

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
July 21, 2016

Bishop Jeff Barrow House and Truck Stop
5715 Evarit Drive, Racine

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		10/2015
Vacant	Lake Country	2019			-
Vacant	Milwaukee 1	2017			-
The Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland	Milwaukee 2	2017	X		1/2011
Ms. Claire Zautke	Milwaukee 3	2019		X	Pending
The Rev. Bill Knapp	Milwaukee 4	2019		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. Angela Khabeab	Waukesha	2019	X		10/2015
The Rev. Lindsay Jordan	At Large	2019		X	Pending
Mr. Steven Hruska	At Large	2019		X	Pending
Ms. Amber Davis	At Large	2019		X	Pending
Mr. Scott Manske	Vice President	2017 (1)	X		10/2015
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2019 (2)	X		1/2012
Mr. Lee Johnston	Treasurer	2017 (2)	X		Pending
The Rev. Jeff Barrow	Bishop	2016 (1)	X		1/2008
Ms. Sarah Muller	Youth Representative	2017	X		Pending
Mr. Jonathan Barker	Young Adult Rep.	2017	X		9/2013

Also present were Rev. Kristin Nielsen, GMS Director of Rostered Leadership; and Mr. Walt Chossek, Mr. Jerry Schmidt and Ms. Janet McGinty of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Calls

The Council voted to approve synod calls to Rev. Andrea Ng'weshemi to a teaching position at Carthage College, and to Rev. Maren M. Hooper for Interim Ministry at Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartford.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston reported that synod finances are in good shape so far in the current fiscal year. Expenses are under budget, even when taking into account expenses for Rev. Gabriel Marcano, some of which may be reimbursed to the synod. Both Mr. Johnston and synod Director of Finance Mr. Dave Groenewold are optimistic that FY2016 financial goals will be met.

Council Action

Acceptance of Financial Statements

The Council voted to accept the synod's financial statements as of June 30, 2016 as presented.

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Action Items – Old Business

Rogers Street Property Disposition – Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto has not taken over the property yet. The question was raised of whether the synod should provide a mortgage, since a commercial mortgage has not been available. It was agreed, without formal action, that Vice President Manske should review options, which include providing a mortgage, extending the lease arrangement, or selling for a dollar. The mortgage option had support from those concerned about ongoing maintenance liabilities under the lease.

Action Items – New Business

Mt. Meru Coffee – Mr. Walt Chossek provided background to the Council, explaining that the only voting member of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project is the synod, and that the current production and sales trends are leading to excessive inventory levels. Current stocks are roughly 2 ½ years of anticipated usage, with another shipment due in August. Mr. Jerry Schmidt reported that even though an appeal letter has resulted in a tripling of orders from normal summer levels, the Project is considering not importing coffee from the 2017 crop, but instead purchasing at the normal level and re-selling through commercial auctions in Tanzania. A key concern with not ordering in 2017 is the likely loss of trust and connections that the Project has developed over the years. There is a recognition that an enhanced marketing plan is needed, especially with the loss of small independent coffee distributors who formerly purchased part of the Project's coffee. Summing up, they said that "investment in relationships is important . . . it keeps people connected to the Body of Christ."

MMCP Calendar Raffle – Ms. Janet McGinty, member of the Project's Golf Outing Committee, provided a description of the proposed calendar raffle to benefit the Mt. Meru Coffee Project. As proposed, there would be 101 days of drawings throughout 2017. Proceeds would be shared with Outreach for Hope, as well as for a micro-loan program, providing farmers with enough money to purchase small amounts of fertilizer, and providing them with training on how not to use pesticides. The raffle would break even with the sale of 140 calendars.

Council Action

Approval of Raffle Participation

The Council voted to approve a calendar raffle to be conducted by the Mt. Meru Coffee Project during 2017.

All voted in favor except Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland, who voted against.

Mt. Meru Coffee Project Memorandum of Understanding – Background provided by the representatives of the Project regarding the history of project management, and the decreased role for the Meru Diocese as a result. This led to a lack of engagement and support by the Diocese, which felt it should have a share of the proceeds. The Memorandum is meant to clarify the situation, and has already been approved by the Meru Diocese Council.

Council Action

Action to Table

The Council voted to table consideration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mr. Meru Coffee Project, the Diocese of Meru and the Greater Milwaukee Synod for further consideration, with the Council to hold a special electronic meeting authorized by the bishop for final action.

Mt. Meru Coffee Project Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Commercial Rental Structures – **The proposed project would** provide funding for economic development work through the Makumira Farm, creating a regular and continuing source of income. At present the

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Meru Diocese is primarily dependent on income from congregations, many of which are composed of subsistence farmers. The Mt. Meru Committee has approximately \$14,000 available as seed money for the project. At first 50% of rental proceeds would be reinvested in the creation of additional rental units. Over time the amount shared with the Meru Diocese would increase from 10% to 30% of rental proceeds.

Council Action Action to Table

The Council voted to table consideration of the Makumira Farm Economic Development Proposal and Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Commercial Rental Structures for further consideration, with the Council to hold a special electronic meeting authorized by the bishop for final action.

Mt. Meru Coffee Project Term Limits – The Project presented a proposed amendment to their by-laws to allow six consecutive three-year terms of service on the Project's Board of Directors, rather than the five consecutive three-year terms currently allowed. Rather than continue extending the term limit provision, Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier proposed eliminating Article 5 Section 2 (c) from the bylaws, thereby removing term limits. The hope expressed was that the organization could revitalize its Board in the short to mid-term, and include a new term limits provision in a general overhaul of the bylaws at a later date. The Project has engaged Dr. Ylonda Glover of Tri-Success Management Institute, Inc. to work on succession planning for the Board.

Council Action

Approval of Bylaw Change – Mt. Meru Coffee Project

The Council voted to remove Article 5 Section 2 (c), regarding term limits, from the bylaws of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project, Inc.

Council Action

Approval of Directors – Mt. Meru Coffee Project

The Council voted to approve as Directors of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project for new or continuing terms: Mr. Ronald Bohrer, All Saints Lutheran Church, as a continuing director serving a fourth term ending in June 2017; Mr. Bruce Johnson, St. Matthews Lutheran Church as a continuing director serving a fourth term ending in June 2017; Mr. Andrew Petersen, St. John's Lutheran Church, Brookfield, as a continuing director for a term ending in June 2017; Mr. David Hammer, Ascension Lutheran Church as continuing director to serve a fifth term ending in June 2018; Ms. Sue Johnson, Vernon Lutheran Church, as a new director for a term ending June 2018; Mr. Jerry Schmidt, Trinity Lutheran Church as continuing director to serve a fifth term ending in June 2018; Mr. Walter Chossek, Kingo Lutheran Church to serve as continuing directors to serve a sixth term ending in June 2019; Mr. Fred Meyer, Martin Luther Lutheran Church, to serve as continuing directors to serve a sixth term ending in June 2019; and Mr. Thomas Schaefer, Fox Point Evangelical Lutheran Church, as a continuing director for a term ending in June 2019.

Compensation of New Bishop – Vice President Manske reviewed the compensation plan developed for the new bishop, with general agreement that it appeared fair. It was noted that the proposal is for compensation slightly below average for our region, but that this is largely due to a number of incumbent bishops having more years of service and thus being higher on the standard compensation tables to begin with. It was also noted that the new bishop's family will arrive in January 2017.

Council Action

Approval of Compensation for New Bishop

The Council voted to approve the compensation plan for Bishop-Elect Paul Erickson as presented, with total defined compensation of \$101,040.00, to begin September 1, 2016.

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500th Anniversary Committee – Rev. Margaret Schoewe sent a proposal to Bishop Barrow for a Greater Milwaukee Synod 500 Year Reformation Commemoration, which is to include a tree planting program and a series of events, including an event with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The bishop will appoint members to this committee, which in formation includes Rev. David Dragseth and Rev. John Bischoff, along with Rev. Schoewe. A grant is sought to support the project.

Council Action

Approval of Grant Submission

The Council voted to approve submission of a grant request to the Siebert Lutheran Foundation for \$10,000.00, with \$5,000.00 requested for the 500th Anniversary Tree Project, and \$5,000.00 requested for 500th Anniversary events.

Information on Contract with Bishop-Elect Paul Erickson for August 2016 – Vice President Manske provided information on the contract for Bishop-Elect Erickson’s transitional work during August. The contract has already been signed.

Bishop Transition Team – Mr. Manske informed the Council that the executive committee stands ready to provide support for the transition to the new bishop. This idea was brought up by the executive committee during its July phone meeting, based on the committee’s ability to respond quickly to questions that arise.

Funds for Installation of New Bishop – Mr. Manske also provided information on the installation ceremony for Bishop-Elect Erickson, which will take place on Saturday, October 8th at St Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa. Former synod vice president Sue Cyr will lead the planning team, which has already met. Among others, the team includes synod Office Manager Mary Romskog and Sue Daniels, AIM. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will attend. Costs for the event will be developed by Mr. Manske, who “will keep it reasonable.”

Vacancies Noted – Continuing vacancies on the Nominating Committee, along with current vacancies on the Council for a lay male from the Lake Country Cluster and a lay female from Milwaukee Cluster 1, were noted, with encouragement to seek individuals willing to serve.

Synod Assembly Resolutions Recapped – Resolutions approved by this year’s Synod Assembly included three which were forwarded to the ELCA, two as memorials to the Churchwide Assembly, and one as a resolution forwarded to a Churchwide unit. Mr. Manske will review these items with the synod’s Churchwide Assembly Voting Members at a meeting on Monday, July 25th. Internal actions called for by the resolutions will be reviewed in the fall.

Vice President’s Remarks – Mr. Manske reported that a meeting to review the bishop election process will be held soon, with a goal of developing a modified process for review and possible action by the 2017 Synod Assembly. He also reported on the clergy compensation survey, the results of which were distributed in written form. Among items highlighted were the occurrence of older pastors seeking higher healthcare benefits in lieu of higher salary, and trends in housing allowance payments in other synods. He will meet with Rev. Kristin Nielsen to review in advance of Council discussion and action in September.

The synod has 18 voting members for the Churchwide Assembly, including one additional replacement named by Bishop Barrow. There will be a farewell celebration for Bishop Barrow on Sunday, August 28th at 2:00 pm at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Milwaukee.

Mr. Manske spoke about the conversation following the Outreach for Hope presentation at the Synod Assembly, praising the Anti-Racism Team, Rev. Nielsen and Rev. Jim Bickel for their leadership in the conversation. He said that the Council needs to continue that conversation this year to

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deal with issues of racism. “Our job as a council to make sure we are talking about it – and to address the issue, continue to talk about it. Not just lay it on anybody else. We as a council need to have that conversation.” Additional opportunities to discuss and respond are being developed.

He ended his report by noting that there have been a lot of issues addressed which have taken a lot of time, and that ongoing he will be asking for help on some of these issues, followed by an appreciation for working with Bishop Barrow. He said that it has been easy to speak directly with the bishop, and that the bishop has been constructively engaged with the Council.

Bishop’s Report – Rev. David D Daubert has been appointed as a temporary Director of Evangelical Ministry (DEM) for the synod, working ten hours per week, and based in Chicago. Bishop-Elect Erickson will need to get a permanent DEM after he takes over. Bishop Barrow noted that DEM’s are chosen by the ELCA in conjunction with the synod.

The bishop said that most of what he feels is thanksgiving, celebrating the last six years, adding that there is a slightly scary aspect to this transition because he is so accustomed to working. He noted that Rev. Sandy Chrostowski’s departure had left a big hole in the staff, but said he is still enjoying going to work. He gave appreciation for the staff being invested in the ministries of the synod, saying there may be some continuity in staffing, at least for the short term. He noted appreciatively Rev. Jonathan Barker’s ordination on July 2nd. “Really so grateful for my life in this office, and in this church. Some days like [the movie] Hidalgo, some like Thelma and Louise.”

Rev. David Schoob encouraged questions in the electronic meetings the bishop has authorized to act on the two pending issues from the Mt. Meru Coffee Project.

Reports

- A. **Director of Evangelical Mission** – No report submitted.
- B. **Director of Discipleship** – No report submitted.
- C. **Director of Rostered Leadership** – A written report was presented. Rev. Kristin Nielsen provided a verbal addendum to her report.
- D. **Cross+Generational Ministry** – No report submitted.
- E. **Lutheran Campus Ministry** – No report submitted.
- F. **Reconciling in Christ** – No report submitted.
- G. **Anti-Racism Team** – A written report was presented.
- H. **Women of the ELCA** – A written report was presented.
- I. **Outreach for Hope** – No report submitted.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 15, 2016 – 5:30 Dinner; 6:15 Meeting

Fox Point Evangelical Lutheran Church, 7510 N Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point

Future Meetings

- To be scheduled

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are preceded by a dinner at 5:30 pm, with the meeting beginning at 6:15 pm.

Presented,

Mr. Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary