

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
May 5, 2012

Adoration Lutheran Church
3840 West Edgerton Avenue, Greenfield, Wisconsin

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

Attendance

Name	Cluster/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Un- excused
The Rev. Eric Silberschmidt	Kenosha/West Racine	2013		X	
The Rev. Steve Blyth	Lake Country	2015		X	
Mr. Gus Barnes	Milwaukee 1	2013	X		
Mr. Michael Herold	Milwaukee 2	2013	X		
The Rev. Carolyn Fredriksen	Milwaukee 3	2015	X		
Mr. Al Van Lith	Milwaukee 4	2015		X	
Ms. Esther Rusch	Northern Lakeshore	2013	X		
Ms. Beth Dorsey	Northwest	2013		X	
The Rev. Warren Williams	Racine	2013	X		
The Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck	Waukesha	2015	X		
The Rev. Gary Grindeland	At Large	2015	X		
Ms. Debra Taylor	At Large	2015	X		
Mr. John Gruber	At Large	2015		X	
Ms. Susan Cyr	Vice President	2013 (2)	X		
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2015 (1)	X		
Mr. Lee Johnston	Treasurer	2013 (1)	X		
The Rev. Jeff Barrow	Bishop	2016 (1)	X		
Vacant	Youth Representative	2013			
Vacant	Young Adult Rep.				

Prior to the call to order, breakfast was served by members of Adoration Lutheran Church, with appreciation by all.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Ms. Susan Cyr called the Synod Council meeting to order at 9:24 am, Saturday, May 5, 2012, at Adoration Lutheran Church, 3840 West Edgerton Avenue, Greenfield, Wisconsin. A quorum was declared.

Synod staff members Rev. Chuck Brummond, Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, Ms. Rhonda Hill, and Ms. Mary Meyer were in attendance; as was Ms. Sandra Wilson of Hephatha Lutheran Church, in her role as co-chair of the 11 x 15 Task Force; and MaryBeth Hoffman, representing Synod Reconciling in Christ.

Opening devotions were shared by Mr. Gus Barnes.

As is customary, all present introduced themselves, sharing highs and lows in their lives.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council May 5, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Council Action

SC 12.05.01. Granting of Voice

The Council voted to grant voice to all present who had not already been granted voice by action of the Council at its September 2011 meeting.

Council Action

SC 12.05.02. Adoption of the Agenda

The Council voted to adopt the agenda recommended by the Executive Committee for the meeting of Saturday May 5, 2012, with the addition of discussion and possible action on the proposed Anti-Fraud policy under Old Business.

Ms. Sandra Wilson provided an overview of the 11 x 15 campaign, an effort to reduce the prison population in Wisconsin by 50% by 2015. Her presentation centered on the faith aspects of the campaign: restoration, justice and mercy. She spoke of the lack of success in existing incarceration programs, and the impact prisons have on everyone, directly or indirectly. She asked that members of the Council consider arranging presentations on the campaign or taking other actions suggested on a handout she provided.

Council Action

SC 12.05.03. Approval of the March 15, 2012 Minutes

It was voted to approve the minutes of the Thursday, March 15, 2012, Synod Council meeting Minutes, as presented.

I. Bishop's Report

The bishop's written report, addressing the assembly, visits with rostered leaders, staff transition, the collective bargaining task force, assembly resolutions and congregational transitions, formed the basis for the bishop's remarks.

Plans for the assembly are coming along well. Mary Meyer was excused as some details pertained to recognition for her faithful, long-term and much appreciated service to the synod.

Council Action

SC 12.05.04. Approval of Recognition of Mary Meyer

The Council voted to approve the means of recognizing Mary Meyer at the Synod Assembly.

The bishop spoke of his one-on-one meetings with rostered leaders, which he called energizing rather than taxing.

Regarding staff transitions, after an initial transition period following Mary Meyer's departure, and making use of existing staff with new assignments, a position posting likely will be made in late summer for a new opening, much different from Mary's current work. Discussion followed on renewing the term call for Rev. Chuck Brummond. He indicated a preference for annual term calls rather than longer-term calls.

Council Action

SC 12.05.05. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a renewed one-year term call to Rev. Chuck Brummond in his role as Director of Rostered Leadership.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council

May 5, 2012 Meeting Minutes

A report on the work of the Collective Bargaining Task Force will be presented to the Synod Assembly, though the resolution from the 2011 assembly which laid the foundation for this work will not be revisited. The bishop stated his belief that one of the great strengths of the ELCA is in bridging political views respectfully, saying that “as people of faith we are called to be political but not partisan.”

The only resolution submitted for consideration by the Synod Assembly concerns the 11 x 15 effort. The bishop was thankful for the good work and leadership on this issue.

Some discussion accompanied the bishop’s remarks on congregational transitions, where the bishop indicated that additional congregational closings were possible in the next few months. Included in this brief discussion were the issues of appropriate use of resources from closed congregations, and developing a group of people conversant with closing or other transition issues who can act as resources for congregations.

II. Executive Committee

The executive committee met by teleconference on April 19th to approve this meeting’s agenda.

Council Action

SC 12.05.06. Approval of Executive Committee Minutes

The Council voted to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of April 19, 2012 as presented.

III. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Lee Johnston reported that income for the first two months of the current fiscal year was at 96% of the budgeted amount, though several traditionally lean months for income are coming up. The fact that the synod is spending below budget for personnel expenses means that, even though income is below budget, net income for the period show a positive variance. The treasurer attributed that variance in part to assumptions used in creating this budget, which were based on a staffing model that has evolved since the budget was developed.

Council Action

SC 12.05.07. Approval of Treasurer’s Report

The Council voted to approve the Financial Statements for the period February through March 2012 as presented.

IV. Reports

- A. Director of Evangelical Mission – A written report was submitted. This was supplemented by a presentation by Director for Evangelical Missions Rev. Sandy Chrostowski. She reported that a video with Rev. Paul Bulgerin on the synod’s stewardship efforts will be shown at the Synod Assembly. The Stewardship Fair in April drew approximately 70 participants, down from last year’s level of roughly 120. Rev. Chrostowski said that the first of the mission support dinners with congregational representatives is scheduled for May 16th, with nine of ten invited congregations planning to attend. Each congregation is asked to send clergy and two lay leaders. She also commented that the search for a new president for the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, for which she served on the search committee, has been successful, with an announcement due very soon.
- B. Director of Discipleship Rhonda Hill provided a verbal report, with an emphasis on the Summer Urban Immersion program. This is an effort that goes beyond the synod, and is

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council May 5, 2012 Meeting Minutes

geared toward middle and high school students. Three groups are already signed up for the four or five day program that covers issues including poverty, anti-racism, worship, ministry and reading. This program intentionally does not include hands-on work projects. Information will be added to a new section of the synod's website: urban.milwaukesynod.org. There was brief discussion over means of controlling possibly inappropriate content left on the site (it is open for comments from any online user). Ms. Hill spoke of a partnership with the Milwaukee YWCA's anti-racism efforts, with Ms. Hill involved in leadership of a joint effort, and four free registrations to the YWCA's fall anti-racism event being made available to the synod. Another topic presented by Ms. Hill was a young adult leadership development initiative, "Fire of Faith," which she described as a project using community organizing principles to re-ignite faith in congregations, making the point that they are places for young adults. Finally, she mentioned a Women in Ministry event she is working on with Rev. Chrostowski.

- C. Director of Rostered Leadership – A written report was submitted that included rostered leadership issues and a Deans' Report. Rev. Chuck Brummond augmented this report with remarks on the Retired Partners in Ministry (RPMs): approximately 16 rostered leaders willing to serve as partners and mentors for younger leaders. They have volunteered to do this work, and will make a presentation at the Synod Assembly. Rev. Brummond provided an overview of Operation Inasmuch, an effort to engage all members of participating congregations in short-term projects. The South Carolina Synod has made this an annual synodical event, and Rev. Matthew Short, who is spearheading this in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, is aiming for participation by 20 congregations in spring 2013. Another topic of concern for the deans is that to some extent the 50/50 Not a Raffle overlaps fundraising efforts already in place at the congregational level. Finally, Rev. Brummond expressed concern over a congregation which had left the ELCA making use of the synod's general Listserve to promote an event. Brief discussion ensued on how best to address that concern.
- D. Youth and Family Network – No report submitted.
- E. Lutheran Campus Ministry – Mr. Lee Johnston, a member of the campus ministry board, reported on those involved with campus ministry having been excited by the special Campus Ministry Sunday. He also reported that Marquette University is proposing changes that will affect the status of the campus ministry program on their campus, and that his congregation, Redeemer, may play a role in resolving some of these issues.
- F. Deans – See Director of Rostered Leadership above.
- G. Anti-Racism Team – A written report was submitted.
- H. WELCA – A written report was submitted.
- I. Outreach for Hope – A written report was submitted.

V. Old Business

LIFT – Rev. Chrostowski reported that there will be either a workshop or a 15-minute presentation on LIFT at the assembly in an effort to broaden the audience for this initiative.

Strategy for Funding Youth and Family (50/50 This is NOT a Raffle) – The bishop reported that there will be at least \$2,500 in income, based on one congregation selling all available tickets. Ms. Meyer reported that the drawing will be moved to Saturday morning at the assembly, allowing more time for ticket sales.

Collective Bargaining had been covered in the bishop's report.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council May 5, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Synod Assembly (May 31 – June 2) – There was discussion on keeping the 2013 Synod Assembly at the Country Springs Hotel in order to ease the transition for staff, since a routine has been established that staff with this responsibility for next year can easily follow. Additional discussion followed on the timing of the 2013 assembly, with concern over ease of participation by youth with the move back to late May/early June this year. An effort will be made to gather more data on date preferences, possibly in part by questions developed to test the new electronic voting system being used at this year's assembly.

Nominating Committee – Secretary Matthew Brockmeier, in his role as nominating committee chair, presented a motion stemming from a strategy developed by Vice President Cyr to allow the next vice president to attend the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. The at-large lay female position that had been held for Ms. Cyr was no longer needed for that purpose since she was elected to serve as a voting member by her cluster.

Council Action

SC 12.05.08. Motion Regarding Open Position for Churchwide Assembly Voting Member

It was voted to approve a motion that the Open At-Large Lay Female position for Voting Member of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly be filled by the Synod Vice-President-Elect selected at the 2013 Synod Assembly, regardless of gender.

In further discussion on the future role of the vice president as a voting member, Secretary Brockmeier said that he had prepared a revision for Appendix 1 of the synod's constitution allocating one seat for the vice president in future assemblies, but wanted to act on that revision after the current election cycle. He also reported that sufficient candidates had been recruited to fill all at-large openings to be voted on at the assembly, with contested races in most cases. Recruitment for members of the nominating committee has also been successful, with eleven of thirteen places filled for next year and Ms. Debra Kohler selected to serve as chair following Mr. Brockmeier's retirement from the committee. Finally, he shared copies of a report providing demographic information on the 2012 nominee pool, showing wide racial and ethnic diversity, but a distinct skewing toward individuals in their 50s and 60s, and a median age of 60 for nominees.

WI Analytics Overview (Brian Clink) – The bishop led a brief discussion on his continued contacts with Mr. Clink regarding the possibility of undertaking the project on congregational siting originally proposed to the synod last year. Comments during this discussion included the idea that it was important for the synod to take action like this study in order to be seen as pro-actively addressing the looming problem of congregational viability; concern that even with clear report recommendations the synod cannot mandate action by congregations; and the possibility that other avenues may lead to comparable outcomes without comparable expenditures. It was agreed to take this issue up again as part of the summer retreat.

GMS Logo – This issue was deferred until the summer retreat.

Anti-Fraud Policy – The proposed Anti-Fraud Policy was moved, seconded and discussed. Secretary Brockmeier presented several concerns, including reliance on an audit to assist in determining whether fraud had taken place and reporting back to the individual reporting suspected fraud on the outcome of the investigation. It was agreed that these two items were appropriately represented in the draft policy. A third issue, reporting to law enforcement in some cases where criminal activity is suspected, was incorporated into the draft policy through amendment.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council
May 5, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Council Action

SC 12.05.09. Amendment to Proposed Anti-Fraud Policy

It was voted to amend the proposed Anti-Fraud Policy through the inclusion of “including the involvement of law enforcement when necessary” at the end of the first sentence of the section on Investigation Procedures.

Council Action

SC 12.05.10. Approval of Anti-Fraud Policy

It was voted to approve the Anti-Fraud Policy as amended in SC 12.05.09.

VI. New Business

A Summer Retreat was agreed for Saturday, August 4, 2012 from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm at Adoration Lutheran Church in Greenfield. The council will be present for the entire day, with members of committees, task forces, staff and the deans present for part of the day.

A new date for the July council meeting will be chosen.

Council Action

SC 12.05.11. Adjournment

It was voted to adjourn the synod council meeting at 12:28 pm, with the meeting closing with the Lord’s Prayer.

Signed,
Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary