

**Minutes of the Fourth Synod Council Meeting
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
March 16, 2006**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Kinney at 3 PM at Holy Trinity, Dingmans Ferry. Pastor Nielsen welcomed the Council and discussed the congregation's 60th anniversary celebration.

Synod Council Members Present: Ed Cool, Guy Ehler, Marty Everhart, Pastor John Hassler, David Hinrichs, Pastor John Houck, Terry Karhan, Pastor Cynthia Kennett, Priscilla Kinney, Pastor Barry Mitchell, Elaine Molnar, Ron Mordosky, Michael Reitz, AiM Barbara Taylor, Susan Wambaugh, and Pastor Sam Zeiser.

Synod Council Members excused: Dawn Baxter, Meghan Fatzinger, Eileen Koehler, Pastor Roxi Kringle, and Lloyd Wertz.

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Michael Bennethum, Pastor Kurt Garbe, Pastor Gene Handwerk, Pastor Cheryl Meinschein, Smoky Schelly, Bishop David Strobel, and Pastor Catherine Ziel.

Guests present: Pastor Ken Feinour, Charles Rush, Ruth Doty, and Pastor Cindy Camp.

Vice President Kinney called the meeting to order and Bishop Strobel shared devotions.

The Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Special Orders

Ruth Doty, Charlie Rush, and Pastor Camp presented the Disaster Preparedness Plan for the Synod. A packet of materials was distributed.

Pastor Feinour presented a packet of materials on the ELCA Foundation and discussed proposed changes to the Endowment Investment Fund.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Strobel reported on the Conference of Bishops meeting in Geneva, Wisconsin, and on the progress made on the resolution from Synod Assembly requesting conversation between Diakon and the Office of the Bishop and the Synod Council.

Vice President's Report

Ms. Kinney submitted a written report. She discussed the work of the Lutheran Pennsylvania Network and invited Council members to join her at Lutheran Day in Harrisburg.

Secretary's Report

A letter was received from Grace, Shillington, regarding the candidacy process. The secretary will send a reply to the congregation explaining that Synod Council has no involvement in the process. The chair of the Candidacy Committee will be in touch with the candidate in question to discuss his situation.

Treasurer's Report

A written report was submitted. Smoky Schelly provided the names of congregations that have not returned their Mission Support Forms to Council members so that they can contact the congregations.

En Bloc Items

The following resolutions were adopted:

(2006.3.1) 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 (first year): Keith Yoder

(2006.3.2) The following resolution is recommended to the 2006 Synod Assembly:

Resolved, that the 2006 Assembly program (as printed in the Bulletin of Reports) be adopted.

(2006.3.3) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. David Werley, to serve as interim pastor of Morgenland Lutheran Church, Orefield, effective March 1, 2006.

(2006.3.4) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, to serve as assistant professor of Religious Studies at Moravian College, Bethlehem, effective August 25, 2005.

(2006.3.5) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. Mary Owens, to serve as of Director of Hospice Saint John's East Stroudsburg office, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, effective March 20, 2006.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Terry presented the report.

The following resolution is recommended to the 2006 Synod Assembly:

(2006.3.6) Resolved, that the 2007 program proposal (February 1, 2007, to January 31, 2008) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2006 spending program no later than its January, 2007, 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.)

Administration Committee: Ed stated that all items would be voted on under the en bloc portion of the meeting.

Program and Review Committee: The committee did not meet.

Old Business

Following discussion, Ed Cool made the following motion, and it was seconded by Susan Wambaugh:

(2006.3.7) Resolved, that the Synod Council establish a committee to develop a set of guidelines for working with congregations that have concerns with their on-going relationship with the ELCA.

The resolution was adopted.. The Bishop and Vice President will appoint the committee.

A Council Task Force composed of Marty Everhart, Elaine Molar, and Pastor Ziel will develop a ministry description for a Synod Council member.

Guy Ehler announced a training session on September 23 for persons interested in the Mission Interpreters program.

New Business

The Connections Building Team needs new members. Give names of potential volunteers to Pastor Kringle.

Reports of Mission District Liaisons

Lehigh – Ron Mordosky announced that a diversity strategy is being developed, the Coopersburg cluster is forming a joint council, and that May 7 is the date for the Mission District Assembly,

Bethlehem/Easton – Elaine Molnar reported on the Thrivent/Habitat building program. April 27 is the Mission District Assembly.

West Berks – Dawn Baxter was not present to report.

East Berks – Pastor Houck announced that the Mission District Assembly is in April.

Schuylkill – Pastor Kennett reported on the district visioning plan and that the Assembly is April 26.

Pocono – Terry Karhan reported that the Assembly is April 30. Diversity and LMM programs are underway.

Northern Lehigh Valley – Pastor Mitchell announced that eight teams have been sent to help with Disaster Response and that a retreat was held for professional leaders in the district.

Hazleton/Lehigh – Pastor Garbe reported that the Assembly is April 23.

Scranton/Wilkesbarre – Marty Everhart reported that they are in a planning process for the Synod Assembly and that their Mission District Assembly is May 6.

Reports of Liaisons to Agencies

Farm Families Appreciation – Pastor Bennethum reported that 840 people attended the celebration.

Diakon- Susan Wambaugh reported that the Benefactors' Dinner is May 11.

Pennsylvania Council of Churches - Guy Ehler announced that the next meeting is April 18.

Lutheran Congregational Services – Ed Cool reported on plans for the annual dinner on May 24.

Vice President Kinney thanked Lloyd Wertz for serving two terms on the Council. She thanked Meghan Fatzinger, Marty Everhart, Dawn, Baxter and Pastor Kennett for serving one term and announced that they are eligible for reelection.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

The next Synod Council meeting is June 10, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Taylor
Secretary