

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Minutes
April 21, 2018

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Saturday, April 21, 2018, in the Board Room of the Pennsylvania United Church Center, 900 S. Arlington Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17109. Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Acting Bishop Thomas McKee Joseph M. Stepansky
Lucinda L. Bringman

Eric N. Anderson	Colleen M. Hoffman
Dana J. Blouch-Hanson	Jennifer R. Lau
Joel S.B. Folkemer	Christine C. Lowe
Joyce E. Frigm	Jillian E. Riddle
Virgil L. Gibson	Beth A. Schlegel
Emma L. Johns	Timothy J. Seitz-Brown
Jered L. Hock	Stephanie M. Strauss
	Allen P. Stump

Staff present: Robert C. Blezard Charlie R. Roberts III
Sharron R. Blezard Marsha L. Roscoe
Debbie M. Clark

Members excused: Brenda D. Hartzell

Members unexcused: Jayne A. LeGore

Liaison excused: Fred Bohls Linda Lubold
Jeremy Filus Elizabeth Polanzke

Staff excused: Bishop James S. Dunlop Richard E. T. Jorgensen Jr.
Jennifer Hope-Tringali

Joyce Frigm thanked the members of Synod Council for their camaraderie, support and grace over the last six years. For those continuing in their terms on Synod Council, Joyce encouraged them to be involved. Everyone's voice is important to the body. She led the members of the Synod Council in opening devotions, reading 1 Corinthians 10:1-17 from the Message, noting that we can receive encouragement from this passage, particularly in Verse 13, "No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face." When we are tested, we are not alone; others have had to face similar challenges. We receive God's grace through our baptism. Joyce led the members of the Synod Council in prayer.

CONSENT AGENDA

Allen Stump moved:

ADOPTED: That the Consent Agenda be adopted.
SC18.04.15.

That the minutes of the February 10, 2018, and March 22, 2018, meetings be approved.

That the Synod Council extend the on-leave-from-call status of the Rev. Nancy Easton for one additional year, from May 1, 2018, until May 1, 2019.

That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call status to the Rev. Glenn Miller from March 3, 2018, until March 3, 2019.

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Jody Silliker, effective June 15, 2018; the Rev. Parris C. Beckhardt, effective July 1, 2018; the Rev. Robert M. Lescalette, effective September 1, 2018; and the Rev. David Kreider, effective September 5, 2018.

That the Rev. Drew Stockstill, interim pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Harrisburg, be available for call to Christ Lutheran Church, Harrisburg.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS

Acting Bishop McKee moved the following:

That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the following proposed amendment to bylaw **S.7.11.01.:**

“The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually ~~during the month of June~~ between May 15 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.”

Vice President Bringman explained that normally Messiah College reserves the first weekend of June for our Synod Assembly. However, some years, this year included, the days before the first weekend scheduled for our assembly fall in the month of May. This may be true again next year when we will need to schedule our assembly on a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday because of the bishop’s election. We propose to have our assembly Thursday, June 6 through Saturday, June 8, 2019. However, since the first full weekend is June 1 and 2, we may have to meet May 30-June 1, 2019, in order to get on Messiah College’s event schedule. This change in the bylaws will give us more flexibility in scheduling the dates for our annual Synod Assembly with the designated location in future years.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the following proposed SC18.04.16. amendment to bylaw S.7.11.01.:

“The regular assembly of this synod shall be held annually ~~during the month of June~~ between May 15 and June 30 at such place as the Synod Council shall designate.”

Acting Bishop McKee moved the following:

That the Synod Council designate Thursday, May 31, 2018, as a Day of Equipping to be held at Messiah College in conjunction with our annual Synod Assembly; that the Synod Council amend the proposed agenda for the 2018 Synod Assembly to be held at Messiah

College on Friday, June 1, 2018; and that the Synod Council designate Saturday, June 2, 2018, as a Day of Feeding to be held at Messiah College and at mission encounter sites on the territory of our synod in conjunction with our annual Synod Assembly.

Acting Bishop McKee informed the members of the Synod Council that we have inadvertently overlooked our own bylaws in planning this year's Synod Assembly with a May 31 beginning date. Our bylaws call for our annual assembly to be held in June. After consultation with our parliamentarian, Joseph Ricci, and our Reference and Counsel chair, the Rev. Stephen Herr, Vice President Lucinda Bringman, Deacon Marsha Roscoe and Acting Bishop McKee proposed designating May 31 as a Day of Equipping to be held in conjunction with the assembly; amending the agenda for Synod Assembly, which would be held on Friday, June 1, 2018, and which would include worship, edification, and the business of this synod; and designating June 2 as a Day of Feeding.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe shared with members of Synod Council that we will be packing 200,000 meals this year with the generous support of our congregations and members remitting \$37,000 and partnering with Kids Against Hunger, the food-packing sponsor organization, for additional grants of \$13,000. Additionally, there are 4-5 mission encounter sites scheduled to host volunteers who wish to serve at other locations. Vice President Bringman reminded members of Synod Council that at last year's assembly a meal packing event was approved for up to \$75,000. We agreed that we would pack the number of meals based on the monies received to support the food-packing event. Pastor Joel Folkemer noted that it was his understanding that our local food pantries do not wish to have this type of food. Colleen Hoffman, chairperson for the food packing event, shared that the meals packed will be distributed to people living in the Philippines and that it is a staple food product for them. Jered Hock expressed that there is an opportunity for us as the church to help people who are hungry when we vote for justice and advocacy. Deacon Roscoe shared that Mikka McCracken, who serves with ELCA World Hunger, is our 2018 Churchwide Representative at Synod Assembly. Vice President Bringman stated that in addition to the food packing and mission encounter sites we will be collecting canned fruits, vegetables, and pasta for the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

Pastor Beth Schlegel asked Vice President Bringman about the section of her Vice President's report where she mentions a special assembly. Vice President Bringman responded that was an option previously presented to resolve the date conflict to the bylaws but is no longer necessary.

ADOPTED: **That the Synod Council designate Thursday, May 31, 2018, as a Day of Equipping to be held at Messiah College in conjunction with our annual Synod Assembly; that the Synod Council amend the proposed agenda for the 2018 Synod Assembly to be held at Messiah College on Friday, June 1, 2018; and that the Synod Council designate Saturday, June 2, 2018, as a Day of Feeding to be held at Messiah College and at mission encounter sites on the territory of our synod in conjunction with our annual Synod Assembly.**

Acting Bishop McKee moved an amendment to the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop:

That #4 of the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop be amended to read:

“4. The Synod Council shall prepare and distribute information about the Lower Susquehanna Synod including the current ~~Vision for Mission~~ mission statement and any strategic planning adopted by the Synod Council.”

Pastor Beth Schlegel moved to amend the recommendation by adding “other mission documents” to #4 of the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop:

“4. The Synod Council shall prepare and distribute information about the Lower Susquehanna Synod including the current ~~Vision for Mission~~ mission statement, other mission documents, and any strategic planning adopted by the Synod Council.”

Pastor Schlegel spoke to her motion by saying that she wanted to ensure that the Synod Council was not limited to the specific document of the mission statement but to allow the incorporation of other mission documents as deemed appropriate.

ADOPTED: *“4. The Synod Council shall prepare and distribute information about the Lower Susquehanna Synod including the current ~~Vision for Mission~~ mission statement, other mission documents, and any strategic planning adopted by the Synod Council.”*

The amended motion was before the Synod Council:

ADOPTED: **That #4 of the Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop be amended to read:**

“4. The Synod Council shall prepare and distribute information about the Lower Susquehanna Synod including the current ~~Vision for Mission~~ mission statement, other mission documents, and any strategic planning adopted by the Synod Council.”

Acting Bishop McKee moved the following action:

ADOPTED: **That the Synod Council call the Rev. Eric N. Anderson to serve as intentional interim pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg, effective April 30, 2018, until March 31, 2019.**

Virgil Gibson, chairperson for Finance and Budget Committee, noted that a portion of the 2019 Proposed Budget includes the continuation of the mission support pilot experiment in which five synods are keeping a portion of their ELCA mission support in their synod for local mission. Vice President Bringman asked the members of Synod Council to be familiar with the 2019 Proposed Budget Summary and Worksheet and to have it available at Synod Assembly. The 2019 Proposed Budget Summary will be included in the Bulletin of Reports and the 2019 Proposed Budget Worksheet will be posted online.

Virgil Gibson moved on behalf of the Finance and Budget Committee:

ADOPTED: **That the Synod Council recommend the proposed 2019 budget to the 2018 Synod Assembly for adoption.**

Virgil Gibson moved on behalf of the Finance and Budget Committee:

That the Synod Council approve a distribution of 5% of the value of the fund assets (as defined by the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund) from the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund.

Pastor Joel Folkemer moved the following amendment on behalf of the Executive Committee:

That the Synod Council approve a distribution of 3% of the value of the fund assets (as defined by the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund) from the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund.

Pastor Folkemer spoke to the motion by saying that the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund recommends a percentage not to exceed 5% of the value of fund assets for distribution and that distributions in 2015 and 2016 were 7%. Jered Hock stated that the Legacy Fund links to the Investment Policy of our synod, with the objectives of preservation of the fund and growth of the fund. Joyce Frigm stated that the Finance and Budget Committee is meeting with the investment advisors to review the 2017 performance of the fund and that not all investment advisors are the same. Our synod has been with this same investment advisor for some time. Treasurer Stepansky noted that our synod's Investment Policy was last updated in 2009 and that it needs to be reviewed. Virgil Gibson stated that the Finance and Budget Committee will be reviewing both the Legacy Fund Policy and the Investment Policy and that the money in the Legacy Fund was set aside by faithful Christians to be used for the ministry of our synod.

Virgil Gibson moved the following:

That the Synod Council approve a distribution of at least 3% but not to exceed 5% of the value of the fund assets (as defined by the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund) from the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund.

Virgil Gibson spoke to the motion by saying that if there were additional programs that would benefit from the additional percentage of the fund distributed, then the Legacy Fund distribution could increase up to 5%. The money is intended for use for the ministry of our synod. Vice President Bringman reminded the members of Synod Council that the Legacy Fund distribution is specifically designated for five ministry areas: Eliminate Hunger Initiatives 32%, Support of the Konde Diocese 32%, Seminarian Scholarship Support 18%, Synodical Program Support 12%, and Bishop's Discretionary Fund 6%. The policy does not allow for an additional distribution to support other worthy ministries.

Vice President Bringman stated that a 3% distribution would be \$68,078 and a 5% distribution would be \$113,463. Pastor Eric Anderson added that a 3% distribution would be a more conservative approach while the 5% distribution would allow for the fund to be used for more mission. Jered Hock noted that it is not a matter of being conservative or generous, it is adhering to the policy of the Legacy Fund, which states that the annual distribution is not to exceed 5%. Additionally, Jered noted that the policy also states that the percentage should be "consistent with the long-term preservation of the real value" of the fund.

Jered Hock moved the previous question.

ADOPTED: To end discussion on the previous motion.

LOST: That the Synod Council approve a distribution of at least 3% but not to exceed 5% of the value of the fund assets (as defined by the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund) from the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund.

Pastor Beth Schlegel moved to amend the original motion from Executive Committee by inserting the year 2018:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve for 2018 a distribution of 3% of the value of the fund assets (as defined by the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund) from the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund.

Pastor Joel Folkemer read excerpts from the synod's Investment Policy. "Primary investment objective: Preservation of the purchasing power (real value) of the permanent endowment fund: Asset growth, exclusive of contributions and withdrawals, should exceed the rate of inflation in order to preserve the purchasing power of the fund. Secondary investment objective: Growth of Capital: The asset value of the fund, exclusive of contributions and withdrawals, should grow over the long term to earn a rate of return in excess of an equity market index while incurring less risk than such an index."

The amended motion was before the Synod Council:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve for 2018 a distribution of 3% of the value of the fund assets (as defined by the Statement of Policy for the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund) from the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund.
SC18.04.21.

No votes: Pastor Eric Anderson and Virgil Gibson

Vice President Bringman noted that there are areas in our current 2018 budget that will be affected by the adopted 3% distribution as opposed to the recommended 5% distribution.

Jered Hock moved the following on behalf of the Compensation and Benefits Committee:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the 2018 Synod Assembly that the 2019 minimum base salary and housing allowance for Ministers of Word and Sacrament with no years of experience and no parsonage provided be set at \$51,165 and that the 2019 minimum salary for Ministers of Word and Sacrament with no years of experience and with a parsonage provided be set at \$35,606, representing a 2.5% increase over the 2018 minimum salary.
SC18.04.22.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the 2018 Synod Assembly that the 2019 minimum base salary for Ministers of Word and Service with no years of experience be set at \$43,075, a 2.5% increase over the 2018 minimum salary.
SC18.04.23.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve a 2.5% increase to the supply rate for one service in 2019, making the 2019 supply rate for one service \$175; approve an additional \$50 for each additional Sunday morning service and an additional \$70 for each additional weekend service other than Sunday morning.
SC18.04.24.

Following a break, Vice President Bringman asked Deacon Marsha Roscoe to share with the members of Synod Council where the Legacy Fund distribution will affect the current year's budget. The distribution will negatively impact the budget line items that support First Call Theological Education and Bishop's Convocation.

Pastor Joel Folkemer asked if the Seminarian Support portion of ABMN campaign was distributed by the Candidacy Committee. He assumed that it was a scholarship through candidacy. But now he understands that \$150,000 of ABMN seminarian support will be contributed to the seminary and that the seminary would match \$150,000 to build a fully-endowed scholarship, which does not necessarily support the seminarians directly.

Acting Bishop McKee stated that the Candidacy Committee divides the Legacy Fund distribution for the seminarian scholarship support among the seminary students with financial need and covers the cost of the psychological testing and background checks for candidates so that is not an expense for them.

Vice President Bringman noted that the goal of \$250,000 for seminarian support for the ABMN campaign was presented by the assembly itself. The synod would contribute \$150,000 and former seminary president Michael Cooper-White offered that the seminary would match the \$150,000 for an endowed scholarship. Deacon Marsha Roscoe added that the matching funds by the seminary would double the capacity for support and that the monies are disbursed to a fully-endowed scholarship that would continue to support a full scholarship for years to come. Acting Bishop McKee stated that a significant amount of the ABMN seminarian support donations came from fundraisers hosted by the Saegers and Trinity, Camp Hill. Joyce Frigm asked if the difference from the \$250,000 goal and the \$150,000 commitment to the fully-endowed scholarship could be used for other seminarian support.

Acting Bishop McKee moved the following:

After the initial commitment of \$150,000 to the seminary, additional donations to the ABMN campaign for seminarian support be distributed to the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund for seminarian support.

Pastor Jillian Riddle noted that initially seminarian support was assumed for Gettysburg Seminary. She added that there are other students attending other seminaries and she is hopeful that seminarian support will be used to support all seminarians, not just those students at Gettysburg. Vice President Bringman stated that the Candidacy Committee determines the seminarian scholarship distribution. Acting Bishop McKee added that the scholarships are given to students that demonstrate a financial need.

Vice President Bringman explained that adding funds to the Legacy Fund would change the distribution percentage proportionally for future distributions. Treasurer Stepansky added that the percentage of the additional fund total would adjust the current percentages distributed among the five ministry areas outlined in the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund policy.

ADOPTED: **After the initial commitment of \$150,000 to the seminary, additional donations to SC18.04.25. the ABMN campaign for seminarian support be distributed to the Vision of Mission Legacy Fund for seminarian support.**

No Vote: 1

Pastor Beth Schlegel stated that the distribution from the Legacy Fund on or before the end of May each year affects the current year's operating budget. Acting Bishop McKee would like to get to a time when we do not need to rely on a distribution from our Legacy Fund to fund our operating budget. The grants in the operating budget are disbursed in full, monthly or quarterly, depending on the size of the annual grant amount. Pastor Folkemer asked if the grants in the current budget can be changed. Vice President Bringman explained that sometimes a spending authorization has been used in previous years to decrease spending by a specific percentage across the board as well as other times keeping the amount of the grants as adopted in the budget and decreasing spending in other areas of the budget.

Pastor Joel Folkemer moved the following:

That the Synod Council authorize a decrease of \$5,000 from the grant to the United Lutheran Seminary to \$180,000 and an increase of \$5,000 to the Candidacy Committee for seminarian support.

Pastor Beth Schlegel noted that this motion would help to alleviate the effect of the lower percentage distribution from the Legacy Fund. Deacon Marsha Roscoe reminded members of Synod Council that we love God and neighbor more than money. Deacon Marsha asked the Synod Council to prayerfully consider budget cuts or changes that align with our missional priorities and not make decisions out of angst. Pastor Sharron Blezard led the members of Synod Council in prayer.

Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council postpone the previous action to Unfinished Business.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman submitted a written report.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and financial reports. He thanked the members of Synod Council for their patience as the Treasurer's Office continues to adjust to staffing changes. Treasurer Stepansky reformatted the monthly income and expenses report to resemble the budget summary. The year-end deficit of \$31,000 is primarily a result of lower mission support. The expenses are in line with the budget. Treasurer Stepansky is working currently to develop a 12-month budget based on forecasted mission support and expenditures by month, instead of the annual expenditure simply divided by 12 months. It will allow for better financial decisions toward the end of the fiscal year. The annual audit begins on Monday. The Treasurer's Office is prepared for the auditor requests for information. Treasurer Stepansky stated that our synod is billing the seminary \$2,500 per week while Bishop Dunlop is Acting President at the United Lutheran Seminary. Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson asked where the income from ULS will be applied in the budget. Treasurer Stepansky replied that the income is not included in the current operating budget and that it will offset Human Resources expenditures. Treasurer Stepansky thanked Cathy Paul, Denise Ferguson, Barb Lane, and especially Linda Lubold, for the work that they all do in the Treasurer's Office.

REPORT OF THE ACTING BISHOP

Acting Bishop Thomas E. McKee submitted a written report. He thanked the members of Synod Council for the honor to serve as acting bishop. He stated that the synod staff is wonderful and is taking on some

of his responsibilities as assistant to the bishop to give him time for other duties. He is spending a lot of time meeting with people. His goal for our staff and as acting bishop is that the synod continues moving forward without losing steam. He is discouraged to hear reports that people believe that the synod is in disarray. While Bishop Dunlop is missed, our staff continues to function without his direct leadership. Acting Bishop McKee asked the members of Synod Council to help to dispel those rumors. He noted that we did have an issue with Synod Assembly dates. However, that was not a result of Bishop Dunlop not being in the synod. He is glad that the Synod Assembly can continue with a minor adjustment to the agenda.

Virgil Gibson asked the status of the letter our Synod Council signed and sent to ELCA Church Council. Deacon Marsha Roscoe responded that it was sent to the ELCA Executive Committee but not discussed. Vice President Bringman added that the discussion on the mission support pilot experiment was deferred to the November agenda of ELCA Church Council and that the bishops of the pilot experiment synods agreed that they would send their budgets to their assemblies with the intent that the pilot experiment would continue. Deacon Roscoe also added that the pilot experiment synods' summaries were distributed to the Finance and Budget Committee of ELCA Church Council. Vice President Bringman stated that our synod's success stories will be shared at our "Day of Equipping."

REPORT OF THE SYNOD SECRETARY

Secretary Thomas E. McKee submitted a written report.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Synod Council Executive Committee provided minutes of its April 5, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL

Assembly Planning Committee provided minutes of its March 8, 2018, meeting. Joyce Frigm reported that the Assembly Planning Committee is up to speed with the new agenda. There may be a need for an additional van. SpiriTrust Lutheran generously donates two handicap accessible vans; however, they are heavily used to transport their residents, and they may have only one van available to donate this year. Camp Nawakwa's van is a backup plan if SpiriTrust is unable to donate two vans. If we use Camp Nawakwa's van, we would need to get another volunteer who could drive the 15-passenger van. Joyce Frigm reported that synod staff will send a hard copy mailing of the change to the assembly agenda. She also reported that there is still a need for volunteers. She will be emailing people to help with registration and the food packing on Saturday. Colleen Hoffman reported the need for heavy lifters and that additional volunteers are needed to fill the shifts added to pack the meals.

Finance and Budget Committee offered minutes of its March 19, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS

No reports received.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Deacon Marsha Roscoe provided a written report.

Charlie Roberts submitted a written report.

Pastor Robert Blezard offered a written report.

Pastor Sharron Blezard provided a written report.

Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali provided a written report.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Bishop's Congregational Mission Fund Committee liaison, Jennifer Lau, submitted a report of its March 15, 2018, meeting.

Committee of Deans provided minutes of its March 12, 2018, meeting.

Compensation and Benefits Committee submitted minutes of its March 6, 2018, meeting.

Worship Committee liaison, Pastor Jillian Riddle provided a Synod Council report.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES

Always Being Made New Campaign (ABMN) Advisory Committee staff liaison, Deacon Marsha Roscoe, provided a written report of the campaign.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Acting Bishop McKee reported that section **S15.13** of our constitution states that "On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council."

Pastor Joel Folkemer withdrew his previous motion on the basis that Treasurer Stepansky reported that the money received from ULS while Bishop Dunlop is acting president is additional income not included in the current operating budget.

WITHDRAWN: That the Synod Council authorize the decrease of \$5,000 from the grant to the United Lutheran Seminary to \$180,000 and the increase of \$5,000 to the Candidacy Committee for seminarian support.

Pastor Joel Folkemer moved the following:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council authorize \$8,000 of the unanticipated income from United SC18.04.26. Lutheran Seminary be allocated to the Candidacy Committee for seminarian support in addition to the 2018 Vision of Mission Legacy Fund distribution.

NEW BUSINESS

The members of Synod Council discussed the role of our Synod Council in addressing the actions taken by the United Lutheran Seminary. Vice President Bringman directed the members of Synod Council to review the provisions of the ELCA constitution and our Lower Susquehanna Synod constitution as it relates to the relationship with the seminaries. Pastor Joel Folkemer explained that this issue was discussed at Executive Committee because of what was being heard from conferences about Bishop Dunlop's current role as acting president and the decisions related to his taking a leave of absence. Pastor Folkemer also added that this situation has been difficult for the students. Acting Bishop McKee reported that our Candidacy Committee met on the Gettysburg campus of ULS and Bishop Dunlop met with the members of the committee and students following lunch. He added that members of our Candidacy Committee have continued to make themselves available as much as possible to our candidates and applicants. Pastor Jillian Riddle asked what type of action Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council is

taking. Vice President Bringman responded that she does not know what, if any, action is being taken by its Synod Council. Pastor Sharron Blezard asked that there be continued prayers for the students, faculty, staff, acting president, and board of trustees.

Pastor Beth Schlegel moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council encourage our congregations and members to join the members of our Synod Council in prayer for continued wisdom, guidance of the Holy Spirit, and commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ on behalf of the students, faculty, staff, acting president, and board of trustees of the United Lutheran Seminary.

Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown committed to personally taking prayer to action by investigating ways to bring care and prayers to both campuses of ULS.

Jered Hock asked about a certain ELCA constitution provision as it relates to the interpretation of our synod constitution by the secretary of the ELCA; this ELCA provision was included in background material provided to Synod Council.

Vice President Bringman noted that Bishop Dunlop continues as our synod's sitting bishop and that the acting bishop possesses all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination since our Synod Council did not limit the authority of the acting bishop. Acting Bishop McKee stated that the constitution of the ELCA is part of our synod's governing documents.

Stephanie Strauss extended an invitation to members of Synod Council to attend the tenth annual coffeehouse fundraiser on Saturday, April 28, 6:30 – 10:00 p.m. at St. Peter, Highspire. There will be handmade coffee mugs for sale, music and refreshments. The proceeds from the fundraiser support Hope for Justice and Blood Water.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Deborah Myers Clark, scribe
Executive Assistant for the Bishop's Office

4/24/18