

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
May 7, 2015

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
313 Main Street, Palmyra, 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
Ms. Lynn Hooper	Racine	2017	X		Pending
The Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck	Waukesha	2015	X		1/2007
The Rev. Jay McDivitt	At Large	2015		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

Mr. Manske provided a brief overview of the leaders' discussion held over the weekend, which focused on the work done by the synod and the national church. One tangible outcome was a plan to solicit information on what congregations need and what they have to share. A letter will go out from the synod to begin work on this idea, which was praised by members as a means of expressing abundance rather than scarcity, and by adding value to participation in the synod.

Mr. Manske also informed the Council that work will begin to provide a procedure for dialogue with potential nominees for bishop in advance of the bishop's election at the 2016 Synod Assembly. The goal is to have a plan prepared during the next two Council meetings and available for distribution in October.

Bishop's Report

Approval of On Leave from Call Status

The Council voted to approve a change from standard On Leave from Call status to On Leave from Call Family Status for Rev. Amy R. Becker Perez.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council May 7, 2015 Meeting Summary

Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. Mary L. Janz, effective May 1, 2015; and for Rev. Gary J. Liedtke, effective July 1, 2015.

Bishop Barrow elaborated on his written report. Observations shared during this discussion included the idea that the problems facing congregations are not unique either to this synod or even to the ELCA; the idea that coming generations will not do exactly what has been done, but will need the same dedication to the church; and the idea that the Eddie Lacy event during the Synod Assembly is NOT about worshipping the Packers.

Executive Committee

The Council was provided minutes of the Executive Committee's meeting by teleconference on April 29, 2015 and electronic meeting ending April 28, 2015. The bishop opined that issues with the electronic Synod Council meeting begs the question of where we put our energy as a Council.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston reported that while giving is down from the budgeted amount, at about 97%, expenses are down even more, at about 91% of budget. This left the synod with about a \$4,300 surplus, rather than the expected deficit of just under \$13,000 for this point in the synod's fiscal year. He added that he and staff will keep a close eye on budget numbers, but that there is no apparent need for immediate corrections. The synod is on pace, he said, for \$1.95 million to \$2.00 million in mission support income for the year. Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck noted that the stewardship team communication was very positive. There was a question about decreases in cash shown on the balance sheet, with Mr. Johnston reporting that these shifts were for planned expenditures.

Action Items – Old Business

Update on Safe Haven Resolution – In the aftermath of the Synod Attorney's rejection of the proposed Safe Haven Resolution, discussion focused on possible next steps and on the question of how to balance the avoidance of risk against the need for the synod to address concerns in a way that assists congregations attempting to find appropriate ways of addressing issues like the safety of the vulnerable. There was a desire to discuss such issues with the Synod Attorney, but it was agreed that this should be done in the context of future needs. Ms. Stephanie Luedtke was encouraged to proceed with the creation of a Safe Haven policy for use by the synod in its events and activities.

Funding Policy Task Force – Mr. Manske presented two documents; one outlining a proposed policy for the use of funds received by the synod from the assets of closed congregations, the other providing options for congregations to consider on the disposition of property prior to closure, merger or other such actions. Discussion hinged on the question of whether the policy would be mandatory or optional for the Council to follow, and ended with the desire by members to spend more time considering the recommendation before final action.

Action to Table

The Council voted to table the proposals for a policy and a document on congregational property options until the July 2015 meeting.

Extension of Approval of Funds for Spirit Alive! Lutheran Church, Pleasant Prairie – The Council considered the question of extending the availability of funding for Spirit Alive! to develop a new facility for another year. Approval had been given in May 2013 for Spirit Alive! to

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council

May 7, 2015 Meeting Summary

have access to \$150,000 in synod funds for a one year period, with a one-year extension granted in May 2014. With concerns about a lack of sufficient funds in the St. Andrew's fund to cover this commitment, the lack of progress to date, and a trend report showing overall declines prior to the start of the newly called pastor's tenure, the Council decided not to act, allowing authorization for these funds to lapse.

Action Items – New Business

Discussion of Lease and/or Sale of Iglesia “El Nuevo Pacto” (Rogers Street Property) – Mr. Manske told the Council that there was no new information, briefly recapping the current agreement and status.

Good Shepherd Trinity Federation Agreement – Rev. Sandy Chrostowski summarized actions by Good Shepherd (ELCA) and Trinity (Presbyterian [USA]) to create a “federated” congregation: in essence a hybrid Lutheran-Presbyterian congregation. This is based on a process under way for the past five years, where the congregations have in many ways been acting as one, but have continued to hold their own corporate identity, with each still owning a building. On April 12th the congregations took initial action to approve a formal federation, though the Synod Attorney has issued a letter stating concerns on some of the particulars of the agreement and on the overall approach. He encourages the congregations to choose one denomination or the other and to create a new corporate identity within that framework as an alternative to federation. It was agreed that more consideration of this proposal, which was only made available to members of the Council this afternoon, was necessary. Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier will review the document, which includes a proposed constitution, and provide a memo to the congregation and the Council, along with a copy of the ELCA's guidelines for federation to aid the additional consideration.

Action to Table

The Council voted to table the proposed federation agreement for Good Shepherd Trinity Church, at the Call of the Chair.

Recommend 2016-2017 Budget to 2015 Synod Assembly – General discussion on the proposed budget, including the importance of the \$2 million threshold for mission support. Bishop Barrow said that he felt that falling much below \$2 million leads to the “implosion” of much of the work of the synod. Mr. Johnston said that the \$2 million goal can serve as a tangible challenge to congregations that can be framed for congregations in a way that provides a manageable target. Mr. Manske noted that the proposal to eliminate fees for the Synod Assembly, included in the 2014 Resolution on Voting Member Diversity and Participation, would move the costs of the Assembly into the general budget if adopted.

Recommendation of Budget

The Council voted to recommend approval by the 2015 Synod Assembly of the 2016-2017 Synod Budget as presented.

Appointment of At-Large Members of the Nominating Committee – Again this month there were no nominations for these positions.

Appointment to Nominating Committee

The Synod Council voted, upon the recommendation of the Northern Lakeshore Cluster, to appoint Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe to a three-year term on the Nominating Committee, from the end of the 2015 Synod Assembly through the end of the 2018 Synod Assembly.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council May 7, 2015 Meeting Summary

Summary of Resolutions to be Presented to the 2015 Synod Assembly – St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa has submitted a proposed Resolution on Social Justice and Ministry. Mr. Manske reported that he and Mr. Brockmeier spoke with Rev. Matthew Kruse of St. Matthew's to clarify language in the resolution, which will now be reviewed by the synod's Reference and Counsel Committee. No Synod Council action is required.

Reports

Director of Evangelical Mission – A written report was presented. Rev. Chrostowski added that there was a call today regarding the Moravian mission developer working under ELCA. This arrangement will not work for the Moravians, who require that this person work under Moravian leadership.

Director of Discipleship – No report was submitted (director on leave).

Director of Rostered Leadership – No report was submitted.

Cross+Generational Ministry – No report was submitted.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – No report submitted.

Reconciling in Christ – No report was submitted.

Anti-Racism Team – A written report was presented. Mr. Jerry Key reminded the Council of the Crossroads Anti-Racism Training scheduled for October 1st through 3rd, which is required of all Council members who have either never taken this training or who took it more than four years ago. He reported that the training done in April was good, with strong representation of People of Color.

Women of the ELCA – A written report was presented, with additional comments by Ms. Betty Warber. She encouraged participation in the blood drive at the Synod Assembly, and asked for help in filling backpacks with school supplies. Details on both requests were included in the written report, along with information on the Synodical Women's Organization's Annual Conference on October 3rd at Norway Lutheran Church in Wind Lake.

Outreach for Hope – No report was submitted.

New Business

None

Old Business

May 2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 2 – Voting Member Diversity and Participation – Mr. Manske reported that he is drafting a memo for the Synod Assembly, to include changes made this year and data showing levels of participation. Rev. Lorbeck reiterated a desire to see the Assembly become more affordable.

May 2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 3 – Intentional Interim Ministry – There will also be a report to the Assembly on the status of the review of Intentional Interim Ministry, with the Task Force chaired by Rev. Jay McDivitt.

May 2014 Synod Assembly Resolution 4 – Opposing Discriminatory Legislation – There is no action at this time.

Cluster Task Force – There is no action at this time.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council
May 7, 2015 Meeting Summary

Next Meeting

Thursday, July 9, 2015 – 5:30 pm Dinner; 6:15 pm Synod Council Meeting

Bishop Jeff Barrow's Home

Future Meetings

- Thursday, September 24, 2015 (all day) – 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