

BULLETIN OF REPORTS

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

From the time of the 2022 Synod Assembly to the time of this report, the Synod Council met 6 times (July 9, 2022, September 24, 2022, January 28, 2023, March 5, 2023, March 18, 2023, and May 13, 2023). This report sets forth the actions of the Synod Council at these meetings.

Calls Extended

Rostered Leaders Retirements

Approved the retirement of Rev. James West on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America effective September 1, 2022 (September 24, 2022)

Approved the retirement of Rev. Ann Schmid on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America effective February 1, 2023. (September 24, 2022)

Approved the retirement of Rev. Margaret Suhr-Barkley on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America effective July 1, 2023. (March 18, 2023)

On Leave From Call and Continuation of On Leave From Call

Continued the Rev. Larry Kemp in the status of On Leave From Call on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (July 9, 2022)

Granted the Rev. Tara Lynn in the status of On Leave From Call on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America up to the completion of her eligible three-year term and/or annual review with the original effective date of August 9, 2022. (September 24, 2022)

Continued the Rev. Daniel Clark in the status of On Leave From Call on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America up to the completion of his eligible three-year term and/or annual review with the original effective date of February 1, 2022. (January 28, 2023)

Granted the Rev. Ryan Pusch the status of On Leave From Call on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America up to the completion of his eligible three-year term and/or annual review with the original effective date of January 9, 2023. (January 28, 2023)

Granted Deacon Amy Santoriello the status of On Leave From Call on the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America up to the completion of her eligible three-year term and/or annual review with the original effective date of November 1, 2022. (January 28, 2023)

Other Actions related to Rostered Leaders

Affirmed, with thanksgiving for their years of active ministry, the retired roster status of approximately one third of the synod's Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service on the retired rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, pursuant to 7.41.07 and 7.71.04 of the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as adopted November 12, 2022 by the Church Council of the ELCA, Part 1, Section 3.D.1.f., Guidelines for retired ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service Part 1, Section 3.D.1.e.: the Synod Council shall engage in a regular, periodic examination of all ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers and Word and Service on the retired roster such that each and every retired minister's status is reviewed at least once during a three-year cycle. (Group 3) (January 28, 2023)

Granted a sabbatical to the Rev. Peter Asplin beginning June 24, 2023 and ending on September 10, 2023 as presented in his sabbatical plan. (January 28, 2023)

Authorized the Synod to enter into an agreement with Rev. Ed Sheehan to serve as Interim Assistant to the Bishop during Rev. Peter Asplin's Sabbatical. (May 13, 2023)

Appointments

Appointed Monica Snyder to the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Campus Ministry of Greater Pittsburgh with a term expiring in 2023 (July 9, 2022)

Appointed the following persons to the Mission Endowment Fund Board of Directors: Rev. Sarah Rossing, first term expiring in 2026, Rev. Michael Sourwine, second term, expiring in 2026, Rolf Otterness, second term, expiring in 2025, Eric Kofmehl, second term, expiring in 2025. (July 9, 2022)

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Appointed Pam Neale to the Synod Council as Conference 3 Lay Representative until the 2023 Synod Assembly (September 24, 2022)

Appointed the Rev. Michael Robinson to serve on the Multi-Synod Candidacy Committee with a term expiring in 2027. (September 24, 2022)

Appointed the Rev. Martin Rafanan to the Board of Directors of Lutheran Campus Ministry of Greater Pittsburgh with a term expiring in 2024. (September 24, 2022)

Appointed Pam McCurdy for a first term and Philip Koch for a second term to the Board of Directors of the Mission Endowment Fund with terms expiring in 2026. (September 24, 2022)

Appointed the Rev. Sarah Irwin to the Ecumenical Affairs Committee with a term expiring in 2025 (September 24, 2022)

Appointed the Rev. Gregory Clagg to serve as the Bishop's Representative on the Lutheran Service Society Board of Directors with a term expiring in 2025. (September 24, 2022)

Appointed Rev. Susan Irons and Rev. Alexander Sumo to the Agape Ministries Board of Directors with their terms expiring in 2025. (January 28, 2023)

Appointed Rev. Frank Podolinski to the Ecumenical Affairs Committee with a term expiring in 2025. (January 28, 2023)

Appointed Rev. Kerri Clark and Rev. Peggy Suhr-Barkley to second terms on the Multi-Synodical Candidacy Committee with terms ending in 2029. (March 18, 2023)

Re-appointed Rev. Kerri Clark and Rev. Ryan Kobert to the Resource Center Advisory Board with terms expiring in 2025. (May 13, 2023)

Finances

Approved the terms of a lease of the building of the former Messiah Lutheran Church, Morningside to the Church of the Open Door (PCUSA) for 6 months for the sum of \$2400 with the option for the congregation to purchase the building for the sum of \$10. (September 24, 2022)

Voted that recognizing that the Mission Support trends of the Synod will not meet the Synod's needs in the future that the Synod Council seek new means to find additional funding resources. (January 28, 2023)

Directed the Budget and Finance Committee to demonstrate how the Synod Council's will can be enacted and report its findings to the Synod Council at its March meeting. (January 28, 2023)

Accepted a proposal from GSB to do an analysis of the synod at the cost of \$5000. (March 18, 2023)

Constitutions and Bylaws

Adopted Continuing Resolution CR104.04.02 (This is new structure for the synod's Standing Committees). (September 24, 2022)

Other Actions

Affirmed the following persons who have been appointed to represent the Southwestern PA Synod on the Lutherlyn Board of Directors (terms are listed after their names): Cathy Coudriet (2023), Kathy Gaberson (2023), Rev. Tara Lynn (2023), Ron Coombs (2024), Rob Hicks (2024), Gwen Steiner (2024), Sara Goncz (2025), Rev. Ryan Pusch (2025), and Mark Trauman (2025). (July 9, 2022)

Received the report of the Outgoing President of the Mission Endowment Fund, the Rev. Kimberly van Driel, and directed the Secretary to convey the thanks of the Synod Council for her work and care of the Mission Endowment Fund during her time as president. (July 9, 2022)

Referred the Ecumenical and Interfaith Agreements found in the Synod's Policy Manual to the Synod's Ecumenical Affairs Committee for their review, refresh of the language, and return with recommendations and possible revisions for these documents to the Synod Council. (July 9, 2022)

Referred the Lutheran Affiliated Services document for the synod's Policy Manual to the Board of Directors of Lutheran SeniorLife and inquire with them if they would like to work to review and update this document with us (July 9, 2022)

Referred the document "Relationship between Thiel College and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod" found in the Synod's Policy Manual to the Thiel College Board of Directors and inquire if they would like to work with us to update and refresh the language of the document. (July 9, 2022)

Revised the "Social Ministry Document" adopted by the 1987 Constituting Convention of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod with more current language and agency names as recommended by the Governance Committee. (July 9, 2022)

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Received editorial changes in the “Tri-Synod Archives” documents found in the Synod’s Policy Manual, **Referred** it to the Tri-Synod Archives Committee for review and recommendations, and **Directed** the Secretary of the Synod to inform the Synod Councils of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod of the action taken by our Synod Council. (July 9, 2022)

Expressed the Synod Council’s appreciation to the members of the Committee Structure Task Force for their work (September 24, 2022)

Affirmed the recommendation of the Executive to invite the most recent Standing Committee Chairpersons or their designees to serve on the Implementation Team for Continuing Resolution CR104.04.02 along with Pastor Sarah Rossing and Secretary Rev. Bill Schaefer. (September 24, 2022)

Voted to continue in prayerful discernment regarding the property of the former Messiah Lutheran Church Morningside while holding together the variety of potential uses of the property: in relation to the memorial passed by the Synod in Assembly in 2022 titled, “SWPA Synod Guidance for a Jubilee Return of the Land to Those Who Belong to the Land”; the potential for growth in a fallow field, such as a new ministry start, or an ecumenical ministry; and the potential selling of the property. (September 24, 2022)

Ratified the document titled “A Covenant Agreement between the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and Lutheran SeniorLife” which includes the changes made by the Synod Council and Lutheran Senior Life. (September 24, 2022)

Adopted the changes to the “Guidelines for the ‘Calendar of Causes’”, the “Capital Fund Campaign Request Guidelines”, The “Synod Assembly Registration Fee Waiver for Retired Rostered Leaders”, “Synod Council Member Expenses for Synod Assemblies”, “Congregations Celebrating Significant Anniversaries”, “Grant Request Guidelines”, “the Installation of Bishop, Synod Officers and Synod Council”, and “Pastoral Salary Guidelines” as proposed by the Governance Committee. (September 24, 2022)

Approved the revision of the resolution titled “Budget and Finance Committee Annual Review of Synod Staff Compensation” as proposed by the Executive Committee. (September 24, 2022)

Archived the LARC Covenant. (January 28, 2023)

Amended the Episcopal Bishop’s Participation in Synod Assemblies document to include the heads of all local judicatories with which the ELCA has an agreement of full communion. (January 28, 2023)

Amended the Membership in Lutheran and Ecumenical Agencies document to change the name Coalition for Public Policy to Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania and include language to encourage members of the synod to engage with these ecumenical organizations. (January 28, 2023)

Nominated Dennis Lane and Rev. William Schaefer to the Region 8 Pool of Nominees for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. (March 5, 2023)

Approved the following changes to the Boards of Lutheran SeniorLife and Lutheran Service Society. (March 18, 2023)

1. Lutheran Service Society: Reduce the number of SW PA Synod elected clergy/lay members on the Lutheran Service Society board from 4 to 2.
2. Lutheran SeniorLife: Reduce the number of SW PA Synod elected ordained ministers/deacons on the Lutheran SeniorLife Board from three (3) to two (2).
3. Revise process to enable SW PA Synod Council to approve Lutheran SeniorLife board nominees rather than have them elected by the SW PA Synod Assembly.
4. Revise process to enable SW PA Synod Council to approve Lutheran Service Society board nominees rather than have them elected by the SW PA Synod Assembly.

Synod Assembly

Created a Domestic Violence Task Force to work with the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network and housed that task force under the Church in Society Committee. (Per Synod Assembly Action SA22.06.06) (July 9, 2022)

Deleted lines 32-41 of the amended Mustard Seed Memorial that was adopted by the 2022 Synod Assembly and inserted the word “Further” after “Be It” in line 43 so that the Memorial would now reflect the intended action of the Synod Assembly. (July 9, 2022)

Took no action on the resolution entitled, “Evaluation of Budget Line Item on Rent and Utilities” that was referred to the Synod Council by the 2022 Synod Assembly as the action being requested under the resolved section is already enumerated in the Bulletin of Reports of the Synod (July 9, 2022)

Approved the Minutes of the 2022 Synod Assembly (September 24, 2022)

Allocated \$1000 total per Conference to fund the Mustard Seed Initiatives through the 2023 Synod Assembly. If a

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Conference has an initiative that exceeds \$1000, it may bring it to the Synod Council for consideration. (September 24, 2022)

Voted to hold the 2023 Synod Assembly on June 16-17, 2023, with Friday, June 16 being held on ZOOM and Saturday, June 17 held in person at Penn West University – California with a cost for each attendee to be set at \$75.00. (January 28, 2023)

Approved the Synod Assembly Lay Voting Member Formula as recommended by the Credentials Committee:

1. That each congregation, irrespective of baptized membership, may elect two voting members
2. That an additional voting member be elected, based on baptized membership above 500 but below 750, an additional two voting members be elected for those congregations with a baptized membership above 750 but below 1,000, and that an additional three voting members be elected for those congregations with a baptized membership above 1,000. And that each increment of 250 above 1,000 baptized members provide an additional voting member for the congregation to elect. (January 28, 2023)

Nominated Rev. James Arter and Rev. William A. Schaefer for the position of Secretary at the 2023 Synod Assembly. (March 18, 2023)

Adopted revisions to the financial documents of the Synod Policy Manual. (March 18, 2023)

Amended the proposed agenda for the 2023 Synod Assembly to insert the inclusion of the proposed amendment to bylaw B7.11.11. and the rule to set the time for speeches immediately after the Adoption of the Agenda. (May 13, 2023)

Designated the offerings from the worship service of the 2023 Synod Assembly to ministries related to our Companion Synod in Madagascar. (May 13, 2023)

Recommendations to the 2023 Synod Assembly

1. To adopt the Program and Order of Business for the 2023 Synod Assembly.
2. To amend Bylaw B7.11.11. to read:

B7.11.11. Each voting member, or those persons accorded the privilege of seat and/or voice, when recognized by the chair, shall state his or her name, and the name of the congregation, institution, or group he or she represents. Persons speaking from the floor of the Synod Assembly shall use the floor microphones (if they are provided) and shall address and speak to the chair. ~~Such speeches shall be limited to 5 minutes on each Synod Assembly issue. Speakers may speak a second time on the same issue, but only after all others desiring to speak have been given opportunity to do so. Those speaking a second time shall be limited to 2 minutes. The time limits for each speaker shall be set in the rules of the Synod Assembly.~~

and set the following rule for the 2023 Synod Assembly:

Speeches shall be limited to 3 minutes on each Synod Assembly issue. Speakers may speak a second time on the same issue, but only after all others desiring to speak have been given the opportunity to do so. Those speaking a second time shall be limited to 2 minutes.

3. To adopt the following additional rules for the 2023 Synod Assembly:

A voting member may not introduce a motion after first speaking to the matter but shall be afforded the first opportunity to speak following receipt of a second, including "calling the previous question."

Any voting member may request, for separate consideration, the removal of any item from the en bloc recommendations of the changes to the Synod Constitution and Bylaws. All requests for the removal of these items must be received by the Secretary of the Synod in writing no later than 11:00 AM on Saturday, June 17, 2023.

Business items being brought before the Assembly that are not on the agenda must be submitted in writing to the Committee on Reference and Counsel no later than 11:00 AM on Saturday or they will not be considered.

Any motion from the floor of the Synod Assembly to amend the proposed budget (1) must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod by 10:15 AM on Saturday, June 17, 2023, (2) that any proposed amendment to increase any line item of the proposed budget must include an offsetting reduction to another line item(s) in order to maintain the parameters of the proposed budget; (3) must be referred to the Committee on Reference and Counsel so that representatives of the Budget and Finance Committee can provide input on the proposed change(s) and the implication(s) of those changes prior to the Assembly's vote on the proposed budget.

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4. To approve the first reading of Group A (Constitution Changes) of the recommended changes to the Synod Constitution. (See *“Exhibit A”*)
5. To approve Group B (Constitution Changes Recommended by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly) of the recommended changes to the Synod Constitution. (See *“Exhibit B”*)
6. To approve Group C (Bylaw Changes) of the recommended changes to the Synod Bylaws. (See *“Exhibit C”*)
7. To approve the 2024 Synod Budget. (See *“Exhibit D”*)
8. To approve the following Mission Support Formula for 2024: “The faithful people who make up the congregations of our SWPA Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America endeavor to live lives of generosity and healthy stewardship. We believe that all we have is a gift from God - ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of God’s gracious love for us. We aspire to give back a portion of every gift to God through the hands and feet of our local churches. We recognize that our Synod further extends the reach of the church into the lives of people both locally and globally. Our congregations are encouraged to give at least a tithe of gifts and offerings to Mission Support. We challenge each other to give a faithful measure of our congregation’s gifts to the work of our Synod. Congregational leaders may request consultation with our Synod Council to assist in determining their proportionate share. We are called to live faithful lives to the bold witness of life-everlasting through our savior Jesus Christ, who sacrificed everything for us and calls us to follow in his footsteps and boldly sacrifice everything for our neighbor. May God work in our hearts and in our congregations to give faithfully so that God’s hands and feet never stop serving our neighbors.”
9. To approve the 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament. (See *“Exhibit E”*)
10. To approve the 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Service. (See *“Exhibit F”*)
11. To approve the 2024 Interim Ministry Guidelines. (See *“Exhibit G”*)
12. To amend the “Minimum Compensation Requirement for Placement of Pastors” by striking the words in the title “the placement of pastors” and inserting “Providing Candidates for Call” and in the striking the words “placing pastors” from the body of the text and inserting “providing candidates for call”. (See *“Exhibit H”*)