained on the roster went unanswered. Since he did not respond, it is appropriate to formalize his decision not to serve under call and remove him from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

Acting Vice President Jennifer Lau, on behalf of the Executive Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the Lower Susquehanna Synod, meeting in assembly June 4-5, 2021, the election of the following conference nominees as voting members of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly: the Rev. Marissa Becklin, Rayne Debski, the Rev. Del Akech Del, Karen Landry, Wanda Neuhaus, Karl Segletes, and Michael Swank.

She explained that this slate of nominees comes directly from the conferences and we can present them as a block for election at the Synod Assembly.

Jennifer Lau for the Executive Committee moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the Lower Susquehanna Synod, meeting in assembly June 4-5, 2021, the election of the following conference nominees as alternate voting members of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly: Russell Kaltreider, Joyce Ray, the Rev. Michael Reist, the Rev. Maureen Seifried, Joseph Stepansky, Judith Swartz, and Suzanne Tilley.

Jennifer Lau for the Executive Committee moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend the revised proposed 2021 Rules of Procedure for a Digital Assembly to the 2021 Synod Assembly for adoption.

2021 Proposed Rules of Procedure for a Digital Assembly

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AGENDA

1. The assembly shall be considered in session from the opening on Friday evening June 4, 2021, until final adjournment on Saturday afternoon, June 5, 2021. The assembly will be divided into two meetings: Friday night, and Saturday. Each meeting will be recorded separately on Zoom and will have a separate log-in and credentialing.

2. The chair shall have authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is most expedient for conducting assembly business.
3. In the event that the assembly must adjourn before completing its business, all remaining items shall be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.

CREDENTIALING AND QUORUM

4. Voting members will be credentialed uniquely through the registration process. **Voting credentials are not transferable and should not be shared with others.**
5. Near the beginning of each meeting, a special vote will be taken to establish the presence of voting members. The number of voters participating in those votes will be used to establish quorum.
6. *Voting members shall not absent themselves from any meeting of the assembly without valid reason* (Constitution & Bylaws S7.36.02). One-half (1/2) of the registered voting members of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum. Once a quorum has been established at the beginning of each assembly meeting, all items of business on the adopted agenda for that meeting may be completed.

PARLIAMENTARY MATTERS

7. The following persons shall have voice but not vote in the assembly:
 - a. official representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 - b. representatives of institutions and agencies having a relationship to this synod
 - c. Others identified by the bishop
8. Upon recognition by the chair, a speaker shall identify oneself by name, congregation (or agency/institution) and town/city and, if a rostered minister, the area of ministry or service.
9. Unless otherwise determined by a two-thirds vote, speeches during debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes and no person shall speak more than twice on the same question, except by consent of the assembly. This rule shall not apply to persons presenting a report nor when direct questions are posed to specific individuals for clarification.
10. No motion, except procedural, may be debated until the motion in writing is in the hands of the chair. Motions shall be submitted electronically to the secretary, according to instructions provided for that purpose in the pre-assembly materials and at the assembly. bschlegel@lss-elca.org
11. If a voting member recognized by the chair desires to make a motion, the motion is to be made first, before the voting member speaks to it. Once a motion is made, if there is a second, the voting member may then speak in support of the motion made.

12. When there are many pro and con statements on any motion, the chair will recognize alternately persons making a pro or con statement. To comply with this provision, when representing a pro position voting members shall indicate this to the chair by indicating "For" or "Against" as instructed. To address procedural issues, voting members shall indicate this to the chair by typing "Point of Procedure" in the chat.
13. During legislative meetings of the assembly, no member of the assembly may express a position on any matter unless assigned the floor by the chair. Further, no member may call upon other members to express themselves by oral acclamation, applause, raising of hands, with digital reactions, or in any other manner.
14. To give members the opportunity to express no opinion on a matter, the chair will ask for "yeas", "nays" and "abstentions".
15. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall be the governing parliamentary law of this assembly, except as otherwise provided in these Rules of Procedure. A parliamentarian will be appointed to advise the chair on procedure.
16. Except for procedural motions, any motion which the chair determines is not germane to the business of the assembly then under consideration shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel to decide whether said motion shall be brought to the assembly for consideration or referred to the Synod Council for final action.
17. Any amendments to the proposed budget of the Lower Susquehanna Synod must be adopted within the total proposed amount. Any motion will be ruled "out of order" that seeks to amend the Synod Council-recommended synod budget by increasing the amount or percentage of a budget item or program without also proposing a dollar-for-dollar matching decrease in another budget item or program. Those proposing such an amendment shall have consulted with the synod treasurer and submitted the motion electronically to the secretary no later than 8:15 a.m. on Saturday, June 5, 2021. bschlegel@lss-elca.org Such motions will be read from the Zoom screen at the time the person making the motion is recognized by the chair during the discussion on the budget.

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

18. The name of the voting member shall be used on the screen.
19. Voting members shall use mute and turn off video unless preparing to speak, to reduce bandwidth and more easily identify persons speaking.
20. During periods of deliberation, use of the chat function will be limited to messages to the host, when it may only be used to indicate "For", "Against" or "Point of Procedure".
These chat messages are not votes; they are how the chair will call on people to speak.
21. Use "Point of Procedure" to be recognized by the chair when you wish to "Move the Previous Question".

VOTING

22. Voting will be done by individual voting members, each with a separate smartphone or tablet device according to the instructions provided.
23. **Voting credentials are not transferable and should not be shared with others.**

BALLOTING AND ELECTIONS

24. The consent of all nominees shall have been obtained prior to their nomination. Nominations made from the floor of the digital assembly must be submitted electronically to the secretary and chair of the assembly. The deadline for the electronic submission of typed biographical information of persons who are nominated from the floor shall be 8:15 a.m. Saturday, June 5, 2021.
25. Nominees shall be listed in alphabetical order on the first ballot, in two groups. Nominations made prior to the assembly shall be alphabetically listed first, followed by nominations made from the floor. This grouping is necessary for efficient handling of vote counting. On subsequent ballots, listing will be in descending order according to votes received on the previous ballot.
26. The report of balloting will be given orally to the assembly, displayed on the assembly screen, and entered in full in the minutes.

MEMORIALS AND RESOLUTIONS

27. Any memorial or resolution which is to be presented at the Synod Assembly for consideration must be delivered electronically to the synod secretary by April 30, 2021, according to instructions presented in the preassembly materials and at the assembly, so that such memorial or resolution may be reviewed by the Committee on Memorials or the Committee of Reference and Counsel and by the voting members of the assembly, prior to the assembly.
28. Because of the conditions of the digital assembly, no resolutions or memorials may be submitted after the April 30 deadline, unless such resolution is determined by the appropriate committee to be of an **emergency** nature.
29. If a resolution has budgetary implications, the author(s) must consult with the synod treasurer prior to submitting the resolution and the resolution should include financial considerations. The treasurer's response must be provided to the Committee of Reference and Counsel. Proposals lacking this documentation will not be considered for action by the assembly.
30. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended the adoption of a resolution, the text of the resolution recommended for passage shall be the main motion before the assembly.
31. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended that a proposed resolution be amended, the resolution shall be the main motion before the assembly and

the committee's recommendation shall be received as information/advice to the assembly.

32. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended referral of a resolution, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.
33. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended that the assembly not adopt a proposed resolution without the committee making any other recommendation related to the same or closely related subject, the resolution shall be the main motion before the assembly and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information/advice to the assembly.
34. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has acted to present a resolution to the assembly without recommendation, the text of the resolution shall be the main motion before the assembly.
35. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has combined similar resolutions, the composite resolution shall be the question before the assembly.
36. Action on recommendations from the Committee on Memorials shall follow the same procedure as action on the recommendations from the Committee of Reference and Counsel.
37. When memorials and resolutions are brought before the assembly, the oral reading of the 'whereas clauses' shall be waived.

Jennifer Lau for the Executive Committee moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend the revised proposed Agenda for the Session of SC21.05.33. Worship & Business to the 2021 Synod Assembly for adoption.

Proposed 2021 Synod Assembly Agenda

First Assembly Meeting: Friday evening – June 4

- 6:00 p.m.
 - Log into Zoom meeting

- 7:00 p.m.
 - Evening Devotions with the Order for the Opening of the Assembly
 - Bishop's Opening Remarks
 - Practice with Voting
 - Certification of Voting Members and Report on Registration
 - Presentation of the Minutes of the 2019 and 2020 Synod Assemblies
 - Report of the Synod Council
 - Adoption of the Agenda
 - Adoption of the Rules of Procedure
 - Introduction of Assembly Guests
 - Report of the Churchwide Representative --The Rev. Christopher Otten

- Report of the Synod Council
 - Adoption of Amendments to the Constitution
 - Nomination of the Vice President and Treasurer
- Report of the Nominating Committee/Floor Nominations
- Report of the Bishop and Officers
- Reports of the Committees, Agencies, Institutions, and Synod Units
- Devotions – Deacon Kristin Vought, chaplain
- 9:30 p.m.** • Recess

DEADLINES

Saturday 8:15 a.m. Deadline for submitting nomination information forms for vice president, treasurer, Synod Council, Consultation Committee, Committee on Discipline, and Churchwide Assembly voting members.

Saturday 8:15 a.m. Deadline for submitting proposals relating to the budget.

All submissions should be made to bschlegel@lss-elca.org

Second Assembly Meeting: Saturday – June 5

- 7:15 a.m.** Log into Zoom meeting
- 8:15 a.m.**
 - Morning Devotions – Deacon Kristin Vought, chaplain
 - Practice with Voting
 - Certification of Voting Members and Report on Registration
 - Report of the Synod Council
 - Ratification of Conference Nominees for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly
 - Adoption of Amendments to the Synod Constitution
- 9:10 a.m.** • Break
- 9:30 a.m.**
 - Balloting
 - Report of the Synod Council
 - Adoption of the 2022 Proposed Budget
 - Adoption of Minimum Salary Guidelines
 - Adoption of Amendments to Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of this Synod
 - Other Synod Council Recommendations
 - Balloting
- 11:00 a.m.** • **Worship -- Service of the Word with the Necrology for 2020 and 2021**
- 12:00 noon** • Recess for lunch
- 1:00 p.m.**
 - Prayer
 - Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel
 - Report of the Synod Council (cont.)
 - Balloting
- 2:20 p.m.** • Break
- 2:35 p.m.**
 - Report of the Committee on Memorials
 - Unfinished Business
 - New Business
 - Bishop's Closing Remarks
- 3:45 p.m.** • Order for the Closing of the Assembly and Installation of Officers, newly elected Synod Council members, Deans and Secretaries

Chucki Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the 2021 Synod Assembly the adoption of new bylaw S16.01.01.

S16.01.01. *For the purposes of determining eligibility for indemnification under the provisions of this chapter, "committee" shall include any task force, team, table, ministry planning group, or other organizational unit accountable to this synod.*

Secretary Beth Schlegel explained that in the chapter on indemnification, the reference to committee members may be construed as limited. Since we have a number of groups labelled as task forces, this bylaw makes sure members of those groups are included.

Chucki Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the 2021 Synod Assembly the adoption of amendments to bylaws S6.03.10., S12.03.01., S12.04.02., S12.04.03., S12.05.01., and S12.05.02.

S6.03.10. *In addition to the requirements of Bylaw 12.41.11. of the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA and synodical bylaw S6.03.09., voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be elected from five panels of nominees: a panel of one voting member or one alternate voting member nominated by each conference at its Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring Conference Assembly~~; a panel of at-large youth voting members nominated by the Nominating Committee; a panel of at-large young adult voting members nominated by the Nominating Committee; a panel of at-large voting members.....*

S12.03. Each conference shall meet at least annually.

S12.03.01. *Each conference shall hold an annual assembly of its rostered ministers and lay voting members of the Synod Assembly. This Annual Conference Assembly ~~conference assembly~~ shall be held within the ninety days prior to the regular meeting of the synod assembly. Notice of the meeting must be given in writing 14 days in advance. Those rostered ministers and lay voting members present shall constitute a quorum and be eligible to vote.*

S12.04.02. *The conference shall elect a dean in odd-numbered years. The dean shall be elected at the Annual Conference Assembly ~~the annual assembly of the conference~~. On their annual confidential report to the bishop, rostered ministers of the conference will submit nominations to the bishop who will recommend to the conference a slate of at least two names. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the conference assembly. The final selection will be made at the ~~annual conference assembly~~ Annual Conference Assembly by written ballot by the voting members of the conference assembly. The term of office for a conference dean shall be two years. A dean shall serve no more than three successive terms. The dean shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament.*

S12.04.03. *The conference shall elect a secretary in even-numbered years. The secretary shall be elected at the Annual Conference Assembly ~~annual assembly of the conference~~. On their annual confidential report to the bishop, rostered ministers of the conference will submit nominations to the bishop who will recommend to the conference a slate of at least two names. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual*

~~Conference Assembly conference assembly.~~ The final selection will be made at the ~~annual conference assembly~~ Annual Conference Assembly by written ballot by voting members of the conference assembly. The term of office for a conference secretary shall be two years. A secretary shall serve no more than three successive terms. The secretary shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament.

S12.05.01. ~~The conference may have a conference cabinet composed of the dean and the secretary, and a specified number of cabinet members as determined by the conference assembly-~~ a Conference Assembly. In addition, the social service agencies on the territories of the conference, the bishop's office, the Synod Council, and each official auxiliary of this synod may send a representative who shall have voice in cabinet meetings. If a conference elects to have a conference cabinet, said conference cabinet shall, in addition to any responsibilities and authority assigned to it by these bylaws, have such responsibilities and authority as the conference shall assign to it.

S12.05.02. ~~The conference assembly~~ A Conference Assembly or the conference cabinet may appoint task forces or ad hoc committees for particular purposes.

Secretary Beth Schlegel explained the importance of consistent language in our governing documents. Since the Synod Assembly could occur at any time of year, as we learned from the pandemic, the conference assemblies may also be scheduled at a time other than spring, since they occur in the 90 days prior to the Synod Assembly. The Constitution Committee believes the use of “Annual Conference Assembly” provides both consistency and flexibility.

Chucki Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council adopt amendments to continuing resolution S12.03.A96. SC21.05.36.

S12.03.A96. All memorials and resolutions which are to be presented at the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~ for consideration must be delivered in writing to the secretary of the conference no less than 40 days prior to the date of the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~, so that the memorial or resolution may be reviewed by the voting members of the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~, prior to the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~.
All memorials and resolutions received less than 40 days prior to the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~ shall be referred automatically to the Conference Cabinet, or where no Conference Cabinet exists, to the conference dean and secretary, according to the order of receipt, for review, and the Conference Cabinet, or where no Conference Cabinet exists, the conference dean and secretary shall decide whether said memorial or resolution shall be forwarded to the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~ for consideration. The procedure set forth here shall apply only to memorials and resolutions which are not germane to the Annual Conference Assembly ~~spring conference assembly~~ agenda as set by the dean.

Secretary Schlegel clarified that since this is a continuing resolution, the Synod Council can simply adopt these amendments, consistent with the previous recommendation.

Chucki Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council refer proposed amendments to continuing resolution
SC21.05.37. **S9.04.r.A18. to the Bishop Election Evaluation Task Force for incorporation into a revised resolution.**

S9.04.r.A18. PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS LEADING TO THE ELECTION OF A BISHOP

1. *The incumbent bishop shall announce whether he or she will stand for election by the time of the Synod Council meeting in November prior to the Synod Assembly during which a bishop is to be elected.*
2. *The Lower Susquehanna Synod shall follow the recommended preliminary identification process and the same election process regardless of whether there is an incumbent bishop standing for election.*
3. *The Synod Council shall call the synod to prayerful deliberation.*
4. *The Synod Council shall prepare and distribute information about the Lower Susquehanna Synod including the current mission statement, mission documents and any strategic planning adopted by the Synod Council.*
5. *At a ~~special meeting of each conference~~ Special Conference Assembly held early in the calendar year of the electing ~~synod assembly~~ Synod Assembly, the voting members of the upcoming Synod Assembly shall be asked to consider a set of questions developed by the Synod Council designed to recognize the conference's understanding of this synod's mission, the issues deemed important for this synod, and the gifts desirable and necessary in a bishop. The secretary of each conference shall provide a record of this discussion to the synod secretary for use by the Synod Council.*
6. *At the ~~regular spring conference meeting~~ Annual Conference Assembly, the voting members of the upcoming Synod Assembly shall be asked to raise up names of ELCA pastors who the voting members believe possess gifts for the office of bishop. Each voting member raising up names of such pastors should receive the permission of those pastors to raise their names and shall be prepared to share with the other voting members why he or she is raising such names. The names of pastors on the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be raised up, even if those pastors are not members of that conference or this synod. Each ELCA pastor is encouraged to give permission to have his or her name raised up as part of this synod's discernment process.*
7. *After all voting members have had opportunity to raise up names of persons possessing gifts for the office of bishop, the voting members will engage in a process leading to the selection of up to three names of persons that this conference intends to share with the entire synod as persons possessing gifts for the office of bishop.*
8. *The dean of each conference shall contact the individuals selected by the conference to secure their permission to include their names as persons possessing gifts for the office of bishop. If these persons are willing to be so identified, the dean shall facilitate their completion of a biographical information form developed by the Synod Council. The dean shall submit these forms to the synod secretary within ten days of the completion of the Annual Conference Assembly ~~conference assembly~~.*
9. *The synod secretary shall post the names of the individuals selected by the conferences on the synod website 45 days before the Synod Assembly begins.*
10. *While these individuals are identified as possessing gifts for the office of bishop, the Lower Susquehanna Synod shall continue to use the ecclesiastical ballot, in which any rostered pastor of the ELCA may be placed in nomination on the first ballot at the Synod Assembly. Any person identified as possessing gifts for the office of bishop must still be nominated on the first ballot by a voting member of the assembly.*
11. *The Synod Assembly shall elect a bishop by the ecclesiastical ballot as set forth in **S9.04** of the synod constitution. The Synod Assembly shall adopt rules of procedure for*

the election of a bishop based upon this constitutional provision. If there is no election on the first ballot for bishop, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. For an ELCA pastor to be on the slate of nominees for bishop, his or her name must be included in the tally of votes received on the first ballot for bishop.

Acting Vice President Lau, who also serves on the Bishop Election Evaluation Task Force, said that the task force is working on a revision of this continuing resolution based on the work they have been doing for the past two years. The revision will include gender-neutral language and also incorporate these recommendations for consistent language.

Chucki Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: **That the Synod Council recommend to the 2021 Synod Assembly for adoption the proposed amendments to bylaw S12.01.01, and that the synod, through its Synod Council or acting in assembly, as required, amend any other provisions of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions necessary to reflect this change in conference structure.**

S12.01.01. There shall be ~~fourteen~~ thirteen conferences:

Chambersburg Conference
Cumberland Conference.
Gettysburg Conference
Hanover Conference
Harrisburg Conference
Lancaster Conference
Lebanon Conference
North Lancaster Conference
North York Conference
Perry Conference
South York Conference
Upper Dauphin Conference
~~West Cumberland Conference~~
~~West Shore Conference~~
York Conference

Secretary Schlegel indicated that the request for these amendments came from the West Cumberland Conference, who wants to merge with the West Shore Conference. Pastor Molly Haggerty, who serves in the West Cumberland Conference, reported that the conference has only four rostered ministers or vicars. The conversation with the West Shore Conference about merging conferences began prior to the pandemic. This is also consistent with our desire for fewer conferences to be able to do God's mission more effectively.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop James Dunlop provided a written report. He noted that we continue to listen to guidance from the CDC and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on proper procedures during the COVID pandemic, and he recently updated his guidance to rostered ministers and congregations. The bishop reiterated the principle of trying to keep people safe, especially since fatigue and frustration give rise to impatience in maintaining safety measures. He is especially concerned for children who cannot yet be vaccinated and the vulnerability of unmasked unvaccinated people to one another. He said we will continue to advise

caution. The bishop reported that the entire synod staff is completely vaccinated at this time. About half the staff will continue to work remotely until the synod offices move to the new location. Then there will be more people working both remotely and in person. He noted that when only the fully vaccinated staff are present in the offices, masks are no longer required to be worn; however, facial coverings are still required in the hallways of the United Church Center.

Bishop Dunlop reported the blessing of gathering the full staff in person for the first time since the pandemic began last spring for a luncheon at Trinity, Camp Hill, to recognize the support staff on Administrative Professionals Day. He observed that the entire staff has done monumental work over the last year to fulfill our mission and respond to the needs that the pandemic has presented and expressed his gratitude. The day was also an opportunity to tour the new office space, which is still being remodeled.

The bishop reported nothing but positive feedback regarding the first Edification Day for Synod Assembly, conducted on Saturday, May 8, 2021. The event will be repeated on May 22, 2021.

Bishop Dunlop shared a draft document regarding Heritage Community. The project group looking at the concept of Heritage Community drafted the document to help guide congregations that are considering closing as a way of being faithful to God's mission. He said this coaching approach will be piloted in a few congregations over the next months.

REPORT OF THE ACTING VICE PRESIDENT

Acting Vice President Jennifer R. Lau submitted a written report. She thanked outgoing council members Pastor Matthew Best, Stella Ludwig, Pastor Jillian Riddle, Chucki Strevig, and Ted Wolfe, for their service.

The acting vice president referred to the schedule for Synod Council and Executive Committee meetings for the coming year. She reminded us that the reorganizational meeting for the new Synod Council is **Wednesday**, June 9, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. At that meeting, the at-large members of the Executive Committee will be elected, as well as the vice chair. It is also the time when Synod Council members indicate their preferences for Synod Council committee service.

The acting vice president reminded us that following Edification Day on Saturday, May 22, 2021, there will be the first "Test your Tech" session. She urged us to participate and to encourage other voting members to test their tech in advance of the assembly.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and a Statement of Operational Activities. He noted that Mission Support is slightly more than forecast and exceeds last year. He is forecasting a 2021 deficit of about \$18,000, which will be funded from the FY2020 budget reserves. This preliminary forecast is subject to change, especially since the final cost for the digital Synod Assembly is not yet known.

Treasurer Stepansky further reported the balance of the Legacy Fund as \$ \$3,068,456 as of May 7. This is about \$800,000 more than the year ago balance and very close to the 2020 year-end balance. This is **after** we withdrew funds for the Legacy Fund distribution and payment of investment advisory fees. The treasurer reminded us that investment returns are always subject to market fluctuations.

Joe reported that the audit has been completed and the draft report indicates a positive assessment. The final report is expected to arrive imminently with an unmodified opinion.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Beth A. Schlegel submitted a written report. She noted that preparing for the first digital Synod Assembly has been an all-consuming undertaking for the whole staff. In addition, this is her first full Synod Assembly since taking office, so there is a learning curve. She expressed gratitude for a wonderful team of people to work with.

There were questions regarding the Constant Contact communications and to whom they are sent. Secretary Schlegel indicated that information on the website is intended for everyone. Deacon Marsha Roscoe, who is the communications manager for the Synod Assembly, noted that all voting members receive assembly communications and WE*News for the current assembly year; once new voting members are registered for the following year, the former voting members no longer receive communications unless they subscribe to WE*News. Debbie Clark requested that if someone wants to unsubscribe from a particular electronic communication to call the office instead of clicking “unsubscribe”; clicking removes one from all lists. Acting Vice President Lau urged us to encourage people to sign up for WE*News.

REPORTS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee provided draft minutes of its May 5, 2021, meeting.

The Assembly Planning Committee provided minutes of its April 29 and May 11, 2021, meetings. Stella Ludwig, chair of the committee, thanked the committee members and synod staff, for their work. She especially appreciates the work of Charlie Roberts, Dana Blouch-Hanson, and Marsha Roscoe.

The Mission Committee provided minutes of its May 6, 2021, meeting. Pastor Matthew Best expressed joy in serving on the committee, noting that “it was great moving mission along.” He reported good work on messaging and foundational priorities. He is grateful for Marsha Roscoe’s work on the new logos and the missional priorities that will be launched at the Synod Assembly. Pastor Best indicated that although he is going off the Synod Council, he will continue to serve on the Mission Committee.

REPORTS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION LIAISONS

Women of the ELCA synod unit liaison Lois Griffiths reported a joyous Day of Renewal at Camp Nawakwa, with Norma Good sharing her faith journey. The convention will be held in hybrid fashion on September 25, 2021.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson provided a written report. She added that the plans for the Synod Assembly are coming along, and it will be different. She reported that the technology team she had lined up to field questions and troubleshoot problems during the business session have all backed out. She is looking for tech-savvy people who would be available to help.

Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Richard Jorgensen asked for prayer as the Heritage Communities pilot gets underway. He noted that this pandemic season has provided opportunities for people to learn and grow, and that he has gotten requests for guidance in unprecedented ways.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe called our attention to the initiatives for spiritual wellness: blogs, retreats a summer course on holy listening, and a podcast with Dr. Kristen Albert and Pastor Carla Wilson on resilience. She will be a spiritual retreat leader this summer.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES FOR THE MINISTERIUM AND MISSION

The Committee of Conference Deans provided the minutes of its May 10, 2021, meeting.

The LSS Mission Fund Committee provided a report. Acting Vice President Lau apologized that the report in the packet was incomplete. A complete version will be sent. She indicated that both requests were granted.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES

The Homelessness and Affordable Housing Task Force provided a report. Pastor Matthew Best noted that the eviction moratorium was overturned, but that the issue is still in appeal litigation. Professionals who work with homelessness say that a “tsunami” is coming when the moratorium is lifted. The task force seeks to help congregations respond to the need.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Acting Vice President Jennifer Lau recalled the action at the April meeting, to dispose of the tabled motion regarding Emmanuel, Lancaster and the funds from the Forrey Estate. She asked Debra Barrett, congregation council president of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, for an update. Debra reported that the Congregation Council has enacted a ten-year repayment plan for the funds. The first payment has been made along with an additional payment. She will make the plan available in writing.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Beth A. Schlegel
synod secretary
5-20-2021