

Synod Council Meeting  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA  
October 15, 2008

Synod Council Members present: Dawn Baxter, Ed Cool, Pastor Barbara Davis, David Derr, Guy Ehler, Martin Everhart, Fran Ferrari, Pastor John Hassler, Dave Hinrichs Pastor Cynthia Kennett, Priscilla Kinney, Pastor Roxanne Kringle, Catherine Mordosky, Madison O'Neil, Pastor Carl Shankweiler, Don Smith, AiM Barbara Taylor, Leslie Wagner, and Pastor Phyllis Wolford.

Synod Council Members excused: Nancy Bleam, Pastor Paul Braden, Scott Edelman, and Christie Kaufman.

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Michael Bennethum, Pastor Kurt Garbe, AiM Karen Matthias-Long, Smoky Schelly, Carol Weiser, Bishop Sam Zeiser, and Pastor Catherine Ziel.

Guests present: Pastor Bruce Osterhout, Joan Becker, Rebecca Seeds, and Pat Reitnauer.

The meeting was called to order at 3 PM by Vice President Kinney at Christ, Penn Forest Township. Pastor Hassler welcomed the group.

Bishop Zeiser presided at Holy Communion.

The Minutes

The Minutes were approved as corrected.

Special Order

Pastor Osterhout, Ms. Becker, and Ms. Seeds discussed the St. Luke's/Christ Partnership Parish and distributed written materials.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Zeiser

- offered a prayer for Scott Edelman.
- discussed his first weeks in office.
- expressed thanks to the Transition Team, the worship planners, the Synod Staff, and the people of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Mission District for their good work on the Installation Service.
- announced that the Synod Council Retreat is scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.
- discussed a new congregation-based Social Ministry initiative.
- Noted that he will make staffing decisions by the end of the year.

### The Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer submitted a written report.

### Vice President's Report

Priscilla submitted a written report.

### Secretary's Report

Barbara announced that Pastor John Hassler had been elected to Synod Council by an email vote.

### Committee Reports

Program and Review: Dawn had no report.

Administration: Ed Cool presented the report.

(2008.10.1) Resolved, that the policy for Synod Assembly displays be amended as follows to include forums, and that the existing guidelines for displays be amended and incorporated into this policy (underlining indicates additions; ~~striketrough~~ indicates deletions):

#### SYNOD ASSEMBLY DISPLAY AND FORUM POLICY

It is clear that there are a great number of organizations, agencies and institutions that do good and commendable work on the territory of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. While they could no doubt use display and forum opportunities ~~space~~ at our Synod Assembly effectively and constructively, practical, theological and other concerns require some restrictions ~~on displays~~. Therefore, it is the policy of this Synod that display space and forum time is available only to:

1. Mission Districts, congregations, commissions, committees, task forces and teams of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.
2. Those agencies and institutions that are a direct outreach ministry of the ELCA and/or the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; ELCA educational institutions; and the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.
3. The Lutheran fraternal benefit societies.
4. Augsburg Fortress Publishers (which is the only group with permission to sell goods).
5. Persons representing our companion synods, LWF partner organizations, and full-communion partners.

Other church-related groups and individuals may apply to the Synod Council for a one-time exception to the policy on displays or forums at an assembly. The decision of the council is final.

The following guidelines will apply to all displays and forums:

1. Displays and forums are to be related to the ELCA and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod or their ministries.
2. Personal attacks and defamation are prohibited. In presenting a point of view, civil and respectful language must be used.
3. Displays and forums are not to promote ideas or activities in opposition to provisions of the ELCA, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or Congregational Constitutions.

The resolution was adopted.

Finance: Fran presented the committee's report.

Discussions are taking place to hold a conference in May 2009 concerning human sexuality especially in regard to homosexuality, the upcoming action at the 2009 ELCA Assembly on a proposed social statement, and the effect this issue could have upon the church. Pr. Carl Shankweiler is releasing approximately \$1,700 from the treasury of the defunct Lutheran Clergy Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania for speakers for this conference, but with the expansion of the program at Bishop Zeiser's suggestion to include a third and possibly fourth presenter, that amount of money will not be sufficient.

(2008.10.2) Resolved, that the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund grant up to \$3,000 to help support a 2009 synodical conference about homosexuality.

The resolution was adopted.

(2008.10.3) Resolved, that the revised policy for the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund be adopted.

The resolution was adopted.

(2008.10.4) Resolved, that the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund grant \$6,000 to the 2009 LIFT program.

The resolution was adopted. The LIFT Team is asked to provide information on costs for 2007 LIFT to the Finance Committee for review.

#### Companion Synod Report

Pastor Garbe and Madison O'Neil reported on the trip to Tanzania.

### Reports of Mission District Liaisons

East Berks – Dave Derr submitted a written report. He announced a trip by the Oley Cluster to Houston in February.

West Berks – Dawn reported that 520 back packs were filled and distributed.

Lehigh – Cathy discussed the St. Michael's/Nativity consolidation.

Bethlehem/Easton – Pastor Kringle reported on the "Discerning God's Call" workshop.

Schuylkill – Pastor Kennett discussed continuing studies on the Middle East.

Pocono – Fran reported on the continuing work on the problems associated with gambling.

Northern Lehigh Valley – no report.

Hazleton/Lehighon – Pastor Wolford discussed a new quarterly newsletter and the annual Luther Day.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre – Marty discussed the Bishop's Installation and plans for a spring Mission District day.

### Reports of Liaisons to Agencies

Lutheran Congregational Services – Ed submitted a written report.

Lutheran Men in Mission – Ed submitted a written report and discussed the November men's event at the Philadelphia seminary.

Women of the ELCA – Pat presented a written report. The women donated to the Synod the chalice and paten that were used at the Bishop's Installation.

### En Bloc Items

The following resolutions were adopted:

(2008.10.5) Resolved, that the following persons be elected to terms on the board of directors of Good Shepherd Hospital: Sandra Jarva Weiss, David Campli, Daniel Wilson.

(2008.10.6) 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:

Associate in Ministry (second year, graduate study): Cinda Brucker

The resolutions were adopted.

New Business

No new business was presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Future meetings:

- Synod Council Retreat --- November 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Synod Council meeting --- January 28, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Taylor  
Secretary