

**MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA-WESTERN MARYLAND SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**SYNOD COUNCIL
Synod Office
Fairmont, West Virginia
November 21-22, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER

The ninety-seventh meeting of the Synod Council of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod was called to order by the Chair, Vice President James Hansen, at 7:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

James Hansen	The Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin, Bishop
The Rev. Matthew Riegel	Carrie Alt
The Rev. Deborah Gable (late Fri)	Sherri Schafer
Lynda Grymala (Saturday only)	Tim Proietti
Grace Lauver	The Rev. Jeffrey P. Wick
Adam Hoke	Marjorie Wolf, Secretary (late Fri)
Pat Keller	The Rev. Brian Bennett

EXCUSED

J. Philip Melick
The Rev. Sally Bartling

VISITORS

The Rev. Craig Settlage, ELCA Director for Mission Support
The Rev. William Ridenhour, (Saturday) Mission Support Funding
The Rev. Kathleen Reed, (Saturday) LTSG Appeal
Warren Hoke (Friday evening)

DEVOTIONS

The Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin, Bishop, led the opening devotions by reading a portion of the Gospel of Mark, — bearing the name of Christ no one will do you harm. He read Pastor Kerry's devotions on the fight at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and closed with a prayer printed in the newsletter from St. John's Lutheran Church, Red House, Maryland.

INTRODUCTIONS

Each person present was asked to introduce him/herself.

SPECIAL ORDER

The Rev. Craig Settlage, ELCA Director for Mission Support, gave a presentation about ministry review and mission support across the church and responded to questions raised by Synod Council members. A good discussion followed.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 8:20 p.m. for refreshments, team building and rest at the Comfort Inn Suites.

**Saturday, November 22, 2008
9:00 a.m.**

INTRODUCTIONS

Each person present was asked to introduce him/herself since several more had arrived after the introductions on Friday evening due to delays caused by icing of roads and accidents.

VOTED:

SC08.11.1

The minutes of the July 19, 2008, Synod Council meeting were approved as distributed with the correction that the name of "Pat Keller" was left off the list of members present.

BISHOP'S REPORT

The Bishop gave a report of his itinerary from July 15 to November 15 and reported on pastoral changes and vacancies within the synod. He noted that Synod Council will need to consider replacing the present synod vehicle in the summer.

Committee Changes

- A. Stewardship Committee — Marc Shideler has resigned.
- B. George Friedline has resigned from the Global Missions Committee and will begin with the Stewardship Committee in December.
- C. The Rev. Dana Holter has resigned as the bishop's representative to the West Virginia Council of Churches and The Rev. Jerry Kliner will take his place. (Effective at the Annual Assembly in October 2008).
- D. J. Philip Melick has resigned from Synod Council.

VOTED:

SC08.11.2

To approve en bloc the changes as presented.

It was moved and seconded that the position of lay member from the Ohio-Kanawha Valley Conference remain vacant until an election takes place at the 2009 Synod Assembly.

VOTED:
SC0811.3

To defeat the motion by a vote of 5 to 4.

It was moved and seconded that Jim Snyder be appointed to fill the seat vacated by Philip Melick until the 2009 Synod Assembly when an election would take place to fill the position.

VOTED:
SC08.11.4

The motion was approved.

VOTED:
SC08.11.5

That Synod Council issue a two-year term call to the Rev. Linda Muhly to serve St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Clarksburg, West Virginia, effective January 1, 2009; and that Pastor Muhly is eligible to be called as a regularly called pastor to St. Mark's at the conclusion of this two-year term call. (She has resigned her call at St. Johannes, effective with Christmas Eve).

The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Service Society voted on August 26, 2008, to change Article VI of their Constitution — Board of Directors, Section 3 — Tenure. Any change to their constitution must be approved by the Synod Councils of Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod.

The revised section now reads:

“Members shall elect directors of the first, second and third classes to terms allocated in a manner which approximates one-third of the terms expiring each year. Elections shall be for a term of two years (excepting terms originating with 1987 elections). Directors of the first, second and third classes shall not serve more than ***three** consecutive terms.” (* originally stated **two** consecutive terms).

VOTED:
SC08.11.6

To approve the constitutional change to the Lutheran Service Society's constitution.

SPECIAL ORDER

The Rev. Craig Settlage showed a DVD related to stewardship, “God’s work, Our hands,” and distributed a brochure that included a section on “Where Your Money Goes.” The Rev. William Ridenhour made a presentation regarding the current system of funding the mission and ministry of the churchwide expression of the ELCA and the inequities that are present. Those of us in the ELCA with the least, give far more than those of us in the ELCA with the most. This presentation and discussion resulted from a resolution adopted at the 2007 Synod Assembly. We need to invite people to grow in discipleship.

Three sense motions were developed regarding Pastor Ridenhour’s presentation.

1. The West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod Council thanks and commends the Conference of Bishops and the Office of Synodical Relations for its on-going dialogue and study of the issues related to stewardship and mission support.

VOTED:

SC08.11.7

To approve the motion.

2. It is the sense of this Synod Council that apparent inequities in mission support (from congregations to synods, and from synods to the churchwide expression) are an issue of significant concern and reflect underlying issues of ecclesiology which do not bode well for the long-term unity or viability of the ELCA as a cohesive polity.

VOTED:

SC08.11.8

To approve the second motion.

3. This Synod Council requests that the officers of this synod collaborate with the officers of our sister synods of this region, to develop a common understanding of this mission support issue, and if possible, a common approach to addressing this issue for the benefit of the church.

It was moved and seconded that the third motion be amended by substituting Regional Council for the officers of the synods.

VOTED:

SC08.11.9

To approve the amendment to motion #3.

The motion now reads: This Synod Council requests the Regional Council to develop a common understanding of this mission support issue and, if possible, a common approach to addressing this issue for the benefit of the church.

VOTED:

SC08.11.10

To approve motion #3 as amended.

RECESS

Synod Council recessed for lunch at 11:30, following a prayer by Pastor Jeff Wick.

RESUMED BUSINESS

Synod Council resumed business at 12:00.

With the resignation of Jim Caton, there is now an opening for a Dean in the Monongahela Valley-Mountain Conference. This conference, similar to the Potomac Conference, covers a great deal of geography. It has been requested that there be two Deans for the Monongahela Valley-Mountain Conference. The Bishop was seeking counsel on this request.

CONSENSUS: Members of Synod Council agreed that the Bishop should have the authority to name two Deans for the Monongahela Valley-Mountain Conference if this would better serve the conference.

VOTED:

SC08.11.11

To make use of \$3,000 from the Vanguard Money Market Fund for scholarships to our two senior seminarians of \$1,500 each, and that we purchase \$500 of new shares in the Vanguard Balanced Fund.

CONGREGATION WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

South Fork Lutheran Ministry requested of Synod Council that for 2009 there be an increase in the synod's monthly gift to them from \$150 per month to \$200 per month. This gift is tied to South Fork Lutheran Ministry having a pastoral leader or an intern in place. Change in funding goes into effect on February 15, the first month of our synod's fiscal year.

VOTED:

SC08.11.12

To approve an increase to \$200 per month to South Fork Lutheran Ministry as long as they have pastoral care. (Kara Propst is serving there at present).

SPECIAL REPORT

Helen Harms, deployed staff for the ELCA Unit known as Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, met with Synod Council to explain changes that are coming to this unit. Beginning in February, Helen will begin working as a Mission Developer for this Synod. Half of her time will be spent upon work for the ELCA, probably in the area of Natural Church Development, and the other half of her time will be spent assisting congregations in the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod with mission or stewardship. In the past, Helen was serving four synods. Her office will continue to be in Wheeling.

VOTED:

SC08.11.13

To approve the half-time position for Helen Harms to serve as the Mission Developer in the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod. This position will be funded by the ELCA.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Rev. Matthew Riegel, Treasurer, reviewed various financial reports, answered a few questions and responded to comments for clarification. He stated that hopefully we will be okay with the budget, since December is usually a good month for income.

SPECIAL REPORT

The Rev. Kathleen Reed, Director of Advancement at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, made a presentation to Synod Council concerning the Crossroads Appeal for the Seminary that will take place in the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod during 2009. The Rev. William Ridenhour has agreed to serve as chair for this Synod-wide appeal. More volunteers are needed to serve on the Steering Committee.

SYNOD COUNCIL COMMITTEES

VOTED:

SC08.11.14

To approve the following Synod Council Committees as recommended by Vice President Jim Hansen.

Executive Committee: Synodical Officers, The Rev. Brian Bennett, Pat Keller and Tim Proietti.

Mutual Ministry Committee: The Rev. Brian Bennett, Chair; The Rev. Deborah Gable, Carrie Alt and Sherri Schafer.

Budget and Finance Committee: The Rev. Matthew Riegel, Chair; Lynda Grymala, Pat Keller and The Rev. Sally Bartling.

Property Committee: Tim Proietti, Chair; Grace Lauver, Adam Hoke and The Rev. Jeffrey Wick.

Nominations Committee: Marjorie Wolf (Upper Ohio Valley Conference), Chair; Pat Keller (Potomac Conference), Grace Lauver (Monongahela Valley-Mountain Conference, and the Deans of the Conferences— The Rev. David Westphal, The Rev. Larry Cantu, The Rev. Fred Soltow and The Rev. Jeffrey Wick.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Budget and Finance Committee will meet before the next Synod Council meeting. Bishop Dunkin reported that the Synod Office purchased a new television and DVD player, and will soon install a handrail along the steps in the office.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN PARTNERS

Sherri Schafer gave an update on Community Lutheran Partners. She stated that there would be some re-structuring in the operations as Sara Soltow, Director, is returning to teaching and will be with Community Lutheran Partners half time.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED:

SC08.11.15

To adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

January 31, 2009	Synod Council, Synod Office, Fairmont
February 7, 2009	Snow Date
March 28, 2009	All-Committee Day, Grace, Fairmont
April 25, 2009	Synod Council, Synod Office, Fairmont
June 5-6, 2009	Synod Assembly, The Wisp Resort