

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Draft Minutes
September 15, 2018

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Saturday, September 15, 2018, in the Board Room of the Pennsylvania United Church Center, 900 S. Arlington Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17109. Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

The Synod Council meeting began with a Service of Word and Sacrament in the Chapel. Pastor Richard Jorgensen presided; Jen Lau served as assisting minister; and Bishop Dunlop preached.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe, Director for Mission Interpretation, asked the members of the Synod Council to identify their top three core values. She reminded them that they need to recognize that they bring these core values with them in their call to represent this synod as members of Synod Council. She stated that the core values and missional priorities of our synod are the 3 E's: equipping leaders, encouraging cooperation, and engaging in new mission. Through the season of listening we learned that the top mission priority requested is developing new models for congregational life together that helps nurture deeper connections with God, one another and the world. She asked the members of Synod Council to discuss why new models for congregational life are important. Deacon Roscoe announced that during this next year we will be emphasizing new mission and renewing mission throughout our synod. She explained the spirit world café model and shared that the members of Synod Council will use the spirit café process to talk about a few of the models being lived out as new mission models in our synod. The table hosts were Jennifer Lau, new worship model; Pastor Joel Folkemer, new wine in old wineskins; and Pastor Matthew Best, new evangelism within a community. The first round discussed, "Why would this model be important for our synod?"; the second, "What would we need to make this a viable model?"; and the third, "What is essential for this model?"

This information was shared with the whole group, and members were invited to add anything that was missing.

Pastor Joel Folkemer reported on the table dealing with “new wineskins.” What is needed are expanded gifts, knowledge of God, and the creation of relationships across cultural lines. This model will strengthen our congregations. It will promote a diverse leadership while maintaining the unity of the congregation. It can exist where congregations are willing to expand their outreach, to welcome new people and to change to meet their needs and to receive their gifts.

Pastor Matthew Best reported on the table dealing with new evangelism within the community. He stated, “To engage in mission leads to new mission.” Needed are people who can help people see, tapping into the existing leadership that accepts diverse leadership, and using the strengths that are already existent in those leaders.

Jennifer Lau reported on the table dealing with new models for worship. Needed are open minds, an appreciation of new ways of being the church, and understanding that church is not bound to the church building. This model may reach people who will not go into a church building. Needed are people with skills in and a love for the arts, someone to move this concept forward, knowledge of demographics in order to plant this in an arts community, and possibly a congregation who claims this as its niche ministry.

The members of the Synod Council discussed what model might work the best in their context and shared how they felt about the process and what they learned from it.

Kay Hinkle said that they need the Gospel. The Gospel must be proclaimed in some way. Virgil Gibson said that he sees three possibilities for his own congregation. He pondered, if his congregation used the wineskin model, what the congregation would need to do and to whom would they reach out. He asked, “What makes it successful? Is it Joel? Is it the congregation? Can we train new leaders to do new ministries?” Pastor Richard Jorgensen said that we are training new leaders through the R3 program. Leaders are called upon to share their gifts. Leadership is the key. Linda Long stated that we need patience. We need to reclaim our understanding of patience. Pastor Joel Folkemer said that patience and timing are crucial. We want things to happen tomorrow. We need to understand how others grew into leadership. We are called to develop relationships which encourage others to develop their leadership gifts.

Deacon Marsha Roscoe invited the members of Synod Council to speak with Pastor Jennifer Hope-Tringali about what is happening and what could happen in their congregations. Deacon Roscoe noted that she had talked with Mikka McCracken recently. Mikka told Marsha that we are the synod who knows its mission and tries to engage in it.

CONSENT AGENDA

Allen Stump moved:

ADOPTED: That the Consent Agenda be adopted.
SC18.09.34.

That the minutes of the May 17, 2018, and the June 1, 2018, meetings of Synod Council be approved.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Synodical Worship Committee the Rev. Rebecca M. Ajer Frantz, Daniel Deitzel, Margaret Folkemer, the Rev. Jennifer Hope-Tringali, the Rev. Dr. Mark Oldenburg, the Rev. Kevin Stout, and the Rev. Amy Wagner, for first year terms, expiring 2021;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Konde Diocese Committee Martina Uffelman, for a first term, expiring in 2021;

That the Synod Council reappoint to the Audit Committee Edward J. Straley for a second term, expiring 2021;

That the Synod Council reappoint to the Global Mission Committee Cornelia Taylor and Sarah Person Williams for a second term, expiring in 2021;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Youth Ministry Team Chuck Bissell, the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, Molly Crouser, Zoe Clark, Jay Eckman, Darren Hamric, the Rev. Jillian Riddle, Sarah Person Williams, and Jesse Woodrow;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Compensation and Benefits Committee the Rev. Douglas Johnson and the Rev. Stanley Reep, for a first three-year term, expiring in 2021;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Candidacy Committee the Rev. Alex Martini Sister Marianne Brock, and the Rev. Tasha Genck Morton, for a first five-year term, expiring in 2023;

That the Synod Council elect to the Consultation Committee the Rev. Barbara Barry, for an unexpired term, expiring in 2023;

That the Synod Council elect to the Discipline Committee Linda M. Bennett, for an unexpired term, expiring in 2023;

That the Synod Council continue on-leave-from-call status of the Rev. Linda Trout, for one additional year, effective October 1, 2018, until October 1, 2019, and the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown, for one additional year, effective September 22, 2018, until September 22, 2019;

That the Synod Council grant on-leave-from-call status to the Rev. Michael T. Petresky, effective January 1, 2018, until January 1, 2019; the Rev. Alison S. Bowlan, effective July 1, 2018, until August 23, 2018; the Rev. Elizabeth Polanzke, effective September 4, 2018, until September 4, 2019; the Reverend Janice M. Lowden, effective September 18, 2018, until September 18, 2019; and the Rev. Daniel M. Yeiser, effective October 1, 2018, until October 1, 2019;

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Joseph A. Veres, effective October 1, 2018, and the Rev. Mary-Margaret Ruth, effective November 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council grant the Rev. Susan McCarthy the roster status of on disability, effective October 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Assembly Planning Committee the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, chair, SC; Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary, assembly manager*; Charlie Roberts, *staff*; Deacon Marsha Roscoe, *staff*; the Rev. Tim Seitz-Brown, SC; the Rev. Becca Ajer Frantz; Tracey DePasquale; the Rev. Elizabeth George; the Rev. Edward J. Robbins; and the Rev. Gwenn Trout;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Constitution Committee Chucki Strevig, chair, SC; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary*; Jen Lau, SC; the Rev. Jeffrey C. Compton; Jered L. Hock; the Rev. Beth Schlegel; Jane Wigand; and Joanne Wilhelm;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Finance and Budget Committee Virgil Gibson, chair, SC; Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*; Joseph M. Stepanyk, *synod treasurer*; Brenda Hartzell, SC; Allen Stump, SC; Dawn O. Frees; Joyce E. Frigm; Wayne R. Gongaware; and Dee Wells;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Gifts Discernment Committee Stella Ludwig, chair, SC; the Rev. Eric Anderson, SC; the Rev. James S. Dunlop, *bishop*; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary*; Allen Stump, SC; the Rev. Douglas DeStephano; Holly Freas-Webster; Robert Walton; and Jane Wigand;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Mission Committee the Rev. Joel Folkemer, chair, SC; the Rev. James S. Dunlop, *bishop*; Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*; the Rev. Sharron Blezard, *assistant to the bishop*; the Rev. Richard E. Jorgensen Jr., *DEM*; Emma Johns, SC; Jennifer Lau, SC; the Rev. Jillian Riddle, SC; Stephanie Strauss, SC; the Rev. Matthew Best, SC; the Rev. Kathleen J. Baker; the Rev. J. Richard Eckert; and Holly Freas-Webster;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Personnel Committee Zach Weiss, chair, SC; Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary*; Kay Hinkle, SC; Linda Long, SC; the Rev. Martha Boyd; the Rev. Elizabeth D. George; Gary L. Laabs; the Rev. Timothy W. Sadler; and Joanne Wilhelm;

That the Synod Council appoint the following Synod Council liaisons to committees: Audit, Lucinda L. Bringman, *vice president*; Bishop's Congregational Mission Fund, Jennifer Lau, SC; Children, Youth and Family Ministries Table, the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, SC; Compensation and Benefits, Virgil Gibson, SC; Criminal Justice System Ministries, the Rev. Eric Anderson, SC; Evangelism Mission Tables, the Rev. Joel Folkemer, SC; Global Missions, Stephanie Strauss, SC; Konde Diocese, Allen Stump, SC; Racial Justice Task Force, Kay Hinkle, SC; Synodical Worship, Stella Ludwig, SC; World Hunger, the Rev. Jillian Riddle, SC; Region 8 Steering Committee, Lucinda L. Bringman, *vice president*;

That the Synod Council appoint the following Synod Council liaisons to conferences: Chambersburg, the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, SC; Gettysburg, the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown, SC; Hanover, Kay Hinkle, SC; Harrisburg, Stephanie Strauss, SC; Lancaster, Zachary Weiss; Lebanon, the Rev. Jillian Riddle, SC; North Lancaster, Stella Ludwig, SC; North York, Jennifer Lau, SC; Perry, Brenda Hartzell, SC; South York, Allen Stump, SC; Upper Dauphin, Linda Long, SC; West Cumberland, the Rev. Eric Anderson, SC; West Shore, the Rev. Matthew Best, SC; and York, the Rev. Joel Folkemer, SC.

That the Synod Council, through the bishop and the secretary, certify the minutes of the 2018 Synod Assembly as the official protocol of said assembly, to be deposited in the archives.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS

Bishop Dunlop moved the following call for which there was documentation in the packet:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council call the Rev. Timothy W. Sadler to serve as hospice chaplain for Lancaster Hospice and Community Care, effective July 2, 2018.
SC18.09.35.

Bishop Dunlop move the following Synod Council call.

That the Synod Council call the Rev. Cynthia Baxter, for a three-year term, to serve as part-time chaplain of SpiriTrust Lutheran Village at Kelly Drive, effective August 22, 2018, through August 22, 2021, contingent upon the approval of the Conference of Bishops.

Vice President Bringman pointed to Pastor Cynthia Baxter's rostered leader profile in the packet and explained that this call is contingent upon the approval of the Conference of Bishops because our Synod Council needs to request from the Conference of Bishops an exception to the requirement that pastors serve their first three years of ministry in congregational ministry. Pastor Baxter has served only two years and eleven months. Pastor McKee added that, according to our policy, this must be a term call because Pastor Baxter, although she has four units of CPE, has not been certified as a chaplain. The three-year term call allows time for her to become certified as a chaplain.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council call the Rev. Cynthia Baxter, for a three-year term, to serve as part-time chaplain of SpiriTrust Lutheran Village at Kelly Drive, effective August 22, 2018, through August 22, 2021, contingent upon the approval of the Conference of Bishops.
SC18.09.36.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

That Synod Council appoint John Coles, Esquire, Barley and Snyder Law Firm, as synod counsel.

Bishop Dunlop explained that for many years the firm Rhodes and Sinon was our synod counsel. However, this firm recently closed. Attorney Coles had been an attorney with Rhodes and Sinon and had

served our synod in many instances in the past. He has joined the law firm of Barley and Snyder in Harrisburg and has agreed to serve as our synod attorney contingent upon approval of Synod Council.

ADOPTED: That Synod Council appoint John Coles, Esquire, Barley and Snyder Law Firm, as SC18.09.37. synod counsel.

Bishop Dunlop moved:

That the Synod Council approve a \$10,000 yearly stipend for the synod secretary-elect for fulfilling the duties and obligations of the office of synod secretary, beginning September 1, 2019, if the synod secretary-elect does not serve on the bishop's staff, the stipend to be allotted in the Human Resources section of the synod budget.

Pastor Joel Folkemer stated that we want a qualified person to fill this position. Pastor Eric Anderson stated that he has mixed feelings about this motion. He believes that we should encourage and welcome volunteers to serve in our synod, but he also knows that this position comes with extensive responsibilities. Kay Hinkle said that we need a certain skill set. Some persons have big hearts and are very willing, but not the skills that are needed. A stipend may help to entice a qualified person. Allen Stump added that at times enthusiasm wanes with time, but a stipend helps to keep people engaged. Lucinda shared a list of twelve synods that do not provide a stipend to any officer. She noted that, if Synod Council adopts this, it will set a precedent that would be difficult for our synod to change at a future time. Pastor Eric Anderson added that, if we offer a stipend, we can be more selective and we have more structure and control over the position.

The motion was before the Synod Council.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve a \$10,000 yearly stipend for the synod secretary-elect for fulfilling the duties and obligations of the office of synod secretary, beginning September 1, 2019, if the synod secretary-elect does not serve on the bishop's staff, the stipend to be allotted in the Human Resources section of the synod budget. SC18.09.38.

Bishop Dunlop moved the following motions.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve the Synod Administration Covenant for St. Paul Lutheran Church, New Cumberland, effective June 24, 2018, until June 24, 2021. SC18.09.39.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council move to adopt the audit for the Fiscal Year 2017 and retain RKL as the auditor for FY 2018. SC18.09.40.

Linda Long offered a prayer before lunch. The members of the Synod Council recessed for lunch at 12:20 p.m. After lunch, the meeting resumed with Midday Prayer led by Pastor Thomas McKee assisted by Stephanie Strauss. Throughout the meeting, the vice president paused and asked the members of the Synod Council to offer a prayer petition for themselves and for a ministry of this synod.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop Dunlop provided a written report as well as a report from the March 2018 meeting of the Conference of Bishops. He announced that Zion Lutheran Church, Penbrook, has merged into the

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Paxtang, Harrisburg, effective September 1, 2018. Pastor Kathy Baker remains pastor of Good Shepherd congregation while Pastor Pamela Carnes has been called by the congregation for a six-month term to serve as Pastor for the Transition.

Bishop Dunlop reported that there have been 17 retirements so far this year and that we have only been assigned two approved candidates for ordination. Forty-eight congregations, or 19% of all our congregations, are in transition. This is much different from five years ago when Bishop Dunlop was called as bishop. We can no longer offer three candidates to each congregation in transition. The larger number of congregations in transition has increased the time that the staff must devote to this process.

The bishops in Region 8 have identified 48 first call possibilities in our region, 20 of them being in our synod. In this assignment process, there are 144 approved candidates, but 111 of them are restricted. That means that only 33 candidates will be assigned across the church. There are lots of second career candidates who have family obligations or whose spouses have jobs that they do not want to leave.

Pastor Joel Folkemer asked, "How many of these congregations can afford to call a pastor?" Bishop Dunlop answered, "Thirty-six." Brenda Hartzell explained that her congregation, Christ, Duncannon, had called a pastor from Alaska, but he accepted a call in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson offered that other synods are head hunters, trying to attract pastors. The bishop said that our synod is too.

Bishop Dunlop provided information about the changing ministry of SpiriTrust Lutheran. The government has been cutting back on Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. Nursing home care is no longer cost effective. Over half of the nursing home residents are on Medicaid. The Medicaid reimbursement is \$20,000 a year per person less than the cost of care. Our institutions are investing more in residential living and assisted living and less in skilled care beds. The number of skilled beds is decreasing. Private facilities often are unwilling to accept persons on Medicaid; and some even ask residents whose funds are depleted to leave, leaving the burden of their care to faith-based and other non-profit facilities.

Bishop Dunlop said that we are monitoring mission support and are developing a strategy for strengthening it. Treasurer Joseph Stepansky sent a letter to congregations, urging them to meet their mission support plans or to exceed them, if possible. The bishop noted that he and Pastor Rob Blezard are sending a series of letters to the congregations, thanking them for their mission support and asking for an increase if possible. He also noted that he and Deacon Marsha Roscoe are working with a videographer to address our congregations about the need for mission support dollars to support the mission and ministry of our synod. We are working on a plan to recognize congregations who are doing well in providing mission support. Pastor Rob Blezard is offering a number of stewardship workshops and multiweek programs to help congregational leaders talk with members about money and stewardship.

The bishop asked the Committee of Deans to form a task force to look at conference purpose and size and to develop a plan to redesign our conference structure. When our synod created 14 conferences, there were 280 congregations. We currently have 233 congregations in the same 14 conferences. The bishop said that he would like less conferences because with less staff it is more difficult to provide staff coverage for each conference meeting. However, others suggest that we need smaller conferences to foster collegiality and support.

Bishop Dunlop informed the members of the Synod Council that he has received a thank-you letter from Zion Lutheran Church, Glen Rock, for the \$3,500 check the congregation received from our synod's

Disaster Relief Fund. The basement of Zion's church building had been flooded twice within a two-week period. The money was given to them to repair, after the second flooding, the boiler that had been just repaired following the first flood. This donation of money is consistent with our policy for distribution of funds from the Disaster Relief Fund.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman submitted a written report. She expressed thanks to Allen Stump for being the greeter at the door and to Debbie Clark for arranging the lunch and providing some baked goods. She circulated a list for members to sign up as door greeters and to provide hospitality for this year's Synod Council meetings.

The vice president explained the Preliminary Policy Leading to the Election of a Bishop adopted by the 2018 Synod Assembly. She noted that our Synod Council will have many details for decision and implementation as we live into this policy and prepare for a bishop's election. Under new business, we will look at some of the materials on which three task forces have been working in preparation for discussion by the conferences in January.

Zachary J. Weiss volunteered to be the conference liaison for the Lancaster Conference.

Vice President Bringman shared an agreement of commitment for the members of Synod Council to review. It was the consensus of the members of the Synod Council that it would be a good idea to adopt this or a similar agreement. The vice president urged the members to take this agreement home, consider whether everything is as it should be, and then come prepared to consider this agreement at the November meeting.

Vice President Bringman encouraged the members of Synod Council to visit other congregations as a representative of our synod. She urged them to contact the pastors before going and offer to bring greetings. Deacon Marsha Roscoe, our Director for Mission Interpretation, is a resource person to aid in developing a presentation to a congregation.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and financial reports. He stated that he will be making a round of visits to thank congregations for their mission support. He expressed his appreciation for the fine work that Denise Ferguson and Cathy Paul do for the Treasurer's office.

The treasurer shared that the largest portion of our unrestricted fund comes from mission support. Every month we consistently receive from \$195,000 to \$215,000 in mission support. Having projected a surplus of \$63,000 at the end of July, he is predicting an \$87,000 surplus at the end of August. Because of staff expenses, this surplus will be reduced. Investment earnings are up 8.2%.

Treasurer Stepansky plans to schedule meetings with congregation treasurers in 2019. He also plans to develop a sample congregation gift policy for our congregations to use in developing such a policy. If congregations do not develop such a policy, they may end up receiving gifts that do not support mission.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD SECRETARY

Secretary Thomas E. McKee submitted a written report. He announced that the Compensation and Benefit Manual for 2019 has been placed on the website. He informed the members of the council that they would soon be receiving a Nominating Handbook for 2019 and encouraged them actively to seek nominees for the positions that will be elected at the 2019 Synod Assembly. He shared that on November

3 at the synod office he will hold an orientation session for those who may be interested in learning the duties of the synod secretary to help them discern whether they are open for nomination to this position. He invited the members of the council to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration for St. Barnabas Center for Ministry on Saturday, October 20, 2018, at Goodwin Baptist Church, Harrisburg.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Synod Council Executive Committee provided draft minutes of its August 30, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL

Finance and Budget Committee submitted draft minutes of its May 22, 2018, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS

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

Lower Susquehanna Synod Lutheran Youth Organization was represented by Emma Johns. She announced that the Lutheran Youth Organization is preparing for ALIVE, which will be held September 29 and 30, and for Winterfest, which will be held in December at the Spooky Nook Sports Complex. Registration for Winterfest will be limited to 200.

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.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen invited members of Synod Council to attend the R3 training session on Saturday, September 22, 2018, at Zion Lutheran Church, York. He noted the idea of renewal and the reality of renewal are very different.

The following events were noted. Dr. Mark Allen Powell will address the subject, Abundant Living: Gratitude and Generosity, on October 13, 2018, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill. The Bishop's Convocation will be held October 25, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, York. Bishop Craig Satterlee will be the keynote speaker on stewardship preaching. Virgil Gibson urged congregations to join together and participate in one of Pastor Rob Blezard's stewardship series. A hearing on the proposed social statement, Women and Justice, will be held on Saturday, September 29, 2018, from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Audit Committee liaison, Lucinda L. Bringman, submitted a liaison report of the May 29, 2018, meeting.

Bishop's Congregational Mission Fund Committee liaison, Jennifer Lau, provided a liaison report from the July 25, 2018, meeting.

Committee of Deans provided minutes of its September 10, 2018, meeting.

Synodical Worship Committee liaison, Pastor Jillian Riddle, provided a liaison report from the July 25, 2018, meeting. The Bishop's Convocation will be held on October 25, 2018 at St. Matthew, York.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES

Always Being Made New Campaign (ABMN) Advisory Committee staff liaison, Deacon Marsha Roscoe, provided a written report of the campaign. She strongly encouraged all in leadership positions to donate to the campaign. The preferred choice for giving is "Where Needed Most."

The Task Forces for the Preliminary Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop provided a List of Questions for Discussion by Conferences, a Synod Profile, and a Bishop's Profile, the Attributes of a Bishop. The members of the Synod Council reviewed the profiles. The consensus was to call the Synod Profile "Mission Snapshot." The vice president tasked the members of Synod Council to bring suggestions to the next meeting for a title for the Bishop's Profile. The Synod Council will finalize these documents at the November meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee of Deans appointed Pastor Robert Wallace, Pastor Douglas DeStephano, Pastor Denise Horn, and Pastor Stephen Verkouw to the Task Force on Conference Structure. Pastor Eric Anderson volunteered to represent the members of the Synod Council on that task force. The task force asked the bishop and the Synod Council to provide some input for it as members of the task force began its work. Pastor Eric Anderson noted that bigger conferences are more efficient for communication of information and for staff involvement. However, smaller conferences foster collegiality and support. Someone suggested that it may be better to cluster by church size, like characteristics, or like demographics. Allen Stump suggested that new conference structures may promote renewal and recommitment to the missional purposes of conferences. Linda Long stated that conference meetings in her small area are working well and do support important ministries. She suggested that the staff person share responsibilities with the Synod Council liaison to free staff time. Pastor Dana Blouch-Hanson suggested having co-deans if we go to larger conferences; the co-deans could share in the work of transition. Pastor Anderson suggested larger conferences for communication purpose composed of smaller clusters for support and collegiality.

Virgil Gibson said that the Finance and Budget Committee was tasked to bring a report related to a proposed amount for our operational reserve. The committee failed to do this. However, they will bring a report to the next meeting.

Vice President Bringman said that our auditing firm has submitted an audit with revised financial reporting. The letter still states that the position presented by our financial reports present fairly our financial position. The firm noted a minor material or technical weakness: because of our limited staff, division of responsibilities is not possible. The auditors noted that they have no recommendations regarding resolution of this.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The members of the Synod Council went into Executive Session. There was no action to be reported out of Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m. with Pastor Matthew Best leading the council in prayer.

Thomas E. McKee
synod secretary
9/22/18

DRAFT