

**1st Quarter Meeting
July 11, 2015**

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**Synod Council Meeting
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Dallas, PA
July 11, 2015**

Attendance:Synod Council Attendees present:

Donald Boyer, Barbara Belón, Stacie Bray, Oliver Brown, Jim Carey, David Derr, Marlane Druckenmiller, Linda Eroh, Martin Everhart, Pastor Charles Grube, David Hinrichs, Ethan Melber, Donald Smith, Pastor Suzanne Trump, Victor Unks

Synod Council Members excused: Donna Austin-Ahner, Pr. June Bair, Pastor Cindy Camp (resigned prior to meeting), Pastor Martin Milne, Pastor Deborah Scheffey, Pastor Gary Walbert

Synod Council Members absent: Taylor Seymour

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Michael Bennethum, Bishop Samuel Zeiser, Pastor Carl Shankweiler

Guests: Marilyn Mazsa - WELCA

Pre-Council Meeting:

Opening Eucharist: Bishop Zeiser officiated with the opening worship service which included communion:

People Bingo: This 'ice breaker' served as a means for all Council members to introduce themselves to everyone on a personal level and find out an interesting factoid about each other.

Organization and Role of the Synod Council: Vice President Don Smith covered the major constitutional duties of the Synod Council. Multiple handouts were distributed to all members. Bishop Zeiser drew attention to the Council's obligation for oversight of the roster of ordained ministers and other official rosters of the Synod.

(NOTE: Members who were absent should contact Pr. Bennethum to request these materials.)

Bishop Zeiser spoke about the role of council members, explaining that their role has a much wider scope than just their congregations. This scope consists of three expressions of the Church: congregations, synod, church-wide; they are not competitive, but interdependent. Council member's responsibility is to help to build that understanding where the members have a presence and an influence. Bishop Zeiser recommended that each member should make a point of reading "The Lutheran" magazine to keep them informed about church-wide issues.

Committees: The following is the committee membership for 2015-16:

Executive Committee – Bishop Zeiser, Don Smith (VP), David Hinrich (Treasurer), Pr. Carl Shankweiler (Secretary), Stacie Bray, David Derr, Jim Carey, and Marlane Druckenmiller

Administration Committee – Stacie Bray (chair), Marty Everhart, Pr. Gary Walbert

Finance Committee – David Derr (chair), David Hinrichs, Pr. Martin Milne, Donald Boyer

Program Committee – Jim Carey (chair), Ethan Melber, Pr. Oliver Brown, Victor Unks, Linda Eroh

Nominating Committee – Marlene Druckenmiller (chair), Donna Austin-Ahner, Deborah Scheffey, Pr. Suzanne Trump, Taylor Seymour, Pr. Charles Grube, Pr. June Bair

Lunch Break – Special thanks to Pr. Grube and St. Paul's members for furnishing lunch and morning snacks for the council.

Call to Order: Vice President, Don Smith, called the council meeting to order at 12:50 pm

APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the March minutes as amended: moved by Marty Everhart, seconded by Victor Unks. Motion approved.

BISHOP'S REPORT

- Bishop Zeiser thanked Barbara Belon for service as interim Secretary. Thanks also went to Jim Parks for his multiple years of service on the council.
- 2015 Assembly – The bishop reported that there are two open slots on Synod Council. Madeline Deegan (Bethlehem) and Ruth Major (Faith, Blakeslee) have agreed to serve until next election cycle.

(2015.07.01) RESOLVED, that the vacant positions on Synod council be filled by Madeline Deegan and Ruth Major until the next election cycle. Moved by Marlene D. Seconded by Marty E. Motion approved.

- Campaign for the ELCA update - So far this year, \$107,084.27 has been contributed by our congregations.
- Sunday May 1st has been selected as the “Always being made new” Sunday for 2016. Bishop Zeiser requested that this be continued, and moved the following resolution:

(2015.07.02) RESOLVED, that the first Sunday in May be designated as “Always Being Made New” Sunday in the NEPA synod. Moved by Bishop Zeiser. Seconded by Victor Unks. Motion approved.

- St. John's Shenandoah update: The intern assignment for the Moravian seminarian is in place, and she will be supervised by Pr. Mindy Heppe
- St. John's, Auburn update: Pr. Schofstell is handling administration and pastoral work.
- St. Peter's, Hughestown: Arrangements have been made for a non-stipendiary call for Pr. David Newman. (The subsequent motion refers to action item #1 in the information sent out to council members ahead of the meeting.)
- St. Paul, Allentown – has issued an invitation to Pr. Steven Shussett, Pastor of Presbyterian Church in USA to serve at St. Paul's for a period of three years. (see Resolution in Action Items section below)
- Youth Gathering in Detroit: 589 youth representing NEPA Lutheran congregations will be attending this event and doing service projects in various communities.
- Malaria Campaign: The bishop reported that total contributions are approaching the 15million dollar goal. It is anticipated that the goal will be reached before end of year. To date, over 2 million people have been enabled to protect themselves and their families from Malaria.
- 2015 Assembly: The bishop reported that the evaluations gave “spirit & content” excellent marks. Evaluations were previously distributed to Synod Council. This assembly used an expanded number of people involved in its planning and execution. Volunteers have already come forward, offering their assistance with the 2016 assembly.
- 1st call process – update: 7 candidates are in process; their potential congregations are spread out amongst the synod's mission districts.
- A New President of Muhlenberg College, John I. Williams, Jr., has been installed.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Call Process Task Force Update – Don Smith reported that the drafted documents have been cleaned up and posted on website; Documents of calling of AIMs are currently being worked on.

Closing of Congregations Task Force - update: The work continues on the manual being created to offer guidance to congregations who begin the process of closing their congregations.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence

- No correspondence received
- Minutes of the 2015 NEPA Synod Assembly have been submitted, reviewed, edited, and are ready for final review by Bishop Zeiser.
- All letters relating to the March council meeting were sent out.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- 2014 Audit Report – A few key pages from the draft of the audit were distributed to council members. Dave H. noted that 46% of contributions go to ELCA. 10% go to Institution and Agency support.
- Mission Investment Fund - Financial Services Organization Proposal – NEPA agreed to be one of the pilot synods. February, 2016 will be the start date for the trial period. Synod Council's Finance Committee will handle the roll-out.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

No Report

PROGRAM AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

No Report

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

(2015.07.03) RESOLVED, that the 2016 Synod Assembly be held June 17-18, 2016 at the PPL Center in Allentown. Motion approved

(2015.07.04) RESOLVED, The Property Committee submitted a recommendation that Synod Council approve moving ahead with painting the nave of the Lutheran Center, and replacing all bulbs in the nave lighting fixtures, at a cost not to exceed \$35,000. Motion approved.

Information item: Property Committee recommends the replacement of the rotting front doors at the Lutheran Center at a cost of \$4,300. Since the bid is under \$5,000, no approval action is required from the council.

ACTION ITEMS

(2015.07.05) RESOLVED, that the synod council convey to the Conference of Bishops its desire to extend a call to non-stipendiary service to the Rev. David Newman to serve as pastor of St. Peter, Hughestown (effective 5/31/2015). Moved by Marty E., Seconded by Dave Hinrichs. Motion approved.

(2015.07.06) RESOLVED, that in the synod council extend an invitation to the Rev. Steven Shussett, an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to serve as pastor of St. Paul, Allentown, beginning July 1, 2015 for a period of three years, renewed annually. Bishop moved, seconded, David Derr; Motion approved.

 EN BLOC ITEMS

(2015.07.07) RESOLVED, that Alvaro A. Diaz, Gary R. Schmidt, the Rev. John C. Richter, and Paul D. Emrick be elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees of the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, terms commencing in 2015.

(2015.07.08) RESOLVED, that the 2016 budget of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Mission District be approved.

(2015.07.09) RESOLVED, that the 2016 budget of the East Berks Mission District 2016 budget be approved.

On Leave from Call Requests and Extensions:

(2015.07.10) 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 (second year):	Paulette Obrecht
Clergy (second year):	Richard Baumann
Clergy (first year):	Darcy Reis
Associate in Ministry (fifth year, family):	Amy Jahn de Torres

(2015.07.11) RESOLVED, that a request be made to the roster committee of the Conference of Bishops, to grant an extension of “on leave from call” status to the following rostered leaders who have reached the end of their regular “on leave” eligibility:

- The Rev. Kim Truebenbach – completed six years of family leave, 6/8/2015
- The Rev. Jennifer Oaks – completing three years of regular leave, 9/30/2015

(2015.07.12) RESOLVED, that a call to special service be extended to the Rev. Roxanne Kringle to serve as Chaplain of Manatawny Manor, a Diakon senior living facility in Pottstown, effective June 8, 2015.

(2015.07.13) RESOLVED, that a call to special service be extended to the Rev. Carl Shankweiler to serve as a part-time Associate of the Bishop, effective June 1 2015.

(2015.07.14) RESOLVED, that a two-year term call be extended to the Rev. Michael Frost to serve as pastor of Holy Trinity, Palmerton, effective June 1, 2015.

(2015.07.15) RESOLVED, that a two-year term call be extended to the Rev. Nancy Moore to serve as pastor of Trinity, Lehighton, effective July 1, 2015.

Retirements

(2015.07.16) 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. Paul Bartlett, effective July 1, 2015
- The Rev. Charles Oldland, effective July 1, 2015
- The Rev. David Roper, effective August 31, 2015
- The Rev. Eugene Sharkey, effective August 31, 2015
- The Rev. Gerald Arndt, effective September 30, 2015
- The Rev. Diane LaFauci, effective September 30, 2015

Approved en bloc - unanimous

 NEW BUSINESS

(2015.07.17) Pursuant to the action of the 2015 Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly: **RESOLVED**, that the Synod Council forward to the executive committee of the ELCA Church Council for proper referral and disposition the resolution titled, “Solar Power at Phebe Hospital in Liberia.” Motion approved.

(2015.07.18) RESOLVED, that in accordance with section S13.21 of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Constitution, approval be given for the congregation of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Lynnville be merged into the

congregation of St. Peter's UCC in Lynnville; and, that approval be given for the Lutheran congregation to transfer its property and assets to the UCC congregation. Motion approved.

Other Reports:

WELCA – Update by Marilyn Mazsa, WELCA NEPA President. Marilyn's report covered the WELCA Spring Retreat on April 11th and the Annual Convention on June 13th. WELCA is asking all women from NEPA Synod to attend the Tuscarora Retreat Center weekend on October 16-18. There is also a Cluster planning event scheduled for October 24th at St. Paul's Fleetwood. Please read the full WELCA report for further details.

Debriefing:

- Council was advised to look at reports of Yvonne Lembo, Regional Gifts Planner for the ELCA (white paper)
- Upcoming meetings: October 22, 2015, January 20, 2016, March 17, 2016. Start time: 3:00 pm unless otherwise noted. Locations to be announced.

Adjournment: 2:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara J. Belón, Synod Council Secretary, 2014-15