

# Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA

## Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting

9 May 2024

Meeting held at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer /Racine and on Zoom

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**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.

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### Meeting Attendance for Synod Council Members

Name	Conference/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Anti-Racism
Andersen, Rev. Doug	At Large Clergy	2025	X		Pending
Beutin, Todd	South Central	2027	X		6/2023
Caldwell, Dr. Joyce	Vice President	2025 (2)	X		10/2023
Coleman, Laura	At Large Lay	2027	X		Pending
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)	X		Pending
Guerrero, Jacob	Young Adult Rep.	2025	X		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
Powers, 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: **the Rev. Afi Dobbins-May**, Assistant to the Bishop; **the Rev. Aida Muniz**, Anti-Racism Team Co-Chair; **the Rev. Kristine Nielsen**, Assistant to the Bishop; and **the Rev. Matthew Short**, Assistant to the Bishop.

*\*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 Joyce Caldwell** called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

## **Devotions**

**The Rev. Matthew James** led the devotions on the topic of Ascension Day focusing on Acts 1.

## **I. Consent Agenda**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared that the consent agenda was presented prior to the meeting.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.44 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; approval of minutes for March 21, 2024, April 25, 2024, May 5, 2024, and 2023 Synod Assembly; approval of On Leave from Call Status for **the Rev. Brad Brown**, standard leave effective 5/4/2024; approval of Retired Status for **the Rev. John Horner-Ibler** effective 5/1/2024, **Deacon Sherie Kruse** effective 6/1/2024; **the Rev. Mark Thompson**, effective 05/01/2024; and approval of appointments of **the Rev. Rachel Young-Binter** and **Lisa Miller** to the Youth Listening Task Force.

## **II. Ministry Highlight: None**

## **III. Synod Calls**

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.45 Approval of Synod Call**

The Council voted to approve **the Rev. Aida Muniz** for a synod call to interim ministry at Ascension Lutheran/Milwaukee effective 05/20/2024.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.46 Approval of Synod Call**

The Council voted to approve **the Rev. Dean Willich** for a synod call to interim ministry at Adoration Lutheran/Greenfield effective 04/01/2024.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.47 Approval of Synod Call**

The Council voted to approve **the Rev. Casey Sugden** for a synod call to interim ministry at Our Savior's Lutheran/Hartland effective 06/03/2024.

## **IV. Vice President's Report**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared a personal reflection about the past year, and her journey since the loss of her husband. **Caldwell** also shared a reminder that the next Anti-Racism Training is scheduled for September 28 and asked those on council who have not taken a recent training to do so soon. The training will be at the Lutheran Church of the Great Spirit from 9-4:30 pm. **Caldwell** also shared that the cost of the training is covered for all Synod Council members.

**Caldwell** shared that an email was sent about assisting with 2024 Synod Assembly worship service. **Caldwell** also reviewed the schedule of the assembly.

The *Equipping the Saints (ETS)* Appeal will be celebrated at the 2024 Synod Assembly with a video on Friday night, sharing the impact of the ETS grants in our synod. **Caldwell** gave her thanks to the congregations that participated in the appeal.

## **V. Bishop's Report**

**Bishop Paul Erickson** submitted a written report prior to the meeting for review.

**Erickson** shared details regarding the changes in financial keeping in the synod office. **Erickson** shared that he is looking forward to the transition and that the synod office will post the new part-time staff position after the assembly. The new position will be for 15 hours a week, two days a week to do the bookkeeping work, and be the bridge between Samlyn Bookkeeping firm and the synod office. This new position will fill the gap that **Treasurer Karen Pahl** has been doing longer than anticipated. Gratitude was shared for this work.

**Erickson** shared details on his travel to Washington DC with the group, Christians for Middle East Peace.

**Erickson** shared that the 2024 Synod Assembly has been front and center for synod staff. Work is being concluded on the worship bulletin, assembly booklet, and items will be posted on the website soon. **Erickson** shared that we are good with our ratios with 64% of lay attendance.

**Erickson** shared that closing procedures for Wellington Park Lutheran/Milwaukee are almost completed. The appointed committee began in March 2023, and the residential property was recently sold. Final checks are being distributed from the sale of the properties.

**Erickson** shared updates about Christ Lutheran/Jackson. **Erickson** met with a lay leader about their future. With their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up, there are tentative plans to close with a service this fall. Currently, only 4-5 people are attending worship.

**Erickson** shared updates about Martin Luther Lutheran Church/Milwaukee. Three weeks ago, **the Rev. Ari Mattson** resigned due to a misconduct issue. **Erickson** is working closely with the congregation council as well as other synod staff. **Erickson** reminded the Synod Council that there is a policy for how we respond to misconduct, and it is posted on the website.

## **VI. Treasurer's Report**

Prior to the meeting, **Treasurer Karen Pahl** presented the financial reports in Dropbox. **Pahl** shared that through March, the synod received roughly \$239,000 for mission support, with an anticipated \$258,000 budgeted. **Pahl** shared that this was not too bad for the first two months, and she will watch how things continue. **Pahl** also shared that at the same time last year, we had received \$248,000 in mission support. **Pahl** reminded the council that the mission support for churchwide was adjusted. Churchwide has contacted the synod office to confirm this change. **Pahl** shared that our total expenses were \$271,000 vs. \$288,000 so we are under about \$16,000. **Pahl** shared that the synod received the churchwide contribution for **the Rev. Matthew Short**/Assistant to the Bishop's expenses, which was roughly \$10,000. **Pahl** shared that we are doing fairly well.

Gratitude was expressed to **Pahl** for the work that she has done to fill the gap for the past 2 years with the finances in the synod office.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.48      Reception of Financial Reports**

The Council voted to receive the financial reports as presented.

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** reminded the council of the approved revised budget from the May 4 email vote. This will be shared with the 2024 Synod Assembly. **Pahl** will be doing a Zoom on the Wednesday before the 2024 Synod Assembly and 40 people have signed up. **Bishop Paul Erickson** reminded the council that motions can come from the floor to amend the budget. **Caldwell** asked council members to be prepared to speak to the budget if needed. Information will be emailed again to all people attending the 2024 Synod Assembly.

## VII. Old Business

### **A. Review and Approve Synod Council Goals for Authentic Diversity (AD) Strategic Plan.**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared that the AD Strategic Plan goals were shared in Dropbox. **Caldwell** reminded the council of the January meeting breakouts that were conducted to review the goals specific to the Synod Council. Following the meeting, **Caldwell** met with **Dr. Rose Dotson** and **Linda Grosser** to review the notes and together they came up with goals for the Synod Council. Discussion ensued. For minute purposes, the goals for Synod Council are listed below:

Goal 1: Gather and maintain a database of congregation presidents and vice presidents.

#### Action Steps

- Create a spreadsheet list of congregations and ministries by conferences.
- Request contact information for congregational officers at the synod assembly.
- Follow up with congregations and ministries that did not complete the survey by assigning six congregations/ministries per Synod Council member.
- Provide script for calls to pastor.
- Call the pastor to introduce themselves and ask for contact information for the congregation president and vice president.

Goal 2: Work with congregation presidents and vice presidents to get them signed up for the Synod E-News.

#### Action Steps

- Update annually the information gathered in Goal 1.
- Encourage congregation presidents to share E-News with their congregations through emails, newsletters, bulletins, etc.

Goal 3: Develop regular articles for E-News and send emails to congregation presidents.

#### Action Steps

- Identify highlights after each Synod Council meeting to be shared in E-News.
- Highlight a Synod Council Member of the Month with photo and short bio/story.

Goal 4: Define and understand the role of Synod Council members and the role of Deans in reaching out and building relationships with congregations and ministries.

Goal 5: Hold a retreat annually for Synod Council members and Deans to focus on synod identities of Anti-racism and Reconciling In Christ and the role of synod council and deans.

**Council Action**

**SC 24.05.49 Approval of Synod Council Goals from the Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan**

The Council voted to approve the outlined Synod Council Goals as stated in the Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan.

**B. Receive, Discuss and Recommend Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan to the 2024 Synod Assembly for Approval.**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared that the whole plan was now in Dropbox. **The Rev. Afi Dobbins-May** began sharing the plan by walking through the introduction and background which led to the themes. **The Rev. Aida Muniz** reviewed Theme 1 Goals and Theme 2 Goals. Discussion ensued. **The Rev. Matthew James** reviewed Theme 3 Goals and Theme 4 Goals. Discussion ensued. **The Rev. Matthew Short** reviewed Theme 5 Goals. Theme 6 Goals were previously reviewed. Discussion ensued. Gratitude was given to the Task Force for their hard work in creating the plan.

**Council Action**

**SC 24.05.50 Approval to Recommend the Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan to the 2024 Synod Assembly**

The Council voted to approve the Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan as presented to the 2024 Synod Assembly for approval and support of its overall direction and commitment, recognizing that specific goals and actions may be adjusted as needed.

**VIII. New Business**

**A. Recommend Amendment to the Synod Constitution (in response to Report of Resolution 1 Task Force).**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared that this is in response to the Task Force for last year's Resolution 1. This will be a new bylaw and is a goal statement.

To add a bylaw, S9.01.02 "Whenever the Synod Council is to nominate individuals for positions of leadership, serious consideration should be given to people of the communities of color and the LGBTQIA+ communities."

Discussion ensued about the difference between a bylaw and a continuing resolution in a constitution. A change in motion was made to become now a Continuing Resolution S9.01.A24. Discussion ensued.

**Council Action**

**SC 24.05.51 Approval of the Continuing Resolution to the Synod Constitution**

The Council voted to approve the continuing resolution S9.01.A24 "Whenever the Synod Council is to nominate individuals for positions of leadership, serious consideration should be given to people of the communities of color and the LGBTQIA+ communities." and will share with the 2024 Synod Assembly.

**B. Recommend Approval of Resolution Honoring the Courageous Leadership of the Rev. Joe and Joyce Ellwanger at the 2024 Synod Assembly.**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared the confidential resolution to the Synod Council. **Bishop Paul Erickson** explained how the resolution will happen at the 2024 Synod Assembly, and how the theme for our assembly is *Courage* and how the Ellwangers have faithfully served the church as examples of courageous leaders.

**Council Action**

**SC 24.05.52 Approval to Recommend the Resolution Honoring the Courageous Leadership of the Rev. Joe and Joyce Ellwanger at the 2024 Synod Assembly.**

The Council voted to approve the recommendation of the resolution to the 2024 Synod Assembly.

**C. Recommend Designation of St. John's Endowment Funds for Mission Support.**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared the history of the endowment that was created from the closure of St. John's Lutheran/West Milwaukee. Twenty percent of the quarterly distributions from the endowment fund is designated for the Greater Milwaukee Synod. **Caldwell** recommended that at this time the payments go into mission support.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.53 Approval of Designation of the St. John's Endowment Fund to mission support.**

The Council voted to designate the receipts from the St. John Endowment fund for congregational mission support.

#### **D. Recommend Change of July Meeting Date to July 11, 2024.**

. **Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared the need to change the date due to ELCA Youth Gathering. The location is not yet determined.

### **Council Action**

#### **SC 24.05.54 Approval to Change the July Meeting Date to July 11, 2024**

The Council voted to approve the change of the Synod Council July Meeting Date to July 11, 2024.

#### **E. Other Business: None.**

### **IX. Reports**

- A. Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission** – A written report was submitted by **the Rev. Matthew Short. Short** highlighted the renewal mission resources and videos and asked the Synod Council to review videos and give feedback. **Short** shared that the tracking system for mission support will be updated to be more effective.
- B. Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission** – A written report was submitted. **The Rev. Kristine Nielsen** shared that there continue to be many congregations in transition. **Nielsen** requested prayer for those congregations in transition and was grateful for the goals of the AD Strategic Plan which will help transition time.
- C. Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity and Leadership** –No report was submitted at this time because the entire AD Strategic Plan was completed and submitted to the council.
- D. Lutheran Campus Ministry-** A written report was submitted.
- E. Reconciling in Christ Team** – No report submitted.
- F. Anti-Racism Team** –**The Rev. Aida Muniz** shared that **Karina Ward** has stepped down from being a co-chair.
- G. Women of the ELCA-** No report submitted.
- H. Outreach for Hope** – **The Rev. Kimberly Jordan** asked for the Synod Council to ratify the appointment of **Scott Manske** to fill a spot that was vacated on the Board.



**Council Action**

**SC 24.05.55 Approval of Appointment to the Outreach for Hope Board**

The Council voted to ratify the appointment of **Scott Manske** to the Outreach for Hope Board.

**I. Latino Strategy Table**—No report submitted.

**J. Endowment Committee**- No report submitted.

**K. Healing Network**- No report submitted.

**X. Synod Discussion: What's the top 5 highlights?**

**Vice President Joyce Caldwell** led a discussion on the top 5 highlights that should be shared with the Synod. At the time of the meeting, the following highlights were raised.

1. The Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan was received and approved by the Synod Council.
2. Gratitude was given for the playfulness of the Holy Spirit.
3. Information concerning the Endowment Gift from St. John's
4. Financial Position/New Hire.
5. Continuing Resolution adopted by Synod Council.

**XI. Adjournment**

**Council Action**

**SC 24.05.56 Adjournment**

The Council, reaching the end of its agenda of business, adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 8:24 p.m.

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**Next Meeting:**

**Thursday, July 11, 2024**

**Location: To Be Determined**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Sarah Crance Stobie*

The Rev. Sarah Crance Stobie, Synod Secretary