

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL
Minutes
September 21, 2017

Prior to the September 21, 2017, meeting of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council, the members of Synod Council enjoyed a catered dinner in the Resource Center. Bishop James S. Dunlop preached and presided in our synod office chapel at a Service of Word and Sacrament with Thanksgiving for Baptism, commemorating St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council met for its regular meeting on Thursday evening, September 21, 2017, 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 7:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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| Members present: | Bishop James S. Dunlop | Lucinda L. Bringman |
| | Thomas E. McKee | Joseph M. Stepansky |
| | Eric N. Anderson | Jennifer R. Lau |
| | Joel S.B. Folkemer | Christine C. Lowe |
| | Joyce E. Frigm | Jillian E. Riddle |
| | Brenda D. Hartzell | Beth A. Schlegel |
| | Jered L. Hock | Timothy J. Seitz-Brown |
| | Colleen M. Hoffman | Stephanie M. Strauss |
| | Emma L. Johns | Allen P. Stump |

Liaison present: Elizabeth Polanzke

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

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| Members excused: | Dana J. Blouch-Hanson | Jayne A. LeGore |
| | Darren M. Hamric | |

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| Liaison excused: | Fred Bohls | Linda Lubold |
| | Jeremy Filus | |

Staff excused: Sharron R. Blezard

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT

Pastor Joel Folkemer shared some highlights of the ministry of Union Lutheran Church, York, a congregation under a Synod Administration Covenant for Redevelopment. Pastor Folkemer said that renewal is all about relationship, relationship, relationship: relationship with God, relationship with ourselves, relationship with our community. He spent his first year at Union working on renewing the congregation's relationship with God by stressing faith formation, Bible study, study groups, and "real" times of devotion at all gatherings and meetings. The second year he spent on relationships within the congregation by having a series of cottage meetings and by working with such concepts as how do we become a welcoming church and how can we make a difference in our community. During the third year, the congregation moved out into the community, meeting with as many community leaders as possible and interviewing them about community needs and how Union might be helpful in addressing these needs, forming many partnerships with groups active in the community, and changing existing ministries

from transactional ministries into relational ministries and from what the congregation members had always done into more what the community needed. The congregation developed a purpose statement and guiding principles, and they conduct regular mission reviews of the congregation's ministries. Pastor Folkemer said that he is proud of what the congregation has accomplished by getting out of its comfort zone to become partners in God's mission in the community. He spoke about two new ministries that have developed: partnering with some businesses and other non-profits to serve a free breakfast each Sunday and creating a half-day afterschool program every other Wednesday when York City schools are not in session.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SYNOD IN RENWAL?

Deacon Marsha Roscoe shared information on renewal as a prelude to the Synod Council's discussion on "What does it mean to be a synod in renewal?" She began by reminding us where we have been. Lower Susquehanna Synod is where the hungry are fed as we have been fed by Christ. We are Reformation people in this time and place called to equip leaders, encourage cooperation, and engage in new mission. We equip leaders through our comprehensive candidacy process, continuing education for rostered ministers and lay leaders, reimaged faith formation initiatives, youth and family ministries, and our new R3 initiative. We encourage cooperation among our deans, secretaries, conferences and congregations and among our ecumenical and ministry partners by facilitating leadership for cooperative conversation. We engage in new mission through the formation of synodically authorized worshipping communities, identifying areas in our synod with under-tapped ministry potential, the Always Being Made New Campaign, and more.

Deacon Roscoe then began her explanation of where we are going. At our 2017 Synod Assembly, we launched R3: reFORM+reNEW+reVISION. The R3 initiative is inviting the Lower Susquehanna Synod into deeper spiritual and congregational renewal. It equips leaders to engage all ages and generations in lifelong spiritual renewal and discipleship, into renewed relationships with others. We have begun this initiative because many congregations struggle for a sense of purpose and mission and question how to move forward faithfully. Renewal pays hopeful attention to our relationships with God, each other, and our community and faithfully participates in what God is up to in the world. Renewal follows a predictable path, but the right step is situational.

In the waters of baptism, we become members of the body of Christ and are called to be disciples in our daily lives. Therefore, the purpose of the church is to understand, practice, and live the teachings of Christ; nurture faith communities where people are in relationship with God, one another, and the community; and grow disciple communities that encourage one another to discover their gifts and use them. When the church fulfills these purposes, we become church for the sake of the world.

Deacon Roscoe continued by saying that the health of our congregations and our synod is a function of how we relate to one another, to God, and to our community. Declining faith communities have lost connection with the church's basic mission of helping people experience God and live the Gospel. The heart of renewal is nurturing deeper relationships with God, with one another, and with our communities by faithfully participating in what God is already up to in the world. Our synod's greatest assets are the people who make up our synod and the possibilities for transformation we embody.

Spiritually vital faith communities share a desire to participate in God's mission to love and reconcile the world around us and embody the common traits of thriving congregations. These common traits must also be found in our synod: members of our synod are growing spiritually, our synod has a sense of purpose

rooted in God's mission, our synod demonstrates a willingness to change, and our synod's leadership is shared and models in a true sense the priesthood of all believers.

There are three phases of renewal: building the readiness of leaders, developing a vision, and aligning our synod's life with the vision we discern together. The incarnational reality of the cross and God's mission are always our guiding principles for renewal. Lasting change happens when we are united by God's purpose, vision, and values. If we desire to be the church God wants us to be, trying new things will be important. Changing the culture of a synod takes time. People move at their own pace, adopt ideas at different rates, and are influenced by gracious hope and trust. While conflict is inevitable, renewal is about relationship, relationship, relationship.

Grounded in the Great Commandment, the heart of life is love. The reason we were created is to love God and people. The purpose of renewal is to fall in love with Jesus over and over again while growing in service to God and one another. Renewal is not about us or our synod. Renewal is about Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Renewing leaders are envisioning, articulating, orchestrating, improvising, and embodying.

The renewing goals for 2017-2018 are:

- Collaboratively engage bishop, staff, Synod Council, renewal team, rostered ministers and other committed leaders in our purpose within God's mission.
 - Mission: Where the hungry are fed as we have been fed by Christ.
 - Purpose: Equipping leaders, encouraging cooperation, and engaging in new mission
- Engage in a season of deeper listening with a particular focus on listening to God, to each other, and to our community.
- Assemble a renewal team and commit to a renewal covenant.
- After a season of listening, assess our willingness to change and formulate guiding principles.
- Identify a system for measuring. The measured marks of renewal are the healthy traits of a thriving faith community as previously named.
- Align our synod's mission with the vision we discern.

Future goals include deepening our capacity for shared leadership, cultivating our spiritual gifts and better stewarding the spiritual gifts of the members of our synod, and growing spiritually and practicing discipleship with transparency and teaching.

Pastor Beth Schlegel asked how will these conversations happen. Deacon Roscoe said the first listenings will happen at the Deans' and Secretaries' Retreat and the Bishop's Convocation. At the Bishop's Convocation, we will use the World Spirit Café Model where many changing small groups will discuss one or two key questions. In this way, we will be able to hear from as many people as possible.

Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown wondered if during this season of listening, we would be listening to people who do not identify themselves as church. Bishop Dunlop said that Bishop Hazelwood of the New England Synod did that exact thing. He went out to meet and talk with those who do not frequent the doors of our churches; he then invited them to speak at Synod Assembly about their experiences with the church.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen spoke about another tool, "B-E-L-L-S," whose steps are to eat with, listen to, and learn from others by asking the question, "Who are you blessing?"

Deacon Roscoe said that the heart of renewal is the heart. It is living into God's future. Are we loving God more deeply?

Pastor Jorgensen talked about the fourfold expressions of the church, the fourth being "the sent."

Bishop Dunlop said that he keeps returning to the question raised at Synod Assembly, "What would a smaller synod look like?" Pastor Beth Schlegel said that before the institutional questions, we need to ask "What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? What does it mean to be sent?"

Jered Hock said that spiritual renewal begins with spiritual practice.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Allen Stump:

ADOPTED: That the Consent Agenda be adopted.
SC17.09.36.

That the minutes of the June 3, 2017, meeting be approved.

That the Synod Council grant the Rev. Beth Martini "on-leave-from call-family leave" status, effective August 1, 2017, until August 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council grant "on-leave-from call" status, to Deacon Valerie Lefever Hughes, effective July 3, 2017, until July 3, 2018; to the Rev. Jean N. Kuebler, effective July 16, 2017, until July 16, 2018; to Deacon Ann Seitz-Brown, effective September 15, 2017, until September 15, 2018; and to the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown, effective September 22, 2017, until September 22, 2018;

That the Synod Council continue on "on-leave-from-call" status for the Rev. Jillian E. Riddle for one additional year, until September 1, 2018, and the Rev. Linda S. Trout for one additional year, until October 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council request that the Conference of Bishops grant a two-year extension of "on-leave-from-call" status for the Rev. Brian Biery;

That the Synod Council approve the retirement requests of the Rev. Edward J. Robbins, effective June 1, 2017; the Rev. Rochelle E. Lewis, effective July 1, 2017; the late Jay B. Eickhoff, effective July 1, 2017; the Rev. Michael Cooper-White, effective July 1, 2017; and Sister Deborah A.S. McClellan, deacon, effective January 1, 2018;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Assembly Planning Committee the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson, co-chair, SC; Lucinda L. Bringman, synod vice president; Cathy Deitrich, staff; Tracey DePasquale; Joyce Frigm, co-chair, SC; the Rev. Elizabeth George; Colleen Hoffman, SC; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, synod secretary, assembly manager; the Rev. Edward Robbins; Charlie Roberts, staff; Deacon Marsha Roscoe, staff; the Rev. Timothy

Seitz-Brown, SC; and the Rev. Gwenn Trout for a one-year term, effective September 1, 2017;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Constitution Committee the Rev. Jeffrey Compton; Jered L. Hock, chair, SC; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary*; the Rev. Beth A. Schlegel, SC; and Joanne Wilhelm for a one-year term, effective September 1, 2017;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Finance and Budget Committee Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*; Dawn Frees; Virgil Gibson; Wayne Gongaware; Darren Hamric, SC; Brenda Hartzell, SC; Colleen Hoffman, chair, SC; Joyce Frigm, SC; Kenneth Mertz, *consultant*; Joseph M. Stepansky, *synod treasurer*; and Dee Wells for a one-year term, effective September 1, 2017;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Gifts Discernment Committee the Rev. Eric Anderson, chair, SC; the Rev. Douglas DeStephano; the Rev. James S. Dunlop, *bishop*; Holly Freas-Webster; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary*; Allen Stump, SC; Robert Walton; and M. Jane Wigand for a one-year term, effective September 1, 2017;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Mission Committee the Rev. Kathleen J. Baker; the Rev. Sharron Blezard, *assistant to the bishop*; Lucinda Bringman, *vice president*; the Rev. James S. Dunlop, *bishop*; the Rev. J. Richard Eckert; the Rev. Joel Folkemer, chair, SC; Holly Freas-Webster; Emma Johns, SC; the Rev. Richard E. Jorgensen Jr., *DEM*; Jennifer Lau, SC; the Rev. Jillian Riddle, SC; Stephanie Strauss, SC; and Allen Stump, SC for a one-year term, effective September 1, 2017;

That the Synod Council appoint to the Personnel Committee the Rev. Martha Boyd; Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*; the Rev. Elizabeth George; Jered Hock, SC; Gary L. Laabs; Jayne LeGore, SC; Christine Lowe, chair, SC; the Rev. Thomas E. McKee, *synod secretary*, *personnel officer*; the Rev. Timothy W. Sadler; and Joanne Wilhelm for a one-year term, effective September 1, 2017;

That the Synod Council appoint as liaisons to the following conferences: Chambersburg, the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson; Gettysburg, Joyce Frigm; Hanover, Allen Stump; Harrisburg, the Rev. Jillian Riddle; Lancaster, Darren Hamric; North Lancaster, Colleen Hoffman; North York, Jennifer Lau; Perry, Christine Lowe; South York, the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown; Upper Dauphin, Brenda Hartzell; West Cumberland, Jered Hock; West Shore, the Rev. Eric Anderson; and York, the Rev. Joel Folkemer and the Rev. Beth Schlegel;

That the Synod Council appoint as liaisons to the following committees: ABMN, the Rev. Beth Schlegel; Audit, Lucinda L. Bringman; Bishop's Congregational Mission Fund, Jennifer Lau; Compensation and Benefits, Jered Hock; Criminal Justice System Ministries, the Rev. Eric Anderson;

Evangelism Mission Tables, the Rev. Joel Folkemer; Global Missions, Stephanie Strauss; Konde Diocese, the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown; Poverty Justice Table, the Rev. Joel Folkemer; Stewardship, Jayne LeGore; Synodical Worship, the Rev. Jillian Riddle; Transformational Ministry Team, the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown; Vibrant Faith University/ Diakonia, Allen Stump; Youth Ministry Team, the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson; World Hunger, Christine Lowe; Lutheran Camping Corporation, the Rev. Dana Blouch-Hanson and Emma Johns; and Region 8 Steering Committee, Lucinda L. Bringman; and

That the Synod Council, through the bishop and the secretary, certify the minutes of the 2017 Synod Assembly as the official protocol of said assembly, to be deposited in the archives.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTIONS

There were no other motions to come before Synod Council.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Bishop James S. Dunlop submitted a written report. Bishop Dunlop spoke about his request to have the conferences experiment by joining together into six mission areas: York, Lancaster, Lebanon-Upper Dauphin, Harrisburg-West Shore, Gettysburg-Hanover, Perry-West Cumberland-Chambersburg to facilitate discussion about mission. This is a one-year experiment to see if this may be a more effective way to encourage cooperation among our congregations around a common mission. After the year, the conferences will evaluate whether having mission areas has been effective.

Bishop Dunlop announced that our synod is all in on renewal. We have over fifty trained coaches, mission developers, redevelopers, and members of our synod's Transformational Ministry Team. It is because we have twenty-four trained coaches that we have been able to launch the R3 initiative. Previously our synod sent to the ELCA 47% of the mission support we received; currently we are sending 35% with the approval of the ELCA. The ELCA has 35 congregations in renewal now; our synod has the same number.

Deacon Roscoe announced that the coach for our synod's renewal team is Pastor Douglas Johnson.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Lucinda L. Bringman submitted a written report. She encouraged the members of the Synod Council to attend the Bishop's Convocation on October 30, 2017, at the Gettysburg Campus of the United Lutheran Seminary. Those who are planning to attend should register online. She announced that she will be attending a meeting of ELCA Vice Presidents, which will be held in conjunction with the Conference of Bishops in Chicago next weekend. The vice president also called upon the members of Synod Council to offer prayer requests.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD SECRETARY

Secretary Thomas E. McKee submitted a written report.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Joseph M. Stepansky submitted a written report and a report of Mission Support from January through August 2017 and 2016. He stated that his overall philosophy is that money comes in, is held for a while, and goes out. He is a bit concerned about the number of buckets that we have to hold the money. He estimated that we have as many as 11.37 million possible buckets in our accounting system. He hopes

to simplify the accounting system. He will speak to us in terms of revenue and expenses. Based on his initial review of our accounting system records, he reported that it appears for February through August 2017, our synod is running a deficit of under \$3,000.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Synod Council Executive Committee provided minutes of its September 7, 2017, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SYNOD COUNCIL

Assembly Planning Committee provided minutes of its September 14, 2017, meeting.

REPORTS OF THE LIAISONS

Lutheran Youth Organization liaison, Jeremy Filus, was excused because of a commitment to his job; he plans to attend Alive at Camp Nawakwa. Emma Johns reported that she plans to attend LYO meetings as she is able; none have occurred yet this early fall.

Lower Susquehanna Synod Lutheran Men in Mission liaison, Fred Bohls, presented a written report.

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

ELCA Foundation's regional financial planner, Pastor Elizabeth Polanzke, reported on the Reformation 500 Event that will occur at the Church of the Reformation in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, October 31. She announced that the ELCA Foundation has received about 40% of its planned giving bequests. The Lower Susquehanna Synod is the frontrunner in planned gifts. Pastor Beth Schlegel and Virgil Gibson are helping Pastor Polanzke to develop a strategy for reaching retired rostered ministers.

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Deacon Marsha Roscoe provided a written report.

Charlie Roberts submitted a written report. Vice President Bringman thanked Charlie for his hard work on the remodeling of the synod office and for bringing in the completed project under budget.

Pastor Robert Blezard offered a written report.

Pastor Sharron Blezard provided a written report.

Pastor Richard Jorgensen offered a written report and supplied lists of R3 congregations and coaches and R3 cohort groups.

REPORTS OF CONSULTANTS

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Audit Committee liaison, Lucinda L. Bringman, provided a liaison report to Synod Council of the Audit Committee's May 31, 2017, meeting. She included the letter to Synod Council from RKL, LLP, our external auditors, announcing that its audit of our synod's financial position resulted in an unmodified position.

Bishop's Congregational Mission Committee liaison, Lucinda L. Bringman, provided a report of the committee's August 31, 2017, meeting.

Committee of Deans supplied minutes of its September 11, 2017, meeting.

REPORTS OF TASK FORCES

Always Being Made New Campaign (ABMN) Advisory Committee staff liaison, Deacon Marsha Roscoe, provided a cover letter, a YTD ABMN report, and a thank you for the seminary scholarship. She thanked Pastor Elizabeth Polanzke for helping obtain a full report of ABMN giving from the ELCA. While the goals for ELCA ministries are being met, our synod's goals are not. Deacon Roscoe will be concentrating on lifting up our synod's goals.

Pastor Beth Schlegel said that she found the new way of reporting on the ABMN campaign receipts to be very helpful.

Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown asked whether the persons who expressed concerns about the ABMN campaign at the Synod Assembly were visited. Deacon Roscoe said that she and the bishop had met with each of the persons who expressed concerns at the Synod Assembly. She will meet with them again now that we have received a full report of the campaign from the ELCA.

Christ Lutheran Church, Manchester, Review Team chair, Joyce Frigm, provided a report of its June 8, 2017, meeting.

Diakonia/VF liaison, Allen Stump, submitted a report of two meetings of the task force.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Colleen Hoffman asked for a report on the resolution adopted at the 2017 assembly regarding the Task Force on the Use of Technology So That Individuals May Attend Meetings from Remote Sites. Bishop Dunlop said that he was waiting until we had the necessary equipment before calling together the task force. The equipment will soon be in place. The task force will meet to decide the program/software that we will use to make it possible for individuals to attend meetings from remote sites.

NEW BUSINESS

The members of Synod Council discussed whether to hold the February 2018 meeting on Thursday, February 8 or Saturday, February 10. The majority preferred Saturday, February 10, 2018, at 9:00 a.m.

Synod Council will meet next on Saturday, November 11, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the United Church Center.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Thomas E. McKee
Synod Secretary
9/22/17