

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.

The Greater Milwaukee Synod Council met on Thursday, January 16th 2020, at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Kenosha, Wisconsin. These are highlights of that meeting: Detailed summaries of the Council's meetings will be available on the synod's website at <https://milwaukeesynod.org/who-we-are/synod-council/>. These highlights are not official minutes of the proceedings.

Actions

- Approved yearly On-Leave-From-Call Status for **The Rev. Amy Becker-Perez; The Rev. Kerstin Hedlund; The Rev. Maren Hooper; The Rev. Patrick Keen; Deacon Douglas Krekling; The Rev. Jay McDivitt; The Rev. Adam Moreno; The Rev. Jennifer Olson; The Rev. Kristin Rice; Deacon Jeanne Solik; The Rev. Kelly Taylor-Schaus; The Rev. Vicki Watkins; The Rev. Dean Willich; and the Rev. Stacy Seger.**
- Approved new On-Leave-From-Call Status for **The Rev. Grant Quever**, effective 31 December 2019; and **The Rev. Steven Clingman**, effective 16 December 2019.
- Approved of Retired Status for **Deacon Judy Kolstad**, effective 1 January 2020.
- Accepted financial statements through October 2019.
- Authorized **San Lucas Lutheran, Racine**, as a Synodically-Authorized Worshipping Community.
- Approved a 2% Cost-of-Living salary increase for Synod Staff in 2020.
- Recommended Sections of the Rules and Procedures for Synod Assembly establishing deadlines for Nominations and Resolutions.
- Ratified the roster of the **Lutheran Campus Ministry Board**; appointed **Joshua Kuehn** as Synod Council representative to that board.

Reports and Discussion

- **Vice President Joyce Caldwell** noted the Executive Committee went through a personnel review with Bishop Erickson; She invited Synod Council members to discuss how to improve visibility of synod ministries in different contexts.
- **Bishop Paul Erickson's** report included updates on staffing changes and interview processes. He announced the new start of **Robyn Di Giacinto** as Communications Specialist. He added his goal is to complete worship visits with all 126 synod congregations (currently at 73%) in 2020.

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- The Bishop has authorized Synod Authorized Minister Status for **Char Giuliani**, seminary graduate awaiting call at **Incarnation, Milwaukee**. The Authorized status for Pastor Ron Reyes, an American Baptist minister, to serve Emaus, Racine, has ended.
- **Bishop Erickson** has received invitation and plans to attend the Diocese of Meru Convention in August 2020.
- The Council was addressed on the ministry and work of the Synod Anti-Racism Team (ART) by **The Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld (Jackson Park, Milwaukee)** and **Esther Rusch (Faith, Cedarburg)**. They thanked the Council for its support and for keeping the work of anti-racism before the synod. The ART is in process of goal setting and exploring new directions regarding the format and scheduling of programs and training events. Plans for 2020 include:
 - Hosting 3 “Deconstructing Racism” Workshops for congregations
 - Hosting two media events (focusing on films, books, and documentaries).
 - Identifying a small working group to explore how to describe the goals and process should a congregation want to become anti-racist. The ART is looking to collaborate with the Synod RIC team to define what it looks like and means to be a welcoming congregation.
 - Providing quarterly gatherings for open conversations—providing support, addressing challenges, and offering resources for church leaders on the journey and continuing the conversations begun in anti-racism training or workshops.
 - Providing resources for rostered ministers to grow in their own understandings of racism.

Rusch shared the vision of the Anti-Racism team is to “be a constant voice lifting up anti-racism as a value of our synod.”

- **The Rev. Molly Doreza** presented an update on the formation and work of the Synod’s Task Force on Opioid and Substance Abuse (2019 Resolution 2). The Task Force has been meeting regularly and has been connected with an organization, Faith Partners, Inc., to discern how to address the culture around substance abuse. She presented a proposal for review for Faith Partners to contract and facilitate curriculum development to build and support Substance Abuse Response Teams within congregations.
- **Dr. Joyce Caldwell** has been offered and has accepted the part-time position of Campaign Manager to lead the Synod’s Mission Appeal: Equipping the Saints. **The Rev. Mike Ward** of GSB continues to assist in the planning stages; the goal is focused now on the formation of a steering committee.
- The Council received a draft of new Conference structures for 7 geographic conferences in preparation for rollout and discussion prior to the Synod Assembly vote to approve modifying the synod’s governing documents to reflect that change. The work of appointing congregations to specific conferences will happen in early summer—this work is governed by Continuing Resolution.
- The Council was made aware of the resignation of **José Andres Guerrero** from his At-large Lay Male seat (term through 2023).
- Other reports included: updates on an ad-hoc Constitution Committee being considered by **Secretary Schlake-Kruse**; the Synod-wide visits from Fall 2019; updates made to

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correct an error in the part-time vacation guidelines for Rostered Leaders in the Synod's Salary Guidelines; details of the Fall Leadership Conference, keynoted by **Susan Beaumont**; an update on the use and continuation of wellness grants, and a brief update on Outreach for Hope, led by Interim Director **Michael Groh**.

Finances

- **Treasurer Tom Gauthier** gave an update on financial state of the Synod. Numbers are on track to reach the targeted levels of mission support (\$75,000 deficit from budget).
- 1/3 of congregations had met their targeted giving levels for Mission support before the end of 2019; **Gauthier** is hopeful the synod will exceed \$300,000 in mission support.
- The Synod has now received its draft report from the 2018 Fiscal Year professional Audit.
- Mission Support intent forms have been mailed to congregations for 2020; He noted the importance of receiving those forms for budgeting purposes.

Meeting and Event Schedule

- **Next Meeting:** March 19, 2020: Trinity Lutheran, South Milwaukee

Upcoming Synod Council meetings for 2019-2020

- May 21, 2020: St. Olaf, Rubicon
- May 29-30, 2020: Synod Assembly, Italian Community Center, Milwaukee
- July 16, 2020: Bishop Erickson's Home
- September 17, 2020: St. Paul's Milwaukee

Unless otherwise published in advance, all meetings begin with dinner at 5:30 pm followed by the meeting beginning at 6:15 pm.

Submitted,

The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse, Synod Secretary