

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
November 20, 2014

Cross of Life Lutheran Church
20700 West North Avenue, Brookfield, Wisconsin

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	Pending
The Rev. Steve Blyth	Lake Country	2015	X		1/2013
Ms. Ar Lee	Milwaukee 1	2017	X		10/2014
The Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland	Milwaukee 2	2017	X		1/2011
The Rev. Carolyn Fredriksen	Milwaukee 3	2015	X		Pending
Mr. Al Van Lith	Milwaukee 4	2015	X		Pending
Mr. Tom Gauthier	Northern Lakeshore	2017	X		9/2013
The Rev. David Schoob	Northwest	2017		X	9/2013
Vacant	Racine	2017			
The Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck	Waukesha	2015	X		1/2007
The Rev. Jay McDivitt	At Large	6/2014	X		Pending
Ms. Debra Taylor	At Large	2015		X	Pending
Mr. Jerry Key	At Large	2015	X		9/2013
Mr. Scott Manske	Vice President	2017 (1)	X		Pending
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2015 (1)	X		1/2012
Mr. Lee Johnston	Treasurer	2017 (2)	X		Pending
The Rev. Jeff Barrow	Bishop	2016 (1)	X		1/2008
Mr. Jack Walch	Youth Representative	2015		X	Pending
Mr. Jonathan Barker	Young Adult Rep.	2017	X		9/2013

Also present were Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, GMS Director of Evangelical Mission; Ms. Stephanie Luedtke, GMS Director of Cross+Generational Ministry; and Ms. Betty Warber, President, Synod Women's Organization.

Vice President's Remarks

Vice President Manske presented a table showing that mission support continues to decline, even though regular giving in congregations remains more or less constant. He noted that Rev. Sandy Chrostowski has reported that this shift is occurring across the ELCA, not just in our synod. This frames, he said, questions about what the synod does and provides to its member congregations, and why this revenue continues to fall. In response to this trend, he added, the synod needs to add value to what people are doing, and to tell its story.

Mr. Manske reported that he attended a stewardship committee meeting where visits by 25 retired clergy to congregations with declining mission support was discussed, citing this work as part of the effort to learn what is going on.

Building on the notion of articulating the work of the synod, he suggested digging deeper into the question of what the synod's mission and vision should be, with a focus on several items and decisions by the Council on a statement of mission and vision. The goal in this, he added, would be to tell a story, simply, about the synod's goals, and to use those as a touchstone for making

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council

November 20, 2014 Meeting Summary

programmatic decisions. His immediate objective is to get five or six Council members to serve as a sub-committee reviewing mission. An e-mail will be sent on Friday to solicit participation.

Comments from the Council indicated a desire both to tell the story of the value of the work of the synod and to encourage work beyond the synod that is supported by congregations. It was agreed that there is value in being able to develop clear statements on what the synod does and why it is worthy of support.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Barrow called the new Synod Communicator, Sarah Christiaansen “a real blessing for us,” saying that “we appreciate what she’s done for us” and that “we are delighted to have her.”

Council Action

Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. Ned E. Dorau, effective December 1, 2014; Mr. Dennis Schultz, AIM, effective November 10, 2014; and Rev. Richard M. Druckrey, effective November 1, 2014.

Elaborating on his written report, the bishop talked about the period from the beginning of September to Thanksgiving being the busiest time of the year for bishops. He added that, as he has said before, “worshipping with congregations is the greatest joy for bishops” and that “hanging out is under-rated.” He said he is impressed with new faces in the church, after attending the first call retreat.

Looking ahead the bishop wants the synod to look at the draft of the Women and Justice Task Force document next year. This document is being developed as part of the process to develop a social statement on Women and Justice for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The bishop is part of the Task Force. The bishop suggested topics addressed in this work as a possible theme for one of the next Synod Assemblies.

Bishop Barrow said that this has been a busy time, but a great time. He is looking forward, among other things, to going to the bishop’s election in El Salvador in 2016.

The bishop then turned to a second written report he presented, this one detailing uses of money from his discretionary fund since 2010. In that time roughly \$67,000 has been distributed to support activities that he described as having no other place in the budget. Among the larger expenditures from this fund have been support for the All People’s Horizon Internship and for MICAH-related projects. He noted that there has been only one project outside the City of Milwaukee, and that 95% or more has gone to projects serving people living in poverty.

The fund, which has largely been supported by donations from interested individuals, is now down to a balance of about \$3,000. He completed his overview of the fund by saying that “we need a place where we can undergird the ministry of our congregations.”

There was support from the Council for the idea of being able to have a fund that does not just focus on one particular item and that can respond quickly to immediate opportunities and challenges. There was also some support for finding a way to replenish the account, which the bishop said could address problems in a serious fashion with a flow of about \$30,000 a year.

Discussion by the Council tied in to the letter soliciting congregational support for the synod’s commitment act as fiscal agent for Rev. Gabriel Marcano, with some support for creating a

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council November 20, 2014 Meeting Summary

broader appeal based on the work accomplished with the support of the bishop's fund, while other members were concerned that these were really two different issues. Included in this discussion were questions of whether working to replenish the bishop's fund might undercut efforts to bolster broader mission support. With no consensus on the question of a tie-in to the bishop's fund, Mr. Manske agreed to work with the bishop to craft the solicitation for Rev. Marcano with no other mention of the bishop's fund.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston reported that the synod's giving continues its downward trend, adding that this is the first time mission support income has been below 90% of budget in his tenure. He was able to compare notes with other synod treasurers at the ELCA's meeting of synod treasurers, where he found that most synods, perhaps 50 or more of the total of 65, are "in the same boat, or worse." He commended Director of Evangelical Mission Rev. Sandy Chrostowski and synod Director of Finance Mr. Dave Groenewold for their support and expertise in confronting this shortfall.

Turning to the expense side of the ledger, Mr. Johnston reported that with full staffing levels there would no longer be savings on personnel costs. With other expenses trending as expected he expects a deficit in the vicinity of \$33,000 for the fiscal year ending in January. This will mean the need to tap reserve funds at the end of the fiscal year.

Moving from his status report, he asked how the synod can budget and talk about the issues without just reciting the numbers. "How do we tell our stories?" Some synods, he said, have used a narrative budget, something which may help in communicating with congregations.

The only question was about the drop in equity from twelve months earlier, which Mr. Johnston reported was due to the commitment of funds from the money from the sale of the Good Shepherd property which has since been turned into a grant fund.

Council Action

Approval of Financial Statements

The Council voted to approve the synod's financial statements as of October 31, 2014 as presented.

Action Items – New Business

Council Action

Approval of Cost of Living Increase

The Council voted to approve a 2.0% 2015 cost of living increase for all staff with at least one year of service by February 1, 2015.

Council Action

Approval of Housing Allowances

The Council voted to approve synod clergy staff housing allowances for 2015 of \$35,000 for Bishop Jeff Barrow, \$34,000 for Rev. Jim Bickel, \$26,400 for Rev. Chuck Brummond, and \$16,000 for Rev. Mary Martha Kannass.

Council Action

Approval of Lease Amendment

The Council voted to approve an amendment to the synod's office lease for 2014-2015, showing a reduction from the anticipated 2.0% rate increase to an increase of 1.7% for the current lease period from the rate in the previous lease period.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council November 20, 2014 Meeting Summary

Cross+Generation Program Using Reserved Funds – Ms. Stephanie Luedtke presented information on plans for ministry to young adults previously discussed with the Council which have now been put into final form. She requested approval to use \$20,000 originally authorized in January 2013 for expenditure for young adult ministry (SC13.01.05.) to support two programs: scholarships for the annual New Orleans Mission Trip and the Waukesha Emerging Adult Cooperative Program. A written plan for the Cooperative Program was provided. She explained that scholarships for the Mission Trip were previously funded by grants, but that support had ended. The Cooperative Program was developed with the participation of Ms. Rozella White, Program Director, Young Adult Ministry for the ELCA. Ms. White met with congregational leaders to fine-tune their plan to develop this ministry. These congregational leaders are now asking their congregations for support for this project, which remains an exploratory effort, not a finished product. Ms. Luedtke's request to the Council was for \$4,000 in support of Mission Trip scholarships, and \$16,000 to fund development of the Cooperative Program. A motion to use funds as requested was made, followed by additional discussion. Among the questions posed were what the total budget for the program would be (unknown as yet), how money will be administered when the complete program is implemented (also unknown as yet), when there will be a report back to the Council (ongoing reports to be provided), how success will be measured (use of an ELCA framework), and whether Ms. Luedtke will be the contact person for the project when in place (she will be advising). Mr. Jonathan Barker opined, based in part on his own previous work with young adult ministry in California, that "this is a tremendous opportunity to grow our synod's ministry," adding that the plan needs additional fleshing out and organization before final implementation.

Council Action

Approval of Cross+Generation Program Expenditures

The Council voted to approve the use of \$20,000 approved for youth ministry in Council Action SC13.01.05. for current projects, with \$4,000 to support scholarships for the synod's annual New Orleans Mission Trip and \$16,000 to support development of the Waukesha Emerging Adult Cooperative.

Approval of 2015 Synod Assembly Rules – Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier presented the proposed Assembly Rules for Elections and Procedures, noting that in previous years action has been taken in March prior to the Synod Assembly, but that the Rules had been redrafted with earlier deadlines for resolutions and memorials to allow more time for scheduling review by the Reference & Counsel Committee. A second reason for the earlier deadline was to allow distribution to congregations before their annual meetings. Mr. Brockmeier also noted the addition of a new provision, 1.E., which is designed to codify initial review of resolutions and memorials, and to provide guidance on requirements for any resolutions directing a change in synod spending to align with the existing requirements in provision VII.

Council Action

Recommendation of Synod Assembly Rules

The Council voted to recommend the 2015 Assembly Rules for Elections and Procedures, as presented, to the 2015 Synod Assembly for the Assembly's approval.

Approval of Process for Selecting Voting Members for 2016 Churchwide Assembly – Mr. Brockmeier then presented a revised version of Appendix 1, related to GMS Continuing Resolution S9.01.01.B11., detailing the allocation by source and demographic characteristics of Voting Members for the Churchwide Assembly. The revisions were based on the ELCA's notification of

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council

November 20, 2014 Meeting Summary

the number of Voting Members assigned to the synod, along with new requirements regarding Persons of Color or whose primary language is other than English and Youth and Young Adults. The most important proposed change is to have a lottery to select which clusters with lay Voting Member allocations will also be required to select individuals in those two categories.

Council Action

Revision of Appendix 1

The Council voted to approve replacement of the existing Appendix 1, related to S9.01.01.B11., with the proposed revised version for selecting Churchwide Assembly Voting Members.

Amendment of Continuing Resolution S10.07.A13. Regarding Anti-Racism Activities – Mr. Brockmeier presented proposed revisions to the continuing resolution addressing anti-racism training, which were developed in conjunction with the Anti-Racism Team to assure stability in future funding and to define the frequency of training for Council members and staff. Mr. Jerry Key, a member of the Anti-Racism Team, then discussed the history of budgeting for this training, saying that the intent is to make sure that since we want to have an Anti-Racist identity, funding for the training will not easily disappear. Mr. Tom Gauthier, also a member of the Anti-Racism Team, concurred with Mr. Key's remarks. Discussion followed about costs for the training (\$175 per person synod/\$225 per person non-ELCA) and about alternative training opportunities. Mr. Key, responding to the question of alternatives, emphasized that the requirement to participate in the Crossroads training is so that everyone can be speaking the same language regarding racism. The discussion about alternatives extended into discussion about the possible need for similar training for other groups, Reconciling in Christ, for instance, and about the difficulty of making time to attend these trainings or being able to attend because of the limited number of times this training is offered. Mr. Barker spoke in strong support of the Anti-Racism Training, saying that this "is one of the best branding things that we do; one of the best things the synod does." The motion approving the revisions to the continuing resolution included one negative vote.

Council Action

Amendment of Continuing Resolution

The Council voted to approve amending Continuing Resolution S10.07.A13. as follows:

S10.07.A13. A14. All members of the Synod Council, and all Synod employees, shall participate in an approved multi-day anti-racism training program within one year of the beginning of their term (Synod Council) or their date of hire (Synod employees). Participation fees for anti-racism training shall be paid by the Synod. Sufficient funding for training all Synod Council members and Synod employees shall be provided in the synod's annual budget for three-day anti-racism training, with retraining every four years. The synod's annual budget shall also provide funding to support related activities by the Anti-Racism Team or its successor.

- A. **Recommend Conversion of Amended Continuing Resolution S10.07.A14. to Bylaw S10.07.02. by the 2015 Synod Assembly** – Because of concerns about converting this continuing resolution to a bylaw, Mr. Key moved to table the question at the Call of the Chair.

Reports

- A. **Director of Evangelical Mission** – Rev. Chrostowski shared highlights of her written report, including the significant grant from The Siebert Lutheran Foundation in support of the Holy Ground Youth and Young Adult Organizing Project, which was approved for synod

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council November 20, 2014 Meeting Summary

funding in September (\$10,000 in Action SC14.09.27.) She also reported that there may be funding from Churchwide in support of The Table, a project being developed by Venice Williams. Finally, she noted that Rev. Gabriel Marcano is currently in Venezuela supporting his mother, who is dealing with cancer, and assisting with his grandmother.

- B. **Director of Discipleship** – No report submitted.
- C. **Director of Rostered Leadership** – A written report was provided.
- D. **Cross+Generational Ministry** – Ms. Luedtke provided information on a youth leadership summit and other events, on a youth leadership model she is working on and on other forthcoming events.
- E. **Lutheran Campus Ministry** – No report submitted.
- F. **Reconciling in Christ** – A written report was provided. There was a question on the loss of their 501(c)3 status. Mr. Key will check in with them to gather additional information.
- G. **Anti-Racism Team** – A written report was submitted. Mr. Key added that at the October Anti-Racism Training there were more people of color registered than whites, and that eight participants signed up for the team after the training. He said that the focus right now is on people of color organizing for themselves.
- H. **WELCA** – A written report was submitted.
- I. **Outreach for Hope** – No report submitted. Outreach for Hope's funding commitment for the coming year were discussed by Mr. Manske.

Old Business

- A. **Funding Policy Task Force Update** – A meeting is scheduled.
- B. **ELCA Capital Campaign** – Mr. Manske reported that the ELCA's first goal is to finish the Malaria Campaign, which now has raised roughly \$13 million of the \$15 million goal for Churchwide. It is expected the final goal will be met by the end of the year. He said that our synod has done very well, with participation by a majority of congregations. The next goal is the focus on congregations, with Mr. Manske calling for Council discussion on how to support congregational issues in 2015.
- C. **May 2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 2 – Voting Member Diversity and Participation** – Mr. Manske stated that he is creating a sub-committee to address the concerns voiced in this resolution. He said this is a work in progress, with the number of days for the 2015 already reduced.
- D. **May 2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 3 – Intentional Interim Ministry** – Rev. McDivitt has already been appointed chair of this committee. There was some confusion on the question of naming additional members; the bishop and Rev. McDivitt will meet to address these concerns.
- E. **May 2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 4 – Opposing Discriminatory Legislation** – There is no action at this time.

Next Meeting

Thursday, January 22, 2015 – 5:30 pm Dinner; 6:15 pm Synod Council Meeting

Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, 2016 Center Road, Waukesha

Future Meetings

- Thursday, March 19, 2015 – Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Kenosha
- Thursday, May 7, 2015 – St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Palmyra

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council November 20, 2014 Meeting Summary

- Thursday, July 16, 2015 – Bishop Jeff Barrow’s Home
- Thursday, September 24, 2015 – The Lutheran Center, Chicago

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