

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
September 21, 2017

All People's Church
2600 North 2nd Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

This summary does not represent official minutes of this meeting.

Ignited by God's love, Burning for Justice, We embrace the world

Attendance

Name	Cluster/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Anti- Racism
Mr. George Sorenson	Kenosha/West Racine	2021	X		Pending
Mr. George Monis	Lake Country	2019	X		Pending
Rev. Tim Tahtinen	Milwaukee 1	2021		X	Pending
Ms. Janet Wunrow	Milwaukee 2	2021	X		Pending
Ms. Claire Zautke	Milwaukee 3	2019		X	Pending
Rev. Bill Knapp	Milwaukee 4	2019	X		Pending
Rev. Elizabeth Jaeger	Northern Lakeshore	2021	X		Pending
Mr. Mark Christiaansen	Northwest	2021	X		Pending
Mr. Bob Reinders	Racine	2021	X		10/2015
Rev. Angela Khabeb	Waukesha	2019	X		10/2015
Rev. Lindsay Jordan	At Large	2019	X		2/2016
Mr. Jerry Key	At Large	2019	X		10/2016
Ms. Amber Davis	At Large	2019	X		Pending
Ms. Joyce Caldwell	Vice President	2021 (1)	X		Pending
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2019 (2)	X		1/2012
Mr. Tom Gauthier	Treasurer	2021 (1)	X		9/2013
Rev. Paul Erickson	Bishop	2022 (1)	X		Pending
Ms. Anja Logan	Youth Representative	6/2018	X		Pending
Ms. Aliliywa Mbise	Young Adult Rep.	2021	X		Pending

*Individuals with Anti-Racism information in **bold & italics** are planning to attend in October 2017.*

Also present were Rev. Jennifer J. Arnold, Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership; Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, Anti-Racism Team; Rev. Kristin Nielsen, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission; and Rev. Matthew Short, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission.

Opening devotions were offered by Vice President Joyce Caldwell, based on I Corinthians 12, with introductions of self and gifts by members.

Vice President's Remarks

Vice President Caldwell provided background on herself, including work with Faith Lutheran Church in Cedarburg and with the churchwide organization and on *Troubling the Waters for Healing of the Church: A Journey for White Christians from Privilege to Partnership*. Her dissertation was an ethnography of a congregation: research on a church wanting to become multi-cultural and multi-racial, exploring the depth of how we are formed in our whiteness. She said that she wishes to speak regularly about these issues, especially exclusionary approaches.

She is at Ottawa University in Brookfield, currently leading the accreditation effort. She noted that, as in the church, this is also an "unsettled time" in higher education, and on questions of diversity generally. She also served as co-chair of the host committee for the 2003 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee

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Bishop's Report

Bishop Paul Erickson referred to his written report. He elaborated on the address by Christina Cleveland at the Fall Theological Conference, dealing with race, conflict and the church. "How do we deal with our natural inclination to homogeneity?" It was, he said, a good conversation. There were 82 enrolled.

The bishop went on the report that all synod staff positions are now filled. The process of finding a new executive director for Outreach for Hope continues, with interviews scheduled.

He urged participation in the three-day Anti-Racism Training event in October, something that is integral to Council service. He also gave a preliminary overview of the cluster event scheduled for February 10th, for which Jennifer Arnold will take a lead planning role. The event will include clusters selecting nominees for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Roster Matters

Council Action

Approval of On Leave from Call Status

The Council voted to approve On Leave from Call status for Rev. Wendy Wirth Brock, effective August 5, 2017; Rev. Jon Breimeier, effective September 1, 2017; Rev. Kimberly Jordan, effective September 1, 2017; and Rev. Jennifer Carlson, effective September 25, 2017.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Rev. Jennifer J. Arnold to Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership, effective September 1, 2017.

David Patterson was at Luther Manor. There was a question on whether the synod pays for his new call; the answer was that the synod calls individuals for entities that cannot issue their own calls, but the entity pays for the position.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Rev. David Patterson to Spiritual Care Coordinator at Heartland Hospice, effective August 22, 2017.

Rev. Muriel Otto was recently ordained by the United Church of Christ. She had worked at Cross of Life, and will, with this invitation, continue working at the merged Unity Lutheran Church in Brookfield. She cannot be called since she is not on the ELCA roster. This invitation is the means to authorize her to function as a pastor (her call comes through the UCC).

Council Action

Approval of Invitation to Extended Service

The Council voted to approve an Invitation to Extended Service to Rev. Muriel Otto at Unity Lutheran Church, Brookfield, effective July 19, 2017.

By way of background, the bishop said that retired status is a privilege rather than a right, and is not automatically granted. While he said it was rare that it would not be granted, there could be circumstances where it would be inappropriate. He added that the complete roster of retired clergy will be reviewed for reapproval every three years, though that will not take place immediately.

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Council Action

Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. Gerald Anderson, effective October 1, 2017; and for Rev. Myron Deschaine, effective November 1, 2017.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Gauthier told the Council that synod finances overall are in good shape, although revenue is somewhat behind, but within projections. He reported that July and August were good months for income. The profit and loss statement was updated today to account for legal fees that are being billed to congregations. On legal fees, the bishop added that work on the revised sexual misconduct policy cost about \$5,000. The treasurer's report included a congregational support report. Mr. Gauthier urged members to review the table showing actual receipts compared with pledges by congregation, in part to see how their own congregations are doing in meeting their commitments. There was a question on negative notation on restricted funds in the balance sheet, which the treasurer will review, and will report to the Council at a future meeting.

Council Action

Acceptance of Financial Statements

The Council voted to accept the August 2017 financial statements.

Old Business – Action Items

Review and Approval of Proposed Severance Agreement

At its July meeting, the Council tabled consideration of a proposed revision to the synod's severance policy for staff. The primary remaining question was the authority of the bishop to make unilateral decisions on what severance package would be offered in a given case.

Discussion included a recounting of the primary change sought, which is the elimination of a mandated three-month salary package, as well as review of the proposed language to involve the executive committee in severance decisions. Questions reviewed included whether there was a guaranty of severance, which there is not, and the reasons for seeking greater latitude in this policy.

Council Action

Approval of Severance Agreement

The Council voted to approve revisions to the synod staff severance policy as follows:

“A staff member leaving his or her position with the Greater Milwaukee Synod may be granted severance benefits as determined by the bishop, who will consult with the Executive Committee. Severance benefits will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but may be particularly appropriate in the context of staff turnover due to the election of a new bishop. Severance benefits are not necessarily limited to that context, however.

Severance benefits will ordinarily not be provided to a staff member who is eligible for retirement benefits from Portico Benefit Services and who has decided to retire. Severance benefits, if any, for a staff member who is eligible for disability benefits from Portico Benefit Services may be subject to adjustment based on such eligibility.

The particular severance benefits to be provided will be set forth in a written severance agreement, which must include a release acceptable to the bishop and the Synod attorney.”

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Review and Approval of Sexual Misconduct Policy

The policy was presented for review and possible action. There remained substantive questions and technical edits, so action was deferred until November. Detailed questions or edits should be sent to Matthew Brockmeier and shared with the bishop. There will be a final review by Attorney Steve Knowles.

Review of Misconduct Webpage

Screen shots of the website content were shared, since the page is not online. Feedback was requested, with the understanding that this is not a Council action item. Mary Romskog will coordinate modifications. The bishop said that he wants to include individuals who are not in the synod office as possible reporting contacts, with one male and one female. The goal is to have multiple pathways for people to communicate regarding misconduct.

New Business – Action Items

Approval of the Relocation of Journey in Faith, Racine

Journey in Faith is a merged congregation which consolidated Emmanuel Lutheran and Gethsemane Lutheran churches. The Gethsemane building has been sold, and an offer is outstanding for the Emmanuel building. Their proposed new location is an existing church building that was available. Journey in Faith has discussed their possible move with nearby ELCA congregations, none of which has any objection to their move.

Council Action

Approval of Relocation

The Council voted to approve the relocation of Journey in Faith, Racine, to 7330 Old Spring Street, Mt. Pleasant.

Election of Executive Committee Members

With brief discussion of the duties of the executive committee, three non-officer members of the Council agreed to stand for election to serve for the next year.

Council Action

Election of Executive Committee Members

The Council voted to elect Ms. Amber Davis, Mr. Jerry Key, and Rev. Angela Khabeb to serve on the Executive Committee through August 2018.

Approval of Recommendation from Synod Endowment Committee

The Synod Endowment Committee is recommending grants of \$5,000 each to two congregations, Village Church and Ascension Lutheran Church, both in Milwaukee, from the Urban Internship Fund. That fund was created by a bequest made by Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Milwaukee in support of internships in the City of Milwaukee, with a mandate to spend down principle as well as earnings. It was noted that Outreach for Hope provides similar support to congregations, though their support is not limited to the City of Milwaukee. The Village Church grant will create an internship that will be at Village Church for half the year and Kingo Lutheran Church for the other half year. All grants made by the Synod Endowment Committee are subject to Council approval.

Council Action

Approval of Funding from the Synod Endowment Fund

The Council voted to approve the granting of funds from the Urban Internship Fund to Village Church, Milwaukee (\$5,000) and Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee (\$5,000).

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Approval of Synod Council Meeting Locations

Discussion on possible meeting locations through next September, including the question of whether to attempt to reschedule the all-day session at the Churchwide office in Chicago for one of the meeting dates. Members wishing to have their congregation host would supply food, tables and WIFI. There will be information on a possible Chicago reschedule and a Doodle Poll.

Nomination for Synod Council Representative to Serve on the Outreach for Hope Board of Directors

Bob Reinders offered to be nominated to serve on the Outreach for Hope board.

Council Action

Nomination to Outreach for Hope Board

The Council voted to nominate Mr. Bob Reinders to serve on the Board of Directors of Outreach for Hope.

Review of Outstanding Commitments and Funds from the Good Shepherd and St. Andrew's Church Closures

Matt Short provided background on the granting process for funds from the sale of properties belonging to Good Shepherd and St. Andrew's churches in Waukesha after they closed. Five large grants were made, including one for \$100,000 to Faith/Santa Fe for development of a Latino ministry in Waukesha. Only \$30,000 was drawn before the project ended due to changed circumstances. There was to be a project tithe, with \$5,000 having been designated by Faith/Santa Fe for Lutherdale and the other \$5,000 never designated. The designated tithe was apparently never paid by the synod. This leaves \$65,000 unspent or undesignated.

The Latino Strategy Table has asked that \$20,000 of the unspent funds be paid to Faith/Santa Fe to support their ministry for the remainder of 2017. This request is not tied to the original grant. At the same time, the Waukesha Cluster has asked about the status of the unspent funds, expressing a desire to keep those earmarked for Waukesha.

Approve Possible Distribution of Funds from the Good Shepherd and St. Andrews Church Funds

While questions remain about aspects of the remaining funds from the Good Shepherd and St. Andrews Church sales, the Council agreed to use other available funds to respond to the Latino Consultation Table's request for \$20,000 in support of Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church.

Council Action

Distribution of Funds

The Council voted to provide \$20,000 for 2017 expenses to Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, from available funds not included in the current year budget.

Additional discussion ensued, with the bishop recommending that the Assistant for Evangelical Mission look at other options to support a Latino ministry in Waukesha, and Rev. Short responding that he wishes to revitalize some version of the old evangelism committee to review successful strategies from past efforts.

Approval of 2018 Lay and Deacon Compensation Guidelines

Compensation guidelines for both lay and clergy were presented to the Council, with editing from the current version limited to updating compensation tables to reflect a cost of living adjustment. Technical details, including date references, will be edited.

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Council Action

Approval of Compensation Guidelines

The Council voted to approve the Compensation Guidelines for Deacons and Lay Professionals as presented, subject to technical editing.

Approval of 2018 Ordained Minister Compensation Guidelines

Council Action

Approval of Compensation Guidelines

The Council voted to approve the Compensation Guidelines for Clergy as presented, subject to technical editing.

Requirement for Council Members to Affirm Operational Ethics and Anti-Fraud Policies

Matthew Brockmeier provided an overview of the requirement for Council members (along with committee members and staff) to affirm both the Operational Ethics and Anti-Fraud policies. Forms were emailed to members this afternoon. Completed and signed forms should be returned to Mary Romskog in the synod office.

Reports

Evangelical Mission – A written report was submitted by Matt Short, with remarks highlighting an as yet to be planned mission support thank you dinner for congregations with the highest percentage mission support payments. Other groups will be addressed in events in future years. He is also working on possible presentations by [Reggie Jackson](#) on segregation in Milwaukee, with a Lutherdale retreat for middle and high school students as an option.

Congregations in Mission – A written report was submitted online after the Council gathered. In remarks Kristen Nielsen noted the new way of organizing staff activities, and spoke of some initial work on cross generational approaches.

Missional Leadership – A written report was submitted. Jennifer Arnold said that a lot of her focus as a new member of the staff is on getting accustomed, learning, and understanding the pastoral transition process. She will partner with Kristen Nielsen in that work. She said she is impressed with the interaction of synod staff. Among her specific tasks will be looking at updating the compensation guidelines for 2019. She will also work with leadership development, growing ways the synod can do that. She said that Christina Cleveland's presentation was very powerful, and had spurred some things that will help anti-racism work.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – No report submitted.

Reconciling in Christ – No report submitted.

Anti-Racism Team – A written report was presented. Brief remarks by Fred Thomas-Breitfeld included Reggie Jackson's presentation and another mention of the Anti-Racism Training scheduled for October 26-28.

Women of the ELCA – No report submitted.

Outreach for Hope – A written report was presented.

Good Shepherd Trinity Administration Commission – No written report submitted. Matthew Brockmeier and Jerry Key provided background on the commission process for Good Shepherd Trinity, along with a status update. The Commission assumed original jurisdiction in August, meaning that they now act in place of the elected congregation council. While there is anger about this decision, Mr. Key noted that the first joint Commission-Council meeting ended on a

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more positive note, with the beginning of a missional budgeting framework. There has not been significant progress in developing the plan necessary for Good Shepherd Trinity to sell the Good Shepherd building, which houses The Table Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community.

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Location TBD

Future Meetings

- Thursday, January 18, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, March 15, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, May 17, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, July 19, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, September 20, 2018 – Location TBD

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are preceded by a dinner at 5:30 pm, with the meeting beginning at 6:15 pm.

Submitted,

Mr. Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary