

ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The members of the Assembly Planning Committee are: Jennifer Lau, acting vice president; the Rev. Beth Schlegel, synod secretary; the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, synod staff/assembly manager; Stella Ludwig, synod council/chair; the Rev. Matthew Best, synod council; Daniel Picone, synod council; the Rev. Edward J Robbins; the Rev. Sean Titus; Lucinda Bringman; and Deacon Marsha Roscoe and Charlie Roberts, synod staff.

The Assembly Planning Committee, a constitutional standing committee, is required to plan the annual assembly agenda and program to fulfill the constitutional mandate for “worship, edification and the legislative business of this synod conducted with the greatest possible involvement of those entitled to participate.” To that end the committee met in 2020 by Zoom on November 18 and December 17, and in 2021, on January 28 and March 18 with plans for additional meetings to prepare and complete assembly preparations.

The committee was given the task to plan two Edification Days and a Day of Worship and Business. The 2021 Synod Assembly will be entirely digital. The Synod Council approved the dates for the 2021 Synod Assembly of the Lower Susquehanna Synod as follows: Business Session on Friday evening, June 4, and Saturday, June 5, 2021, by digital means; and Edification Days on Saturday, May 8, and Saturday, May 22, 2021, by digital means. The dates were adopted at the February 20, 2021 Synod Council meeting.

The committee proceeded with plans as follows: Friday evening business and worship, Saturday morning business with 11:00 Worship Service of the word with Necrology for 2020 and 2021. The business meeting is scheduled to be completed in the afternoon. The Edification Days (the content will be the same both days) will be held on Saturday, May 8, and Saturday, May 22, 2021. The keynote speaker for our Days of Edification will be the Rev. James Hazelwood, current bishop of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Our other meetings included planning how to do everything digitally, shaping the agenda for the business days, developing the rules of procedure, setting registration rates, and planning other essential parts that make our days together run smoothly.

My heartfelt thanks to the members of the Assembly Planning Committee for their dedicated work to plan this year’s assembly. Doing a new format for the assembly took a lot of discussions and planning. THANK YOU! A very special thanks to Dana, Marsha, Lucinda, and Charlie who guided me through the planning and meetings. It is our wonderful synod staff that makes planning and running this event run smoothly. Thank you for all you do!

Stella Ludwig, *chair*

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

The Constitution Committee met in January, March, and September of 2020, continuing the work begun following the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of preparing proposed amendments to our governing documents. In addition to the recommendations from the Churchwide Assembly, we examined the bylaws regarding indemnification and committee structure.

The proposed amendments remove the limitation on the number of people who may serve on most committees, providing increased opportunities for people to use their gifts in service to the Lord Jesus and his church. Other amendments are proposed to make language consistent throughout the document and to clarify meaning. The proposed amendments that were not considered at the 2020 Synod Assembly due to the coronavirus pandemic as well as the additional proposed amendments will be part of this year's assembly consideration.

Members of the committee also assist in reviewing the governing documents of congregations of our synod. Special thanks to Tom McKee for his help in this work.

Deepest thanks to the members of the committee: Carlotta "Chucki" Strevig, *chair*; the Rev. Jeffrey Compton, Jered Hock, the Rev. Brian McClinton, and Secretary Beth Schlegel.

Beth A. Schlegel, *synod secretary*

FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Finance and Budget Committee experienced some personnel changes in 2020: Virgil Gibson retired from the committee, and Meredith Askey replaced him as chair; Wayne Gongaware and Jim Druckenbrod agreed to continue serving; and we are all thankful for our new designated taker of meeting minutes, Vicki Rutter. Virgil transferred ownership of the committee's Google Drive folder to Meredith, who has updated the folder organization and granted access to all current committee members. We use the Google Drive folder to store meeting agendas and minutes; reports received from Emerald Advisors; and other information from the synod treasurer.

Throughout the pandemic, we have been meeting via Zoom when there is a specific item we need to address. A focus of this year was the distribution of the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund, adding a new category of Christian Education, and adjusting the distribution percentages across the six categories. At our most recent meeting, we agreed on the annual distribution from the Legacy Fund at the rate of 10%, instead of the usual 5%, which was made possible due to a legislative exception made for pandemic relief. All committee members were in support of the maximum disbursement, based on the treasurer's report that the Legacy Fund has experienced a banner year in line with the overall stock market, and our desire to live out an attitude of abundance. We all feel very thankful to have this source of abundance to spread to our synod in these difficult times!

The Finance and Budget Committee are a warm, faithful, engaged group of people, even virtually! I am thankful for the thoughtful input and support of everyone: Jen Lau, acting synod vice president; Joe Stepansky, synod treasurer; Bishop Jim Dunlop; Dawn Frees; Vicki Rutter; Wayne Gongaware; James Druckenbrod; and Mike Zeigler.

Meredith Killian Askey, *chair*

GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

The task of the Gifts Discernment Committee is to identify individuals to be nominated for all open officer positions. This year we need to fill the nomination for treasurer. It was the consensus of the committee to recommend Joseph Stepansky for the position of synod treasurer.

In addition, the Gifts Discernment Committee confirmed that Jennifer Lau was previously recommended for the position of synod vice president in our work last year. Because of the COVID-19 cancellation of our 2020 Synod Assembly, both positions will be filled by election at the 2021 Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly.

I would like to thank all those who serve as committee members: the Rev. Eric N. Anderson; Debra Barrett, synod council; the Rev. Douglas DeStephano; Bishop James Dunlop; Holly Freas-Webster; the Rev. Beth Schlegel, synod secretary; Robert Walton; M. Jane Wigand; and Deborah Clark, synod staff.

Kay Hinkle, *chair*

MISSION COMMITTEE

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Committee reconvened in December 2020. The committee met three times between June 2020 and when this report was written in March 2021. Our primary focus has been and continues to be work on rebranding, mission identity, and messaging in our synod as well as setting and clarifying mission priorities for our synod.

We have done this by:

- Working with synod staff and providing feedback and guidance on our new synod logo as well as examining alternative tag lines that our synod can use to convey our synod focus.
- Working on clarifying mission priorities for our synod as well as defining aspects of those priorities.

As we go forward, we will continue to clarify our synod mission priorities as well as flesh out those priorities in terms of goals for our synod in existing and new missions, in addition to developing leadership, expanding justice work, deepening our connection to the larger church, and nurturing the spiritual growth of our rostered leaders and lay people.

Members of the Mission Committee: the Rev. Matthew Best, chair, Synod Council; Bishop James Dunlop; the Rev. Richard Jorgensen, director for evangelical mission; the Rev. Kathleen Baker; Jen Lau, acting vice president; the Rev. Jillian Riddle, Synod Council; the Rev. Jack Horner, Synod Council; Deacon Marsha Roscoe, assistant to the bishop; Stacy Schroeder, Synod Council; Chuck Book; Theodore Wolfe, Synod Council; the Rev. Robert Wallace; and Holly Freas-Webster.

The Rev. Matthew Best, *chair*

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Proverbs 16 reminds us to “commit your work to the Lord”. The staff of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the ELCA is guided by this passage and encouraged through the support of the synod Personnel Committee. The committee reviews salaries, position descriptions, personnel policies, and other pertinent documents to ensure that the work that comes out of our synod office is grounded in the Gospel and is life-giving for those charged with its care. Those who served on the Personnel Committee in 2020 include Bishop James Dunlop, personnel officer; Lucinda Bringman, synod vice president; Jennifer Lau, acting synod vice president; Dallas Barclift Jr, SC; the Rev. Matthew Best, SC; the Rev. Martha Boyd; the Rev. Elizabeth George; the Rev. Molly Haggerty, SC; the Rev. Gretchen Ierien, SC; Gary Laabs; Linda Long; the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown, SC; and Zachary Weiss, SC, chair.

In 2020, the Personnel Committee carried out its traditional tasks despite it being a very non-traditional year. The members updated a number of points in the personnel policy to address the realities of the demands on the staff around Synod Assembly and other aspects of their work. Position descriptions were revised and created anew as the structure of the staff changed this year. The staff saw the significant departure of assistant to the bishop, the Rev. Robert Blezard.

Based on the recommendation of the bishop and discussion, the Personnel Committee recommended the following salary and housing allowances for 2021: Bishop Dunlop, \$104,215; the Rev. Richard Jorgensen, \$83,500; the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, \$66,500; Deacon Marsha Roscoe, \$66,500; the Rev. Elizabeth Martini, \$49,875 (30 hrs/week). These salaries were adjusted to more appropriately fall in the Salary Guidelines worksheet. Additionally, the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson is contracted at one quarter of her full-time salary and benefits at The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Lancaster. Also recommended was a 3% increase for all remaining staff.

Zachary J. Weiss, *chair*