

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

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Saturday, November 20, 2021, by Zoom. Vice President Jennifer R. Lau called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**DEVOTIONS**

Deb Barrett led us in devotions and prayer on the theme of gratitude. The members of the Synod Council spent a time in silent prayer naming all the things they are grateful for receiving.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members present:**

Bishop James S. Dunlop	Jennifer R. Lau
Beth A. Schlegel	Joseph M. Stepansky
Debra K. Barrett	
Stacy L. Schroeder	Kathleen A. Kuehl
Linda J. Long	Hans E. Becklin
	Barbara G. Miller
Michael R. Zeigler	Kay A. Hinkle
James F. Druckenbrod	Gretchen S. Ierien
Zachary J. Weiss	Brian A. McClinton
Laura A. Willoughby	Rachel Norris

**Staff present:**

Deborah M. Clark	Richard E.T. Jorgensen
Marsha L. Roscoe	Elizabeth G. Martini
Dana J. Blouch-Hanson	Charles R. Roberts III
Carla S. Christopher Wilson	

**Liaisons present:** Donna Greifzu (WELCA)

**Members excused:** Molly K. Haggerty, Meredith Killian Askey, Jack Horner

**Members absent:**

**Staff excused:**

**Guests:** Lucinda Bringman, chair of the Bishop Election Evaluation Task Force

**SPECIAL ORDER: Election of Young Adult Member**

Secretary Beth A. Schlegel moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council elect Rachel Norris to the Synod Council as a young adult, SC21.11.52. to fill the vacant seat until the 2022 Synod Assembly.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice President Jennifer Lau introduced the Consent Agenda. She asked the council members if there was anything they wanted to remove from the Consent Agenda for further consideration, but there was nothing.

Kay A. Hinkle moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Consent Agenda be adopted:  
**SC21.11.53.**

That the minutes of the September 18, 2021, Synod Council meeting be approved.

That the Synod Council appoint Jennifer R. Lau to the Region 8 Steering Committee.

That the Synod Council elect to the board of directors for the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania the Rev. Nora Foust for a 1<sup>st</sup> term expiring December 31, 2024; Julie Theresa Jackson for a 1<sup>st</sup> term expiring December 31, 2024; the Rev. George Schneider for a 1<sup>st</sup> term expiring December 31, 2024; and Thomas Sites for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term expiring December 31, 2024.

That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call status to the Rev. Kurt S. Strause, effective November 1, 2021; and to the Rev. Martha S. Boyd, effective November 30, 2021.

That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call—Graduate Study status to the Rev. John G. Teitman, effective November 9, 2021.

That the Synod Council continue on-leave-from-call status to Deacon Janice M. Davis, effective February 1, 2022, until February 1, 2023; and to the Rev. Sherry A. Miller, effective February 1, 2022, until February 1, 2023.

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Eric N. Anderson, effective November 1, 2021; the Rev. William B. Nienstedt, effective December 31, 2021; the Rev. Cynthia K. Baxter, effective February 1, 2022; and the Rev. Michael Edward Allwein, effective February 27, 2022.

That the total compensation paid to the Rev. James S. Dunlop for the period beginning January 1, 2022, 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; that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson for the period beginning January 1, 2022, shall include an annual payment of \$23,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code; that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Elizabeth Martini for the period beginning January 1, 2022, 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. Richard E. T. Jorgensen Jr. for the period beginning January 1, 2022, shall include an annual payment of \$18,000 to be designated as a housing allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code; and that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Jennifer Richards for the period beginning January 1, 2022, 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.

**C. Vice President (Addendum to report)**

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**That the Synod Council appoint Rachel Norris and Karl Segletes to the Assembly Planning Committee.**

**That the Synod Council appoint Denise Kerr to the Constitution Committee.**

**That the Synod Council appoint the Rev. Robert W. Wallace Jr. to the Mission Committee.**

### **CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING**

Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson led us in the third module of training, focusing on practical questions. How can an organization become an ally for groups that historically do not trust them? The main realities to be considered are:

1. Erasure is real. Statements such as “we are colorblind” or “women got the vote in 1920” discount or erase the reality of color and that women of color often were not able to vote until years later.
2. Specific movements need to have their voice. Statements such as “all are welcome” or “all lives matter” diminish the need to build equitable and fair treatment for specific marginalized groups.
3. Internalized oppression is the root of much of the apathetic or damaging behaviors we see in marginalized communities. Negative messaging about marginalized groups can become self-fulfilling.
4. Privilege is real. Ask yourself, “How might life be more of a struggle for those without reliable transportation, nutritious food sources in the neighborhood, or a supportive family system?”
5. Intersectionality: The way social categorizations such as race, class, and gender overlap and change an individual’s experience. It is crucial to look at as much of the picture as we can when discerning how to practice accompaniment.
6. Ask when you don’t know. Consider the possibility that a food or other custom is unfamiliar or countercultural for a person.
7. Lead with neutrality. Use “partner” instead of “wife/husband”, “siblings” instead of “brothers and sisters”. Referring to Black and brown siblings or multicultural communities is appropriate, but it is helpful to name specific communities when known.
8. Individuals can only speak to their experience, not for an entire group. When we recognize gaps in our knowledge, it is our responsibility to broaden our knowledge.
9. Inclusion work causes fatigue. It is important to practice daily prayer and self-care and rely on grace.

When introducing congregations to deeper engagement with marginalized groups, consider starting with written information, such as an informational brochure or book study, which allows time for processing. Preachers may consider bringing diverse voices into sermons or devotions. Be sure to provide context to help understanding. When having speakers, consider a panel discussion to diversify the voices. Inviting people to view short videos in preparation for hearing a speaker may be helpful.

What do we do with ancient texts whose language does not reflect the values we hold today? Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson responded that it is important to differentiate between biblical texts and other texts. With non-biblical sources such as Martin Luther, one might contextualize and edit the texts to avoid harm. For biblical texts, one might consider various translations and seek the meaning of the original languages. There are some biblical texts that are best used for teaching, where more time can be spent, than in preaching. In some circumstances, texts are best omitted if they would cause harm. It is also helpful to name that some have been misused as weapons to cause harm. Others suggested providing the context of the Lutheran distinction between Law and Gospel, and that we are simultaneously saint and sinner.

How do we handle situations when we realize we have offended someone, but a long time has passed since the offense? Carla responded: It is never too late for an apology, though it can take as long for an apology to be accepted as to make. Be a learner and continue to learn and evolve. Admitting we don't know everything creates space for others to learn.

Beware of "ableist" language. Even when used metaphorically, such language can be troublesome for some. Imagine being a blind person hearing the lecturer say, "As we can all see, ..." or imagine being deaf when the class teletype indicates, "Listen up!" or imagine being wheelchair-bound when a speaker invites the audience to "walk this path together". Instead, consider using "Let us learn together" or "Let us experience this together."

Create an environment for allyship.

1. Consider an equity audit with a trained consultant
2. Site analysis: décor, music, website, accessibility, "white Jesus", brochures, payment options, event pricing. Do these aspects of your site invite and include all communities? Consider alternatives.
3. First impressions
4. Relationship practices – consider targeted outreach, have a presence in the community outside the building

Other ideas are to have greeter training, connect local pastors and lay people with marginalized community events to build relationships, make connections through local artists.

### **SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS**

Bishop James Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Pamela J. Carnes as Intentional Interim Pastor for Zion Lutheran Church, East Petersburg, effective September 1, 2021, until August 31, 2022, or until the congregation has called a permanent pastor.  
**SC21.11.54.**

Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council call the Rev. Joel S.B. Folkemer, as pastor/mission redeveloper for Union Lutheran Church, York, under the terms of a Covenant for Renewal effective December 1, 2021, until November 30, 2026.  
**SC21.11.55.**

The bishop clarified that there has been redevelopment ministry ongoing at Union for a number of years, but a new covenant was necessary now because of the recent merger of St. Mark, York into Union.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council renew the call to the Rev. Jillian E. Riddle as chaplain with Luthercare, Lititz, for one additional year, effective January 1, 2022, and expiring December 31, 2023.  
**SC21.11.56.**

Stacy L. Schroeder, Vice-chair of the Executive Committee, moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council establish the Lower Susquehanna Synod Healing Justice Fund as a fund of this synod.  
**SC21.11.57.**

Stacy L. Schroeder moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council adopt the proposed policy for the Lower Susquehanna  
SC21.11.58. Synod Healing Justice Fund.

**Lower Susquehanna Synod Healing Justice Fund Policy**

*The Lower Susquehanna Synod Healing Justice Fund seeks to encourage the relationships within the Lower Susquehanna Synod by providing financial support to those who are underrepresented in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and/or those who have been hurt or harmed by the church.*

*As a synod focused on building relationships and growing a healthy church equipped to reach all people, this fund solidifies and embodies our commitment to celebrate diversity, restore equity, and promote inclusion of people including, but not limited to those who have experienced injustice on account of race, disability, LGBTQIA+ status, or immigration status.*

*The LSS Healing Justice Fund Committee shall oversee the LSS Healing Justice Fund. The Committee shall be composed of at least 7 persons: the Assistant to the Bishop for Justice Ministries and at least 6 members, a majority of whom come from marginalized communities, to be appointed by the Synod Council. Members of this committee will serve for a term of 3 years. Nominations shall come from diverse populations. The fund, established by the Synod Council, shall be supported by gifts, bequests, trusts, endowments, planned and deferred gifts. The committee, Synod Council, and bishop shall promote and encourage such gifts. The assets of the funds shall be invested in a manner consistent with the purpose of the fund.*

*Expenditures from the fund will be made on the basis of rolling grant applications to the committee. Expenditures from the fund up to \$1,000 may be made by the discretion of the Assistant to the Bishop for Justice ministries and the Chair of the Committee per applicant per calendar year. Other expenditures from the fund may be made by majority action of the LSS Healing Justice Fund Committee.*

Stacy L. Schroeder moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council amend by addition continuing resolution S11.01.C21. to  
SC21.11.59. establish the Lower Susquehanna Synod Healing Justice Fund Committee under bylaw S11.01.13. to provide oversight for the management and distribution of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Healing Justice Fund according to the policy for that fund.

*S11.01.C21.5) The LSS Healing Justice Fund Committee shall be composed of at least 7 persons: the assistant to the bishop for justice ministries, and at least 6 other members, appointed by the Synod Council. A majority of committee members shall come from marginalized communities and be nominated from diverse populations. The fund, established by the Synod Council, shall be supported by gifts, bequests, trusts, endowments, planned and deferred gifts. The committee, Synod Council, and bishop shall promote and encourage such gifts. The assets of the funds shall be invested in a manner consistent with the purpose of the fund.*

*The purpose of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Healing Justice Fund is to encourage the relationships within the Lower Susquehanna Synod by providing financial support to those who are underrepresented in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and/or those who have been hurt or harmed by the church.*

Stacy L. Schroeder moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson, the Rev. Beth Martini, Jonah Davis, the SC21.11.60. Rev. Beth Folkemer, Moses Kavishe, Jacqueline Smith-Bennett, and the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown be appointed to the Healing Justice Fund Committee.

Pastor Kathleen A. Kuehl, chair of the Assembly Planning Committee, moved:

That the Synod Council set the dates for the 2022 Synod Assembly of the Lower Susquehanna Synod as follows: Business Session on Friday evening, June 3, 2022, and Saturday, June 4, 2022, at Messiah University in Mechanicsburg, PA; with a digital Edification Day on Saturday, May 14, 2022.

Bishop James Dunlop made a substitute motion:

That the Synod Council set the dates for the 2022 Synod Assembly of the Lower Susquehanna Synod as follows: Business Session on Friday evening, June 3, 2022, and Saturday, June 4, 2022, at a location to be determined; with a digital Edification Day on Saturday, May 14, 2022.

Bishop Dunlop explained that Messiah University has been embroiled in public controversies regarding discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students which have created a hostile environment. As a Reconciling in Christ synod, it is no longer appropriate for us to hold our synod assemblies at that location. The bishop indicated that we are researching other venues, but none has yet been established.

The motion to substitute was before the council.

**ADOPTED:** To substitute the recommendation presented by Bishop Dunlop for the recommendation presented from the Assembly Planning Committee.

The substitute recommendation from Bishop Dunlop was now before the council for deliberation.

Bishop Dunlop explained that according to our governing documents, notice of the time and place of the assembly is *normally* given six months in advance. It may be that this time, we may need to give that notification without a location. If we are unable to find a suitable location, we may need to change the dates. Gettysburg College is not available for these dates. We may consider one of our larger congregations, but there is concern for being shoulder-to-shoulder in this COVID-19 season. To the question of whether Messiah University has been notified of our intentions, the bishop responded that he and Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson have an appointment in the coming week to meet with them and explain our rationale and ask for our deposit to be refunded. To the question of whether a Zoom assembly would be an alternative if no suitable venue is found, the bishop responded that it is a possible last resort. There will not be a hybrid event with some people in person and others participating remotely because it is logistically too complicated.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council set the dates for the 2022 Synod Assembly of SC21.11.61. the Lower Susquehanna Synod as follows: Business Session on Friday evening, June 3, 2022, and Saturday, June 4, 2022, at a location to be determined; with a digital Edification Day on Saturday, May 14, 2022.

Zachary J. Weiss, chair of the Personnel Committee, moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council set the base salary and housing allowance for Bishop James SC21.11.62. Dunlop for 2022 at \$106,715.

There was no discussion. Bishop Dunlop abstained from voting.

Zachary J. Weiss moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council set the following increases in the base salaries and housing allowance for 2022:  
**SC21.11.63.**

**The Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson: \$69,500 (4.5 percent increase)**

**The Rev. Richard Jorgensen: \$85,500 (2.4 percent increase)**

**The Rev. Elizabeth Martini: \$52,125 (30 hours/week) (4.5 percent increase)**

**Deacon Marsha Roscoe: \$69,500 (4.5 percent increase)**

Treasurer Joe Stepansky asked for clarification on the origin of the 4.5% increase for some staff members. Bishop Dunlop explained that the increases were determined based on the synod recommended salary guidelines. Those guidelines call for higher percentage increases in earlier years of ministry.

Zachary J. Weiss moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council determine that all remaining staff receive a 2.4% increase for 2022.  
**SC21.11.64.**

Zachary J. Weiss moved:

**Adopted/Reconsidered:** That the Synod Council review the Remote Work Agreement at the next Synod Council meeting and vote on its approval.

Vice President Jennifer Lau indicated that this would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Zachary J. Weiss moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council adopt the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to add Juneteenth to the Holiday Schedule in the Personnel Policies of the Lower Susquehanna Synod ELCA Manual.  
**SC21.11.65.**

Bishop Dunlop called for a point of personal privilege to clarify whether council members voting on the recommendation regarding the Remote Work Agreement believed they were voting to approve the agreement or to put it on the next meeting agenda.

Secretary Beth Schlegel moved:

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council reconsider the action regarding the Remote Work Agreement.

Pastor Hans Becklin commented that the motions reflected in the minutes of Synod Council committees become the recommendations for the Synod Council, and he, like Vice President Lau, believed it to be for consideration in February. Zach Weiss indicated that the intention of the Personnel Committee was for the Remote Work Agreement to be considered at this meeting, being the “next Synod Council meeting” after the committee met. Others concurred that they believed they were voting to approve the document.

Secretary Beth Schlegel moved to amend the recommendation:

**ADOPTED:** To strike the phrase “at the next Synod Council meeting”.

The amended recommendation was before the Synod Council.

**ADOPTED:** That the Synod Council review the Remote Work Agreement and vote on its approval.  
**SC21.11.66.**

### **UPDATE ON OUR MISSION VISIONING PROCESS**

Vice President Lau indicated that the Mission Committee has been working hard on this process, and that the leadership of Deacon Marsha Roscoe and Pastor Matthew Best has engaged the officers in clarifying and prioritizing our key initiatives. Bishop Dunlop explained that this is a process of deepening our synod mission by developing the six key initiatives: Developing Leaders, Fostering Spiritual Wellness, Interacting Authentically, Nurturing Congregations, Growing Justice Outreach, Relating Globally. The officers met with Deacon Marsha Roscoe and Pastor Matthew Best on several occasions for conversation around these key initiatives. The bishop has been working with Treasurer Joe Stepansky and the staff on developing a zero-based budget, asking the questions: What do we need to do differently or new to fulfill this mission? What do we need to keep doing or stop doing for the sake of this mission? We have been planning communication around this process and spent time with staff doing time studies to determine how to best align the work with the mission. Bishop Dunlop emphasized that we are not just talking about this mission, we are not waiting for it all to come together before acting on it, but rather, our current actions and planning are being shaped by these priorities. This mission is currently underway in efforts such as the Hybrid Church Academy, the cultural competency training we experienced today and the Worship & Wonder chapel services, and the establishment of the Healing Justice Fund. We are modelling the mission even as we continue to deepen and define it. The bishop further illustrated the mission in motion through conversations he has had with Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson regarding candidate discernment; his initiative to restart training for lead pastors in staff ministries; the recent Bishop's Convocation on trauma preaching, which strengthens spiritual wellness; the Portico tools for emotional health and the respite opportunities for rostered ministers through the camps, both of which foster spiritual wellness. The bishop closed his remarks by saying that we are reshaping our work and digging deeper as we move forward.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe added that the zero-based budget will reflect some high-cost items that reflect the realignment of resources for this mission. One example is the seminary. She noted that we are working more collaboratively with United Lutheran Seminary (ULS), which justifies the higher level of financial support.

Vice President Jennifer Lau noted that she is excited about this new way of doing things, particularly with the budgeting process. She encouraged broad participation in this mission. Conversations need to be happening across the synod.

To the question of whether there has been any prioritizing of the six key initiatives, Bishop Dunlop responded that the areas of Developing Leaders, Fostering Spiritual Wellness, and Interacting Authentically have been identified as the top three initiatives. Deacon Marsha Roscoe summarized them as Leadership, Discipleship, and Community.

To the question of whether talking points for conference liaisons are anticipated, Deacon Roscoe responded that the next 2-3 months would be spent listening to voices that still need to be heard. There will be talking points developed for the Annual Conference Assemblies.

### **REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop James Dunlop provided a written report. He highlighted two things from his report. First, the controversy in the Konde Diocese, our companion synod in Tanzania. Bishop Edward Mwaikali and the



executive team of the diocese decided to move the diocesan office and the cathedral from Tukuyu, a rural location, to Mbeya, the central city in the diocese. Since most of the diocese is rural, a protest ensued, and the executives of the diocese removed 17 pastors from the roster and effectively their congregations. Some of these congregations are partner congregations with some of our congregations. This has made for a very awkward situation for our congregations who want to send support to their partner congregations with whom they have long-standing relationships. Bishop Dunlop has exchanged letters with Bishop Mwaikali and intends to meet with him via Zoom soon. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has just recently met with Bishop Mwaikali and moved the diocesan office and cathedral back to Tukuyu. Deacon April Trout, who is our ELCA country liaison to the Konde Diocese, is helping us work through the delicate sociopolitical issues.

Second, the bishop referred to his initiative to move \$10,000 from our Synod Programs Restricted Fund to develop a training program for lead pastors of multi-staff congregations. This was training that was originally developed at ULS, under the leadership of Pastor Glenn Ludwig. It was very well received. The funding for the program dried up and it was discontinued during COVID-19. Pastor Ludwig came to Bishop Dunlop with a proposal to conduct similar training in Lower Susquehanna Synod on a smaller scale, over a 9-month timeframe as opposed to the 18-month timeframe of the original program. Doing the training on the territory of the synod with day-long events will significantly reduce the cost. Pastor Ludwig and a staff of two others would put the program together to start in 2022 and finish in the Spring of 2023. This training was very well received in its original configuration and will be very important for the development of the leaders that we need for our larger congregations.

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

Vice President Jennifer R. Lau submitted a written report. She welcomed Rachel Norris to the Synod Council.

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

Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and a Statement of Operational Activities. He noted that mission support has been coming in well in November. He observed that a delay in forwarding mail from the old address could explain the slump in October receipts.

He introduced the shrug emoji -- "\\_(ツ)\_/" -- as symbolic of attempts to forecast income or market trends.

The treasurer reported a potential savings of \$5000-\$8000/year by discontinuing the fidelity bond coverage for congregations. Most congregations already have this coverage through their insurance programs.

Treasurer Stepansky reported that the Legacy Fund balance is just under \$3.4 million, a roughly 12% increase from the end of FY2020. But, he noted, this outstanding result presents us with a "problem", albeit a good one. Due to the pandemic, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will once again allow us to designate **up to** 10% of the average of the past three years' Legacy Fund balances for distribution, rather than the customary 5%. The question is, just because we can designate 10%, should we? Do the areas receiving the money need that much? Some might, some probably don't. We also need to be mindful of our responsibility to maintain the Legacy Fund's value. This isn't some far off decision. The 2021 calendar year end will be 41 days from this Synod Council meeting. This will be discussed further in the Finance and Budget Committee for recommendation to the Synod Council in February.

Treasurer Stepansky further reported that the balance of the Healing Justice Fund is \$26,500.

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

Secretary Beth A. Schlegel submitted a written report. She called attention to the thank you letter from the Ecumenical Food Pantry in Harrisburg. She also explained that the 2021 Minutes Book is nearing publication. Though they cost about \$25.00 each to produce, we customarily offer free copies to Synod Council members. Those desiring a personal copy indicated so.

Kay Hinkle called attention to the Key Timeline for Conferences and thanked Secretary Schlegel for making that available.

### **REPORTS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

The Executive Committee provided minutes of its November 3, 2021, meeting.

The Assembly Planning Committee provided minutes of the November 2, 2021, meeting.

The Finance and Budget Committee provided minutes of the October 19, 2021, meeting.

The Gifts Discernment Committee provided minutes of the October 28, 2021, meeting.

The Personnel Committee provided minutes of the October 27, 2021, meeting, as well as the draft Remote Work Agreement and holiday policy.

The Constitution Committee has not met.

Vice President Lau thanked everyone who submitted reports.

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

**Women of the ELCA** synod unit liaison Peggi Norman provided a written report. Donna Greifzu was in attendance in Peggi's stead. She reported a wonderful Day of Renewal at Camp Nawakwa and a convention at St. John's in Berrysburg.

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

Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson provided a written report.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen provided a written report.

Pastor Beth Martini provided a written report.

Charlie Roberts provided a written report. He reminded Synod Council members that Winterfest would be held in person in January to launch a positive 2022.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe provided a written report.

Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson provided a Justice Ministries Strategic Plan. She asked the council's help in promoting and sharing the Justice Ministries' Advent series via Zoom on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. on the theme of reparative justice. This is an opportunity for rostered leaders' self-care, as they don't have to create their own material. Additionally, it is launching a partnership with the Episcopal diocese. The Zoom invitation is on the synod website and the sessions will be recorded and posted to YouTube.

### **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES FOR THE MINISTERIUM AND MISSION**

The Committee of Deans provided the minutes of its November 8, 2021, meeting.

The Compensation and Benefits Committee provided a liaison report.

The Harrisburg Conference provided a liaison report.

### **REPORTS OF TASK FORCES**

The Bishop Election Evaluation Task Force provided a written report of its ongoing work, including a draft revision the continuing resolution S9.04.A18. that describes a preliminary identification process leading to the election of a bishop, a draft Rules of Procedure for the Election of a Bishop, and constitutional information. Lucinda Bringman, chair of the task force, led the conversation on this work. She began by saying that the purpose for today was for her to listen to feedback. She reviewed the history of the work. The Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop was developed in 2011, adopted in 2012, and used for the 2013 and 2019 elections for bishop. One of those elections followed a retirement and the other involved an incumbent. Thus, this process was used in two different ways. The task force was to determine whether to retain or change this process for the 2025 election, along with the rules of procedure for electing a bishop. The task force sought input from the Synod Council and the Committee of Deans, then developed a broad-based survey assisted by churchwide staff.

The task force noticed that the Rules of Procedure for the Election of a Bishop included some items that are constitutional and cannot be changed and other items that can be modified. The task force has separated the constitutional elements from the Rules of Procedure for the Election of a Bishop to minimize confusion. Lucinda explained that the task force has been working so far ahead because one of the constitutional provisions, S9.04. is not a mandated provision and theoretically could be amended; however, the process for amendment of a provision requires two consecutive assemblies. For this reason, the task force will give separate notice to the 2022 Synod Assembly of the constitutional items pertaining to the election of a bishop.

Lucinda Bringman led us through the proposed Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop. It adds a preamble explaining why this process is important and its role in the spiritual discernment of leadership. She noted that the Preliminary Identification Process is written into our governing documents as a continuing resolution, which can be changed at any time by either the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council. Though it is within our authority to do so, she discourages the Synod Council from undertaking the amendment, since it was initially adopted by the Synod Assembly. [Secretary's note: The coding of continuing resolutions was updated administratively in 2021 at the suggestion of the churchwide Office of the Secretary. S9.04.r.A18. is now S9.04.A18.]

The purpose of the Preliminary Identification Process is to facilitate everyone's participation *before* the Synod Assembly. It seeks to prevent uninformed voting. The proposal calls for two conference assemblies prior to the Synod Assembly: the first, a special Conference Assembly, is educational only, to inform the voting members of the process; the second, or Annual Conference Assembly (formerly Spring Conference Assembly), is to raise up names and share the rationale for those names. It is envisioned that the Synod Council would be a 14<sup>th</sup> group identifying up to three names.

Task force chair Lucinda Bringman paused to ask for feedback which would be shared with the task force. Concern was raised regarding the impact of listing rationale for names identified – would some names have a long list because multiple conferences identified them and other names a short list? Should it be known how many conferences identified a particular name? Additionally, there was concern regarding the Synod Council as a group identifying names, since that creates an imbalance of power/influence; it would be more comfortable if the source of the identification were not given. Lucinda assured us that the task force would continue to have conversations regarding equity with regard to the rationale and identification of persons with gifts for bishop. There was a question whether the task force was promoting the amendment of S9.04. or whether the possibility of amendment was theoretical. Lucinda indicated that it was entirely theoretical, simply because it is a non-mandated provision of the constitution. She knows of no other synod that has amended that provision, though she does know of

synods that do not use the ecclesiastical ballot for the election of a bishop. Pastor Hans Becklin noted that one of the challenges is that those identified in the Preliminary Process are not automatically nominated on the first ballot; he is aware of instances in other synods where individuals identified never made it onto the ballot. He suggested that one possible way of avoiding that unfortunate situation is for Synod Council members informally to make sure each person identified is nominated and to encourage conferences to do the same. Lucinda responded that the evaluations clearly indicated that this synod is strongly committed to using the ecclesiastical ballot and that as a synod, we have worked hard to communicate that those identified are not nominees and must still be nominated on the first ballot. Linda Long wondered if there would be resistance to providing reasons for identifying a particular name, since the ecclesiastical ballot requires no rationales. Lucinda responded that since the Preliminary Identification Process is distinct from the ecclesiastical ballot and it is only the preliminary process that requires that the reasons be shared, there should be no resistance. A voting member who desires to nominate someone without giving a reason may still do so on the first ballot. The proposed Preliminary Identification Process insists on rationales to avoid spontaneous or unconsidered conference nominations.

Lucinda Bringman led us through the proposed Rules of Procedure for the Election of a Bishop. She indicated that these will be brought to the Synod Assembly no later than 2024 so that they can be publicized well in advance. She explained that previously, we had an “opt-out” process, which required contact with nominees to confirm their willingness to be on the ballot. Proposed is an “opt-in” process, which requires nominees to submit their biographical information in order to be placed on the ballot. This places responsibility on the pastor to discern the possibility of such a call and to act. The other significant change in procedure regards the engagement with the top seven candidates giving them the opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer period. Following the question-and-answer period, the voting members will be divided into seven groups in separate rooms and the seven candidates will spend a period of time with each group in rotation until all seven candidates have met with all seven groups. This will require several hours to accomplish, and the task force agrees with the feedback that the assembly should be entirely focused on the election. Bishop Dunlop suggested that the seven candidates only spend 20 minutes in each room as being more humane.

To the concern for loss of questions when confronted with large group rooms, Lucinda responded that the Rules of Procedure do include opportunity for submission of advance questions to allow for prior input. To the concern for making room for spontaneous questions, Lucinda responded that the proposed rules change the timing of the final speeches to allow for voting members to discern whether the candidates have listened to them or whether the speeches were written in advance without regard for the conversations. Linda Long raised a question of logistics: with an assembly of 500-600 people, we would need a venue with seven rooms with sufficient capacity.

Lucinda thanked the Synod Council for their thoughtful consideration and feedback and ended her report. She invited additional comments to be emailed to her or to Vice President Lau. The task force is scheduled to meet on November 30.

The Homelessness and Affordable Housing Task Force provided a liaison report.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Pastor Richard Jorgensen included an update on the Heritage Community Initiative in his report. Pastors Lois Van Orden and Debbie Brumbaugh are developing a ministry possibility with a working title of “Psalm 23 Churches” which may be an essential building block to helping our synod develop the Heritage Community of congregations effectively. In essence, this project will offer options for distributed (online) worship which would be available for congregations which would otherwise be unable to afford or receive in-person pastoral leadership.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Conference reassignment of Communities of Hope (SAWC)—Bishop James Dunlop moved:

**ADOPTED:**   **That the Synod Council reassign the synod-authorized worshipping community SC21.11.67. Communities of Hope from the Harrisburg Conference to the Cumberland Conference effective immediately.**

Bishop Dunlop indicated that this community was originally launched by Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali, who lived and worked in Harrisburg. It is now a community that gathers in a variety of spaces, not all in community, and since the synod has relocated to Camp Hill, and since the pastor of Communities of Hope, Pastor Jennifer Richards, is the dean of the Cumberland Conference, it makes sense to make this reassignment.

Allocation of Funds for Leadership Development—Bishop James Dunlop moved:

That the Synod Council allocate \$10,000 from the synod program funds to be designated to fund the development of a training program to equip pastors to serve larger congregations or multi-staff ministries.

Bishop Dunlop explained that the prior program was funded by a Lilly grant which ended. It was managed by Pastor Glenn Ludwig, who has proposed restarting it with a small group of about 12 pastors. We would also seek to partner with ULS.

Secretary Beth Schlegel indicated that when she read the motion, she thought it applied to any pastor serving in multi-staff settings, but that the bishop in his report referred to lead pastors. Does the motion also include associates serving larger multi-staff congregations? Bishop Dunlop replied that this program would specifically equip lead pastors, but it is not limited to those already in that role. There may be some associates who are positioned to follow a retiring lead pastor.

Secretary Schlegel moved to amend the motion:

**ADOPTED:**   **to strike “serve” and to insert “lead”**

The amended motion was before the Synod Council:

**ADOPTED:**   **That the Synod Council allocate \$10,000 from the synod program funds to be SC21.11.68. designated to fund the development of a training program to equip pastors to lead larger congregations or multi-staff ministries.**

Bishop Dunlop added an item of new business from the Church Council meeting regarding the Mission Support Experiment in which we have been participating. In this experiment, we have held back a portion of our churchwide mission support for local ministry, including the Director for Evangelical Mission and other outreach and evangelism efforts (aka the budgetary “yellow zone”). The Church Council has acted to permit us to continue in this fashion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:51 p.m.

Beth A. Schlegel, Synod Secretary, 11-20-2021