

# Greater Milwaukee Synod Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting held 21 September 2023

Meeting held at The Table, 5053 Capital Ave., Milwaukee.

**God's Vision:** A world that embodies the fullness of life: justice, peace, equity, hope, and love for everyone, including all races, genders, identities, abilities, and social status.

**Our Mission:** We follow Jesus, form communities, love all.

## Meeting Attendance for Synod Council Members

Name	Conference/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Anti-Racism
OPEN	At Large Lay				
Beebe, Rev. Kevin	At Large Clergy	2025	X		11/2020
Beutin, Todd	South Central	2027	X		6/2023
Caldwell, Dr. Joyce	Vice President	2025 (2)	X		10/2023
Dotson, Dr. Rose	At Large Lay	2025	X		11/2021
Erickson, Rev. Paul	Bishop	2028 (2)	X		6/2023
Grosser, Linda	North	2025	X		10/2023
Guerrero, José Andrés	At Large	2027 (2)			Pending
Guerrero, Jacob	Young Adult Rep.	2025			Pending
Gyson, Rev. Joshua	At Large Clergy	2027	X		Pending
Hartfield, Steven	At Large Lay	2025	X		11/2021
James, Rev. Matthew	South	2025	X		11/2021
Jordan, Rev. Kimberly	West	2027	X		Pending
Key, Jerry	Central	2025	X		Pending
Pahl, Rev. Karen	Treasurer	2025	X		11/2021
Reinders, Bob	Acting Treasurer	2025			11/2021
Schober, Missy	West Central	2027	X		6/2023
Short, Lucas	Youth Representative	2024	X		Pending
Stobie, Rev. Sarah Crance	Secretary	2027	X		06/2023

## **Guests and Synod Staff**

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Others present included: **Ms. Venice Williams**, the Table (our host), **The Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays**, Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity and Leadership; **The Rev. Chris Manke**, Executive Director of Outreach for Hope; **The Rev. Kristin Nielsen**, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission; **The Rev. Matthew Short**, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission; and **Karina Ward (Kingo, Shorewood)**, Anti-Racism Team Co-Chair.

*\*In compliance with new guidance regarding the recording of Actions from the Office of the Secretary, numbering for Synod Council Actions does not reset at the onset of each month but continues throughout the year.*

*Thus, SC22.01.16. may be followed by SC22.03.17., not SC22.03.01. \**

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## **Call to Order**

**Vice President Caldwell** called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

## **Devotions**

**Ms. Venice Williams**, our host, led our devotion with an introduction to the ministry and mission of The Table focusing on John 10:10, *“I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

## **I. Consent Agenda**

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 23.09.67. Approval of Consent Agenda**

The Council voted to approve the following items from the consent agenda as presented, including: approval of voice for visitors; adoption of agenda for this meeting; approval of minutes from the Synod Council meetings of 20 July 2023; approval of on leave from call status for **the Rev. Susan Bowen**, standard leave effective 16 July 2023, **the Rev. Maren Hooper**, standard leave effective 31 December 2022, **the Rev. Diane Olson**, standard leave effective 28 June 2023, and **the Rev. Lindsey Beukelman**, standard leave effective 30 September 2023, and approval of retired status for **Deacon Marian Wasierski**, effective 01 October 23.

## **II. Ministry Highlight: The Table**

**Ms. Williams** shared the mission and ministry of The Table in detail for those present, beginning with the early beginning of The Table through Alice’s Garden to its new location and new ministries onsite at 5053 Capitol Ave, Milwaukee. Some of the ministries onsite are: Wellness Studio, Mystic Phoenix Arts, a birthing studio, Umbutu Research and Evaluation events, Herbs and Lather, art therapy, MKE Winter Farmer’s Market and more.

### III. Synod Calls

#### **Council Action**

##### **SC 23.09.68. Approval of Synod Call**

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for **The Rev. Steve Rutter**, called to interim ministry at **Resurrection, New Berlin**, effective 21 August 2023, and **The Rev. Tom Gaulke**, called to interim ministry at **Carthage College, Kenosha** effective 5 September 2023.

### IV. Vice President's Report

**Vice President Caldwell** invited incoming, outgoing, and continuing Council members to attend anti-racism training which will be held on 28 October 2023 at **St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa**. She also shared a handout on the role and responsibilities of the Synod Council and its members. She reminded all to complete their fraud paperwork. She also reminded the Council of the 4 values of the synod: curiosity, courage, compassion and collaboration.

### V. Bishop's Report

**Bishop Erickson** provided oral highlights from his written report, and lifted up the need for conversation concerning possible changes to the structure of the Synod Assembly for 2025. This will be further discussed at the November meeting.

**Erickson** also shared highlights on congregations in transition, and needs for an interim pastor for **First United Lutheran, Sheboygan**.

### VI. New Business: Reinstate the Rev. Karen Pahl as Treasurer

#### **Council Action**

##### **SC 23.09.69. Reinstate the Rev. Karen Pahl as Treasurer**

The Council voted to reinstate the Rev. Karen Pahl as Treasurer for Synod Council. Gratitude was expressed to Bob Reinders for his willingness to serve as Acting Treasurer.

## VII. Treasurer's Report

**Treasurer Pahl** presented the financial reports. **Pahl** share that there is a deficit of \$27,000 of mission support at end of July, and then August was not as good as anticipated. **Pahl** shared that sometimes it picks up in the Fall. **Pahl** shared that expenses are holding at expectation, ahead by \$44,000, but the synod is in a deficit of \$34,000.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 23.09.70. Reception of Financial Reports**

The Council voted to receive the financial reports through 30 June 2023 as presented.

Following the Council Action above, **Pahl** shared the need for a few volunteers to serve on the Finance Committee. She also updated the Synod Council on the process of auditing the Synod's financial records.

## VIII. Old Business

### **A. Update on Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal**

**Vice President Caldwell**, presenting as the Campaign Manager, shared a history of the ETS Appeal after passing out the current brochure for ETS. **Caldwell** discussed current churches completing their campaigns, and reminded all that congregations should consider their part since at this time only one-third of the synod's congregations have participated. Discussion centered on how to get the information out to the congregations and not just the rostered leaders or church administrators. **Caldwell** also shared that the committee would be talking with Mike Ward on how to wind down the appeal.

### **B. Synod Staff Personnel Policy Review**

The Council discussed proposed amendments and revisions to the Synod Staff Personnel Policy which will be placed into a handbook. Discussion occurred regarding options for a parental leave policy, sabbaticals, and vacation time. **Caldwell** requested that the Synod Council review the handbook and send feedback to her prior to the next Synod Council meeting.

### **C. Update on the Authentic Diversity Audit Work with Gold Enterprises**

**The Rev. Dobbins-Mays** shared the names of those seeking appointment to the Authentic Diversity Audit's Strategic Planning Task Force to the Synod Council for approval. The list was in Dropbox and defines each person as a member or advisor of the team.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 23.09. 71. Appointment to the Strategic Planning Task Force**

The Council voted to appoint the following to the Strategic Planning Task Force:  
**Dr. Joyce Caldwell, John Corning, Angelica Dudenhoeffer, Chuck Ellingson, Maryann Galicia, Bishop Paul Erickson, The Rev. Matt James, Yolanda Lewis, The Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays, The Rev. Denise Mbise, The Rev. Marilyn Miller, The Rev. Aida Muniz, The Rev. Matt Short, The Rev. Michelle Townsend de Lopez, and Karina Ward.**

**The Rev. Dobbins-Mays** presented a written overview and oral summary of the next steps of the Synod's Authentic Diversity Audit, completed in partnership with Gold Enterprises, LLC. Discussion followed regarding how the work will proceed.

**Dobbins-Mays** expressed gratitude for the words of several members and the support of the Synod Council.

#### **D. Review of Synod Assembly Resolutions**

**Vice President Caldwell** led the Council through an overview of actions required by resolutions adopted at the 2023 Synod Assembly.

##### **1. Resolution 1: Creation Care and ELCA Governing Documents**

**Caldwell** shared that this has been completed following Synod Council Action from the last meeting. The letter was sent out from **Bishop Erickson**.

##### **2. Resolution 2: Supporting Raise the Age Wisconsin Campaign**

**Caldwell** shared that this has been completed since the last meeting. The letter was sent out from **Erickson**.

##### **3. Resolutions 3 & 4: Synod Compensation Guidelines & Continuing Education Guidelines**

**Caldwell** shared that the Synod Council will appoint members to these special task forces in November. A call has been made through communications for names, one has been received.

##### **4. Resolution 5: Children and Vulnerable Youth**

**Caldwell** requested the Synod Council to consider names of persons who can serve on this task force which will be a "youth listening" task force for the synod. She requested that we return to our own ministry sites and consider who can serve, and then share those potential names to her.

#### **IX. New Business**

##### **A. Action to Reinstate the Rev. Karen Pahl as Synod Treasurer.**

This action was moved and approved earlier in the agenda so that **Treasurer Karen Pahl** could share the Financial Report.

##### **B. Review of Synod Assembly Report**

**Vice President Caldwell** shared that the report was in the Dropbox. **Bishop Erickson** shared that the goal of the Synod Assembly expenditures and fees to those who attend is to break even. **Erickson** stated that feedback is needed for 2025 since the ICC is already reserved for 2024. **Erickson** asked those present to review the report thoroughly and provide ideas for 2025. **Caldwell** suggested discussing this again in November.

##### **C. Discussion of Synod Assembly Structure and Format for 2025**

**Vice President Caldwell** observed that this was discussed with the above agenda item.

#### **D. Recommendation of Medical Plan for Synod Staff for 2024**

**Council Action**

**SC 23.09.72. Recommendation of 2024 Medical Plan for Synod Staff**

The Council voted to approve the motion made by the Executive Committee to continue to provide health care benefits in 2024 through Portico Benefit Services at either the Silver+ or Gold+ Level, at the employee's discretion.

#### **E. Recommendation of Compensation Guidelines for 2024**

Before the motion was made, **Bishop Erickson** reminded the council that there will be a task force appointed for 2025's compensation guidelines. **Erickson** also shared that there was a recommendation to increase Continuing Education. The task force will be assigned to look at area synods guidelines and compensation charts. Discussion was held on expectation of hours worked for full and part-time leaders. The guidelines were provided in Dropbox prior to this meeting for review.

**Council Action**

**SC 23.09.73. Recommendation of Compensation Guidelines for 2024**

The Council voted to approve the motion made by the Executive Committee to accept the provided written Compensation Guidelines for 2024.

#### **F. Action to Approve Urban Internship Grants**

The Endowment Committee made a motion to the Executive Committee to approve their choices for the Urban Internship Grants. The Executive Committee approves of their recommendation that Cross Lutheran, Milwaukee receives \$30,000.00 and that Reformation Lutheran, Milwaukee receives \$19,500.00.

**Council Action**

**SC 23.09.74. Recommendation of Urban Internship Grants**

The Council voted to approve the motion made by the Executive Committee and the Endowment Committee to distribute to Cross Lutheran, Milwaukee the grant award of \$30,000.00 and to Reformation Lutheran, Milwaukee the grant award of \$19,500.00 through the Urban Internship Grants.

### **G. Election of 3 At-Large Members to Executive Committee**

**Vice President Caldwell** shared that the Executive Committee has 7 people, and there is a need for 3 At-Large members who are not rostered to maintain the 60/40 balance. **Caldwell** passed out a written ballot, and **Secretary Stobie** and **Treasurer Pahl** counted the ballots after they were collected.

#### **Council Action**

#### **SC 23.09.75. Election of 3 At-Large Executive Committee Members**

The Council elected by written ballot 3 At-Large Executive Committee Members for a 1-year term. They are: **Dr. Rose Dotson, Linda Grosser, and José Guerrero.**

### **H. Appointment of 1 Synod Council Member to the Outreach for Hope Board**

**Vice President Caldwell** shared the Outreach for Hope Board always has a Synod Council member serve on it. **The Rev. Kimberly Jordan** volunteered to serve on the board.

#### **Council Action**

#### **SC 23.09.76. Appointment to the Outreach for Hope Board**

The Council voted to approve the appointment of the **Rev. Kimberly Jordan** to the Outreach for Hope Board for a 1-year term.

### **I. Ratify the Election of Ava Lemke to the Mt. Meru Coffee Project Board**

#### **Council Action**

#### **SC 23.09.77. Ratification of Mt. Meru Coffee Board Member**

The Council voted to ratify the appointment of **Ava Lemke** to the board of the Mount Meru Coffee Project.

### **J. Open Synod Council Position: At-Large Female**

**Vice President Caldwell** reminded the Synod Council of this vacancy and requested that all members consider possible persons to fill the position.

## **X. Reports**

**A. Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission** – A written report was submitted to Dropbox. **The Rev. Short** shared information about coaches and coaching work that is happening in the synod now, and an upcoming grant which will allow coaches to assist congregations as needed.

- B. Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission** – A written report was submitted to Dropbox. **The Rev. Nielsen** shared 33 congregations are in transition at this time. Work is happening within Region 5 to assist in the call process through the creation of short videos.
- C. Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity and Leadership** –A written report was submitted. **The Rev. Dobbins-Mays** shared that she has enjoyed visiting congregations and sharing in adult forums about the audit.
- D. Lutheran Campus Ministry**-A written report was submitted.
- E. Reconciling in Christ** –No report submitted. The next training opportunity is November 11.
- F. Anti-Racism Team** – No report submitted.
- G. Women of the ELCA**- No report submitted.
- H. Outreach for Hope** – A written report submitted. A reminder for the Run/Ride/Walk fundraiser was shared.
- I. Latino Strategy Table**—No report submitted.
- J. Endowment Committee**- No report submitted.
- K. Healing Faith Network**- No report submitted. A reminder was shared about their next training on October 7.

## X. Adjournment

### **Council Action**

**SC 23.09.78.**

### **Adjournment**

The council, reaching the end of its agenda of business, adjourned with prayer led by **the Rev. Kevin Beebe** at 9:05 p.m.

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### **Next Meeting:**

**Thursday November 16, 2023**

**Location: Resurrection Lutheran, Pewaukee**

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings begin with dinner at 5:30 p.m. and formal business at 6:15.

Submitted,

The Rev. Sarah Crance Stobie, Synod Secretary



