

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
November 3, 2012

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church
W156 N8131 Pilgrim Road, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

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

Attendance

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

The meeting was conducted as a working lunch during the Council's full-day retreat at Holy Cross.

Ms. Tracy Apps, Director of Communications and Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, Director of Evangelical Mission, were present from synod staff. Also present were Mr. Jerry Key, Mr. Jim Liedtke, and Rev. David Schoob of the Anti-Racism Team; Rev. Jim Bickel from Outreach for Hope; and Rev. Larry Westfield, Regional Gift Planner for Lutheran Planned Giving of Wisconsin.

Opening devotions were shared by Mr. Michael Herold.

Property Sale

The Council reviewed the proposed sale of the property located at 601 North University Drive, Waukesha, that was owned by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, a congregation that voted to disband on May 13, 2012. This property came into the synod's hands after the congregation closed on September 23, 2012.

The Council approved an offer to purchase the property for \$510,000, with a closing date no later than December 28, 2012. The bishop and other synod officers were authorized to act on the synod's behalf to complete this transaction.

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Council Action

The Council voted to ratify the action taken in an electronic meeting on October 31, 2012 to approve the submission of a grant request to the Siebert Lutheran Foundation for \$30,000 to support the synod's Director of Discipleship position. Minutes originally presented for this meeting were amended to incorporate votes by Vice President Susan Cyr, Mr. Michael Herold, and Rev. Eric Silberschmidt.

Council Action

The Council voted to approve 2013 Housing Allowances for Bishop Jeffrey Barrow (\$35,000), Rev. Charles A. Brummond (\$25,200), Rev. Mary Martha Kannass (\$14,883) and Rev. James Bickel (\$34,000).

Bishop's Report

In his report, Bishop Jeff Barrow discussed possible ways of approaching the allocation of funds from the sale of closed church properties, especially from the pending sale of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Waukesha's building. Realizing that there is a wealth of good possibilities, but that funding will be insufficient for all or even most of them, he recommended creation of a task force to review possible allocation, based in part on suggestions from Vice President Cyr. The Council agreed with this approach without formal action.

Council Action

The Council voted to approve on leave from call status for Rev. Chris Lear, with an effective date of July 1, 2011.

Council Action

The Council voted to ratify the action taken in an electronic meeting of the Executive Committee from October 14-15, 2012 to approve an increase in the 2012 Housing Allowance for Rev. Jim Bickel from \$28,000 to \$31,000.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lee Johnston reported that current financial statements were not available, but were being prepared for the beginning of the FY2014 budget process, which will commence with a Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 6th. He indicated that there has not been a significant shift in the income and expense patterns since his last report to the Council, but that there is concern about a continuing fall-off in revenues toward the end of the year.

Old Business

- A. Pentecost/Divine Word – It was reported that there are ongoing discussions over the allocation of fees for legal work between the synod and Pentecost.
- B. GMS Logo – Vice President Cyr spoke to the need to change the synod's logo, amid concerns that the existing logo has negative connotations, especially for people of color.

Council Action

The Council voted to approve the use of a logo consistent with the ELCA's Graphic Standards Manual in place of the existing logo, effective immediately.

- C. **Gethsemane** – Anti-Racism Team discussions stemming from the departure of Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld from Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brookfield

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were considered. The focus was on revisiting the MET process with an eye toward both greater inclusivity and more realism on the part of congregations and potential pastors. Of special note in the discussion was the need for very honest appraisals of the needs of congregations and the gifts of pastors. Topics such as whether a congregation is actually interested in change, and the financial situations of congregations, were cited as often-overlooked but critical parts of the equation of matching pastors with congregations. It was agreed that a team approach to addressing the MET process would be created, with review by the Executive Committee and a report to the January 2013 Council meeting.

- D. **Anti-Racism Training** – The next 2 ½ day Anti-Racism Training session will take place at Lutherdale from January 17-19, 2013. It was noted that members of the Council are required to participate in the full Anti-Racism Training, with any members who have not yet done so strongly encouraged to register for the January session. Staff is also required to take this training. Registration costs for Council and staff members are covered by the synod.

VI. New Business

- A. **Synod Personnel Policy** – Secretary Matthew Brockmeier reported on his work to rationalize the synod's personnel policy, using the ELCA's policy as a model. Following completion of a rough draft, he will review the policy with Bishop Barrow, with the finished product coming to the Council for action at a future meeting. Discussion included requests that policies already completed or under review be modified for distribution as model documents for congregations, which was agreed.
- B. **Legacy Society** – Rev. Jim Bickel and Rev. Larry Westfield made a presentation on the idea of developing a Legacy Society that would solicit and manage bequests made for the benefit of Outreach for Hope, and possibly for the synod and other ministries. Several models were discussed, especially one created by the Nebraska Synod. According to the presenters, there would likely be minimal direct expenses for creating such a program, at least at first. The creation of promotional materials and donor cultivation events are the most likely early-stage expenses. Rev. Bickel and Rev. Westfield intend to continue research and planning activities for the Society, asking for the synod to express support for this effort.
- C. **Salary Guidelines for 2013** – The synod's guidelines for salaries for rostered leaders were discussed in order to set recommended levels for 2013. Taken into account were the current official rate of inflation (2% for the year from September 2011 to September 2012), and the difficulty many congregations have in meeting the existing guidelines. It was noted that each synod approached salary guidance in its own fashion: there was a desire for future years to compare the synod's approach to those of other synods.

Council Action

The Council voted to approve an increase of 2% (two percent) in recommended salaries for rostered leaders working in congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

- D. It was announced that the 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly will take place at the Country Springs Hotel Conference Center at 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, Wisconsin from Thursday, May 30 through Saturday, June 1, 2013. Bishop Barrow also announced that he

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has requested that Ms. Mikka McCracken, Program Director, ELCA World Hunger Appeal-Constituent Engagement and Interpretation, be sent by the ELCA to the Assembly.

Council Action

The Council voted to use all offerings received during worship services at the 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly to support the ELCA Malaria Campaign.

E. **Marketing Discussion** – An in-depth discussion on marketing and brand identification followed. Forming the foundation for this discussion was Bishop Barrow's assertion that the work done in the synod is strong: he cited campus ministry, urban ministry and global partnerships as prime examples. Ms. Apps provided an overview of what people have been most responsive to in the e-newsletter, with pieces by the bishop, other stories and images getting by far the most attention. This included the Holy Ground stories. She also noted that approximately 45% of visitors to the website are new visitors, giving the synod opportunities to make new connections.

Mr. Lee Johnston made a series of suggestions to harness these successful means of reaching people, including creating a way of gathering user-generated content such as videos or other files, providing information on successful press releases for congregations, and creating e-mail distribution lists for identified segments within the synod. These were agreed to be appropriate priorities for the synod's marketing efforts.

Specific actions to be pursued are the creation by Ms. Apps of an e-mail system for submitting videos, the development of a how-to session on press releases for the congregational leaders event in March 2013, and the development of lists of e-mail addresses including congregations, clergy, local newspapers and clusters.

Next Meeting

Thursday, January 31, 2013 5:30 pm Gathering; 6:15 pm Meeting

Cross of Life Lutheran Church, 20700 W North Ave, Brookfield

Signed,

Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary