

**LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**Minutes**  
**February 15, 2020**

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Saturday, February 15, 2020, 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.

**DEVOTIONS**

Jennifer Lau led devotions. She reflected on the learning she has done as an R3 coach working with congregations and lay leaders in the renewal process. She rediscovered that not only does God come down to us in the Incarnation we know as Jesus, but God is here, present and active in renewing us. We need to develop eyes to see God at work, to notice “God-sightings”, and to see with our eyes and our hearts. Congregational renewal is renewal of people. It begins with spiritual renewal and the spiritual disciplines. We move from a strong relationship with God, to relationship with each other, and then relationship with our community. For Jen, R3 ignited a spark of passion for the Gospel that she has seen repeated in other people and congregations. She read Matthew 4:12-25, which speaks of the people sitting in darkness who have seen a great Light, of Jesus healing the afflicted and calling people into discipleship. In small discussion groups, we reflected on the text considering questions regarding how we see ourselves and others experiencing darkness and light. Comments included the following:

- When the church is in darkness, members experience power in money and comfort, not in being challenged.
- The most vital congregations in the New Testament are those that suffer. We avoid suffering.
- We experience darkness in terms of “things” and “doing”, consumerism, and the notion that being good equals doing good. We focus on ourselves instead of on God.
- Darkness is a lack of knowledge of our communities and their needs. There is an assumption of needs instead of being in relationship with people and finding out what they need.
- Light is being in relationship with others. Marginalized people need to trust us; we need to be open to including them in decisions.
- Hurts in the synod include sexism and the ongoing wounds of women.
- Much distrust is based on past hurts; we can be a healing presence.

The groups were invited to share prayers for light and healing vision.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman explained that she chooses devotion leaders from among those in the last year of their term on the Synod Council.

**ROLL CALL\***

\* (z) by zoom

**Members present:**

Bishop James S. Dunlop	Lucinda L. Bringman
Beth A. Schlegel	Joseph M. Stepansky
Matthew B. Best	Kay A. Hinkle
Meredith Killian Askey	Debra K. Barrett
Virgil Gibson	Timothy J. Seitz-Brown
Carlotta “Chucki” C. Strevig	Jennifer R. Lau
Stella Ludwig	Zachary J. Weiss
Daniel Picone	Theodore D. Wolfe
Joel S. B. Folkemer	

**Staff present:**

Robert C. Blezard	Elizabeth G. Martini	Dana J. Blouch-Hanson
Deborah M. Clark	Richard E.T. Jorgensen	

**Liaison present:**

**Guest present:**

**Members excused:** Gretchen Ierien, Jillian E. Riddle, Jack M. Horner, Dallas J. Barclift, Jr.

**Staff excused:** Charles R. Roberts III

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice President Lucinda Bringman introduced the Consent Agenda.

Jennifer Lau moved, and Carlotta “Chucki” Strevig seconded:

**ADOPTED** That the Consent Agenda be adopted.  
**SC20.02.01.**

**That the Synod Council approve the Minutes of the November 16, 2019 Synod Council meeting.**

**That the Synod Council appoint to the Candidacy Committee the Rev. Caitlin M. Kurtz for a 1<sup>st</sup> five-year term, expiring 2025.**

**That the Synod Council appoint to the Synod Worship Committee the Rev. Carl P. Rabbe for a 1<sup>st</sup> three-year term, expiring 2023.**

**That the Synod Council elect to the SpiriTrust Lutheran Board of Directors Samm Smeltzer for a 1<sup>st</sup> three-year term, expiring December 31, 2022.**

**That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call status to the Rev. George B. Scott, effective December 28, 2019, until December 28, 2020.**

**That the Synod Council continue the on-leave-from-call status of the Rev. Pamela Carnes, effective March 1, 2020, until March 1, 2021.**

**That the Synod Council approve the requests for retirement of the Rev. Kenneth Jetto, effective February 1, 2020; Deacon George E. Bennett Jr., effective February 5, 2020; the Rev. Nancy R. Easton, effective April 1, 2020; and the Rev. Anne-Rose Reeves, effective May 1, 2020.**

**That the total compensation paid to the Rev. Jennifer H. Richards for the period beginning February 15, 2020, shall include an annual payment of \$30,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.**

**SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS**

Bishop James Dunlop moved, and Meredith Askey seconded:

**ADOPTED** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Lois K. Van Orden as the  
**SC20.02.02.** intentional interim pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Hummelstown, effective

**November 1, 2017, until October 31, 2020.**

Bishop Dunlop noted that Pastor Van Orden is the longest-serving interim pastor and is doing a good job. The congregation has experienced two failed call processes, but he is hopeful that the reorganization of the call committee will bring results. The motion carried.

Bishop James Dunlop moved and Pastor Matthew Best seconded:

**ADOPTED SC20.02.03. That the Synod Council call the Rev. Kurt S. Strause as the intentional interim pastor of Swamp Lutheran Church, Reinholds, effective February 1, 2020, until January 3, 2021.**

Bishop Dunlop explained that the previous pastor, the Rev. Dennis Trout, had served the Swamp congregation for fifty years, and so the congregation needs an experienced interim pastor. Virgil asked about the status of Pastor Strause. The bishop stated that he is on leave from call preparing for retirement and is available for interim work. The motion carried.

Bishop James Dunlop moved, and Virgil Gibson seconded:

**ADOPTED SC20.02.04. That the Synod Council call Deacon Jennifer Murphy as a Spiritual Counsellor for the Visiting Nurse Association of Hanover and Spring Grove, without conditions of term, effective December 5, 2019.**

Vice President Lucinda Bringman asked the bishop to clarify the phrase “without conditions of term”. Bishop Dunlop explained that normally, the Synod Council grants chaplains a three-year term call so that they have time to become certified, as required by our policy. However, in this instance, the VNA is not cooperative with that process. Vice President Bringman noted that if we accept this motion, we will be breaking our own rule. Meredith Askey asked why the VNA is not cooperative? Bishop Dunlop said that as a non-faith-based organization, certification is not important to them and costs time they are not willing to allow employees to take. Zach Weiss asked if this would be setting a precedent that could be problematic? Bishop Dunlop responded that this is a conversation we must have with candidates for positions with secular organizations. There are so few calls in the church for deacons. Pastor Richard Jorgensen added that the role of chaplains in secular organizations is increasing, so we are likely to face this challenge again. This is a good question to ask as we move forward. Bishop Dunlop reported that the head of the ELCA chaplaincy review board retired and has not been replaced, so candidates applying for certification are receiving no response. Pastor Joel Folkemer insisted that the precedent issue must be addressed. He noted that if a pastor takes a position with a secular organization, he or she goes on leave from call to take that job. Bishop Dunlop said the question hinges on whether we believe the work being done is indeed a call. We have generally considered the work of chaplaincy to fall within the scope of sacramental and diaconal ministry to which one could be called; a secular administrative job is neither sacramental nor diaconal. Pastor Joel Folkemer asked whether and where that principle is written? The bishop said it is a Synod Council judgment call. Vice President Bringman wondered if there is indeed a policy regarding chaplaincy calls. There was consensus that there is. Secretary Beth Schlegel noted a distinction between a chaplain as someone with responsibility for the worship life of a chapel and other “unchapeled” positions such as spiritual counsellor. Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson reported from texting Pastor Jillian Riddle that the synod policy was enacted in February 2017. Vice President Bringman asked Debbie Clark to obtain that policy so that we could revisit it. Meredith Askey noted the benefits of allowing religious leaders to serve in secular organizations as a witness to Christian faith. Debbie Clark reported that we have others serving in ELCA agencies “without conditions of term”. The motion carried.

Bishop James Dunlop moved and Pastor Matthew Best seconded:

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**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Amy M. Wagner as Chaplain for SpiriTrust Lutheran for a three-year term, effective March 4, 2020, until March 4, 2023.

Bishop Dunlop explained that Pastor Wagner was pastor at Zion, Newville, and left there to take a call to a hospice organization, as the Synod Council approved last year. The hospice organization was not interested in supporting her chaplaincy certification efforts, so Pastor Wagner moved to SpiriTrust Lutheran, which is a better fit. The motion carried.

### **CONVERSATION: MISSION AND THE FUTURE**

Vice President Lucinda Bringman referred to Bishop Dunlop's earlier presentation regarding the movement of Christianity in the world and the more recent conversations regarding decreasing mission support. Bishop Dunlop noted that the trends are not upward, but significantly downward. We have lost roughly 50% of our membership, giving is down 10%, attendance is down 50%. The first budget he oversaw as bishop was for \$2.7 million. The current budget is \$2.525 million, but with the proposed spending authorization, it is reduced to \$2.4 million. If this trend continues, by the end of his second term, the budget will be reduced to \$2.0 million. This synod won't disappear, but some synods are disappearing. The West Virginia-Western Maryland synod office consists of Bishop Riegel and one assistant. Bishop Dunlop posed the question: What do we look like 15-20 years from now? What structure will we have to do God's mission? What does the church need to be? He noted that the ELCA was built like a large corporation with regional dealers to supply local needs. There is a corporate brand which is expected to be reflected at every level, with everyone doing the same thing the same way. Today, we are much smaller than in 1987. The average Lower Susquehanna congregation has a weekly worship attendance of fewer than 100 persons. It is also true that the ELCA is not the same everywhere. Does this "one size fits all" corporate model work? For example, the ELCA has a rule that pastors must serve three years in a parish setting before being called into specialized ministry. We overlooked that and called Pastor Amy Wagner to specialized ministry before she had completed three years in the parish. The ELCA noticed and initiated a process of documentation to justify the exception. Now, the Conference of Bishops must decide whether she can be called to the work she is currently doing at SpiriTrust Lutheran. Another example is the experiment we are part of to show that mission should not be decided in Chicago, but locally. Among the Region 8 bishops, the question was raised whether the pilot synods would revert to the old model. The consensus was that it is unlikely. None of the Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEM) want to revert and it is expected that the ELCA will recommend that all DEMs be employed by the synods they serve. Some congregations are following the example of the experiment and reducing mission support to meet local needs – they are moving dollars to where the work needs to be done. The corporate model is no longer what this church needs.

The strongest organizational model is a network, not a hierarchy. Groups that hold common ideals collaborate and work together. This is the way it used to be in the New Testament church and in the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States. The larger entity almost exclusively served to raise up church leaders by establishing colleges and seminaries. This model fits with our core values of equipping leaders and encouraging cooperation. Historically, the church grew because one congregation planted a new congregation. Networking focuses on relationships more than on institutional structure.

So how do we get from here to there? How do we shift from corporate hierarchy to networked congregations? Most of the time, people within the institution are reluctant to change. They want to protect their turf. Some places in this synod are networking, but often with reluctance or due to desperation. We need healthier motivation for cooperation. Bishop Dunlop is open to ideas about how to do this. At the Region 8 bishops' meeting, it was said that this is incredibly hard work and some of us will have to die, that is, give up being bishop. Some there were willing to do that. We could make top-down decisions about actions to be taken, but without congregational support, any model we suggest would

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collapse. One model under consideration is the anchor church. Secretary Beth Schlegel noted that in a recent conversation with other rostered ministers, it was suggested that conferences as we have them are important for communication and participation in essential organizational business, but that ministry is already happening in networks that form across those lines and more organically among congregations. Pastor Richard Jorgensen said that a congregation doesn't need to be large to be an anchor church. Meredith Askey observed that we cannot do away completely with organizational structure because resources are unevenly distributed and a mechanism for seeing the big picture is necessary. She reported on a journalist who said that the ELCA is the least dysfunctional Christian organization. She wondered how much of the decline in financial giving and worship attendance is due to the formation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). Bishop Dunlop replied that in some synods, the impact has been significant, but the Lower Susquehanna Synod lost only 12 congregations to non-ELCA Lutheran groups. Meredith noted that in addition to entire congregations leaving the ELCA, there have been individual members who have changed their membership to non-ELCA congregations. Bishop Dunlop indicated that the synod does not have that data. His sense is that the loss of members has more to do with the secularization of society than movement to other denominations. The Church is no longer central to people's lives. Meredith commented that generally, people won't change unless asked to change. Bishop Dunlop explained the bell curve of change: there are a few early adopters, the majority in the middle who are later adopters, and 10-20% who won't move.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman called us back to the question at hand: What does it look like to move congregations to networking? Pastor Matthew Best observed that we proclaim life, death, and resurrection, but we are afraid of it. What is God calling us to now? We need to acknowledge that things have a life span and efforts that work now may not work 25 years from now. We should keep what works and let go of the rest because God is calling us to something new. This is impossible for us – we need spiritual growth and renewal. We also need to recognize the fourth expression, the individual disciple. We must ask: With what are we blessed? Where are we weak? Where can we find partners? Bishop Dunlop affirmed that we need to find a sense of value in the connections, the relationships. He reported that Pastor Liz Polanzke recently came across minutes books from the York Conference in the 1880s. They described how the conference pastors rode on horseback all the way to Dillsburg to spend several days together. We need to value neighboring congregations. Pastor Matthew Best suggested we make an intentional effort to build the sense that we cannot do the mission of God by ourselves. We should be sure to have a person tending to this value-building. Jen Lau noted that the relationships built in the R3 cohorts are persisting beyond the initial training. She asserted that relationships among laypersons are just as important as relationships among pastors. When lay people from various congregations build relationships, it takes away the fear of cooperation and reduces the perception of competition among congregations. A shift in culture is needed and when lay people are involved, it goes better; they need to have skin in the game. Virgil Gibson shared the experience of a 100-home community with a community association. The community has a Facebook group and a communication network which shares information, buys and sells items, posts events, and keeps the community connected. The church needs to be similarly connected. We need to get into people's data stream and be among those things that are there when people log onto their computers. He noted that among the sites in his data stream is the Lutheran Coalition for Renewal (Lutheran CORE), which posted positively about Presiding Bishop Eaton's recent communication. This also appeared in WE News.

Pastor Tim Seitz-Brown admitted feeling vulnerable. He referred to Australia having been on fire and now flooding, an indication that our planet is out of balance. He stated that 40 percent of our country is either in financial crisis or only \$400 away from crisis. Pennsylvania is moving from being the fifth most corrupt state to close to #1. He shared that he is moved by his faith to address these issues but feels that he must go outside of the Lutheran Church to work with others to do so. He has a passion for addressing these bigger issues but has been criticized for spending the time to do so. He noted that for him, the three years allowed for being on-leave-from-call is running out. He is trying to find his way but is feeling

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awkward. Bishop Dunlop responded that the churchwide expression of the ELCA does mission we cannot do by being a voice in the world and developing social statements. It is important for us to raise up leadership and ask what we treasure about our global and regional presence.

Treasurer Joe Stepansky commented regarding the challenge of congregational networking due to the inability of some congregations to network internally. He shared the example of rapid staff turnover in a congregation because of lack of communication within the congregation and among staff members. When there is dysfunction within a congregation, it is unlikely that networking between congregations will be healthy.

Kay Hinkle affirmed the viability of networks and noted that sometimes networks that include multiple denominations work very well. She wondered what it means to network as Lutherans and what we can learn from cross-denominations relations.

Vice President Bringman averred that we could spend more time on this and should continue this conversation at a future meeting. Pastor Joel Folkemer indicated that he had been listening to the conversation and writing down key points that could be topics for further conversation:

- What do we do now that can be let go?
- Are there ways that we as a synod are an unnecessary middle person?
- We have named the essentials for our synod ministry: candidacy and mobility.
- There is a misunderstanding of the distinction between evangelical mission and doing nice things; many congregations do nice things but that doesn't mean they are living into God's mission for the Church.
- How can we be better at including the unknown? (Building relationships with those who are different from us.)
- The synod could be stronger in taking a stand on global issues.
- Pay attention to the bell curve of change (innovators, early adopters, middle, late, and never adopting) but acknowledge that in most cases in our synod congregations, the innovators and early adopters are long gone because nothing ever changes, and what's left are the middle, late, and never adopting. It is important that we encourage being bold and speaking the truth in love. Union, York, lost people because they were happy being in the dying stage. It is not productive to drop new things to keep people happy.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman referred to the notes from the Deans' and Secretaries' Retreat that lists other observations.

Stella Ludwig, chair of the Assembly Planning Committee moved:

**ADOPTED** That the Synod Council recommend the Proposed Agenda for the 2020 Synod Assembly to the 2020 Synod Assembly for adoption;  
**SC20.02.06.**

Vice President Bringman called attention to the location of the ordination service in the middle of the agenda and noted that the agenda is "lean and mean" since we have a lot to cover in one day. The motion carried.

Stella Ludwig, chair of the Assembly Planning Committee moved:

**ADOPTED** That the Synod Council recommend the Proposed Rules of Procedure for the 2020 Synod Assembly to the 2020 Synod Assembly for adoption;  
**SC20.02.07.**

Vice President Bringman called attention to new rule #12 requiring consultation with the treasurer and the changes to #15 that asks for specificity regarding where funds are coming from. The motion carried.

Stella Ludwig, chair of the Assembly Planning Committee moved:

**ADOPTED**      **That the Synod Council adopt the following registration rates for the 2020 Synod SC20.02.08. Assembly: \$175 Early Bird Registration (2/16-3/17); \$200 Registration (3/18-3/31); \$250 Walk up Registration; \$30 Retired Rostered Ministers;**

Vice President Bringman explained that usually, the Synod Council approved the complimentary package rates, but that the committee this year wanted to present all the rates. She noted that the cost to retired rostered ministers was to cover the cost of the two lunches. Regarding the registration dates, everything has been moved up because of the new schedule. She also noted that the contract with Messiah College came back costing less than anticipated, making it unnecessary to charge retired rostered ministers. She explained that the assembly registration rates must be set high enough so that the revenue offsets the costs for the complimentary packages and the additional staff time. At the time of the Assembly Planning Committee meeting when the rates were proposed, we did not have the finalized contract with Messiah College and anticipated that the costs there could be higher than they turned out to be. For that reason, the charge for the retired rostered ministers was added, though not unanimously. Such a cost will not be met with joy and is not needed for the offsets. Meredith Askey wondered if such a cost would help to solve the lay/ordained ratio problem we have been struggling to overcome. Secretary Beth Schlegel asserted that since the ratio problem is due to congregations not sending their lay voting members, she does not think it is fair to place the burden of remedy on the backs of the retired rostered ministers who have given so much to the church. Stella Ludwig agreed that we do not need to include this rate for retired rostered ministers. Bishop Dunlop disagreed, asking, "If it is not worth \$30 to them to come, what are they coming for?" He noted that there is no such thing as a free lunch and recommends keeping the charge. We may not need the money this year, but it could be different in the future. The \$30 is for two lunches, one on the Edification Day and one on the Day of Business. Pastor Joel Folkemer asked if we have the numbers to calculate the offsets needed. Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson indicated that the contract with Messiah College is \$18,000-20,000. Vice President Bringman stated that the complimentary packages are only for early registration; if registering later, participants will be charged the difference. This includes Synod Council members. Pastor Folkemer asked how many register for the assembly. Vice President Bringman answered 500-600, but 100 of those do not pay. In the future, we hope to reduce the costs to congregations. Daniel Picone affirmed that small congregations are concerned about the costs of the assembly. Vice President Bringman indicated that we need \$20,400 in offset revenue. She called for the vote on the proposed rates. The motion carried with Secretary Beth Schlegel voting no.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman said there is an additional motion that did not come from the committee and asked for the committee chair to move it. Stella Ludwig moved:

That the Synod Council adopt the following complimentary packages for attendance at the 2020 Synod Assembly to [retired rostered ministers not serving congregations], rostered ministers on leave from call, rostered ministers called by the Synod Council whose agency or institution does not fund their attendance at the Synod Assembly, seminarians under the care of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Candidacy Committee, lay synod officers, lay members of the Synod Council, members of the Assembly Planning Committee and members of the Worship at Assembly Committee who are not serving congregations or elected assembly voting members from their congregations, and synod staff, who register by March 17, 2020: \$175.00.

Vice President Bringman indicated that Secretary Schlegel noticed that we need to define who is eligible for complimentary packages. This motion does that. Secretary Schlegel called attention to the bracketed

phrase and indicated that since we approved the rates, including the charge for retired rostered ministers, the bracketed phrase could be omitted from the motion. Stella Ludwig restated the motion, which carried:

**ADOPTED**      **That the Synod Council adopt the following complimentary packages for attendance at the 2020 Synod Assembly to rostered ministers on leave from call, rostered ministers called by the Synod Council whose agency or institution does not fund their attendance at the Synod Assembly, seminarians under the care of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Candidacy Committee, lay synod officers, lay members of the Synod Council, members of the Assembly Planning Committee and members of the Worship at Assembly Committee who are not serving congregations or elected assembly voting members from their congregations, and synod staff, who register by March 17, 2020: \$175.00.**  
**SC20.02.09.**

Carlotta “Chucki” Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee moved:

**ADOPTED**      **That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the adoption of the recommended amendments to the synod constitution and bylaws from the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.**  
**SC20.02.10.**

Vice President indicated these amendments as the first part of the committee’s document “For the 2020 Synod Assembly”. They follow here:

**CHAPTER 7: SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

- S7.13.**      ~~Written notice~~ of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod ~~in accordance with the bylaws of this constitution.~~
- S7.22.**      This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those ~~designated as disabled granted disability status~~, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c.
- S7.26.**      This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit ~~persons representatives from congregations under development and of~~ authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw ~~10.02.03, 10.01.04~~, to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.27.**      This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ~~ordained~~ minister’s service in a congregation of this church.

**CHAPTER 8: OFFICERS**

**S8.01.01.**      *No elected official or other duly appointed representative of the synod shall accept personal special remuneration for services rendered on behalf of this synod to any congregation or organization of this synod. Any contributions made in connection with such services shall be placed in the ~~synodical~~ treasury.*

**S8.11.01.**      *When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this*

church or any of its affiliated ministries. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.

S8.14. The ~~synodical~~ bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall ~~from time to time~~ authorize.

#### CHAPTER 10: SYNOD COUNCIL

**S10.04.** Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

If we accept proposed S10.04, all subsequent provisions in LSS will be proposed for renumbering as follows:

S10.045

S10.056

S10.056.01

S10.067

S10.067.01

S10.067.02

S10.067.03

S10.067.04

S10.067.05

S10.067.06

S10.067.07

S10.067.08

S10.067.09

**S10.08.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council, unless otherwise ordered by the council.

#### CHAPTER 13: CONGREGATIONS

S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence. Such synod administration shall continue only so long as necessary to complete the purposes for which it was requested by the congregation or until the congregation withdraws consent to continued administration.

S13.40. ~~Synodically Authorized Synod-authorized~~ **Worshiping Communities**

#### CHAPTER 14: ROSTERED MINISTERS

S14.14. Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a ~~Lutheran~~ congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.17. No minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the ~~chair-president~~ of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the ~~chair-president~~ of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call

**CHAPTER 15: FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**S15.14.** Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to ~~synodical~~ causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

Vice President Bringman explained the rationale for the changes from the Churchwide Assembly having to do with the change in status of deacons to ordained and the change in language from "synodical" to "synod". The motion carried.

Carlotta "Chucki" Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee moved:

That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the adoption of continuing resolution S7.11.01.r.A20. *The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually between May 15 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.*

Vice President Bringman asked whether making this a continuing resolution was so that the Synod Council could have more flexibility. Secretary Beth Schlegel indicated that the impetus was a bylaw in the Model Synod Constitution that would authorize the Synod Council to determine dates and places but stipulate the notification of the voting members six months in advance. Making the current bylaw S7.11.02. a continuing resolution would facilitate the adoption of the model bylaw. It would also give the Synod Council greater flexibility in determining the dates. Pastor Joel Folkemer asked if the continuing resolution needed to have dates. Secretary Schlegel said that the committee did not change the content of the bylaw; it only recommends making it a continuing resolution instead. Pastor Folkemer moved an amendment to the motion changing May 15 to May 1.

**ADOPTED**      **That the resolution be amended to read: *The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually between May 1 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.***  
**SC20.02.11.**

The amended motion was before the council for a vote.

**ADOPTED**      **That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the adoption of continuing resolution S7.11.01.r.A20. *The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually between May 1 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.***  
**SC20.02.12.**

Carlotta "Chucki" Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee moved:

That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the adoption of other suggested bylaw amendments from the Constitution Committee.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman referred to the second part of the committee's document "For the 2020 Synod Assembly". The committee's recommendations follow here:

**S6.03.05.**      *To promote relations of mutual benefit, this synod shall accord to the ~~synodical~~ organization of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of establishing liaison with the appropriate organizations of this synod and of presenting reports to regular assemblies of this synod and shall, upon invitation, appoint consultants to the ~~clusters~~ conferences and executive*

board of the organization.

- S6.03.06.** To promote relations of mutual benefit, this synod shall accord to the Lower Susquehanna Synod Lutheran Youth Organization the privilege of establishing liaison with appropriate organizations of this synod and of presenting reports to regular assemblies of this synod and shall, upon invitation, appoint consultants to the clusters conferences and executive board of the organization.
- S6.03.07.** To promote relations of mutual benefit, this synod shall accord to the synodical organization of Lutheran Men in Mission the privilege of establishing liaison with the appropriate organizations of this synod and of presenting reports to regular assemblies of this synod and shall, upon invitation, appoint consultants to the clusters conferences and executive board of the organization.
- S6.03.08.** The Synod Council shall elect representatives to the Region 8 Steering Committee in a number to be determined by the Region 8 Steering Committee. In addition to the bishop who serves ex officio, at least one synodical representative to the Region 8 Steering Committee shall be a member of the Synod Council.
- S6.03.09.** Voting members and alternate voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be elected according to the procedures set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The synodical bishop and synodical vice president shall be ex-officio voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.
- 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:
- ~~**S7.11.01.** The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually between May 15 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.~~
- ~~**S7.11.01.r.A20.** The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually between May 1 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.~~
- ~~**S7.11.01.** The time and place of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly shall be determined in a continuing resolution by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced six months prior to the assembly.~~
- S8.14.01.** Staff assistants to the officers, if and when such positions are created by the Synod Assembly synod in assembly, shall be appointed by the bishop with the approval or call of the Synod Council. The term of office of a staff assistant to any officer shall continue six months beyond the expiration of the term of the officer. During the aforementioned term, such staff assistants may be recalled or dismissed by the bishop with or without cause pursuant to the written personnel policies of this synod.
- S9.03.01.** With the exception of nominations for the officers of this synod and Panel #1 for the Churchwide Assembly...
- S9.03.02.** The Synod Assembly shall elect board members of the boards of the following educational institution(s):  
1) Susquehanna University - one (1) member.
- S9.12.r.A08.** The Synod Council Executive Committee shall provide for background checks for persons nominated for synodical office prior to the Synod Assembly at which the election will take place or as soon as possible after the Synod Assembly for newly elected officers nominated from the floor who were not identified as nominees prior to the assembly. The process shall be as follows: ...  
The Executive Committee may adopt other procedures or protocols as are necessary to provide for background checks for nominees and newly elected synodical synod officers and shall report

such actions to the Synod Council.

**S10.01.01. [excluded from the final motion]** The Synod Council, in addition to the four officers, shall consist of fifteen (15) adult members and one (1) youth member and one (1) young adult member. Said membership shall conform to the standards of representation of the ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in **†S6.04**. Therefore, there shall be ~~six~~ seven (7) ~~elderly~~ ordained ministers, of Word and Sacrament members, at least four (4) of whom shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament; ~~nine~~ eight (8) lay members; one (1) youth member; and one (1) young adult member. All other members shall be elected as members-at-large.

**S10.01.03.** Youth member: ~~Each~~ The youth elected to the Synod Council shall serve one two-year term. ~~Each~~ The youth member shall be a confirmed member of a congregation of this synod and shall be under eighteen (18) years of age at the time of election.

**S10.01.04.** Young adult member, 18 – 30 years old: ~~Each~~ The young adult member elected to the Synod Council shall serve a three-year term. ~~Each~~ The young adult shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

**S10.06.01.** To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

**S10.06.05.** Duties and responsibilities of the Synod Council in addition to those specified in this ~~synod~~ constitution shall include:

c. Confirmation of appointments by the bishop of synod, including appointment of ~~synodical~~ representatives to serve on the governing bodies of ~~inter-church~~ agencies to which this synod is related;

e. Creation of and appointment to any committees, commissions, and other organizations needed to fulfill the functions of the Synod Council; and

f. Approval and triennial review of all policies to ~~consistent~~ assure consistency with ~~this the~~ Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of this synod.

**S10.06.06.** Meetings: The Synod Council shall have at least four (4) stated meetings annually. Special meetings may be called by the chair or by the bishop of ~~the~~ synod in the event of the death, removal, or incapacity of the chair. A majority of the members of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum.

**S10.06.07.** General Provisions: The Synod Council shall be responsible for:

a. The election of members of the boards of SpiriTrust Lutheran and LutherCare - to be elected from nominees submitted by the respective agency, in numbers required by the ~~constitution~~ governing documents of the respective agency;

b. The election of members of the board of the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania - to be elected from nominees submitted by the corporation in accordance with the ~~constitution~~ governing documents of the corporation;

c. The election of a member of the board of directors of the United Lutheran Seminary;

d. The election of representatives to other institutions and agencies as may be determined.

**S10.06.08.** ~~The~~ Synod Council shall have the following standing committees to fulfill its responsibilities, with the members appointed annually:

a. Assembly Planning ~~Committee~~. ~~This committee is~~ composed of the vice president, secretary, assembly manager, at least 2 Synod Council members, and at least 5 additional committee members. It shall plan the annual assembly's 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."

b. Constitution ~~Committee~~. ~~This committee is~~ composed of the secretary, at least 2 Synod

Council members, and 3 to 5 additional committee members. It shall study the governing documents of this synod and recommend amendments to the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly for adoption. It shall aid congregations in the development and adoption of their governing documents.

- c. Finance and Budget **Committee.** — **This committee is** composed of 9 members, 1 of whom shall be the treasurer and at least 3 of whom shall be Synod Council members. It shall oversee the financial affairs of this synod; confirm that all obligations are being met and that mission support is forwarded to the churchwide office; exercise oversight responsibility for this synod's investments, insurance, and banking procedures; receive the annual audit and the accompanying financial statements; and make recommendations to **the** Synod Council on financial matters. It shall project anticipated income for the coming fiscal year and, based on anticipated income, program requests, and adopted goals, develop a proposed budget for recommendation to **the** Synod Council and **the** Synod Assembly.
- d. Gifts Discernment **Committee.** — **This committee is** composed of the bishop, the secretary, at least 2 Synod Council members, and 3 additional committee members. It shall aid in identifying members of this synod for nomination, appointment, or election to the committees and task forces of this synod and to the boards of agencies and institutions. It shall aid **the** Synod Council in securing nominees for the offices of vice president, secretary, and treasurer of this synod.
- e. Mission **Committee.** — **This committee is** composed of the bishop, at least 3 Synod Council members, and 3 additional committee members. It shall uphold the vision and goals of this synod by proposing, developing, maintaining, and promoting priority ministries and by advocating that these priority ministries receive adequate financial and human resources.
- f. Personnel **Committee.** — **This committee is** composed of the vice president, at least 3 Synod Council members, and 5 additional committee members. It shall review the personnel policies of this synod and recommend amendments to **the** Synod Council. Under the guidance of the personnel officer, it shall administer and interpret these personnel policies. It shall recommend to **the** Synod Council the salaries of the bishop, treasurer, and assistants to the bishop and a salary scale for other members of this synod's staff.

**S10.08.01.** **To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.**

**S11.01.02.** *The Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Fund Committee shall be composed of 7 persons: the bishop and the treasurer of this synod and 5 members (one of whom shall be an attorney) appointed by the Synod Council. Three of the appointed members shall be lay voting members of congregations of this synod and 2 shall be **ordained** ministers **of Word and Sacrament** on the roster of this synod. The committee shall administer the Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Fund. The fund, established by the Synod Council, shall be supported by bequests, trusts, endowments, planned and deferred gifts, assets from closing congregations, gifts from merging and consolidating congregations, and gifts from other congregations, individuals, and entities. The committee, **the** Synod Council, and **the** bishop shall promote and encourage such gifts. The assets of the fund shall be invested in a manner consistent with the purpose of the fund.*

**S11.01.03** *It shall receive requests and proposals from this synod's officers and committees and present recommendations to **the** Synod Council. It shall be empowered to act upon recommendations regarding reinstatement to ordained ministry in cases where required by the Candidacy Manual of the **ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.** It shall receive reports about the distribution of funds from the Bishop's Discretionary Fund.*

**S11.01.05.** *The Committee for Global Mission shall be composed of a minimum of 8 persons. This committee shall be responsible for furthering the global mission of **the Lower Susquehanna Synod this synod.** To fulfill its responsibilities, this committee shall engage the members of this synod in global mission by raising awareness of the global mission of **the Church this church** and their responsibility for the same; cooperate with the Global Mission Unit **of the churchwide***

organization to provide global mission education for members of this synod; recruit missionary personnel from within this synod and encourage support for them; work with congregations to provide human and material resources in support of global mission; and be a channel with the Global Mission Unit of the churchwide organization through which churches church bodies and congregations in other countries engage in mission ~~to with~~ this synod.

**S11.01.08.** The Committee for Synodical Synod Worship shall be composed of 8 to 12 persons, both ordained and lay. This committee shall serve the bishop and this synod in planning and coordinating worship for Synod Assembly, ordination and consecration, and vocational reaffirmation. At the request of the bishop, this committee shall provide, by appointment of the chairperson, a liaison for worship at other synodical synod events. This committee also shall serve as a resource ~~for the purpose of for~~ education and ~~of~~ consultation with pastors, congregations, and worship planners; and shall respond to the requests of the bishop.

**S11.01.10.** The Compensation and Benefits Committee shall be composed of 5 to 7 persons, at least 2 of whom are rostered ministers in this synod. This committee shall provide informed guidance and recommendations to this synod on matters of compensation and benefits for rostered persons, in support of synodical synod policies and guidelines.

**S11.01.11.** The Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs shall be composed of at least 8 persons, both including ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained ministers and laypersons. This committee shall relate to the bishop of this synod. The bishop also may invite ~~to serve as consultants~~ representatives from churches with which this synod has entered into agreement to serve as consultants. The bishop shall appoint the chair of this committee. The bishop shall appoint a person to serve as the ecumenical representative of this synod who shall become a member of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network. This committee shall coordinate the inter-Lutheran, ecumenical, and inter-religious activities of this synod and shall recommend policies, through this synod's the bishop, to the Synod Assembly and the Synod Council. To fulfill these responsibilities, this committee shall assist this synod's the bishop in carrying out the bishop's role as the chief ecumenical officer of this synod; oversee and facilitate the inter-Lutheran, ecumenical, and inter-religious discussions (including bilateral dialogues) in which this synod is involved; guide the process of reception of theological agreements; encourage the study of theological topics of shared concern; and assist the staff, institutions, agencies, and congregations of this synod in carrying out their inter-Lutheran, ecumenical, and inter-religious responsibilities.

**S11.01.r.C.16.** Consonant with the provisions of S11.01.15. these ministries may include:

- 1) ABX (Alpha Beta Christos), which shall be a ministry of the bishop's office of the bishop of this synod in collaboration with the Region 8 Office of the ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to gather newly rostered leaders during the initial two years of their first call for the purpose of support, collegiality, and disciplined reflection on ministry in accordance with ELCA First Call Theological Education requirements. The bishop shall designate an assistant to the bishop to provide coordinate this ministry.
- 2) The Learning Ministries Team shall be composed of no more than 10 persons who are experienced Christian educators who currently serve or who have served in congregational, institutional or middle judicatory settings of the ELCA this church or that of an ecumenical partner. The team shall be responsible for providing continuing education and resourcing of congregational leaders in keeping with standard and emerging faith formative faith formation practices. This shall include but not be limited to workshops and events in addition to electronic resources and social networking. The Learning Ministries Team shall work cooperatively with established ELCA partners of this church such as the ELCA Youth Ministry Network and the United Lutheran Seminary. Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg's Youth Ministry Certification School.
- 3) The Office of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry (CYFM) shall have a director who shall work cooperatively with this synod's team of youth leaders to help train and equip young leaders for service in Christ's name. In addition, the Office of CYFM will assist in providing

programming and event management for synod-wide events that foster faith formation for children, youth, young adults, their families, and the youth workers of this synod. The work of this office shall be considered a ministry of service to the congregational leaders of this synod who provide faith formation to the young people and their families. they serve. This ministry shall include but not be limited to consultations, electronic resourcing and social networking, and event planning and management. The Office for CYFM shall also partner and network with other ELCA ministries of this church that support congregational leaders as they strive to raise faithful young people for a life of service and discipleship in Jesus' name.

- 4) The Congregational Leadership Resource Team (CLRT), which shall be composed of 8 to 12 persons, both including ministers of Word and Sacrament, ordained ministers and laypersons. A chairperson/convener shall be appointed by the bishop. This team shall work with congregations and leaders of the Lower Susquehanna Synod this synod to achieve positive responses to change, anxiety, and conflict. Members of this team shall possess skills and willingness to assist congregations in healthy communication and leadership patterns, as well as addressing conflict management, mediation, and resolution.

**S11.04.01.** The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be composed of 9 persons; 4 ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained ministers and 5 laypersons, with at least 1 of the 9 to be a representative of the Synod Council. No officer of the synod nor any synod staff member shall serve on this committee unless appointed by the Executive Committee. The term of office shall be 2 years. Persons may serve consecutive terms.

†**S11.05.** The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.

**S11.05.01.** The Audit Committee shall consist of 5 persons, at least 2 of whom should be certified public accountants if possible and all of whom shall have accounting or related financial management experience. In order to maintain its independence, No officer of this synod or synod staff member shall serve on this committee. The synod treasurer shall be a consultant to this committee, and the committee may invite others as necessary to provide information necessary for the conduct of its work. The primary purpose of this committee is to assist the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of this synod's accounting and financial reporting, internal control, and audit functions. The committee's authority, responsibilities, and duties are further described in its charter as adopted by Synod Council.

**S12.02.** Boundaries of conferences shall be determined by the Synod Council.

**S12.02.01.** The boundaries and number of conferences shall be determined reviewed by the Synod Council by 1990 and thereafter at six-year intervals calculated from 1990.

**S12.02.02.** Any change shall be effective upon Synod Council approval.

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

**S12.03.03.** The bishop of this synod or the bishop's appointee and such staff officials members as the bishop may designate shall have voice at the conference assemblies. In addition, the social service agencies ministry organizations on the territories of the conferences, the Synod Council, and each official auxiliary of this synod may send a representative who shall have voice in conference assemblies.

**S12.03.04.** Conference assemblies may from time to time adopt memorials and resolutions to be sent to the Synod Council Minutes/February 15, 2020/page 15

Synod Assembly.

**S12.03.A96.** All memorials and resolutions which are to be presented at a spring ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~ for consideration must be delivered in writing to the secretary of the conference no less than 40 days prior to the date of the spring ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~, so that the memorial or resolution may be reviewed by the voting members ~~of the spring conference assembly~~, prior to the spring ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~.

All memorials and resolutions received less than 40 days prior to the spring ~~cConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~ shall, ~~according to the order of receipt~~, be referred automatically to the Conference Cabinet, or where no Conference Cabinet exists, to the conference dean and secretary ~~for review~~; ~~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 such~~ memorials or resolutions shall be forwarded to the spring ~~cConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~ for consideration.

**S12.04.** Each conference shall elect its officers.

**S12.04.01.** All ~~members~~ ~~ministers~~ of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the ~~ELCA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~ who are members of a congregation of the conference shall be eligible to hold office in that conference.

**S12.04.02.** ~~The Each~~ conference shall elect a dean in odd-numbered years. The deans shall be elected at the annual assembly of ~~the each~~ conference. On their annual confidential reports to the bishop, rostered ministers ~~of the conference~~ will submit nominations ~~for the office of dean of their conference~~. ~~to~~ ~~The~~ bishop who will then recommends to ~~the each~~ conference a slate of at least two names. Additional nominations may be made from the floor ~~at~~ of the ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~. The final selection will be made at the annual ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~ 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 Each~~ conference shall elect a secretary in even-numbered years. The secretary shall be elected at the annual assembly of ~~the each~~ conference. On their annual confidential reports to the bishop, rostered ministers ~~of the conference~~ will submit nominations ~~for the office of secretary of their conference~~. ~~to~~ ~~The~~ bishop who will then recommends to ~~the each~~ conference a slate of at least two names. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the ~~cConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~. The final selection will be made at the annual ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~ by written ballot by ~~the~~ 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.** Each conference may order itself in other ways to fulfill its purposes as designated in the bylaws of this synod.

**S12.05.01.** ~~The Each~~ conference may have a ~~eConference~~ ~~eCabinet~~ composed of the dean and the secretary, and a specified number of ~~cabinet~~ ~~additional~~ members as determined by the conference assembly. In addition, the social service agencies on the territories ~~ies~~ 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 ~~eConference~~ ~~eCabinet~~, ~~said~~ ~~conference~~ ~~cabinet~~ it shall, in addition to any responsibilities and authority assigned to it by these bylaws, have such responsibilities and authority as the ~~eConference~~ ~~Assembly~~ shall assign to it.

**S12.05.02.** The ~~eConference~~ ~~aAssembly~~ or the ~~eConference~~ ~~eCabinet~~ may appoint task forces or ad hoc committees for particular purposes.

- S12.05.03.** ~~In each conference~~ *The rostered ministers in each conference shall meet regularly for the purpose of professional and personal support.*
- S13.11.01.** *In the event of a pastoral vacancy vacant pastorate in a congregation or multi-congregation parish, the bishop shall appoint an interim pastor, in consultation with the dean and the Congregation Council.*
- S18.21.01.** *Whenever the bylaws of this synod are adopted or amended at any meeting of the Synod Assembly, the remaining bylaws shall be renumbered appropriately without any further action required.*

Vice President Bringman indicated that S10.01.01. would need to be excluded from the motion and that the committee has agreed to do that. The reason for the exclusion is that the proposed numbering is incorrect. The committee intended to include deacons in the membership of the Synod Council. However, the committee was not aware of the ELCA principles for rounding, which stipulate that when calculating ratios for people, fractions are always rounded up. This provision will need to be reworked and brought back at the April meeting.

**ADOPTED** **That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the adoption of other suggested bylaw amendments from the Constitution Committee, excluding S10.01.01.**

Carlotta “Chucki” Strevig, chair of the Constitution Committee, moved:

**ADOPTED** **That the Synod Council direct the synod secretary to provide notice to the voting members of the 2020 Synod Assembly of the proposed amendments to the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the Lower Susquehanna Synod.**

Vice President Bringman thanked the committee for their careful words.

Virgil Gibson, chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, moved:

**ADOPTED** **That the Synod Council approve a 5% distribution from the Legacy Fund to be distributed according to the formula in the Legacy Fund policy.**

Vice President Lucinda Bringman reported that the endowment is currently at \$2.480 million. The “Legacy Fund policy is on the website on the “Congregations” tab under “Policies and Procedures”. She explained that during the time of the fraud, documents were shredded that contained the origins and designations of the funds. The committee has worked diligently to examine years of minutes to recreate this information. The areas of designated giving identified are as follows: Hunger, Konde Diocese, Seminaries, Synod Programs, and the Congregational Mission Fund a.k.a. Lower Susquehanna Synod Mission Fund. According to the policy, we can withdraw 3-5% annually. A 5% distribution equals \$111,882, which is less than the growth of the fund, so no principal is involved. Virgil Gibson noted that if someone has a passion for one of those areas, making a designated gift to the Legacy Fund is a good way to express it. The motion carried.

Virgil Gibson, chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, indicated that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Budget Summary Sheet was distributed this morning and apologized that it was not included in the packet. Virgil moved:

**ADOPTED** **That the Synod Council adopt a spending authorization for 2020 in the amount of \$2,412,413.98.**

Vice President Bringman explained that the Synod Council can modify this based on future revenue. This is based on projections for mission support revenue. Bishop Dunlop suggested looking at it from the bottom up: We thought we would receive this much, but we now expect to receive less. This is what prompts a spending authorization. He pointed out that the expenses for human resources are down because we are no longer paying for Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali and Deacon Marsha Roscoe as staff members. We are receiving grant funding for some initiatives but are still using less staff. He also indicated a reduction in our mission support to the churchwide organization as a percentage of a lower total. The motion carried.

Zach Weiss, chair of the Personnel Committee, moved:

**ADOPTED**     **That the Synod Council adopt the proposed changes to the Personnel Policies of the SC20.02.17. Lower Susquehanna Synod.**

Meredith Askey wondered about an apparent gap in the overtime calculation between up to 40 hours and 41 or more hours. She asked if work time was calculated incrementally or by full hour. Debbie Clark explained that they strive to avoid overtime altogether.

The motion carried.

Bishop Dunlop moved an additional recommendation for a change to the Personnel Policies, seconded by Virgil Gibson:

**ADOPTED**     **That the Synod Council change article 6.70 of the Personnel Policies of the SC20.02.18. Lower Susquehanna Synod from “ordained employee” to “An employee who is a Minister of Word and Sacrament”.**

6.70 Housing Allowance

An ~~ordained~~ employee who is a Minister of Word and Sacrament may request that a portion of his/her annual salary be designated as housing allowance, in keeping with Internal Revenue Service regulations. .

..

Bishop Dunlop explained that deacons are now ordained by the ELCA but are not eligible for housing allowances as defined by the IRS. The motion carried.

Kay Hinkle, liaison to the Compensation and Benefits Committee, moved and Bishop Dunlop seconded:

**ADOPTED**     **That the Synod Council recommend to the 2020 Synod Assembly that the 2021 SC20.02.19. minimum base salary and housing allowance for Ministers of Word and Sacrament with no years of experience and no parsonage provided be set at \$53,875 and that the 2021 minimum salary for Ministers of Word and Sacrament with no years of experience and with a parsonage provided be set at \$37,480, representing a 3% increase over the 2020 minimum salaries;**

The motion carried.

Kay Hinkle, liaison to the Compensation and Benefits Committee, moved and Bishop Dunlop seconded:

**ADOPTED**      **That the Synod Council recommend to the 2020 Synod Assembly that the 2021 minimum base salary for Ministers of Word and Service with no years of experience be set at \$48,530, a 5.5% increase over the 2020 minimum salary with the intent to achieve parity within six years;**  
**SC20.02.20.**

Kay Hinkle indicated that this is in response to the conversation at last year's Synod Assembly. Daniel Picone asked to clarify that "achieve parity within six years" means that by that time, compensation for both rosters will be the same. Kay indicated that as the intent. The motion carried.

Kay Hinkle, liaison to the Compensation and Benefits Committee, moved and Bishop Dunlop seconded:

That the Synod Council approve a \$5.00 increase to the supply rate for one service in 2021, making the 2021 supply rate for one service \$180; approve an additional \$50 for each additional Sunday morning service and an additional \$70 for each additional weekend service other than Sunday morning.

Virgil Gibson asked whether it was necessary to specify "weekend" service. What about midweek services? Pastor Beth Martini clarified that "additional service" assumes that the pastor is preaching the same sermon. If a midweek service requires a separate sermon from Sunday, then it is a separate service to be compensated fully. If the "additional service" is, for example, on Monday but uses the same sermon as on Sunday, then the "additional" rate would apply. Virgil Gibson moved and Pastor Matthew Best seconded:

**ADOPTED**      **That the resolution be amended to strike the word "weekend".**  
**SC20.02.21.**

The amendment passed.

Vice President Bringman clarified that the proposed increase was only for the base rate for one service; the rates for additional services remain unchanged. The amended resolution was before the council.

**ADOPTED**      **That the Synod Council approve a \$5.00 increase to the supply rate for one service in 2021, making the 2021 supply rate for one service \$180; approve an additional \$50 for each additional Sunday morning service and an additional \$70 for each additional service other than Sunday morning.**  
**SC20.02.22.**

The amended motion carried.

### **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Jim Dunlop provided a written report. He further reported that at the upcoming meeting of the Conference of Bishops, the bishops from Regions 7 and 8 will be proposing to remove their synods from the ELCA seminarian assignment process. In their last year of seminary, following final approval by the Candidacy Committee, seminarians seeking ordination must be assigned to a synod for initial placement following graduation. Each seminarian completes an extensive profile for bishops to review. Seminarians may request to be restricted to a specific area or be open to being called anywhere within the church. The assignment process requires all bishops to convene in Chicago to review the profiles, to meet the seminarians and negotiate for the seminarians they think will serve their synods well. From the standpoint of the Regions 7 and 8 bishops, this process is not working. Of the total of 150 seminarians entering the assignment process, 100 might be restricted. This leaves 50 seminarians available for the negotiation of the 65 bishops. This is a poor use of time and money to travel. The bishops from Regions 7 and 8 are

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proposing to withdraw from this process in favor of a process in which seminarians who are raised up in each synod are assigned to that synod for placement. If there are those who want to serve elsewhere, the synod bishop will work to get them placed in another synod. This was the method used in the former Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and it worked well. The current process is built on the assumption that all candidates are young, unattached, and available to move, but this does not describe the current seminary enrollment. Increasingly, the pool of candidates for ordination are married, second or third career students, and with families established where they live. For these reasons, they request to be restricted to that area. Restrictions limit the number of available candidates for whom a bishop may negotiate. Thus, it is likely that a bishop must travel to Chicago knowing that none of the available candidates will, in the end, be assigned to his or her synod. Therefore, the regional bishops propose to withdraw. Bishop Dunlop does not know how the Conference of Bishops will receive the proposal and they own the process.

Meredith Askey wondered what would happen if the Conference of Bishops decline to accept the proposal. Bishop Dunlop responded that since the synod is part of the whole church, we would continue with the process. He reported that some bishops have said that if the Conference of Bishops retain the current process, they will not attend the assignment meeting. He explained that the process is labor intensive. Profiles for the candidates and profiles for first-call congregations are matched, but from the whole process, we might get only one candidate assigned to our synod. Pastor Rob Blezard does the legwork of compiling the profiles. Vice President Bringman added that the number of candidates restricted to our synod reduces the number of available candidates we can receive. The bishop said that this year, he knows we will not be assigned anyone because of those already restricted to our synod. Regions 7 and 8 want to pilot a different approach and have apprised Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton of their intention to make the proposal to withdraw.

#### **REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**

Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman submitted a written report. She announced that assembly registration is ready to go. Cathy Deitrich is ready to launch this afternoon. We are using new registration software, so Vice President Bringman encouraged us to register early. That way, if there are any glitches, we can resolve them quickly. Because of the changed schedule, conference spring assemblies will be held earlier. Be in communication with your dean to find out the date and place and make sure it is communicated to the synod office. We will write guidelines for you to share with your conferences at those assemblies.

Vice President Bringman reminded liaisons to committees about the importance of their role. They are to summarize the work of the committee and if they do not attend the committee, ask the committee chair for information. There is a template for these reports that can be made available. It is helpful when the summary report relates to the mission of the synod and it is important that the report include any motions that request Synod Council action. She noted that there has been resistance to doing these reports, so she asked the Synod Council to decide: would we rather increase the size of our informational packet and commit to reading the minutes of all committees and groups? Or would we rather have summary reports from those groups that are not Synod Council committees? Discussion included the observation that although the packet is larger now that we communicate electronically, we receive it early enough to read it ahead of time. On the other hand, it is a lot of material to work through. The consensus was reached that summary reports are preferred.

Vice President Bringman reported the positive impact of the Gratitude Tour of congregations who have maintained or increased their Mission Support giving through the synod and thanked those who shared their experiences.

#### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

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Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and a Statement of Operational Activities. He noted that our 2019 revenue was down 2.2%, \$50,000 below 2018. He reported that he had lost confidence in his original forecast and adjusted it down, but it came out ahead, close to the original. The trend in giving indicates that we are headed toward a \$2 million operating budget. The staff has been doing an excellent job of keeping expenses low.

The Legacy Fund stands at \$2.48 million and has increased. We received a bequest from the estate of Christine Mummert for Christian Education that will be added to the Legacy Fund and distributed according to the policy.

Treasurer Joe Stepansky explained that he was receiving numerous calls from congregations regarding tax exemption certificates due to expire. The synod must renew the exemption every five years. This clarifies the active numbers and which ones need to be inactivated because congregations have closed. The treasurer's office has done the paperwork and the exemption has been approved. Congregations will receive their forms in early March.

Treasurer Stepansky reported that the auditors will be coming March 18-20, 2020. He thanked Denise Ferguson and Cathy Paul for their hard work getting everything ready for them. He further reported that we will likely end up with a deficit of less than \$10,000 for fiscal year 2019, which is a testament to the staff holding down expenses.

#### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**

Secretary Beth A. Schlegel submitted a written report. She referred to the letter from Pastor Tim Seitz-Brown as correspondence. Vice President Lucinda Bringman reminded us that the committee reports for the Bulletin of Reports have a deadline of March 15 and should be submitted sooner rather than later. A reporting form will be sent with the reminder email.

#### **REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Synod Council Executive Committee provided draft minutes of its January 29, 2020, meeting.

#### **REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Synod Council Assembly Planning Committee provided draft minutes of its January 21, 2020, meeting.

#### **REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE**

The Synod Council Finance and Budget Committee provided draft minutes of its January 30, 2020, meeting.

#### **REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Synod Council Personnel Committee provided draft minutes of its January 22, 2020, meeting.

#### **REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE**

The Synod Council Constitution Committee provided notes of its January 8, 2020, and January 15, 2020, meetings.

#### **REPORT OF THE GIFTS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

The Synod Council Gifts Discernment Committee provided draft minutes of its February 12, 2020, meeting.

#### **REPORTS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION LIAISONS**

**Lutheran Men in Mission** secretary William Schirmer provided a draft memo indicating that due to death and health issues, the leadership roles are being vacated, effective immediately. Bishop Dunlop indicated that this would provide an opportunity for reorganization, but that for now, it would be given a sabbatical. It was reported that Fred Bohls has left the ELCA and joined a congregation of another Lutheran denomination.

**Lower Susquehanna Synod Women of the ELCA** liaison, Lois A. Griffiths, provided a written report.

**Region 8 Campus Ministry** provided a written report.

**United Campus Ministries** liaison Daniel Picone provided a written report. Daniel further reported that Shippensburg University had asked how much it was allocated this year and next year. Vice President Bringman responded that the fiscal year 2020 budget allocated \$2400 to the campus ministry at Shippensburg University. The budget for the 2021 fiscal year that will be presented to the Synod Assembly is not yet ready.

Vice President Bringman asked Ted Wolfe about the synod's youth ministry. He said that Winterfest was a good event.

#### **REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF**

Deacon Marsha Roscoe provided a written report.

Pastor Robert Blezard offered a written report.

Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson provided a written report.

Pastor Beth Martini provided a written report.

Charlie Roberts provided a written report.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen provided a written report.

#### **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**The Compensation and Benefits Committee** liaison, Kay Hinkle, provided a liaison report.

**The Committee of Conference Deans** provided notes from its January 13, 2020, Deans' and Secretaries' retreat.

**The Criminal Justice System Ministry Committee** provided a written report.

**The Gift and Bequest Acceptance Committee** liaison, Virgil Gibson, provided a liaison report.

**The LSS Mission Fund Committee** liaison, Jennifer Lau, provided a liaison report.

**The Nominating Committee** provided draft minutes of its January 29, 2020, meeting.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman thanked all the committees and liaisons for their reports. It helps us know what is happening.

#### **REPORTS OF TASK FORCES**

**The Bishop Election Task Force** provided a written report.

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**The Toward Racial Justice Task Force** provided a written report.

Pastor Tim Seitz-Brown wondered about the status of the AMMPARO task force. Bishop Dunlop said he is putting it together and is thankful for the nudge.

Pastor Tim Seitz-Brown stated that the anti-racism training needs wider participation. It is part of our discipleship. Vice President Bringman said that it is required of rostered ministers every two years.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Daniel Picone asked about the budget process. Vice President Bringman explained that the treasurer develops a worksheet and the staff make a first pass, indicating what they hope to accomplish in the coming year and how much they think it might cost. Then a draft is made, and it goes through another review by staff and appropriate committees. A proposal then comes to the Synod Council and finally to the Synod Assembly.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Bishop Dunlop moved, and Virgil Gibson seconded:

**ADOPTED**     **That the Synod Council move the designated Synod Program money in the amount of \$2,226.97 from last year's Legacy Fund distribution from the reserve account to the General Fund to offset the cost of the 2019 Healthy Leaders Retreat.**  
**SC20.02.23.**

Bishop Dunlop explained that when the Healthy Leaders retreat started, it was funded with money from Portico. Since Portico has stopped funding the retreats, they have been funded through the Legacy Fund distribution. This action makes that allocation for last year's retreat. The motion carried.

Vice President Lucinda Bringman thanked Debbie Clark for hospitality, prayer lists, name cards, and all she does to make things run smoothly. She thanked Meredith Askey for coming early for door hospitality and she thanked Meredith Askey, Ted Wolfe, and Dan Picone for refreshments. She reminded us of the upcoming ordination of Carla Christopher Wilson at Union Lutheran Church, York, on Sunday, February 23, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice President Bringman led the members of the council in the Lord's Prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

Beth A. Schlegel  
synod secretary  
2/18/2020