

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Minutes
May 18, 2017

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the United Church Center, 900 S. Arlington Avenue, Harrisburg, PA. Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman called the meeting to order.

Prior to the meeting and during the later break members of the Synod Council had opportunity to enjoy refreshments and fellowship in the Board Room. The vice president thanked the door keeper, the Rev. Richard Jorgensen, and those who provided refreshments, Allen Stump, Brenda Hartzell, Colleen Hoffman, and Stephanie Strauss. Periodically throughout the meeting, Vice President Bringman asked those present at this meeting to share their prayer requests.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Bishop James S. Dunlop Lucinda L. Bringman
Thomas E. McKee

Eric N. Anderson	Colleen M. Hoffman
Dana J. Blouch-Hanson	Christine C. Lowe
Zoe L. Clark	Susan L. McDonald
Joel S. B. Folkemer	Jillian E. Riddle
Joyce E. Frigm	Beth A. Schlegel
Virgil L. Gibson	Stephanie M. Strauss
Brenda D. Hartzell	Allen P. Stump
Jered L. Hock	M. Jane Wigand

Staff Present: Robert C. Blezard Richard E. T. Jorgensen, Jr.
Sharron R. Blezard Charlie R. Roberts III
Debbie M. Clark Marsha L. Roscoe

Liaison Present: Stephen R. Herr

Consultant Present: Donna Nicholson

Members Excused: Bruce E. Seagrist J. Richard Eckert

Liaisons Excused: Fred Bohls Linda L. Lubold

DEVOTIONS

Zoe L. Clark provided devotions, reading the accounts of Jesus praying in Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, and John 17. She noted that something important happens after each of these accounts of Jesus praying. Zoe stated that prayer helps us better our lives in Jesus. She provided for the members of the Synod Council “Zoe’s Guide for New Prayer,” listing some of her favorite ways to pray: using a favorite Bible verse as prayer, a portable prayer, everyone in a group praying simultaneously out loud, using Bible study as prayer, using sticky notes, and candle prayer. She guided the members through a candle prayer, using the following questions: 1.) “Where do you feel there is darkness, sadness, or heavy burden in your life?” 2.) “Where do you feel there is light, happiness, or joy in your life?” 3.) “Where do you see the light of Christ in others?” and 4.) “How can the light of Christ be more in us?” She concluded by leading the members of the Synod Council in prayer.

MISSION UPDATE

Pastors Rob and Sharron Blezard led the Synod Council in the mission highlight. They noted that these are challenging times for the church. The old is passing away, but the new is not yet apparent. They contended that renewal and stewardship are both critical for the church in these challenging times. Faith formation and spiritual renewal are central as we further our goals of equipping leaders, encouraging cooperation, and engaging in new mission while we reFORM, reNEW, and reVISION. Stewardship also is a spiritual issue and a practice of faith. Jesus saw abundance everywhere. He pushed his disciples to be renewed through prayer, God's Word, worship, generosity, and good stewardship practices. We must lay aside the old notions of secrecy and scarcity. We are called to equip people with ideas and resources.

The bishop's video, "If I had only known," was shown. This video will be sent to all rostered leaders to be shared in every congregation. It may also be viewed on You Tube after May 19, 2017.

CONSENT AGENDA

Pastor Beth Schlegel moved:

ADOPTED: That the Consent Agenda be adopted:
SC17.05.23.

That the Synod Council appoint to the Compensation and Benefits Committee the Rev. Deborah Mahady, for a second three-year term, expiring in 2020;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Synodical Worship Committee the Rev. Karen Durbin and the Rev. Kester T. Sobers, for a second three-year term, expiring in 2020;

That the Synod Council grant the Rev. John Largen "on-leave-from call" status, effective August 1, 2016, until August 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council continue on "on-leave-from-call" status the Rev. Sandra Mackie, for one additional year, until August 1, 2018, and the Rev. Edward J. Robbins, for one additional year, until August 8, 2018;

That the Synod Council continue on "on-leave-from-call-family-leave" status the Rev. Martine Joseph, for one additional year, until June 19, 2018;

That the Synod Council continue on "on-leave-from-call-graduate study" status the Rev. Jillian Riddle, for one additional year, until September 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Linda L. Hostetter, effective June 11, 2017; the Rev. Stephen P. Folkemer, effective July 1, 2017; the Rev. Elaine Miller Dent, effective August 1, 2017; and the Rev. John D. Merkel, effective November 1, 2017.

That the Synod Council remove from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service Deacon Laura Lengel Ramsey, at her request and without prejudice, effective May 18, 2017.

OTHER ACTIONS

Bishop Dunlop moved the following actions:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve the synod administration covenant for Christ Lutheran Church, New Bloomfield, and approved candidate for ordination, Linda Shank, effective June 3, 2017, until June 2, 2020;

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council call the Rev. Eric N. Anderson to serve as intentional interim pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg, effective May 1, 2017, until April 30, 2018;

(Pastor Eric N. Anderson abstained from voting on this motion.)

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council extend the terms of the synod administration covenant for Union Lutheran Church, York, and the Rev. Joel Folkemer, effective July 21, 2017, through August 31, 2020;

(Pastor Joel S.B. Folkemer abstained from voting on this motion.)

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council remove the phrase, “under the terms of synod administration,” from the Synod Council call to the Rev. Sharon R. Kelly as interim pastor for redevelopment of Trinity Lutheran Church, Chambersburg, effective January 1, 2017, until December 31, 2018;

Pastor Beth Schlegel moved the following on behalf of the Executive Committee:

That the Synod Council recommend the Policy for the Lutheran Disaster Response Fund to the 2017 Synod Assembly for adoption.

Jane Wigand questioned the use of the Disaster Response Fund for disasters outside of our synod. She stated that we as a synod continue to ask for more and more and that she is afraid that our members will just stop giving.

Pastor Jorgensen said that those who give to the Disaster Response Fund give out of a sense of abundance. He stated that personally he would rather that our synod run out of money than our synod not go where our Lord is calling our synod to go.

Pastor Herr asked if the task force reviewed the policies of other synods. Virgil Gibson, a member of the task force, stated that the task force did not review the policies of any other synod.

The members of Synod Council discussed how the money released would be restored to the fund through donations received and how additional gifts above the amount of money released would be forwarded to address the recovery needs of that disaster. Jered Hock asked, “What if our synod received funds that are designated for another emergency?” The bishop responded that those funds would be sent to respond to the needs of that designated disaster.

Jered Hock moved the following amendment by addition to the third paragraph:

That the proposed policy be amended by adding the following (underlined) words to

the third paragraph: “(designated to those immediate needs or undesignated). Such designated funds...”

Jered Hock moved:

ADOPTED: That the previous question be called.

The motion to amend was before the Synod Council.

ADOPTED: That the proposed policy be amended by adding the following (underlined) words to the third paragraph: “(designated to those immediate needs or undesignated). Such designated funds...”

The main motion to recommend the policy as amended was before the council.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend the Policy for the Lutheran Disaster SC17.05.28. Response Fund to the 2017 Synod Assembly for adoption.

Policy for the Lutheran Disaster Response Fund

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Disaster Response Fund is established to hold all disaster response donations to the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Disaster Response Fund responds primarily to declared* and undeclared disasters on the territory of the synod, working in partnership with disaster response groups such as voluntary organizations active in disasters (VOADs) and long-term recovery groups. In cooperation with the leadership of LSS-LDR Network coordinator, the fund may also respond to state or federally declared domestic disasters outside of our synod.

(*Declared means: LDR Churchwide Expression or a Federal Disaster Declaration by the President of the United States.)

Funds held may be used to make advance payments to respond to immediate needs with the funds to be replenished with subsequent fund receipts (designated to those immediate needs or undesignated). Such designated funds received by the synod in excess of any advanced monies shall be forwarded to the specific disaster for which designated.

A spending authorization of \$5000 is granted to the LSS-LDR Network coordinator for each disaster. Additional funding up to 20% of the fund may be distributed at the discretion of the bishop in consultation with the coordinator of the LSS-LDR Network. Funds above 20% of the balance of the fund can be distributed by action of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council.

The recommendation of a spending authorization can be implemented using a credit/debit card.

M. Jane Wigand requested that her no vote be recorded.

Pastor Beth Schlegel moved the following on behalf of the Executive Committee:

That the Synod Council approve a spending authorization to the 2017 budget.

Bishop Dunlop explained that the Executive Staff had gone through the FY 2017 budget to look for areas in the budget where the budgetary lines could be adjusted. The staff identified some areas where cuts could be made and an area, health care for staff, where additional money was needed to fund this area of the budget. As a result, the budget was reduced by \$2,750. Bishop Dunlop explained the proposed adjustment in each line item.

The motion was before the Synod Council.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve a spending authorization to the 2017 budget. SC17.05.29.

Ministry Area	Current Plan for 2017	Spending Authorization	Change	Reasoning
Web Master	5,000	1,500	-3,500	Cancelled web page redesign
Media Services	5,000	3,000	-2,000	Will use more in house resources
Resource Center	5,000	3,000	-2,000	Reduce purchase of resources
Candidacy	4,000	2,000	-2,000	Interns are mostly local
Shared Risk Pool	2,000	0	-2,000	No anticipated payment in 2017
Administrative costs	24,600	23,600	-1,000	Reduced printing, copying and hospitality costs
ABMN	45,000	23,000	-22,000	Will handle with existing staff when Donna leaves
Mileage for Tom McKee	5,500	4,250	-1250	No travel while on Sabbatical
Health Care Costs	113,313	146,313	+33,000	Was underestimated as new people came on to health coverage

TOTAL			-2,750	

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Pastor Beth Schlegel moved the following on behalf of the Executive Committee:

That the Synod Council approve the distribution of the restricted legacy funds for synod programs not to exceed \$23,000, to renovate the synod office space to enable a reduction in occupancy space to meet the requirements of the 2018 budget proposal, a cost reduction of approximately \$25,000 per year.

Charlie Roberts provided an explanation of how our synod office would be reconfigured. He provided an analysis of the costs that would be incurred to make the necessary improvements. He explained that the technological improvements will be necessary even if we did not reconfigure our office space. Charlie also addressed the fact that we have accumulated excess furniture and supplies and have saved outdated files.

Pastor Herr asked, “How will the purging of files be done? Pastor McKee said that we would purge our files according to the ELCA Record Retention Policy. Debbie Clark added that the archives will no longer accept all of our archived files.

Joyce Frigm asked how the office reconfiguration may affect the ability of the staff to fulfill their responsibilities. Bishop Dunlop said that it is a rarity that the pastoral and program staff are all in the office at one time; much of their ministry is carried out outside of the office in our congregations and conferences.

Joyce Frigm added that the downside to cubicles is a lack of privacy and the possibility of being distracted by noise. She advised, “Staff members must be kind to each other by lowering their voices.” The vice president said that she noted how often the staff interact; that being in proximity may be conducive to communication and productivity. Charlie Roberts informed that there will be conference areas where staff can go for confidential conversations.

The motion was before the Synod Council.

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council approve the distribution of the restricted legacy funds for synod programs not to exceed \$23,000, to renovate the synod office space to enable a reduction in occupancy space to meet the requirements of the 2018 budget proposal, a cost reduction of approximately \$25,000 per year.

Synod Office Renovation

Budget:

Construction:

+ 30-yard dumpster rental (5-7 days)	\$800.00
+ Shred-It one-time mass shredding	470.00
+ Entry door install (250.00/door: labor and materials)	0.00
+ Demo (Luther Room wall + half-wall in Admin Office)	400.00
+ Paint	300.00
+ Steam Cleaning (rental and cleaner)	<u>100.00</u>
	- Sub-Total =2,070.00

Furniture:

+ New (Capture wall units + SitOnIt Chairs)	<u>10,000.00</u>
	Sub-Total = 10,000.00

Technology:

+ Main Panel move, re-routing and simplified wiring, moving existing work stations to reflect new office configurations (new data line “drops”)	10,000.00
+ Flat Screen Monitor (wall-mounted in Conf. Room)	<u>700.00</u>
	Sub-Total=10,700.00
	Total=22,770.00

The members of the council enjoyed a fifteen-minute break.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop James S. Dunlop provided a written report to Synod Council. He informed the council that likely there will be four ordinations and one consecration at the assembly’s Friday evening service. There also is a call vote on Sunday, June 4, for a candidate for ordination. If that call vote is positive, the candidate will be ordained in his home synod, the Northern Illinois Synod.

The bishop reported on the always changing financial scene. At last report, our 2017 mission support has increased over 2016 mission support to date by \$23,000, an increase of 2.8%. However, even if this trend continues, we will be looking at an \$80,000 shortfall at the end of FY 2017. The bishop is hoping that congregations and rostered leaders will respond positively to his video. If not, we may have to adjust our budget as we move forward. He confided that the only areas where he could conceive of major reductions in funding would be our support of our ministry partners and/or a reduction in staff.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Synod Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman submitted a written report. She expressed appreciation to the six members of Synod Council whose terms conclude at Synod Assembly: Zoe Clark, Pastor Richard Eckert, Pastor Joel Folkemer, Vigil Gibson, Susan McDonald, and Jane Wigand. She announced that the names of Pastor Joel Folkemer and Virgil Gibson will appear on the ballot.

The vice president informed the members of Synod Council that, because of schools being in session and graduation ceremonies, Charlie Roberts has been having difficulty securing pages. She requested that the members of Synod Council help in the following ways: as ushers during the Friday evening worship service (rehearsal on Friday morning at 10:30), as distributors of voting machines (information provided at 8:15 a.m. Saturday in the Synod Council seating area), and as distributors and counters of ballots (on Friday if the voting machines fail).

Joyce Frigm reported that she has not been able to secure the 158 volunteers needed for the Fill the Truck: Feed the Children initiative. If she does not have the necessary volunteers, she believes that she will have to cancel the event. Pastor Joel Folkemer offered that perhaps the reason Joyce has had difficulty finding volunteers is because many congregations are dedicated to local food banks that are doing similar ministries to feed children this summer. Pastor Stephen Herr added that, even if this initiative is cancelled, it has already had a real impact on our synod. The food items that have been collected will be put to good use in local food banks. Lucinda Bringman suggested that Joyce consider compressing the hours. Donna Nicholson assured Joyce that additional persons will volunteer after Memorial Day. Vice President Bringman encouraged all members of the Synod Council actively to recruit volunteers.

The vice president urged all members of the Synod Council to have a copy of the entire budget so that they can be prepared to answer questions on the proposed budget. A copy of the entire proposed budget can be found in last month’s Synod Council emailing. She urged the members of Synod Council actively

to participate in the assembly, talking in favor of the Synod Council recommendations, engaging in debate, and performing such functions as moving the previous question when the debate has continued too long.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD SECRETARY

Secretary McKee provided a report.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Bruce E. Seagrist provided a written report to Synod Council by means of a separate email.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee submitted draft minutes of its May 4, 2017, meeting.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL

REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS

Lutheran Youth Organization liaison, Zoe Clark, said that preparations are going well for Leadership Training Camp.

Lower Susquehanna Synod Women's Organization of the Women of the ELCA liaison, Linda Lubold, provided a written report.

ELCA Church Council member, Pastor Stephen Herr, had nothing additional to report.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Marsha Roscoe presented a written report.

Charlie Roberts had nothing additional to report.

Pastor Robert Blezard presented a written report.

Pastor Sharron Blezard presented a written report.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen presented a written report

REPORT OF CONSULTANT

Donna Nicholson, consultant for the ABMN Comprehensive Campaign, presented a written report.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

Committee of Deans provided draft minutes of its May 15, 2017, meeting.

The Global Mission Committee liaison, Stephanie Strauss, submitted a written report.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Advisory Council of the Always Being Made New Campaign provided a written report on the future of the campaign as requested. Virgil Gibson, a member of the Advisory Council, asked if there were any questions or comments on the Advisory Council's report. Pastor Stephen Herr pointed out that requests

to support the Always Being Made New campaign and the appeal to increase mission support to fulfill our budgetary needs could well be competing claims. Bishop Dunlop answered that giving to the Always Being Made New campaign always has been promoted as giving above and beyond mission support. The question is, "Will the congregations be willing to step up and increase mission support while still encouraging members to give second-mile gifts to the Always Being Made New campaign?" Virgil Gibson shared that, when we love something, we give to support that thing. He urged us as a synod to tap into the love that our members have for our synod and the ELCA.

The members of council concurred that this report is ready for sharing with the 2017 Synod Assembly.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee of Reference and Counsel provided minutes of its May 2, 2017, meeting. One resolution has been submitted for action at the 2017 Synod Assembly. This resolution has been submitted by the North Lancaster Conference. The Reference and Committee refined that resolution; the North Lancaster Conference accepted the modified resolution with one additional amendment. The resolution is as follows:

RESOLUTION #1 RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY SO THAT INDIVIDUALS MAY ATTEND MEETINGS FROM REMOTE SITES

WHEREAS, the many committees, task forces, and teams that serve the Lower Susquehanna Synod are comprised of people coming from a wide area, which often results in a huge expenditure of time and money merely to get to meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Susquehanna Synod is well served by encouraging people who possess unique education, skills, work experience, and competencies to participate in synod meetings regardless of their ability to attend in person; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Susquehanna Synod should model efficient use of human, technological, and financial resources as a reflection of the stewardship of God's gift given to the church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the bishop assign a task force to work with synod staff to develop a plan to enhance the use of technology so that individuals may attend meetings from remote sites; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task force appointments shall be made within six weeks of the passage of this resolution and that such task force shall report to the Synod Council within six months of its appointment.

Adopted by North Lancaster Conference in assembly
March 30, 2017

Amended by the Reference and Counsel Committee
May 2 and 18, 2017 in consultation with the North Lancaster Conference

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends the adoption of this resolution.

Jered Hock stated that this resolution does not just offer a technological challenge; it invites a legal challenge also. He offered the example that everyone entitled to participate in the meeting must be able to hear simultaneously everything that is being said during the meeting. Jered stated that he believes that a lawyer should speak at the assembly to the legality of remote meetings. Pastor Herr said that it is his hope that such issues would not be pursued out at the assembly, but that such issues would become the work of the task force requested in the resolution.

Vice President Bringman asked Pastor Jorgensen why the Covenant of Renewal Commitments was included in the packet. Pastor Jorgensen said that it was included for the Synod Council's information, to inform the Synod Council about what would be required of all parties in the covenanted renewal process, the renewal team, the rostered minister, the coaches, the synod staff, and the consultant. Pastor Beth Schlegel asked about the timeline for sending in the R3 application. Pastor Jorgensen responded that he is requesting that no congregation submit the application before hearing the presentation at the Synod Assembly. After the assembly, information should be considered by Congregation Councils. Approval of Congregation Councils is necessary to apply. All applications should be submitted by July 28. Then a team of people will review each application and decide which congregations will be accepted into this initiative. Pastor Jorgensen affirmed that it is our intent as a synod to accompany all congregations in our synod regardless of whether they have been accepted to participate as a covenant congregation committed to renewal.

The members of the Synod Council reviewed a letter from Pastor Jonathan Jenkins, expressing concern about the election of Dr. Theresa F. Latini, an ordained Presbyterian minister, as the first president of the United Lutheran Seminary and requesting that the Synod Council discuss this matter and communicate with the Synod Councils of other supporting synods. Jane Wigand expressed her surprise that a nationwide search could not identify one Lutheran who was more qualified to serve as seminary president. The bishop responded that the search committee did register a preference for a Lutheran to serve as seminary president, but they chose the best candidate, who happened not to be Lutheran. The board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the search committee and to elect Dr. Latini as the seminary president. She had excellent recommendations from Luther Seminary where she has taught, and she demonstrated many gifts for leadership during the selection process. The bishop expressed his frustration that someone who has never met her and who did not have the opportunity to participate in the interview process would judge her as an inappropriate choice for seminary president. He stated that he found this letter to be very unhelpful.

Members of the council shared information that concern was also expressed at the North Lancaster, Lebanon, and Gettysburg Conferences. Jered Hock stated that the announcement of Dr. Latini's appointment gave him pause at first, but then he remembered that she taught at Luther Seminary, that she would not be teaching Lutheran theology, and that the Presbyterian church of which she is a member is a full communion partner with the ELCA. He reflected that he would rather have someone from a full communion partner denomination serve as seminary president rather than someone from a Lutheran denomination with which we had no formal relationship. Pastor Beth Schlegel stated that the seminary is an institution being pulled apart from the vocation on which it was founded.

The vice president asked the members of the Synod Council if they desired to take any action. Pastor Schlegel asked, "What affect would this communication have?" The bishop responded that it would have none. The board of directors of the seminary has the responsibility for appointing the seminary president.

Virgil Gibson moved:

That the secretary respond to Pastor Jenkins, informing him that the Synod Council has discussed his concern and has decided to take no action.

Pastor Schlegel moved:

ADOPTED: To amend by adding, "We note further that communication with other Synod Councils would have no affect."

The amended motion was before the Synod Council.

ADOPTED: That the secretary respond to Pastor Jenkins, informing him that the Synod Council has discussed his concern and has decided to take no action. We note further that communication with other Synod Councils would have no affect.
Sc17.05.31.

Pastor McKee shared with the council that a rostered minister at one of our conference meetings expressed his opinion that it would be wise to ask the members of the Synod Assembly to approve the recommendation of Synod Council to hold a food-packing event in conjunction with the 2018 Synod Assembly. By doing this, he believed that our congregations and rostered ministers would have more ownership of the event and would support it more. Pastor Joel Folkemer added that the rostered minister who suggested this was in favor of having the event but that he believed by their positive vote the members of the assembly would be promising their support. Pastor Folkemer added that he agreed.

Colleen Hoffman moved:

ADOPTED: That the Synod Council recommend to the 2017 Synod Assembly that a food-packing event be held in conjunction with the 2018 Synod Assembly with an advance financial commitment not to exceed \$75,000.
SC17.05.32.

Virgil Gibson shared that he will not be purchasing red socks to wear to the assembly, but that he will be making an additional donation to Local Hunger Initiatives.

Vice President Bringman explained that only newly-elected members of Synod Council and the newly-elected treasurer will be installed at the end of the assembly. It is not necessary for those currently serving on Synod Council to be installed again. A reorganizational meeting for the 2017-2018 Synod Council will be held immediately after the assembly.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas E. McKee
synod secretary
5/19/17

Approved by Synod Council June 3, 2017