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Synod Council  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod**

**July 26, 2104**

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**Synod Council Meeting  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA  
Lutheran Center  
July 26, 2104**

Synod Council Members present: Donna Austin-Ahner, Staci Bray, Pastor Cindy Camp, Jim Carey, Pastor Lee Diefenderfer, Marlene Druckenmiller, Marty Everhart, David Hinrichs, Pastor Michele Kaufman, Pastor Tricia McMackin, Pastor Marty Milne, James Parks, Don Smith, Victor Unks and Pastor Gary Walbert.

Synod Council Members excused: Steve Barnett, Mark Hammond

Synod Staff Members present: Bishop Samuel Zeiser, Pastor Michael Bennethum and Pastor Catherine Ziel.

Bishop Zeiser led a worship service with Holy Communion.

Bishop Zeiser led us through a “getting to know you” exercise.

Vice President Don Smith highlighted the constitutional duties of the Synod Council and highlighted the role of a synod council member in the election of a pastor.

Bishop Zeiser reviewed the organization of committees of the Synod Council. Council members were encouraged to choose a committee where they feel their gifts can be utilized.

Committees organized as follows:

Administration – Pr. Cindy Camp - chair, Staci Bray, Jim Carey, Marty Everhart and Pastor Gary Walbert

Executive – Bishop Samuel Zeiser, Vice President Don Smith, Secretary Pr. Tricia McMackin, Treasure Dave Hinrichs and Committee Chairs

Finance – Pr. Lee Diefenderfer - chair, Steve Barnett, Dave Hinrichs and Pr. Marty Milne

Program and Review – Mark Hammond – chair, Donna Austin-Ahner, Marlene Druckenmiller, Pr. Michele Kaufman, Jim Parks and Victor Unks

We enjoyed a delicious luncheon and cake to honor Pr. Catherine Ziel.

Vice President Don Smith called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM.

The minutes from the March 20th meeting were approved as presented.

### Bishop's Report

Bishop Zeiser welcomed new council members. He addressed the issue of vacancies on the council. The following resolution was made and adopted:

(2014.7.1) Resolved, that the Rev. Barry Spatz and the Rev. Jeff Odgren be elected to fill vacant positions on the synod council, to serve until the 2015 Synod Assembly when there will be an election to fill the unexpired 2 year terms of Pr. Jeff Butz and Pr. Jerry Kulp.

Bishop Zeiser shared how he will staff synod positions during his second term. The following resolution was made and adopted:

(2014.7.2) Resolved, that the Synod Council affirms the staff appointments made by Bishop Zeiser for his second term.

Bishop Zeiser shared that he has asked Pr. Richard Gardener to work with him on wellness for synod rostered leader and Guy Ehler to work with him on reaching out to first-time assembly goers in conjunction with the Campaign for the ELCA.

Bishop Zeiser took a moment to explain the call to special service being extended to Rev. Susan Horst.

Pr. Mike Bennethum addressed the status of Source of Love Indonesian Ministry at St. Peter's, Scranton. It is a synodically authorized worshipping community authorized by the Synod Council in 2010. Unfortunately problems developed with the ministry leader and he resigned in December 2010. Since then, attendance has declined and the community has not been able to complete paperwork for incorporation nor keep up with necessary reports. The recommendation at this point is that St. Peter's continue to support this ministry but it no longer be a stand-alone ministry. The following resolution was made and adopted:

(2014.7.3) Resolved, that the designation of Source of Love, Scranton, as a synodically authorized worshipping committee be rescinded.

### Finance Committee

Pr. Lee Diefenderfer shared the report of the auditors. The fiscal year ended with a balance of \$109,482.00 which came from good management of funds received. Giving was down by \$87,000.00 from 2013. The committee will be looking at securing a comptroller in concert with other synods. The following resolutions were made and adopted:

(2014.7.4) Resolved, that the following grants be made from the Prosser/Pahse/Mission Fund: Allegheny, Mohnton - \$650 for mailing for parish education; St. John, Stroudsburg - \$12,000 for Astroturf for daycare; New Jerusalem, Saucon Valley - \$4000 for meal ministry and senior seminarian; Hope, Reading - \$6,000 for meal ministry; Arndt's, Easton - \$4,000 for preschool and living nativity education program; Adult Lutherans Organized for Action - \$300 for senior ministry festival.

Finance Committee (cont'd)

(2014.7.4) Resolved, that we accept the proposal of Keystone Paving for \$81,600 to pave the parking lot of the Lutheran Center, and that the expense be financed from the Prosser/Phase/Mission Fund.

(2014.7.5) Resolved, that the spending limit for the Kelchner Fund for 2015 be set at 10%, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia be informed that \$138,776 will be available for that year.

(2014.7.6) Resolved, that in honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, the synod make a one-time gift to the seminary of \$75 for each LTSP graduate serving in rostered ministry in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, for a total of \$21,675, the funds to come from the Prosser/Phase/Mission Fund.

Vice Presidents Report

Don attended the cabinet meeting of ministry team chairs. He shared with Worship and music that synod assembly worship was "smokin'". The Witness and Service ministry Team shared the grants given to congregations. Since the assembly approved synod council being authorized to implement the Campaign for the ELCA, the Executive Committee will discuss ways to achieve the goal of having all 275 congregations participating.

Secretary's Report

No report.

Treasurer's Report

Dave reported that Mission Support for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter is 15% behind last year. The final copy of the audit will be electronically distributed to synod council members.

Program and Review Committee

Bishop Zeiser shared that the remarks received from assembly evaluations were positive.

Administration Committee

Cindy presented the proposed changes to the synod personnel policy for council members to read and take action on at the October meeting. Don asked that the committee consider a sabbatical policy for the Bishop and developing a feedback form for the Bishop.

The following resolution was made and adopted:

(2014.7.7) Resolved, that the 2015 Synod Assembly be held May 29-30, 2015 at the Santander Arena in Reading.

En Bloc Items

The following resolutions were adopted:

(2014.7.8) Resolved, that David DeCampi, Elsbeth Haymon, Sandra Jarva Weiss and Daniel Wilson be elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees of the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, terms commencing in 2014; and that the Rev. John C. Richter be elected to fill the remaining one year of a term commencing in 2014.

(2014.7.9) Resolved, that in accordance with sections 7.31.16 and 7.52.22 of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Clergy (fourth year, study leave):	Roxanne Kringle
Clergy (disability):	Douglas McKeeby
Associate in Ministry (disability):	Bruce Saylor
Associate in Ministry (fourth year, family)	Amy Jahn de Torres

(2014.7.10) Resolved, that a call to be special service be extended to the Rev. Mark Wimmer to serve as Vice President for Church Relations, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, effective July 2, 2014.

(2014.7.11) Resolved, that a two-year term call be extended to the Rev. Peggy Sue Pfeffer to serve as half-time assistant pastor of St. John, Friedensburg, effective May 1, 2014.

(2014.7.12) Resolved, that a two-year term call be extended to the Rev. Robert Kramer to serve as transitional pastor of St. Mark, Birdsboro, effective August 1, 2014.

(2014.7.13) Resolved, that a call to be special service be extended to the Rev. Susan M. Horst to serve as chaplain at Life Choice Hospice, Shoemakersville, effective July 26, 2014.

(2014.7.14) 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. Oliver E. Brown, effective June 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Harry L. Hefflefinger, effective, May 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Robert G. Kaltenbaugh, effective August 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Thomas A. Neel, effective July 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Fred S. Opalinski, effective August 1, 2014  
 The Rev. John C. Richter, effective June 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Paul L. Schoffstall, effective September 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Willard J. Uhler, Jr., effective April 1, 2014  
 The Rev. Catherine A. Ziel, effective August 1, 2014

New Business

Marlene shared that some retired roster leaders are feeling alienated because they are dropped from mailing lists. Bishop Zeiser suggested they can call the synod office to be put on mailing lists. Also she shared that the front doors to the Lutheran Center are not the most welcoming because of their condition. Bishop Zeiser shared that now the Wescosville property is sold, attention can be paid to the Lutheran Center Property. The attempt to form a property committee has not yet been successful.

The meeting adjourned at 2:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tricia A. McMackin  
Synod Secretary