

**Minutes of the First Synod Council Meeting
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
June 30, 2007**

Synod Council Members Present: Dawn Baxter, Nancy Bleam, Scott Edelman, Guy Ehler, Fran Ferrari, Pastor John Hassler, David Hinrichs, Christie Kaufman, Pastor Cynthia Kennett, Priscilla Kinney, Pastor Roxi Kringle, Elaine Molnar, Pastor Carl Shankweiler, AiM Barbara Taylor, Susan Wambaugh, Pastor Phyllis Wolford, and Pastor Sam Zeiser.

Synod Council Members excused: Ed Cool, Marty Everhart, Pastor John Houck, Ron Mordosky, Madison O'Neil, and Don Smith.

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Gene Handwerk, AiM Karen Matthias-Long, Pastor Cheryl Meinschein, Smoky Schelly, Bishop David Strobel, and Pastor Catherine Ziel.

The Synod Council Retreat began with a welcome from Pastor Ginny Biniek. Associate in Ministry Karen Matthias-Long led team building exercises. A tour of Topton's facilities followed.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Kinney at 1 PM. Two resolutions that were adopted by the Executive Committee were reported.

(2007.6.1) Resolved, that \$500 from the Mission Fund be used to fund an expenditure designated to be paid from the Bishop's Fund, with the expectation that it will be repaid from the Bishop's Fund when monies are available from that fund.

(2007.6.2) Resolved, that a grant of \$3,000 from the Mission Fund be given to Bear Creek Camp, to provide camperships for the 2007 season.

Two resolutions were brought to the floor.

(2007.6.3) Resolved, that Pastor Phyllis Wolford be elected to a three-year term on Synod Council. The resolution was adopted.

(2007.6.4) Resolved, that Madison O'Neil be elected to a two-year term on Synod Council. The resolution was adopted.

The Minutes

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as corrected.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Strobel reported that the Synod Assembly and LIFT went well. He discussed first-call candidates, plans for Churchwide Assembly, and newly-elected Bishops in neighboring synods.

Vice President's Report

A written report was submitted. Priscilla She discussed a project at Reformation, Reifton, to bring a delegation from Tanzania to Pennsylvania.

Secretary's Report

A thank you note from Pastor Stover for the Synod's grant to Bear Creek Camp was read.

Treasurer's Report

Dave explained his hand-outs.

Committee Reports

Finance – Pastor Shankweiler presented the following resolutions:

(2007.6.5) Resolved, that a grant of up to \$7,500 in additional support from the Prosser-Pahse Mission Fund be made to cover expenses still remaining to be paid for the 2007 LIFT event. The resolution was adopted.

(2007.6.6) Resolved, that a grant of \$2,465 in additional support from the Prosser-Pahse Mission Fund be made to cover the remaining expenses for the 2007 Bishop's Conference. The resolution was adopted.

(2007.6.7) Resolved, that the 2008 Spending Policy be as follows:

Prosser-Pahse Mission Fund --- 8% of assets, \$42,500
Student Education Fund --- 6% of assets, \$24,654
Leadership Development Fund --- 8% of assets, \$3,251
Social Ministry Fund --- 9% of assets, \$67,730

Administration - Guy reviewed LIFT. He presented the following motion:

(2007.6.8) Whereas LUTHERANS from all parts of our synod were blessed by the opportunity to gather at Muhlenberg College on June 9, 2007, for a day of celebration, music, games and learning, and

Whereas IN faithful response to God's call (and the bishop's arm-twisting), Ken and Ruth Miller and Herb and Judy Gifford provided much of the dedication, exhortation, inspiration and perspiration, not to mention leadership, that made this day a reality, and

Whereas FAITH was nurtured and celebrated on that day in truly creative and joyous ways, and

Whereas TOGETHER with Martin and Katie Luther, J. S. Bach, Davey and Goliath, and other saints of many times and places, we bore witness to the people of northeastern Pennsylvania that there are a whole lot of Lutherans around here, now therefore be it

Resolved that this Synod Council on behalf of all of the members of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod gives thanks for all of the work done by Ken, Ruth, Herb and Judy in organizing this remarkable event, and be it further

Resolved that we express our appreciation for their unflagging enthusiasm, their endless optimism and their absolute determination, without which LIFT would still be only a passing thought, and be it further

Resolved, that we praise our loving Lord for sending such servants to us, to help us grow, learn, rejoice and sing, all to the glory of God,

This is most certainly true!

The resolution was adopted.

Program and Review – Pastor Zeiser handed out a description of the process for the election of a bishop in 2008. The Committee will now work on the election portion of the Synod Assembly agenda.

Old Business

Pastor Shankweiler presented the Report of the Task Force on Congregations Considering Withdrawal from the ELCA and the following motion.

(2007.6.9) Resolved, that the Report of the Task Force on Congregations Considering Withdrawal from the ELCA be approved. The resolution was adopted.

Reports of Mission District Liaisons

Lehigh – Pastor Meinschein reported that work continues on “EMBRACE,”

Bethlehem/Easton – Elaine reported on hosting the assembly and that the Mission District Assembly is October 18.

West Berks – Dawn reported on plans for the summer day camps and that the Family Promise program is up and running.

East Berks – Pastor Handwerk reported that things are going well.

Schuylykill -Pastor Kennett discussed a course being taught by Pastor Shankweiler entitled “A History of the Middle East.”

Pocono – Fran discussed an emphasis on the effects of gambling.

Northern Lehigh Valley – Scott reported that the Mission District meeting is November 8.

Hazleton – Pastor Wolford reported that two youth will go to Argentina.

Scranton-Wilkes-Barre – Pastor Garbe reported that one youth is going to Slovenia and two to Argentina.

Reports of Liaisons to Agencies

Pennsylvania Council of Churches – Guy submitted a written report.

Lutheran Congregational Services – no report.

Diakon – Susan said she would let the facilities we toured speak for themselves.

New Business

There were no items to discuss.

En Bloc Items

(2007.6.10) 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 (first year): Elizabeth Huwiler

Associate in Ministry (first year): Bruce Saylor

(2007.6.11) Resolved, that the Administration Committee be authorized to review nominations and select a recipient of the 2007 Wilson Touhsaent Award for Significant Social Ministry, on behalf of the Synod Council.

(2007.6.12) Resolved, that the Synod Secretary be instructed to send a letter to those pastors residing on the territory of this synod who were absent from the synod assembly without submitting an excuse, reminding them of the constitutional responsibility in this regard.

(2007.6.13) Resolved, that the Synod Secretary be instructed to write to the secretaries of the congregations which had no registered lay voting members or only one lay voting member and presented no excuse for such absence, calling attention to the constitutional requirement in this regard, and to send copies of the letters to the respective deans; and that, in the case of congregations that had no voting members and did not present excuses, personal consultation as deemed appropriate by the Mission District dean be effected between Congregation Councils and pastors of those congregations and a representative or representatives of the Synod (Mission District deans, Synod staff persons, or Synod Council members), with arrangements for such consultation to be initiated by the Mission District deans.

All of these resolutions were adopted

Bishop Strobel led devotions. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.

The next Synod Council meeting is October 24 at Reformation, Noxen.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Taylor
Secretary