

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Draft Minutes
November 17, 2018

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Saturday, November 17, 2018, in the Board Room of the Pennsylvania United Church Center, 900 S. Arlington Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17109. Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present:	Bishop James S. Dunlop Lucinda L. Bringman	Thomas E. McKee
	Eric N. Anderson Matthew B. Best Dana J. Blouch-Hanson Joel S.B. Folkemer Virgil L. Gibson Kay A. Hinkle Emma L. Johns	Jennifer R. Lau Linda J. Long Stella Ludwig Jillian E. Riddle Timothy J. Seitz-Brown Stephanie M. Strauss Carlotta Strevig Zachary J. Weiss
Staff present:	Robert C. Blezard Sharron R. Blezard	Debbie M. Clark Jennifer Hope-Tringali
Members excused:	Joseph M. Stepansky	Allen P. Stump
Liaison excused:	Fred Bohls Jeremy Filus	Linda Lubold
Staff excused:	Richard E. T. Jorgensen Jr. Charlie R. Roberts III	Marsha L. Roscoe

Stephanie Strauss led devotions, reading from Hosea 6:3 and Lamentations 3:22-24. She based her devotions on a song, "As Sure as the Sun," written and performed by Ellie Holcomb. The good news is that there is a promise. The promise is that God's mercy will not end. Stephanie led the members of the Synod Council in prayer.

BOARD TRAINING

Pastor William Snyder led the members of the Synod Council in board training, addressing the subjects of governance and leadership. He began by saying that Synod Council is an odd board in a way. All the members of council are constituents of our synod. Nevertheless, he stated, he would provide us with some good principles which would apply to all non-profit boards.

Pastor Snyder first addressed the subject of governance as leadership. In any non-profit organization, leadership is a shared responsibility between elected officers and the elected members of the council. Every board is about good governance and oversight.

Pastor Snyder addressed three modes of operation: fiduciary, strategic, and generative. Fiduciary deals with budgets, motions, and other parliamentary actions, the things necessary for making mission move forward. Strategic centers upon the question, "How do we move into the future to continue to fulfill our

mission?” It is the mode where discernment occurs. It often is done by task forces and interest and reflection groups. Its product is the development of strategy and tactics to help an organization move forward. Generative is thinking together as a committee of the whole. It is a thought-provoking process. The question is, “How do we generate thought?” To do so, you need to put aside the thought that you are the only smart person in the room. Everyone’s thoughts are important and necessary to be heard. The more a board spends in the generative mode, the better the board and the happier the board members.

Pastor Snyder offered the distinction between policy and operation. A good system of bylaws provides the tools for good governance. Setting good policy and directions help to ensure that tasks can be carried out faithfully. Boards exist as a corporate person. The only authority that board members enjoy is when the board comes together as a board. The bishop is the chief spokesperson for the board.

The type of governance that boards should seek is Type III Governance where trustees and executives collaborate. Not preferable are governance by fiat where trustees displace executives, or governance by default where trustees and executives disengage, or leadership as governance where executives displace trustees. To be highly engaged, all members of Synod Council should prepare for each meeting, read the materials, come prepared for work, and come prepared to stay for the entire meeting. There must be a communal engagement, a commitment to work together for the well-being of our synod. The bishop must commit to being honest and transparent. The members of the council must commit to trusting each other and holding each other accountable. Real engagement does not happen without trust, transparency, and accountability.

Pastor Snyder stressed that boards rarely spend enough time on generative thinking. Leaders must plan to give time and space for generative thinking. Time for generative thinking should be included in each agenda. This does take additional time. However, he reminded the members of council, “if you agree to serve on a board, you must put in the time.”

Whenever an embedded generative issue arises, it causes you to step back and consider, “How will we handle this?” Some issues involve all three modes, fiduciary, strategic, and generative.

The members of the Synod Council were divided into small groups and the staff formed a small group to discuss generatively the proposed questions being addressed to the conferences for reflection.

After the council came back together, Pastor Snyder distributed the Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice. He spoke about the importance of evaluation of the board, both individually and as a group.

The board expressed its appreciation to Pastor Snyder with its applause.

CONSENT AGENDA

Allen Stump moved:

**ADOPTED: That the Consent Agenda be adopted.
SC18.11.41.**

That the minutes of the September 15, 2018, meeting of Synod Council be approved.

**That the Synod Council appoint to the Synodical Worship Committee the Rev.
Jillian Riddle for a first term, expiring 2021;**

That the Synod Council appoint to the World Hunger Committee Cheryl Burns and Fay Nichols for first terms, expiring in 2021;

That the Synod Council elect to the SpiriTrust Board of Directors Lawrence Young, Esquire, and Stephanie Kessler, for a first three-year term, beginning January 1, 2019, and ending December 31, 2021;

That the Synod Council continue on-leave-from-call status the Rev. Dr. Chad Rimmer for one additional year, effective December 31, 2018, until December 31, 2019; the Rev. Brenda M. Ritterpusch, effective January 1, 2019, until March 4, 2019; and the Rev. Michael T. Petresky, effective January 1, 2019, until January 1, 2020;

That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call status to the Rev. Sharon Kelly, effective October 1, 2018, until October 1, 2019, and to the Rev. Titus Clarke, effective December 1, 2018, until December 1, 2019.

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Robert Lowden, effective July 15, 2018; the Rev. Daniel V. Biles III, effective January 1, 2019; and the Rev. Brenda M. Ritterpusch, effective March 5, 2019; and

That the total compensation paid to the Rev. James S. Dunlop for the period beginning January 1, 2019, shall include an annual payment of \$25,000 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. Robert Blezard for the period beginning January 1, 2019, shall include an annual payment of \$12,500 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. Sharron Blezard for the period beginning January 1, 2019, shall include an annual payment of \$12,500 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. Richard E. T. Jorgensen Jr. for the period beginning January 1, 2019, 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; that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Thomas E. McKee for the period beginning January 1, 2019, shall include an annual payment of \$20,000 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 Hope-Tringali for the period beginning January 1, 2019, shall include an annual payment of \$20,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS

Bishop Dunlop moved the following:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council release St. Paul Lutheran Church, Dillsburg, from the SC18.11.42. Synodical Administration to enable the Congregation Council to contract with an interim pastor, the Rev. Glenn Ludwig, for a three-year term.

Bishop Dunlop moved the following Synod Council call:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council call the Rev. Robert W. Moore to serve as intentional SC18.11.43. interim pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Hanover, effective November 12, 2018.

Jen Lau, member-at-large of the Executive Committee, moved the following on behalf of the Executive Committee:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council formally adopt resolution calling the Lower SC18.11.44. Susquehanna Synod to prayerful deliberation as our synod prepares to elect a bishop.

Vice President Bringman appointed Virgil Gibson to join Deacon Marsha Roscoe and Pastor Thomas McKee in preparing devotional materials for the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop.

Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson, chair of the Assembly Planning Committee, moved the following on behalf of the Assembly Planning Committee:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council set the dates of the 2019 Synod Assembly as June 6, 2019, SC18.11.45. beginning at 6:45 p.m., through Saturday afternoon, June 8, 2019.

Zachary J. Weiss, chair of the Personnel Committee, moved the following motions on behalf of the Personnel Committee:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council set the 2019 salary and housing allowance for Bishop SC18.11.46. Dunlop at \$99,000.

Bishop James Dunlop abstained from voting on this motion.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council authorize for Level I executives a two-percent SC18.11.47. increase in their salaries and housing allowances, and that Synod Council set their salaries and housing allowances for 2019 at: the Rev. Thomas McKee, \$79,900; the Rev. Robert Blezard, \$65,600; the Rev. Sharron Blezard, \$65,600; the Rev. Richard Jorgensen, \$79,300; and the Rev. Jennifer Hope-Tringali, \$30,400 (half-time compensation).

Pastor McKee abstained from voting on this motion.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council authorize a two-percent increase in salaries across the SC18.11.48. board for all remaining staff in 2019.

Vice President Bringman called the Synod Council into Executive Session. She invited the staff consultants to remain. There were no actions to report out of the Executive Session.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop Dunlop provided a written report as well as a report from the Fall 2018 meeting of the Conference of Bishops.

Bishop Dunlop asked Pastor Rob Blezard to give a progress report on the review of our Child Protection Policy. Pastor Rob Blezard stated he had reviewed the policy. The policy is current with the latest legislation. However, some of the forms in the appendix need to be replaced with new forms and information on some of the forms amended. He has sent the current policy to Attorney Joseph Ricci, Esquire, for legal review. Through Pastor Blezard, Deacon Marsha Roscoe shared the information that she had sent our policy to Barbara Keller, the ELCA staff person who is a resource person for sexual abuse. Ms. Keller also said that our current policy is in good order. Pastor Blezard shared that, our policy is ideal for a large congregation with many children, but not ideal for a congregation with a small number or no children. Ms. Keller recommends that, in the latter case, congregations develop a policy that suits their needs, like a nursery policy. She reminds us that the church's role is to be proactive in the protection of our children.

Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown urged the synod staff to communicate with our congregations at least annually the importance of establishing a child protection policy. Pastor Blezard provided information to the council members about how to implement a child protection policy.

Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown moved:

That the Synod Council establish a task force to prepare a resolution to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council from the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council regarding clergy misconduct.

Carlotta (Chucki) Strevig expressed a wonder if this would be seen as a reaction to what has occurred in our synod. Pastor Jillian Riddle said that she believes it is very appropriate because of the overall context of all that has transpired within the Church in Pennsylvania. Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson added that we can see the flaw in the tapestry. Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown added that we can see the big picture. Linda Long urged the council to be proactive on this subject.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council establish a task force to prepare a resolution to the SC18.11.49. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council from the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council regarding clergy misconduct.

Vice President Bringman appointed Carlotta (Chucki) Strevig, Pastor Matthew Best, Pastor Thomas McKee, and Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown to this task force.

Bishop Dunlop asked the members of the Synod Council to have a generative conversation about clergy benefits. He reported that the members of the churchwide staff have had their Portico health and dental plans reduced from the gold plan to the silver plan. In the meantime, the Church Council has not changed its former action that the gold plan is the recommended plan for the congregations, rostered ministers, and employees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The gold plan is an 80-20 plan; the silver plan, because of higher deductibles, is a 70-30 plan. The reason that the administration gave for the change of plans was a \$70,000 cost savings. Bishop Dunlop argued that this is not cost saving, it is cost shifting. Those who are affected by this change include Portico itself, synods with Directors of Evangelical Mission, and the employees and their families, especially those who can least afford it.

The churchwide organization also has begun charging a portion of the cost of insurance for spouse and children to the employees. Before the meeting of Church Council, all employees were enrolled in the silver plan. Therefore, the decision was already made. Bishop Dunlop stated, “We are the church together, but in this case, we are not the church together.”

The more generative question that the bishop asked the council members to discuss was “How do we treat benefits for rostered ministers?” It has been our policy to bundle all the benefits together in a required package and to treat everyone the same. Part of the reason for this is that rostered ministers need to be able to move throughout this church. Does this need to change considering the market and our present health care situation? Linda Long asked for clarification about the amount of money that is paid by the insured. The bishop responded that 20% is paid by rostered ministers. Linda affirmed the right of everyone to have health care. Pastor Joel Folkemer referred to our social statement, saying that the churchwide organization ignores the social statements of this church when dealing with employees. Virgil Gibson stated that he does not want his pastor to worry about health care for the pastor’s family. He believes that congregations should pay as much of the health care costs as possible. Pastor Folkemer countered that parishioners do not take responsibility for providing for their congregation’s staff and ministry. They balance budgets on the backs of their pastors, deacons, and congregation’s staff. Pastors begin to look for other types of occupations that offer more secure payment and benefits. Pastor Eric Anderson reminded the members of council that the cost of health care is huge. Other cost-cutting measures may be needed if health care costs are covered. Debbie Clark stated that this is not just an issue in the church. It is an issue everywhere. Lucinda Bringman suggested that the church can conform to this world or it can be transformed and be a transforming power. The bishop asked again, “Is keeping all the benefits the same for our rostered ministers a benefit or not? Pastor Anderson responded that pastors would not like it if all of them were paid a uniform salary. Pastor Folkemer said that those who have a difficult time finding a call would suffer, people of color and gay, lesbian, and transgendered persons. Congregations that do not pay adequate salaries and provide suitable benefits will get the least qualified pastors and deacons to serve them. Kay Hinkle said that all pastors and deacons compete for a finite number of positions. Pastors look at salary and benefits when they discern whether this is a call for them to pursue. Different salary and benefits make us stretch and perform better. We need pastors and deacons. The church should provide adequate health care for all pastors, deacons, and their families.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman submitted a written report.

The vice president explained in detail the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop adopted by the 2018 Synod Assembly and reviewed the document, “Critical Information Lower Susquehanna Synod ELCA Election of the Bishop 2019.” She noted that she desires every member of Synod Council to be very familiar with this process and to be able to provide accurate information to the conferences to which they are liaisons to ensure that the conferences are following the prescribed process. She asked the liaisons to the following conferences to contact the conference deans and secretaries to set the dates for their January and March assemblies: Perry, Upper Dauphin, West Cumberland, Gettysburg, Lancaster, Hanover, Harrisburg, Chambersburg, and Lebanon.

The vice president will investigate how voting members can have access to the ELCA Directory with the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament during the Synod Assembly to find the full names of pastors they wish to nominate for the office of bishop.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and financial reports. The treasurer has continued to provide an accurate forecast of where we are financially at any one period. While there has been a \$100,000 drop in mission support, he is predicting a \$63,000 year-end surplus currently. This surplus is due largely to the revenue brought into our synod through outsourcing Pastor Sharron Blezard and Bishop Dunlop. Bishop Dunlop expressed his hope that our total revenue will exceed \$2.5 million.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD SECRETARY

Secretary Thomas E. McKee submitted a written report. He reported that the 2018 Minute Book has gone to the press. He thanked the members of the production team: Debbie Clark, Marty Shifflett, and Deacon Marsha Roscoe for their work on the Minute Book. The secretary stated that he has asked Stella Ludwig, chair, to call a meeting of the Gifts Discernment Committee for December or early January. He envisions two thrusts to this meeting. One involves the election of the vice president. Vice President Bringman is willing to stand for re-election with the caveat that she will resign at the end of the first year of this term. The reason for this is to make sure that a bishop's and vice president's elections do not occur in the same year. The secretary's recommendation to the Gifts Discernment Committee is that the committee does not actively seek a second nominee for vice president this year but would actively pursue qualified candidates to nominate in 2020. The second involves the election of a secretary. The secretary desires to orient the committee to the secretary's responsibilities so that they are prepared to interview interested persons and to have the committee set dates for these interviews to occur. The secretary believes that it would be wise for the Synod Council to adopt a slate of nominees for vice president and secretary at its February 2019 meeting. Three interested persons plus a member of the Gifts Discernment Committee attended the orientation session on the secretary's office; Pastor McKee has met privately with five other persons expressing interest in the secretary's position.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Synod Council Executive Committee provided draft minutes of its October 31, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL

Assembly Planning Committee provided minutes of its October 24, 2018, meeting.

Finance and Budget Committee submitted draft minutes of its September 6, 2018, meeting.

Personnel Committee offered draft minutes of its November 1, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS

Lower Susquehanna Synod's Organization of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America liaison, Linda Lubold, presented a written report.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Deacon Marsha Roscoe provided a written report as Director of Mission Interpretation and a report on the Always Being Made New Campaign.

Charlie Roberts submitted a written report of the Center for Faith Formation and Office for Youth and Family Ministry.

Pastor Robert Blezard offered a written report.

Pastor Sharron Blezard provided a written report.

Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali provided a written report.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen submitted a written report and an amended report.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Committee of Conference Deans provided minutes of its November 12, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES

The Synod Council Review Committee for the Synod Administration Covenant for Salem Lutheran Church, Jacobus, presented a written report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The members of Synod Council reviewed the “Mission Snapshot,” the “Attributes of a Bishop,” and the “Conference Assembly Questions for Reflection.”

The Synod Council worked on these documents as a committee of the whole. By consensus, the Synod Council approved the “Mission Snapshot” and the “Attributes of a Bishop,” and changed the name of the “Attributes of a Bishop” to “A Bishop’s Gifts for God’s Mission.”

They reviewed the introduction to the “Conference Assembly Questions for Reflection,” and the four questions prepared by the Mission Committee. After working through this material as a committee of the whole, by consensus the Synod Council adopted the following:

“Conference Assembly Questions for Reflection”

Review the “Mission Snapshot” and “A Bishop’s Gifts for God’s Mission.” Please consider the following questions:

How well does our “Mission Snapshot” capture the mission and priorities of our synod? What modifications would improve the “Mission Snapshot,” if any?

How well does “A Bishop’s Gifts for God’s Mission” capture the gifts desirable and necessary in a bishop for our synod? What modifications would improve “A Bishop’s Gifts for God’s Mission,” if any?

What do you hear God calling us to be and do together in fulfilling God’s mission?

The members of Synod Council considered the Synod Council Covenant.

Pastor Joel Folkemer addressed #6, noting the importance of supporting the final decisions of Synod Council, but questioning the need to promote them. Virgil Gibson observed that it does not say to seek to promote Synod Council’s decisions, but to seek to promote the mission of the synod. Pastor McKee read from “Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice: “A charitable organization should formally adopt a written code of ethics with which all of its directors or trustees, staff, and volunteers are familiar and to which they adhere.” Jennifer Lau stated that it is a good idea to understand how we work together. Vice President Bringman distributed the Synod Council Covenant for all to sign.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice President Bringman thanked Pastor Matthew Best for being our door host and Jennifer Lau, Stephanie Strauss, Pastor Joel Folkemer, and Kay Hinkle for providing refreshments.

Vice President Bringman informed the members of Synod Council that there is a vacancy on Synod Council caused by the death of Brenda Hartzell. It has been our practice that the Synod Council elect the person receiving the next highest number of votes from the previous Synod Assembly election to fill the unexpired term. That person would be M. Jane Wigand. Her nomination information was included in the Synod Council packet. The vice president also asked another former Synod Council member who serves on Finance and Budget Committee to consider nomination because the vice president viewed it important to have a full Synod Council contingent on Finance and Budget as we begin to prepare the 2020 budget.

Pastor Jillian Riddle moved:

That Synod Council not fill the unexpired term of Brenda Hartzell.

This motion was ruled out of order. Our Constitution charges the Synod Council to fill unexpired terms on Synod Council.

Virgil Gibson stated that we need to assign someone from Synod Council to serve on Finance and Budget Committee. The other option would be to encourage someone from Finance and Budget Committee to submit their name in nomination to fill this unexpired term on Synod Council.

Pastor Jillian Riddle moved:

ADOPTED: That the election of a Synod Council member to fill the unexpired term of Brenda SC18.11. 50. Hartzell be tabled until the February 2019 meeting.

Virgil Gibson announced that the Finance and Budget Committee is dealing with a very important issue in that we may not be complying with existing investment policies.

Pastor Eric Anderson asked that there be time set aside on a future agenda to discuss the call of interim pastors to the congregations they are serving as interim. The policy for intentional interims states clearly that intentional interims cannot be eligible for call. Our practice allows for exceptions that weakens the policy. Other interims are more vulnerable than those trained as intentional interims. Pastor McKee quoted from *C9.07. of the Model Constitution for Congregations 2016: "Unless previously agreed upon by Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served." Pastor Robert Blezard stated that we have been following this policy, bringing the names of interim pastors whom the staff believe qualified to serve as called pastors of these interim congregations to the Synod Council for its agreement.

The vice president shared a thank-you note that our synod received from the United Lutheran Seminary.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Thomas E. McKee
synod secretary
11/26/18