

**Synod Council Meeting  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA  
Good Shepherd Hospital  
March 20, 2014**

Synod Council Members present: Donna Ahner, Pastor Paul Braden, Steve Barnett, Pastor Cindy Camp, Dave, Derr, Pastor Lee Diefenderfer, Mark Hammond, Dave Hinrichs, Pastor Michele Kaufman, Cathy Mordosky, Jim Parks, Don Smith, Leslie Wagner and Pastor Gary Walbert, and Bishop Samuel Zeiser

Synod Council Members excused: Pastor Jeff, Butz, Jim Carey, Marty Everhart, Pastor Tricia McMackin, and Terry Shilling

Synod Council Member not excused: Pastor Jerry Kulp

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Glenn Simmons and Pastor Catherine Ziel

Guests Present: Marilyn Masza, synodical president, Women of the ELCA; Georgia Suranofsky, Mission Interpretation project

Vice President Don Smith called the meeting to order at 3:10 PM.

The minutes from the January 29, 2014, meeting were approved as corrected.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Zeiser shared a number of updates:

- Mission support commitments from congregations are coming in. He asked mission district representatives on the council to make contact with those in their districts who have not yet responded. Synod staff will follow up in a month.
- We are prepared for next week's mini-retreat on the Campaign for the ELCA, which will be led by Pr. Laura Csellak and Vice President Don Smith.
- The new ELCA Secretary is requesting that we follow some constitutional requirement that had previously been overlooked by most synods, including that the synod council give approval of change of roster status for rostered leaders who are retiring.
- Georgia Suranofsky reported on the progress of the Macedonia Project and the work of mission interpreters.
- Don Smith was honored by the Pennsylvania Bar Association with the Arthur J. Birdall Award, which is given to outstanding bar executives.
- Two members of the synod staff, Pr. Catherine Ziel and Carol Weiser, will be retiring as of July 31, 2014.
- First call assignments took place last weekend, and we look forward to welcoming two outstanding new young pastors.

- The Wescosville property has now been completely sold. The final piece, the main building and rental properties, was sold last month, and both parcels sold for a total of \$401,000.
- Muhlenberg College president Randy Helm, Diakon Vice President for Church Relations John Richter and Philadelphia Seminary President Phil Krey will all be retiring in the coming year.

#### Vice President's Report

Don reported that he had participated in a conference call with ELCA Secretary Chris Boerger regarding the process for the election of a bishop.

#### Secretary's Report

We received a letter of resignation from Sr. Ramona Daily. The council accepted her resignation with regret.

#### Dwelling in the Word

Pastor Cindy Camp led the council in a time of reflection on Matthew 6:25-34.

#### Treasurer's Report

Dave reported that the auditors were in this month, and things were not as difficult as we had expected, in spite of the staff turnover and changes in software. The Finance Committee is now more actively involved in oversight of our finances.

#### Committee Reports

##### Finance Committee

Lee reported that our receipts for 2013 appear to be \$115,421 over projections

The following resolutions were received from the Finance Committee and adopted:

(2014.3.1) Resolved, that the following resolution be recommended to the 2014 synod assembly:

Resolved, that the 2015 program proposal (February 1, 2015, to January 31, 2016) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2015 spending program no later than its January, 2015, meeting, making any necessary adjustment to the budget proposal in light of both realistic anticipation of receipts and synod priorities (in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer with respect to the ELCA portion thereof).

(2014.3.2) Resolved, that the 2012 and 2013 income from the Potteiger Estate be divided into three equal parts and be disbursed accordingly for Muhlenberg

College, for the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and for world mission projects as determined by the synod's Global Mission committee, with the grant to Muhlenberg College designated for the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding.

#### Program and Review Committee

The committee continues to work on arrangements for the election of a bishop at the upcoming synod assembly.

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly approved several changes to the *Model Constitution for Synods*. Some are required changes and are automatically incorporated into our constitution. Two require action by the Synod Assembly. The following resolution was adopted:

(2014.3.3) Resolved, that the Synod Council recommends that the Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments to the synod's constitution:

**S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall ~~also~~ have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

**S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of ~~mission settings formed with the intent of becoming recognized~~ congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

#### Administration Committee

The committee continues to work on the synod's personnel policy and expects to present recommendations later this year. Work also continues on the synod assembly and on identifying a property committee for the Lutheran Center.

#### Women of the ELCA

Synodical unit president Marilyn Masza submitted a written report. She also reported on her conversation with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

#### En Bloc Items

The following resolutions were adopted:

(2014.3.4) The following resolution is recommended to the 2014 Synod Assembly:

**Resolved, that the 2014 Assembly program (as printed in the Bulletin of Reports) be adopted.**

(2014.3.5) Resolved, that the offering received at the 2014 Synod Assembly be designated for the Campaign for the ELCA.

(2014.3.6) Resolved, that the Connection Building Ministry Team be given permission to sell copies of *The Social Media Gospel* by Meredith Gould at cost at the 2014 Synod Assembly.

(2014.3.7) Resolved, that in accordance with ELCA bylaw 7.41.17. and upon endorsement by the bishop, the following rostered leaders be granted the roster status of "retired":

The Rev. Virginia M. Biniek, effective December 27, 2013

The Rev. Dennis J. Carroll, effective May 1, 2014

The Rev. John G. Pearson, effective June 1, 2014

#### New Business

Bishop Zeiser shared a letter from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia inviting synods to make a special gift to the seminary in recognition of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The request was referred to the Finance Committee for discussion.

The council discussed the qualities that they felt would be helpful in identifying new synod council members.

Vice President Smith announced that several council members are completing their terms. He thanked Paul Braden, Leslie Wagner, Cathy Mordosky and Dave Derr for their contributions.

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine A. Ziel  
Secretary *Pro Tem*