The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Saturday, November 21, 2020, by Zoom, as the coronavirus mitigation measures continue. Acting Vice President Jennifer R. Lau called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**DEVOTIONS**

Acting Vice President Jennifer Lau led devotions reflecting on the importance of vision. Vision is the compelling image of what God has in mind for us. We must be aware of the limitations of myopic vision, peripheral vision, and tunnel vision, praying and seeking from God the capacity for panoramic vision that sees the big picture and can discern where to go and how to get there.

**ROLL CALL**

Members present:
- Bishop James S. Dunlop
- Beth A. Schlegel
- Matthew B. Best
- Meredith Killian Askey
- Stacy L. Schroeder
- Carlotta “Chucki” C. Strevig
- Stella Ludwig
- Daniel P. Picone
- Michael R. Zeigler
- Jillian E. Riddle
- James F. Druckenbrod

Jennifer R. Lau
- Joseph M. Stepansky
- Kay A. Hinkle
- Debra K. Barrett
- Brian A. McClintoon
- Molly K. Haggerty
- Zachary J. Weiss
- Theodore D. Wolfe
- Gretchen S. Ierien
- Jack M. Horner

Staff present:
- Dana J. Blouch-Hanson
- Carla Christopher Wilson
- Marsha L. Roscoe

Elizabeth G. Martini
- Deborah M. Clark
- Richard E.T. Jorgensen
- Charles R. Roberts III

Liaisons present: Lois Griffiths (WELCA)

Guest present:

Members excused:

Staff excused:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Acting Vice President Lau introduced the Consent Agenda. She explained the nature of a consent agenda and asked if anyone wanted to remove any items from the consent agenda.

Pastor Matthew Best moved:

**ADOPTED**

**That the Consent Agenda be adopted:**

**SC20.11.63.**

**That the minutes of the September 26, 2020, Synod Council meeting, be approved.**
That the Synod Council appoint to the AMMPARO Task Force Deacon David Hope-Tringali, the Rev. Jennifer Hope-Tringali, and the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, synod staff.

That the Synod Council appoint Lou Shaffer to the Criminal Justice System Ministries Task Force.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Reconciling in Christ Task Force the Rev. Michael E. Allwein; Sister Davia Evans; the Rev. Joel S.B. Folkemer; the Rev. Traci Benditz Glover; the Rev. Angela F.S. Hammer; the Rev. Richard E.T. Jorgensen Jr., synod staff; Beth McKinley; Marty Jo Stellabotte-Irvin; the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, synod staff; Michael Youse; and the Rev. Dr. Martin Otto Zimmann.


That the Synod Council elect to the board of directors for the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania Deacon Emily Myall for an unexpired term, expiring in 2022; the Rev. Drahomir Oslik for a 1st term, expiring in 2023; Rachel Berkebile for a 2nd term, expiring in 2023; Lyle Hosler for a 2nd term, expiring in 2023; and Eric Huth for a 2nd term, expiring in 2023.

That the Synod Council elect to the board of directors for the United Lutheran Seminary the Rev. Constance L. Mentzer for a 2nd term, expiring in 2023.


That the Synod Council approve the retirement request of the Rev. E. Walter Cleckley Jr., effective December 1, 2020.

That the total compensation paid to the Rev. James S. Dunlop for the period beginning January 1, 2021, 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; that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson for the period beginning January 1, 2021, shall include an annual payment of $24,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the
meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code; that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Elizabeth Martini for the period beginning January 1, 2021, shall include an annual payment of $15,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code; that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Richard E. T. Jorgensen Jr. for the period beginning January 1, 2021, shall include an annual payment of $19,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code; and that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Jennifer Richards for the period beginning January 1, 2021, shall include an annual payment of $27,500 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Assembly Planning Committee Lucinda Bringman.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Constitution Committee the Rev. Brian A McClinton, sc.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Finance and Budget Committee James F. Druckenbrod, sc; and Michael P. Zeigler, sc.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Mission Committee Stacy Schroeder, sc; Theodore D. Wolfe, sc (youth), and Chuck Book.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Personnel Committee the Rev. Molly Haggerty, sc; and the Rev. Gretchen Ierien, sc.

That the Synod Council appoint the following Synod Council liaisons to committees and task forces: James F. Druckenbrod, sc, to the Stewardship Committee; Stacy Schroeder, sc, to the Toward Racial Justice Task Force; Michael Zeigler, sc, to the Audit Committee.

That the Synod Council appoint the following Synod Council liaisons to conferences: James F. Druckenbrod to the Gettysburg Conference; the Rev. Brian A. McClinton to the North York Conference; the Rev. Molly Haggerty to the West Cumberland Conference, and Stacy Schroeder to the York Conference.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS
Bishop James Dunlop moved:

ADOPTED:  SC20.11.64. That the Synod Council call the Rev. Eric N. Anderson as Intentional Interim Pastor for St. Paul (Sand Hill) Lutheran Church, Hummelstown, effective December 1, 2020, until December 1, 2021.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

ADOPTED:  SC20.11.65. That the Synod Council call Kristen M. Barnes, candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service approved for ordination, as Staff Chaplain for Penn State Health Holy Spirit Medical Center, for a three-year term, effective June 7, 2020, until June 7, 2023.
Bishop Dunlop explained that Kristen has been approved by the seminary as a candidate for ordination to Word and Service ministry and has been assigned to the Lower Susquehanna Synod. She started work in June. This would be a three-year term call to allow her the opportunity to gain the chaplain certifications necessary for her call to be regularized. The motion carried.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Jennifer A. Hope-Tringali as Global Missionary for the Lower Susquehanna Synod, for a six-year term effective November 21, 2020, and expiring February 28, 2026.

Bishop Dunlop explained that Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali began working with the people of Guatemala about ten years ago through www.Tree4Hope.org that emerged from Tree of Life Lutheran Church. She and her husband, Deacon David Hope-Tringali, felt a call to return to Guatemala for mission, where they built a girl’s school and fostered relationships with congregations and other agencies. They have also built a relationship with the Episcopal Church in Guatemala. Bishop Dunlop acknowledged the unusual nature of this call, indicating that usually missionaries are called through the churchwide organization, but efforts to do that were unsuccessful for reasons of ecclesial protocol. Bishop Dunlop asked us to recognize the Hope-Tringalis as members of our synod who are building connections between congregations in our synod with the mission in Guatemala, making a way for us to be engaged, and encouraged us to take this action.

There was discussion affirming the ministry being done and clarifying that the synod would bear no responsibility for compensation or health benefits, as these are provided by Tree4Hope. The motion carried.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call Deacon David A. Hope-Tringali as Global Missionary for the Lower Susquehanna Synod, for a six-year term effective November 21, 2020, and expiring February 28, 2026.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Lois K. Van Orden as Intentional Interim Pastor for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, York Springs, effective November 1, 2020, until October 31, 2021.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council approve the decision of Sattazahn Lutheran Church, Jonestown, Pennsylvania, to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to unite with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).

Bishop Dunlop indicated that although there were several disaffiliations prior to his tenure as bishop, this is the first during his time of service. This congregation followed the constitutional procedure for terminating its relationship with the ELCA, with both congregational votes being 31-1 for leaving the ELCA. Since Sattazahn was formerly a congregation of the Lutheran Church in America, the ELCA constitution requires its termination to be approved by the Synod Council. The bishop further explained that the congregation is committed to leaving and there is nothing to be gained by preventing its departure. The motion carried.
Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council, under S13.24, declare that St. Mark Lutheran Church, York, can no longer function in the administration of their congregation, and that the Synod Council appoint the Rev. William C. Snyder, the Rev. Brenda M. Ritterpusch, and the Rev. Ronald W. Costen as trustees to take charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod.

Bishop Dunlop explained that Pastor Liz Polanzke has been serving there as the Intentional Interim Pastor and worked closely with the congregation toward several options for leaving a legacy for mission. When the Congregation Meeting was held to decide between disposing of their building to a non-profit entity or merging with another nearby congregation, the decision was postponed indefinitely. Upon this action, the leadership resigned, the new president was advised to resign for health reasons, and no others were available to form a council. Under these circumstances, the outgoing president requested that the congregation be placed under synod administration. The congregation has financial trusts that must be protected, and it is a neighborhood where we would like to have mission presence. Placing the congregation under synod administration is the first step toward that goal. The motion carried.

Stella Ludwig, chair of the Assembly Planning Committee moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council set the dates for the 2021 Synod Assembly of the Lower Susquehanna Synod as follows: Business Session on Friday evening, June 4, 2021, and Saturday, June 5, 2021, by digital means; with Edification Days on Saturday, May 8, 2021, and Saturday, May 22, 2021, by digital means.

Chucki Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the amendment of the synod constitution:

S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the previous regular Synod Assembly.

S7.35. Immediately after the Order for the Opening of the Assembly, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall certify to the chairperson of the Synod Assembly the total number of persons who are eligible to vote at that assembly in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of this synod.

S12.06. The Committee of Deans shall be composed of the deans of all the conferences of this synod, who are elected to offer the rostered leaders and congregations of their respective conferences prayerful and practical support on behalf of the bishop by caring for the development of this church within the conference, by providing leadership to congregations in the call process, and by serving as liaison between the bishop and the congregations. Annually, at the first meeting after the Synod Assembly, the deans Committee of Deans shall elect a chair, vice chair, secretary, and one member-at-large, who shall comprise the Executive Committee. The eCommittee of Deans shall make an annual report to the Synod Assembly. This committee shall meet regularly to receive reports and guidance from the bishop, to receive reports and pertinent information from the
bishop’s staff, and to support one another in carrying out the functions of the office of dean.

Meredith Askey, chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council amend the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund (Pg. 3, Paragraph 4) as follows:

The distributions (based on donor-imposed restrictions) will be weighted in the following manner (*) with oversight of the distributions delegated to specific committees of this synod as noted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate Hunger Initiatives</td>
<td>31.50%</td>
<td>World Hunger Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Konde Diocese</td>
<td>31.50%</td>
<td>Konde Diocese Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminarian Scholarship Support</td>
<td>17.75%</td>
<td>Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synodical Program Support</td>
<td>11.75%</td>
<td>Synod Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop’s Discretionary Fund</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>Bishop of this synod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Education</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>Director of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oversights of the distributions are delegated to specific committees of this synod.

Meredith Askey clarified that previously, there were no firm designations for the oversight of the distribution of these funds, and the addition of the Christian Education allocation provided an opportunity to correct that. The motion carried.

Meredith Askey, for the Finance and Budget Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council adopt the proposed budget for FY 2021.

Bishop Dunlop noted that this proposal represents a 6.5% reduction from last year, based on Treasurer Joe Stepansky’s best estimated forecast regarding Mission Support. Reductions were made in both the external mission through agencies and partners as well as our designated internal mission areas. There are also reductions in operational costs and programs. The amount allocated for building occupancy reflects the anticipated relocation of the synod office to the parsonage of Trinity Lutheran, Camp Hill. While the relocation will reduce our rent, that savings will not be realized until FY2022, since we will incur costs in 2021 for the move. Bishop Dunlop also indicated that this budget proposal is funded from reserves to balance it. The reserves are due in part to the forgiveness of the PPP loan. The motion carried.

Zach Weiss, chair of the Personnel Committee, moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council set the base salary and housing allowance for Bishop James Dunlop for 2021 at $104,215.

The motion carried; Bishop Dunlop abstained.

Zach Weiss moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council set the following increases in the base salaries and housing allowances for 2021:

- The Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson: $66,500 (4.9% increase)
- The Rev. Richard Jorgensen: $83,500 (3% increase)
- The Rev. Elizabeth Martini: $49,875 (for 30 hours per week - 8.3% increase)
- Deacon Marsha Roscoe: $66,500 (8.3% increase)

Zach Weiss moved:
ADOPTED: That the Synod Council determine that all remaining staff receive a 3% increase for SC20.11.77. 2021.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP
Bishop James Dunlop provided a written report, including a Letter of Intent to relocate the synod offices to the parsonage at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill. Bishop Dunlop reported that this letter has now been converted to a lease which was signed, sealed and delivered. The bishop further reported that he recently provided new guidance to congregations regarding the current surge in COVID-19 cases. He repeated the recommendation that the safest course is not to worship in person and the importance of having an active COVID-19 task force to enact safety plans in each congregation. He acknowledged that many congregations are worshiping in person and underscored the need to maintain the safe practices of hand sanitizing, wearing facial coverings, and physical distancing. The situation will continue to be monitored.

REPORT OF THE ACTING VICE PRESIDENT
Acting Vice President Jennifer R. Lau submitted a written report. She provided an encouraging update on conversations among bishops and vice presidents within Region 8 regarding cooperation. Two areas have been targeted for intentional efforts to work together: youth ministry and technology. She thanked the council members for their patience, grace, and kindness as she continues to learn and grow into this office.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER
Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and a Statement of Operational Activities. He was delighted to report the full forgiveness of the PPP loan of $234,000.

Treasurer Stepansky further reported the balance of the Legacy Fund as $2,867,483.

He has been contacted to schedule the audit for FY2020 around March 22, 2021.

The question was raised regarding synod contact with congregations who have applied for PPP loans, whether assistance is being given. Treasurer Stepansky indicated that congregations deal with various banking institutions, each of which has its own process for managing the PPP loans. The synod cannot intervene but stands ready to assist congregations with questions they may have.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
Secretary Beth A. Schlegel submitted a written report. She reported that she continues to review congregational governing documents, especially as annual meetings are now occurring. She will be enlisting the help of the Constitution Committee in this effort. She is also preparing the six-month notification of proposed amendments to provisions of the synod constitution and the dates for the 2021 Assembly.

CONVERSATION REGARDING ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
Bishop Jim Dunlop reflected on the staff reorganization following the departure of Pastor Rob Blezard as attending to the spiritual life of rostered leaders and leadership development, but not doing enough to lift up justice issues. For this reason, he brought Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson on staff to focus on social justice ministry in our synod.

Bishop Dunlop noted that the cultural environment has changed, and the divided political culture is entering church life, making it difficult to maneuver. He referred to an article in the NY Times which observed that America is culturally conservative and often reacts against advocacy for social justice. In the church, this finds expression in a false opposition of Bible and social justice. This sometimes highly
emotional misconception is amplified and politicized through social media. The bishop reported one congregation’s decision to cut mission support because of a letter he wrote in June advocating for social justice. ELCA bishops received an extensive tome critical of various stances on social issues and a recent exchange in the Gettysburg Times decried local pastors’ advocacy. There is a toxic environment both inside and outside of our congregations. The bishop asked us to reflect on this reality in our synod.

Discussion included the following observations:

- Taking a stand will alienate some but encourage deeper discipleship in others
- Sometimes, a strong reaction means the strategy is working
- It is hard to serve in a church when others are being hurt by insensitivity
- Luther Seminary has an excellent program called “Spit and Mud”
- We need to learn how to care for people on the whole spectrum of response to social justice issues
- Asking people to give up long-held worldviews and beliefs creates grief that must be tended
- It is important to ground social justice work in the Scriptures
- Liturgies to make those connections may be helpful
- Breaking down defenses is hard – especially within ourselves
- Having extensive, nuanced, discussion is important
- It is important to hear about difficult issues from the pulpit
- We need to find tools to help bring people along
- Lay people can promote conversation and model hospitality and inclusion
- God places us where we are on purpose
- Being kind sometimes silences conversation
- It is important to be non-threatening
- Impatience is a challenge
- This is a long-term process requiring small steps in building relationships
- We need to be aware how our language affects those who hear
- Some of our language is not biblical, but cultural and political, which can cause the conversation to shut down
- We need to remember that we all love Jesus, even those who disagree
- We need to be invitational, to make it safe
- Lay people need to hear direction as the voice of Jesus speaking to them, thus we have a responsibility to Jesus to speak to these issues
- Jesus is always between me and you (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together)
- We need to be biblically focused and grounded, especially in a climate in which Evangelical Christianity has changed the narrative of who Christ is and what the Gospel is in order to achieve cultural and political goals
- The creed speaks of one, holy, catholic church – and Jesus chose for this church a Zealot (anti-empire revolutionary) and a tax collector (pro-empire civil servant)
- We will always have diversity
- We should not marginalize anyone – not liberal or conservative
- Every congregation must discern what its ministry is based on available resources and gifts
- It is helpful to give people permission to disagree
- We can show love to people we disagree with or whose lifestyle choices we do not understand
- It is not our job to fix people – that is God’s work and we need to trust Jesus to do that

Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson shared a social justice strategy that is evolving for 2021 called Worship and Wonder. She noted that social justice is a brand-new topic for many people. The term “diversity”, for many, is reduced to racial diversity, which is too narrow. Part of the challenge is that many of our
congregations have no visual reality for diversity; experience is severely limited. The strategy has identified three priorities:
1. Expanding the definition of diversity to include disability, addiction and recovery, LGBTQIA+, and others by building cultural competency and inviting people into the conversation.
2. Promoting the biblical call to this work by having members of the justice team lead chapel worship in January. Part of this call is also to provide trauma-informed care for those being asked to recognize that the premises on which their lives are founded need to change.
3. Bringing together safe spaces for people who want to do the work of social justice, including the opportunity for people to fund efforts toward inclusion, such as camperships and scholarships.

REPORTS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES
The Assembly Planning Committee provided minutes of its November 18, 2020, meeting.

The Constitution Committee provided its notes from January 2020 and For the 2021 Assembly.

The Executive Committee provided draft minutes of its November 4, 2020, meeting.

The Finance and Budget Committee provided minutes of its October 29, 2020 meeting.

The Gifts Discernment Committee provided minutes of its October 28, 2020 meeting. It also provided a revised Nominations Handbook as information.

The Personnel Committee provided the minutes of its October 28, 2020 meeting.

REPORTS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION LIAISONS
Women of the ELCA synod unit liaison Lois Griffiths reported that the board will meet on December 5 to make decisions.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF
Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Richard Jorgensen provided a written report. He showed a visual graphic depicting the practice of discipleship. He rejoiced that the book he and Dave Daubert wrote, Becoming a Hybrid Church, has now been published. He recommends purchasing it directly from www.Day8ministries.org or https://www.lss-elca.org/r3-congregational-renewal/. He is thankful that the book emerged from congregations in our synod and he will be donating his portion of the proceeds from the sale of the books to the Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Fund.

Charlie Roberts provided a written report. He encouraged our prayer for young people who are discerning whether to come home or not for the holidays. He clarified that since Extravaganza will be entirely online this year, he will be asking for help with watch parties, noting that the event is designed for team participation.

Pastor Beth Martini provided a written report. She noted that one of her new responsibilities is the mobility of our synod rostered ministers. She is thankful for the opportunity to learn and serve.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe provided a written report. She indicated that as we move forward toward becoming a hybrid church, there will be more videos and she is developing playlists. One of them is a Meet our Leaders playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOwL5wOvIbfjqp1EJUTUI4EP_VFZhMXmXa

Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson provided a written report.
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES FOR THE MINISTERIUM AND MISSION
The Committee of Conference Deans provided the minutes of its November 9, 2020, meeting.
There were no committee liaison reports.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES
There were no task force reports.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
The election of Executive Committee members-at-large was conducted on the Zoom chat. Before the balloting commenced, Acting Vice President Jennifer Lau explained the role and purpose of the Executive Committee. Three persons are elected each year to serve, requiring a majority to be elected. Debbie Clark was appointed the Zoom teller, with Deacon Marsha Roscoe assisting with the verification of votes. Eighteen ballots were cast with ten votes needed to elect. Matthew Best was elected with 15 votes. Appearing on the second ballot were Meredith Askey, Kay Hinkle, Jack Horner, and Stella Ludwig. Meredith indicated that she is not available for daytime meetings. On the second ballot, Stella Ludwig was elected with 12 votes. Appearing on the third ballot were Meredith Askey and Kay Hinkle. Kay Hinkle was elected with 15 votes. The three at-large members of the Executive Committee are Pastor Matthew Best, Stella Ludwig, and Kay Hinkle.

The election of vice chair of the Executive Committee was similarly conducted by Zoom chat. Nineteen ballots were cast with ten votes needed to elect. Pastor Matthew Best was elected as vice chair with 12 votes.

NEW BUSINESS
There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

Beth A. Schlegel
synod secretary
12/1/2020