

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
January 21, 2016

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
5601 Washington Road, Kenosha

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

Attendance

Name	Cluster/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Anti-Racism
Ms. Sue Schmidt-Decker	Kenosha/West Racine	2017	X		10/2015
Vacant	Lake Country	2019			
Ms. Ar Lee	Milwaukee 1	2017		X	10/2014
The Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland	Milwaukee 2	2017	X		1/2011
Ms. Claire Zautke	Milwaukee 3	2019	X		Pending
The Rev. Bill Knapp	Milwaukee 4	2019	X		Pending
Mr. Tom Gauthier	Northern Lakeshore	2017	X		9/2013
The Rev. David Schoob	Northwest	2017		X	9/2013
Ms. Lynn Hooper	Racine	2017	X		Pending
The Rev. Angela Khabebe	Waukesha	2019		X	10/2015
The Rev. Lindsay Jordan	At Large	2019	X		Pending
Mr. Steven Hruska	At Large	2019		X	Pending
Vacant	At Large	2019			
Mr. Scott Manske	Vice President	2017 (1)	X		10/2015
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2019 (2)	X		1/2012
Mr. Lee Johnston	Treasurer	2017 (2)	X		Pending
The Rev. Jeff Barrow	Bishop	2016 (1)	X		1/2008
Ms. Sarah Muller	Youth Representative	2017	X		Pending
Mr. Jonathan Barker	Young Adult Rep.	2017		X	9/2013

Also present were Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, Director of Evangelical Mission; Mr. Dave Groenewold, GMS Director of Finance; Ms. Rhonda Hill, GMS Director of Discipleship; Ms. MaryBeth Hoffman, Chair, GMS Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team; Mr. Jerry Key, Anti-Racism Team Representative; and Mr. Dale Landgren, GMS Representative on Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Board of Directors.

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Presentation

Mr. Dale Landgren, who is serving his second term on the Board of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago on behalf of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, reported on the status of and trends facing the seminary. He provided highlights from his written report, adding details on the school's sources of funds and on financial trends for ELCA seminaries generally.

He reported, among other things, that the student body is much smaller than at its peak enrollment, but has been slowly increasing over the past two year's toward the strategic plan goal of 225. A major capital campaign will be initiated for a variety of needs, and to shore up finances, with budgets still not balancing. One of the larger trends is for increasing consideration of coordination of focus by the seminaries.

The Council expressed appreciation for Mr. Landgren's presentation and continued communication with the synod.

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Vice President's Remarks

Mr. Manske turned the floor over to Ms. MaryBeth Hoffman to provide information on the Bishop Election Committee and process. The committee submitted a written report, and has issued forms to allow members of the synod to suggest prospective candidates. These submissions are due by February 29th. Coordination with the Synod Assembly Committee has been going well, and a "job description" will be posted within 24 hours. It was reported that things are "moving nicely," with one of the next steps being to find host congregations for the four forums called for in the election process. Mr. Manske added that the Synod Council may be called upon to assist with counting during the election and "walking with candidates" during the electoral process. Rev. Lindsay Jordan asked whether the ELCA's pre-election demographic report would be available, with Ms. Hoffman responding that it should be ready next week.

Bishop's Report

Council Action – Approval of One Leave from Call Status

The Council voted to approve On Leave from Call Status for Rev. Clifford R. Hanus, effective January 24, 2016; and for Rev. Phetsamone Vannavong, effective December 31, 2015.

Council Action – Appointment to Synod Council

The Council voted to appoint Ms. Betty Warber to the Synod Council to fill a vacancy for an at-large lay female member, for the period through the 2016 Synod Assembly.

Noting the possible fragility of ethnic start-up congregations, Bishop Jeff Barrow said that there may be synod funding to aid the transition for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Milwaukee following the departure of Pastor Phetsamone Vannavong.

On the open Cross-Generational synod position, Bishop Jeff noted that it may well not be filled during his tenure, because of the likelihood of at least some staff restructuring when the new bishop takes office in September. He added that many Cross+Gen projects had already been set in motion and were proceeding as planned, and that, if needed, short-term contract help may be sought for other activities. Funding for this position will remain in the budget.

The bishop also reported on changes pending at the new Emaús congregation, with the departure of Rev. Jhon Freddy Correa and synod financial responsibility for Rev. Gabriel Marcano nearing its end. Additional questions on Rev. Marcano's probable application for Resident Status were addressed, including legal representation for the synod in this process following the death of the attorney with whom the synod had been working. There will be updates at future meetings.

It is likely that the bishop will continue some involvement with ELCA World Hunger after his term ends. He said it is "one of the most hopeful things I see in the church today," noting the involvement of young people and the value received for funds allocated.

Bishop Jeff ended his report by urging members to attend the Lead and Learn event on Saturday, highlighting the presentation by Dr. Ken Inskeep, Executive for Research and Evaluation in the Office of the President Bishop, and the bishops' panel.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston briefly reported on the synod's finances, though financial statements had not been provided in advance. He said that, while the synod was likely to run a deficit, it was not likely to be as great as had been feared a few months ago. He added that benevolence income

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should reach or exceed \$2 million. Most expense line items are below budget, although legal fees and the costs associated with Rev. Marcano are above. There was no action taken.

Action Items – Old Business

Funding Policy Task Force Recommendation –

Council Action – Recommendation to Synod Assembly

The Council voted to recommend that the 2016 Synod Assembly adopt the Policy on the Use of Funds from the Sale of Greater Milwaukee Synod Church Properties, the Procedure for the Distribution of Grants from the Sale of Greater Milwaukee Synod Church Properties, and Options for Missional Closing and Disbursement of Assets as presented, as called for in 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly Resolution 2.

Synod Office Staff Cost of Living Increase – The Council received a verbal report that the total cost of a 1% cost of living increase for synod office staff would be approximately \$4,200.

Council Action – Approval of Cost of Living Increase

The Council voted to amend the 2016-2017 budget to reflect a one percent (1%) cost of living increase for all synod office staff, effective February 1, 2016.

Rogers Street Property – The Council reviewed the status of the Rogers Street property. Total payments against the existing land contract with Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto are approximately \$61,000 to date. The new proposal from Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto calls for a final payment of \$80,000 in place of the \$144,000 due at the end of the contract on March 1, 2016.

Mr. Groenewold reported that the new proposal was received on Tuesday. He also said that the buyer had always made prompt payments, that the property had serious maintenance issues which have led to several building code citations, and that the synod has spent roughly \$24,000 on repairs during the term of the contract. The property had been vacant for about four years before Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto took possession. Council action followed detailed discussion.

Council Action – Approval of Property Sale

RESOLVED, that the Proposal to Purchase Real Estate dated January 18, 2016 from Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto, M.E.A.I., Inc. to purchase the properties located at 2000 South Layton Boulevard in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and 2623 West Rogers Street, in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for \$80,000 in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in the offer, subject to clarification to assure that the total sale price is realized and that the property is accepted in “as-is” condition be, and hereby is, accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vice President of the Greater Milwaukee Synod be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to take all actions and perform all things necessary or desirable to consummate the transaction described in the aforesaid offer to purchase, including, but not necessarily limited to, the execution and delivery of a warranty deed conveying the properties at 2000 South Layton Boulevard in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and 2623 West Rogers Street, in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto M.E.A.I., Inc.

Action Items – New Business

2016 Synod Assembly Rules – Mr. Manske recapped the process of developing Synod Assembly Rules to include election of a bishop. This process included review and consultation with the Bishop Election Committee, the Synod Assembly Committee, and the synod and ELCA secretaries. There was brief discussion on the decision not to include provision for nominees to drop out after the second ballot.

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Council Action – Recommendation to Synod Assembly

The Council voted to recommend the adoption of the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly Rules and Procedures – 2016 to the 2016 Synod Assembly, as presented.

Siebert Lutheran Foundation Grant – Rev. Sandy Chrostowski presented a request for approval of an application to the Siebert Lutheran Foundation to support “Breaking the Chains,” the new name for the prison congregation approved by the Synod Council in July, 2015 as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community. The request would be for a three-year, \$50,000 grant supporting pastoral salary and mission development. Rev. Chrostowski reported that \$13,500 was approved by the ELCA for support of this new start, but these funds will not be available until there is a paid leader. The report about current activity was encouraging. Questions remained about what would happen with the expiration of the grant.

Council Action – Approval of Grant Submission

The Council voted to approve submission of a grant request to the Siebert Lutheran Foundation for \$50,000 to support pastoral salary and mission development for the Breaking the Chains prison congregation over a period of three years.

Immanuel Lutheran Bequest for Urban Internships – Documents were provided to the Council regarding a bequest of funds from the former Immanuel Lutheran congregation in Milwaukee, along with a request for the funds from Ascension Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. Mr. Manske reported that the funds were in process and not yet received by the synod. A meeting, including the Endowment Fund, Outreach for Hope, and the synod’s vice president and secretary to clarify the process to be used for distribution of these funds. No Council action is needed at this time.

Rate of Reimbursement for Supply Pastors – Mr. Manske distributed a report showing current supply pastor pay arrangements in the Greater Milwaukee and other synods for study by the Council. Action on a recommendation will be sought at the March Council meeting.

Acceptance of Parroquia Emaús – Parroquia Emaús, the Latino ministry at Emmaus Evangelical Lutheran Church in Racine, had not been legally incorporated or made a part of the synod prior to merger discussions with Emmaus. Incorporation documents were filed with the Register of Deeds for Racine County, and Synod Attorney Steve Knowles has requested that the synod take action to accept Parroquia Emaús as a member congregation to facilitate the merger of Parroquia Emaús and Emmaus, scheduled for a vote on Sunday.

Council Action – Acceptance of Congregation

The Synod Council voted to accept Parroquia Emaús as a member congregation of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Reports

Director of Evangelical Mission – A written report was presented. Included was the current status of grants from the Good Shepherd Fund. The grant to Faith/Santa Fe for the development of a new Latino ministry in Waukesha is on hold. The total amount of the grant was \$100,000, of which \$30,000 was dispersed and used for salaries. There was also grant funding from the ELCA that is on hold for this project, pending assignment of a full-time bilingual leader.

Council Action – Approval of Hold on Grant Funds

The Synod Council voted to place a hold on distribution of funds from the Good Shepherd Grant Fund to Faith/Santa Fe.

Director of Discipleship – A report was provided electronically after the meeting. Ms. Rhonda Hill is continuing communication on projects that normally would have involved the Cross+Generation

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Ministry position. She reported that the current Siebert Grant is supporting, among other things, the Synod Youth Gathering and peer ministry training. She is also working to support relationships between congregations and new pastors, and urged members to check for and promote events appearing on the synod Listserve.

Director of Rostered Leadership, Women of the ELCA and Outreach for Hope – Written reports were presented.

Cross+Generational Ministry – No report submitted.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – No report submitted. Members were urged to attend the “Chilly Cook Off” on January 30th in support of LCM.

Reconciling in Christ – A written report was presented. Ms. MaryBeth Hoffman added that lay and pastors asking how to start the conversation about becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. There will be a Reconciling Works training in the fall.

Anti-Racism Team – A written report was presented. Mr. Jerry Key invited people to attend movie nights and book reviews, adding that ART’s goal is to have discussions before there are conflicts, so that we have better vision in conflicts.

Old Business

ELCA Capital Campaign – More information will follow.

2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 2 – Mary Romskog is preparing a report for the 2016 Synod Assembly. A key finding is that there is significant disparity between the clergy and lay perception of the length of the Assembly, with clergy happy with a shorter Assembly but lay members feeling rushed.

Mr. Manske apologized for the influx of material to Council members in recent days, but Mr. Brockmeier opined that the Council had made significant progress in addressing long-standing issues, which might free up some time for consideration of Council priorities.

Members thanked Rev. Lindsay Jordan for setting up a Dropbox account for Council documents.

Mr. Key inquired about statistics from the last Assembly, and was told they would be ready soon.

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 2016 – 5:30 Dinner; 6:15 Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church, 1415 Dopp St, Waukesha

Future Meetings

- Thursday, May 19, 2016 – St. Paul’s Lutheran, 705 Grand Ave, Random Lake
- Thursday, July 21, 2016 – Bishop Barrow’s Home, Racine
- Thursday, September 15, 2016 – Fox Point Evangelical Lutheran Church, 7510 N Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point

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