

**Minutes of the Second Synod Council Meeting
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
September 22, 2005**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Kinney at 3 PM at St. Paul, Mountain Top.

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

Synod Council Members excused: Eileen Koehler and Lloyd Wertz.

Synod Staff Members present: Pastor Michael Bennethum, Pastor Kurt Garbe, Pastor Gene Handwerk, AiM Karen Matthias-Long, Pastor Glenn Simmons, Bishop David Strobel, Carol Weiser, and Pastor Catherine Ziel.

Bishop Strobel led devotions using the "Renewing Worship" materials.

The Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Strobel introduced two new members of his staff, Pastor Michael Bennethum and AiM Karen Matthias-Long. The Bishop is doing "Synopsis," a monthly show out of Trinity, Reading. He explained that Alsace, Reading, has begun the process to withdraw from the ELCA. The Advisory Panel at Dinkey Memorial has recommended the resignation of both the pastor and the Congregation Council.

Both resolutions concerning Diakon that were sent to the Synod Council by the Assembly are being considered. The Bishop asked Pastor Garbe to discuss the Sea Container project. He reported that it has arrived in Tanzania.

Vice President's Report

A written report was submitted.

Secretary's Report

Several letters were received in reply to letters sent following Assembly. Pastor Ziel has made corrections to the attendance figures. A thank you from AiM Ruth Miller was read. Mary Miller's letter of resignation from Council was shared and accepted with regret.

Treasurer's Report

A written report was submitted. To date, \$31,000 has come through the Synod for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Special Order

Pastor Mark Wimmer gave a presentation on the Mission Investment Fund.

Committee Reports

Program and Review: Pastor Ziel reported that the staff is now working on the three dominant tensions identified in the “Real Results” process:

1. Stewardship – Pastor Bennethum
2. Transitions for rostered leaders – Pastor Ziel
3. Communicating the mission of the Synod – Carol Weiser

A report will be given at each Synod Council meeting.

Finance: The committee will meet in November.

Administration: The committee presented the following:

(2005.09.1) Resolved, that the 2006 Executive Staff compensation be set in accordance with the following schedule, reflecting 1) total compensation, and 2) for ordained staff members the amount of base salary, social security allowance, and housing allowance. The amounts designated as housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2005 and all future years unless otherwise provided by this Synod Council. (Numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar.) This reflects an increase of 3% over 2005 figures.

NAME	BASE SALARY	HOUSING	SS	TOTAL
Strobel	\$49,846	\$25,000	\$6,200	\$81,046
Ziel	\$37,649	\$16,000	\$4,444	\$58,093
Bennethum	\$44,004	\$18,000	\$5,136	\$67,140
Meinschein	\$35,603	\$17,000	\$4,358	\$56,961
Handwerk	\$38,431	\$16,000	\$4,509	\$58,940
Simmons	\$35,980	\$20,000	\$4,637	\$60,617
Garbe	\$38,744	\$12,000	\$4,203	\$54,947
Matthias-Long	\$46,596		\$3,565 ¹	\$46,596
Weiser	\$52,060		\$3,983 ¹	\$52,060
Schelly	\$44,220		\$3,383 ¹	\$44,220

¹Employer’s required share (7.65%)

Reports of Mission District Liaisons

Lehigh – Ron announced that congregations are working together in clusters, the district has produced a “Gift Catalogue,” and the Reformation Service is scheduled for October 30.

Bethlehem/Easton – Elaine reported that Pastor Bruce MacLaughlin is the new dean, and that an “after Orlando” dinner and discussion was held at Holy Trinity.

West Berks – Dawn shared that 519 back packs were collected for area school children, both after school and summer camp programs work well, and she shared a brochure

and a newsletter. She asked the treasurer to consider acknowledging their benevolence giving on the monthly report.

East Berks – Pastor Houck announced that Pastor Tom Irwin is the new dean, and that Holy Trinity in Leesport has a trailer to collect building supplies for disaster response.

Schuylkill – Pastor Kennett reported on the district visioning event led by AiM Terry Lieb, and on the effort to empower small congregations.

Pocono – Terry shared that Pastor Ken Buckwalter is the new dean, a stewardship workshop took place in June, and St. Paul, White Haven, hosted the annual presidents/vice presidents workshop.

Northern Lehigh Valley – Pastor Mitchell announced that a Mission Fest is planned and they are working with LCS disaster response.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre - Marty reported that they are in a planning process and that a 24-hour Lutheran radio station will be on the air beginning October, 2006.

Hazleton/Lehigh – Pastor Walter Breiner is the new dean, and Eileen Koehler is the new treasurer.

Reports of Liaisons to Agencies

Pennsylvania Council of Churches- Guy reported that he will attend the next board meeting, scheduled for October.

Lutheran Congregational Services – Ed reported on the disaster response efforts and that two new staff members have been hired.

En Bloc Items

The following resolutions were adopted:

(2005.09.2) Resolved, that at the request of the members of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Greeley, and St. Mark Lutheran Church, Lackawaxen, the Good News Parish be dissolved effective September 30, 2005.

(2005.09.3) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. John Richter, to serve as Vice President for Church Relations of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, effective April 1, 2005.

(2005.9.4) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. Virginia Biniek, to serve as Chaplain, Lutheran Home at Topton, effective August 15, 2005.

(2005.9.5.) Resolved that Kevin Kring and the Rev. Clark Kuntz be elected to three-year terms on the board of the Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation.

New Business

Region 7 Coordinator Pastor Peggy Wuertele will be invited to a future Synod Council meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Taylor
Secretary