

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
July 11, 2013

Bishop Jeff's Home
Mount Pleasant, 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
Ms. Sue Schmidt-Decker	Kenosha/West Racine - Elect	2017
The Rev. Steve Blyth	Lake Country	2015
Mr. Michael Herold	Milwaukee 1	2013
The Rev. Paula Canby	Milwaukee 2 - Elect	2017
The Rev. Carolyn Fredriksen	Milwaukee 3	2015
Mr. Al Van Lith	Milwaukee 4	2015
Ms. Esther Rusch	Northern Lakeshore	2013
Mr. Tom Gauthier	Northern Lakeshore - Elect	2017
Ms. Beth Dorsey	Northwest	2013
The Rev. David Schoob	Northwest - Elect	2017
The Rev. Warren Williams	Racine	2013
Ms. Marge Puntarec	Racine - Elect	2017
The Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck	Waukesha	2015
The Rev. Jay McDivitt	At Large	6/2014
Ms. Debra Taylor	At Large	2015
Mr. John Gruber	At Large	2013
Mr. Jerry Key	At Large	2015
Ms. Susan Cyr	Vice President	2013 (2)
Mr. Scott Manske	Vice President - Elect	2017 (1)
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2015 (1)
Mr. Lee Johnston	Treasurer	2017 (2)
The Rev. Jeff Barrow	Bishop	2016 (1)
Vacant	Youth Representative	2013
Mr. Jonathan Barker	Young Adult Rep. - Elect	2017

Thanks from a grateful Synod Council to Bishop Jeff and Kate Barrow for the joy of good food and fellowship before the meeting, and to Kate and Gracie for their amazing rendition of *Amazing Grace* during the bishop's report.

In addition to Council members, those present at the meeting were Ms. Tracy Apps, GMS Director of Communication ; Rev. Chuck Brummond, GMS Director of Rostered Leadership ; Ms. Rhonda Hill, GMS Director of Discipleship; MaryBeth Hoffman, GMS Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team; and Ms. Betty Warber, President of the Synod Women's Organization.

I. Bishop's Report

Bishop Jeff Barrow praised Ms. Kate Mattson, who recently resigned as the synod's Director of Youth and Family Ministry. Ms. Mattson moved from part-time to full-time a year ago, but

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the work had been weighing on her since before Christmas. The bishop said that she did an excellent job. Ms. Hill and the bishop have met with the Cross Generational Ministry Team as part of the process to move ahead with a new hire; revisions to the job description may be desirable, especially since the position is no longer grant-funded and has been in place for nine years. The lack of grant funding is not a problem, since money had previously been set aside as a staff reserve. Discussion ensued regarding the nature and scope of the position in the future, with questions about representation from the synod, inclusion of children's ministry, whether it will be full or part-time, and the balance between managerial skills and visionary ability. Much of this is already under consideration by the Personnel Committee. Ms. Hill responded that the position will probably need to embody more leader than manager, with a broad scope and a focus on establishing networks. Multiple teams will need to be managed, though their participation may make the position more manageable for an individual, since the duties have historically been wide-ranging.

On another position, receptionist, interviews have been set up, and strong candidates are under consideration. The bishop said that Lurna Prantil has been a great blessing filling that role temporarily.

The bishop reported that the Good Shepherd task force will meet next week. This is a group of eight individuals who will make recommendations on the use of funds remaining from the sale of Good Shepherd. The eight individuals include three from the Waukesha Cluster in recognition of the source of the funds, and five others, none of whom has a "pony in the race" according to the bishop, but all of whom have "great hearts for mission." This process will lead into, but is not the same as, the task force called for in Resolution 2 from this year's Synod Assembly, which will address development of a long-term plan for potential future sales of property. He said that Rev. John Horner-Ibler, who presented Resolution 2 on behalf of the Waukesha Cluster, agreed that this approach made sense. The use of funds from property sales has already led to a commitment to Spirit Alive! to help support their acquisition of a possible new worship site, though that commitment represents only perhaps ten percent of the total funds needed. The goal of this process is to use the funds in ways that "make a difference in the life of the church, not to plug \$10,000 holes."

Restructure clusters – Ms. Esther Rusch, departing Council member from the Northern Lakeshore Cluster, will chair the task force considering restructuring the synod's clusters. It was noted that the list from Rev. Schoob was helpful. There will be a meeting with Rev. Steve Jerbi, who presented the resolution on restructuring on behalf of All People's Lutheran Church, on what was hoped for in the resolution.

The Refugee Resettlement Task Force will also be addressed in the near term.

Council Action

The Synod Council voted to approve a motion stating that "The Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America calls Rev. Victoria Simon to serve as Chaplain at Allay Home and Hospice, Mequon."

The bishop opined that there will be more and more calls like this as the church moves into new places, including calls to serve communities.

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He concluded his report by praising the new president and CEO of the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, Ms. Brenda Skelton, by saying that she is a good choice, with a heart for urban ministry.

III. Treasurer's Report

A profit and loss statement for February through May 2013 was provided in advance of the meeting. Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston reported that the synod is doing very well financially for the fourth straight month, with an operating surplus of approximately \$33,500 for this period. He added that this trend continued into June, praising the work of the stewardship committee and noting that the mindset of congregations is good. Bishop Barrow gave thanks for Rev. Sandy Chrostowski's work on stewardship. The Council was informed that the orientation for newly-elected members will include more information on the budget and budgeting.

Council Action

The Council voted to approve the Profit and Loss Statement for the period from February 1st through May 31st, 2013 as presented.

IV. Reports

- A. **Director of Evangelical Mission** – A written report was submitted.
- B. **Director of Rostered Leadership** – Rev. Chuck Brummond provided a verbal report, saying that there are an average of 20 to 25 congregations in transition, a figure that hasn't varied much. He went on to say that something that is significant is the number of pastors retiring. Last year there were six, some long-term ministries, which leads to some challenges, especially needing interim ministry. He noted that the synod is now scrambling a bit to fill interim needs, with recently retired pastors taking on transitions. A possibility he foresees is in moving to interim ministry postings before the departing pastor leaves, something he termed "intriguing to look at." He said that he is excited for the staff exploring culture in churches with Rev. Ernie Hinojosa, Director for Evangelical Mission for the North Carolina Synod. The "huddle" experience is creating a disciple culture in the church. The fall theological conference is also exciting, he added, noting that lectures only go so far, but looking to have people going beyond the event. Mr. Johnston asked if there are plans to conduct a survey of the demographics of the synod, especially as retirements are looming. It was agreed that demographic information could come from the ELCA, though it wasn't clear if this would provide significant insights into timelines for retirements. Rev. Brummond said that as far as his work in the synod is concerned he is still in the discernment stage, wanting to return to word and sacrament ministry, particularly as interim. Rev. Schoob asked whom to contact for young people who are looking at ministry? Appropriate initial contacts are Rev. Brummond, GMS Office Manager Mary Romskog, or Rev. Marilyn Borchardt, chair of the candidacy committee.
- C. **Director of Discipleship** – Ms. Rhonda Hill reported that the synod's summer immersions have started, with groups of youth from outside the synod participating in this urban immersion program. For two weeks in June participants included groups from Atlanta, Chicago's northern suburbs and northern Minnesota. This week's group is from Wittenburg, Wisconsin, with one group remaining this year. She went on to say that the synod staff is talking about urban strategy, and that there are meetings scheduled in October with Milwaukee clusters 1 and 2 to talk about urban ministry. Part of the emphasis, she noted, was that education is central to urban strategy; "people want to learn from us." Further action includes J-Term in January with seminary students. The goal is to create a

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true urban learning center for clergy, youth and others. She said that this is a long-term goal, with three years to accomplish. Bishop Barrow said that the work on urban strategy provides a tie-in with the effort to reshape clusters. Moving into another area, Ms. Hill discussed the strategy for the use of the synod's wellness money from Portico, emphasizing healthy congregations with a missional vision (growing in mission). This includes re-development and review. One program mentioned was the Kaleidoscope training in Los Angeles, which she attended with members of Kingo and Peace Lutheran churches in Milwaukee. Rev. Chrostowski plans to attend Kaleidoscope training with Faith/Santa Fe. More activities include a Women in Ministry event, the Outreach for Hope Bike Ride, a corn roast and a big Christian concert. Ms. Hill noted that the bishop says that hanging out is underrated, and that these activities provide, in part, valuable opportunities for people to hang out. Pictures of people being active will be used on the synod's website. She reported that there is no family camp this year (it was done last year), but some money may be available for Lutherdale's family camp. Finally, the first meeting for the synod's Malaria Campaign initiative was two weeks ago. Rev. Chuck Brummond suggested, as a follow-up to Ms. Hill's comments on hanging out, that "more kick-back time" is also a wellness issue for staff.

- D. **Youth and Family Network** – No report submitted. Ms. MaryBeth Hoffman raised up one youth-related event, a co-sponsored project called Love is Greater Than Hate (Love>Hate: Be an Ally), which was in the school system in Waukesha and will be presented on Sunday, July 21st at Resurrection Lutheran Church in New Berlin. She noted that the youth have planned this event, which is geared for high school students. The bishop added that this was a synod-budgeted event.
- E. **Lutheran Campus Ministry** – No report submitted.
- F. **Anti-Racism Team** – A written report was submitted.
- G. **WELCA** – No report submitted.
- H. **Outreach for Hope** – A written report was submitted.
- I. **Cluster Revision Task Force** – Covered in Bishop's Report.
- J. **Use of Funds Task Force** – Covered in Bishop's Report.
- K. **Refugee Resettlement Task Force** – Covered in Bishop's Report.

V. **Old Business**

- A. **MET Revision Task Force** – The review of the MET process is ongoing.
- B. **Synod Personnel Policy** – Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier reported that he has reviewed the new document provided by synod attorney Stephen Knowles, and that staff is currently reviewing it for accuracy and completeness. The final version, ready for approval, should be in members' hands well in advance of the September Council meeting.
- C. **2013 Synod Assembly** – Bishop Barrow reported that, while a complete review of this year's Assembly is pending (scheduled for next week), Country Springs has been reserved as the site for next year's Assembly, due to deadlines for reserving the facility. He said that it was obvious that they know how to do our event well. While changes might be made for future years, reserving Country Springs for 2014 was the clearest path for the synod at this point.
- D. **Letterhead** – Vice President Ms. Sue Cyr presented a quote from PrintPlace.com for letterhead and envelopes with the synod's new logo.

Council Action

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The Council voted to approve printing of letterhead and envelopes by PrintPlace.com as quoted.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 19, 2013 – 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

ELCA Churchwide Offices, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois

Submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary