

Synod Council Meeting
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
St. Paul, White Haven
October 20, 2011

Synod Council Members present: Jamie Anczarski , Dawn Baxter, Nancy Bleam, Sister Ramona Daily, Dave Derr, Pastor Lee Diefenderfer , Pastor Rachel Dietz, Marty Everhart, Fran Ferrari, Mark Hammond, Dave Hinrichs, Pastor Jerry Kulp, Pastor Nancy Moore, Catherine Mordosky, Lois Sterling, AiM Barbara Taylor, Wayne Weidner, and Pastor Phyllis Wolford

Synod Council Members excused: Pastor Paul Braden, Don Smith, and Leslie Wagner.

Synod Council Members absent: Pastor Jeff Butz and Daisy Marin.

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Michael Bennethum, Pastor Kurt Garbe, AIM Karen Matthias-Long, Pastor Niels Nielsen, Pastor Carl Shankweiler, Smoky Schelly, Pastor Glenn Simmons, Bishop Samuel Zeiser, and Pastor Catherine Ziel.

Guest present: Judy Hilberg, representing the Synod Women of the ELCA organization.

Bishop Zeiser led worship, and Pastor Bob Stover welcomed the group to St. Paul. The business meeting was called to order by Vice President Baxter.

The agenda was approved. The minutes were approved as amended.

Special Order

Pastor Don Hayn, interim executive director, provided an update on Bear Creek Camp & Conference Center.

Bishop's Report

- The Bishop reported on the highlights of the Churchwide Assembly. Voting members shared their perspectives.
- Holy Cross, Moorestown, will take the second vote to leave the ELCA on October 30.
- Grace and St. Mark, Allentown, have discontinued their partnership efforts.
- Bishop Zeiser reported on his visits to Saxony and Slovenia.
- An All Saints Service will be held at the Lutheran Center.
- The Wescosville building suffered severe damage when the trash hauler hit wiring sending 7,000 volts of electricity through the building.
- Community, Vinemont, has taken its second vote to leave the ELCA.

(2011.10.1) WHEREAS, the members of Vinemont Community Lutheran Church, Vinemont, have voted by a margin greater than a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, in accordance with Evangelical Lutheran Church of America churchwide constitutional provision 9.62.a. and d., to terminate the congregation's relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; and

WHEREAS, said congregation has also voted to affiliate with the North American Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, churchwide constitutional provision 9.62.g. requires that the congregation receive synodical approval before such termination may take place; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that synodical approval is given to the congregation's decision to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective October 20, 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that title to all of the congregation's property will remain with the congregation upon its reception into the North American Lutheran Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Synod Council of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod expresses its sorrow over the congregation's decision but declares the hope that God will bless the members of Vinemont Community Lutheran Church in their continuing journey of faith and commitment to the mission of their new church body; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of Vinemont be assured that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod will continue to pray for them in their mission and ministry, and that we will remain open to receiving the congregation back into the ELCA, should the congregation desire to return at some time.

The resolution was adopted.

(2011.10.2) Resolved, that a call to special service be extended to Linda Zawaski to serve as a diaconal minister in her position as a counselor at Concern Counseling Services. She will be expected to make quarterly reports to the Bishop reflecting on her ministry in light of the seven characteristics of diaconal ministry. The resolution was adopted with one abstention.

Vice President's Report

A written report was submitted. Dawn is seeking people to serve on the Task Force on bullying.

Secretary's Report

The email ballot authorizing Pastor Carl Shankweiler to act on behalf of the Synod to sell St. Paul, Gordon, was approved.

The Treasurer's Report

A written report was submitted. Dave announced that through two-thirds of the year, the deficit is \$135,000.

Committee Reports

Administration: Lois had no report.

Finance: Fran presented the report. She thanked Pastor Shankweiler for his work to make the sale of St. Pau, Gordon, a reality.

(2011.10.3) Resolved, that Grants Spending Policies for 2012 be approved as distributed, with the following limits:

Prosser/Pahse/Mission Fund	\$55,297
Student Education Fund	\$18,099
Leadership Development Fund	\$4,004
Social Ministry Fund	\$60,217
Kelchner Far Eastern Endow. Fund	\$74,914

The resolution was adopted.

The following resolution was adopted for recommendation to the special synod assembly on October 22:

(2011.10.4) Resolved, that the 2012 program proposal (February 1, 2012, to January 31, 2013) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2012 spending program no later than its January, 2012, meeting, making any necessary adjustments 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.)

Program and Review: Mark had no report.

En Bloc Items

(2011.10.5) Resolved, that a two-year call to special service be issued to the Rev. Michael Bennethum to serve as pastor of St. John, Reading, effective September 1, 2011.

(2011.10.6) Resolved, that 2012 housing allowances for synod staff who are ordained ministers be set as listed below. These amounts shall apply to calendar year 2012 and all future years unless otherwise provided by this Synod Council. (Numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar.)

NAME	HOUSING ALLOWANCE
Zeiser	\$20,000
Ziel	\$18,000
Garbe	\$12,000
Gade	\$24,000

NAME	HOUSING ALLOWANCE
Handwerk	\$6,000
Simmons	\$25,000

(2011.10.7) 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):	Randele Albers
Clergy (first year):	Peter Bredlau
	Virginia Goodwin
Clergy (disability):	Daniel Bell
Associate in Ministry (first year):	Amy Jahn de Torres
Deaconess (first year):	Ramona Daily

(2011.10.8) Resolved, that a two-year term call be extended to the Rev. Sonja Ware to serve as interim pastor of Epiphany, Temple, effective August 16, 2011.

(2011.10.9) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. Donald Hayn to serve as interim executive director of Bear creek Camp & Conference Center, effective June 1, 2011.

(2011.10.10) Resolved, that a call to special service be extended to the Rev. Dody Siegfried to serve as interim pastor of St. Matthew, Bethlehem, effective September 12, 2011.

(2011.10.11) Resolved, that the Rev. Cheryl Meinschein be elected to serve on the board of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for a term ending in 2013.

The resolutions were adopted.

New Business

The Council discussed procedures for sale of properties.

(2011.10.12) Resolved, that an email vote taken on the sale of St. Paul, Port Carbon, will be allowed. The resolution was adopted.

(2011.10.13) Resolved, that a Task Force be created to deal with legal and other issues surrounding the closing of a congregation, including distribution of assets and cemeteries. The resolution was adopted.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Taylor
Synod Secretary