

**Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
September 15, 2016**

Fox Point Evangelical Lutheran Church
7510 North Santa Monica Boulevard, Fox Point

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			-
Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland	Milwaukee 2	2017	X		1/2011
Ms. Claire Zautke	Milwaukee 3	2019	X		Pending
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
Rev. Angela Khabebe	Waukesha	2019		X	10/2015
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
Rev. Paul Erickson	Bishop	2022 (1)	X		Pending
Ms. Sarah Muller	Youth Representative	2017	X		Pending
Rev. Jonathan Barker	Young Adult Rep.	2017	X		9/2013

Also present were Ms. MaryBeth Hoffman, Chair, GMS Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team; Mr. Jerry Key, Anti-Racism Team Representative; and Rev. Kristin Nielsen, Director of Rostered; and Rev. Grant Quever, representing the GMS Stewardship Team.

Ms. Amber Davis and Bishop Paul Erickson were introduced to the Council.

Vice President's Remarks

Mr. Manske introduced the idea of a Council retreat, suggesting an all-day Saturday meeting (9:00 am – 3:00 pm) for November or January. This would not include regular Council business. He will ask staff to poll members for possible dates.

Mr. Manske also urged Council members to review the ELCA's paper, "Called Forward Together in Christ for the Sake of the World", which lays out future directions. Action on this paper is expected at the November ELCA Church Council meeting; members are asked to share their thoughts with Bishop Paul.

Finally, Mr. Manske told the Council they should be proud of how the Voting Members represented the synod at the Churchwide Assembly.

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Bishop's Report

Bishop Erickson reported that he has had “a great two weeks,” giving a brief summary of his written report to the Council. He plans a six-month process of reviewing staffing, with no actions anticipated during that time except filling the Director of Evangelical Mission position.

The Breaking the Chains ministry is moving forward. This will be a synod call, but requires a process involving the churchwide office. Before that process is complete, the prospective pastor, Rev. Mark Thompson, is working under contract doing preparatory work.

In the process of “learning a lot of stuff” Bishop Erickson is asking for more time on some things, for example, approval of non-ordained individuals to preside at communion.

He said that he looks forward to “getting to know [the Council], and [its] perspective on life and ministry in the GMS. Thank you for prayers and support and engagement in this work.”

Roster Matters

Council Action

SC 16.09.04. Approval of On Leave from Call Status

The Council voted to approve On Leave from Call Status for Rev. Arlen P. Solem effective August 12, 2016.

Council Action

SC 16.09.05. Approval of Synod Calls

The Council voted to approve synod calls to Rev. Jane E. Fryda for Chaplaincy at Children's Hospital.

Bishop Erickson asked the Council to defer action on a call to interim ministry for Rev. Cynthia Assen.

Council Action

SC 16.09.06. Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. Jim Stein, effective November 1, 2016; Rev. Steven Anderson, effective November 1, 2016; Rev. Christian von Dehsen, effective September 1, 2016; and Rev. Jeff Barrow, effective September 1, 2016.

Report from Others

Rev. Grant Quever addressed the Council, reporting that the churchwide office wants each synod to approve a stewardship strategy and providing history on the success of the South Central Synod in stabilizing giving using this approach. He went on to say that the Stewardship Strategy document shared with the Council has been sent to churchwide.

Discussion followed on related topics, including whether mission interpreters can be effective in stewardship efforts, and promoting the idea that individuals should be challenged to understand that stewardship is part of the call of the church.

More detailed discussion on what information is available about specific congregations giving, and the dynamics for congregations which are having financial difficulties.

Rev. Quever told the Council that this type of review will now take place annually, rather than every other year. He ended his report by saying there would be a meeting at Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brookfield on October 8th to discuss a Giving Kiosk pilot program.

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Council Action

SC 16.09.07. Acceptance of Stewardship Strategy

The Council voted to accept the “Greater Milwaukee Synod Mission Support and Stewardship Strategy.”

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Lee Johnston reported that despite the summer normally being a lull period, July “was pretty good”, at about \$13,000 over last year for income. He said that things are looking good, with income running ahead of budget, and results that are close to being even on income and expenses. VP Manske shared the synod’s internal mission support document, prepared by staff, and said he would attempt to provide to the Council every month.

Council Action

SC 16.09.08. Acceptance of Financial Statements

The Council voted to accept the synod’s financial statements as of July 31, 2016 as presented.

Old Business – Action Items

- A. Rogers Street Property Disposition** – Mr. Manske reported that Iglesia El Nuevo Pacto has been working with banks seeking a mortgage while continuing to make occupancy payments every month. Following the Council’s consensus authorizing him to pursue options, he presented the idea of the synod providing a mortgage. A real estate attorney from the synod attorney’s office is reviewing. When ready in a week or two draft documents will be sent to the Council. There is no need for further Council action at this point.
- B. Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Mt. Meru Coffee Growers Association** – It has been agreed with the Mt. Meru Coffee Project that more discussion needs to take place before a decision is made on this document, including discussion between the two new bishops. This will be on the November agenda.
- C. Possible Reconsideration of Fundraising Idea for Mt. Meru Coffee Project** – A fundraising raffle to support the Mt. Meru Coffee Project was approved by the Council in July (SC16.07.10.), but was placed on this agenda by request for possible reconsideration. The raffle license has not yet been issued, with an initial denial by the state because it was not perceived as being local. Rev. Lindsay Jordan, who was not present in July, spoke against the decision to grant permission, based on the idea that we should support our missions and that the ELCA has taken a position opposing raffles as not being good for society. Some discussion on implications for project if approval is reversed. A motion to reconsider was made by Mr. Tom Gauthier, who supported the original motion.

Council Action

SC 16.09.09. Motion to Reconsider

The Council voted to reconsider SC 16.07.10., Approval of Raffle Participation, which approved a calendar raffle to be conducted by the Mt. Meru Coffee Project during 2017.

Council Action

SC 16.09.10. Rejection of Raffle Participation

The Council voted to reject a calendar raffle requested by the Mt. Meru Coffee Project.

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New Business – Action Items

- A. Application to Siebert Lutheran Foundation** – Funding for the synod’s Leadership Development Program is being sought from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation. This is similar to support that has been requested and received in previous years.

Council Action

SC 16.09.11. Approval of Grant Submission

The Council voted to approve submission of a grant request to the Siebert Lutheran Foundation for \$55,000.00,

- B. Approval of Campus Ministry Sunday –**

Council Action

SC 16.09.12. Approval of Campus Ministry Sunday

The Council voted to approve April 30, 2017 as Campus Ministry Sunday in the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

- C. Updates to Synod Constitution** – Secretary Matthew Brockmeier requested that the Council recommend to the 2017 Synod Assembly optional changes to the synod constitution presented by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. He explained that required changes are already in effect, as mandated by the ELCA, and that a handful of optional changes involving item numbering had already been made to avoid confusion. The Council deferred action until November, to allow additional time for review of the proposed changes, especially in light of the consolidation of lay rosters.

Council Action

SC 16.09.13. Motion to Table

The Council voted to table consideration of updates to the synod constitution until November 2016.

- D. Extension of Synod Office Lease** – For several years the Council has approved one-year lease extensions, with rent increases matching the rate of inflation.

Council Action

SC 16.09.14. Approval of Synod Office Lease Extension

The Synod Council voted to approve an extension of the synod office lease through September 30, 2017, with a rent increase matching the rate of inflation through September 2016.

- E. Election of Non-Officer Executive Committee Members –**

Council Action

SC 16.09.15. Election to Executive Committee

The Synod Council voted to elect Ms. Sue Schmidt-Decker, Rev. Angela Khabeb and Rev. Lindsay Jordan as non-officer members of the synod executive committee for terms through August 2017.

- F. Council Meeting Schedule** – Following discussion on locations offered by Council members, the Council acted on its 2016-2017 meeting schedule.

Council Action

SC 16.09.16. Approval of Meeting Schedule

The Synod Council voted to approve meetings on November 17, 2016 at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Milwaukee; on January 19, 2017 at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenosha; on March 16, 2017 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Delafield; on May 18, 2017 at Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Milwaukee; on July 20, 2017 in a location to be determined; and on September 21, 2017 at the Lutheran Center in Chicago.

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G. Synod Compensation Guidelines – Discussion on compensation guidelines began with a recap of key items, especially trends in health insurance costs. Questions on whether congregations are looking to move away from paying all health insurance costs, with Rev. Nielsen saying that this is rare. She added that roughly 95% of congregations are providing Gold+ coverage. Bishop Erickson suggested exploring Health Savings Accounts, and urged that guidance be provided to congregations based on an expectation of 80/20 cost sharing between congregations and clergy for total health costs.

Rev. Lindsay Jordan raised a concern related to health coverage, noting that congregations don't always understand that clergy illness is higher than in many other professions. Rev. Nielsen added that this is based to some extent on expectations by congregations and the clergy themselves, sometimes unrealistically. She said that if we could move to a healthier approach this could have a beneficial impact on healthcare costs. Rev. Jordan urged the synod to share this information, noting that information like this did not always get to congregational decision-makers.

Among suggestions to provide such information were articles by the bishop and a revival of the synod's leadership conferences. Mr. Jerry Key asked how we can give a vision of doing God's business in a healthy way, and Treasurer Johnston spoke about a similar approach by the private sector, focusing on wellness.

Vice President Manske provided additional detail on the compensation guidelines.

Council Action

SC 16.09.17. Approval of Recommended 2017 Pay Scale Adjustment

The Synod Council voted to approve a one percent (1%) increase in the basic pay scale for 2017.

Council Action

SC 16.09.18. Approval of Revised Compensation Guidelines for Ordained Clergy

The Synod Council voted to approve the Revised Compensation Guidelines for Ordained Clergy for 2017, subject to minor editing.

Prior to acting on the Compensation Guidelines for Lay Rostered Leaders, there was discussion on the changes resulting in the new Word and Service definitions. Language dealing with these changes will be incorporated into the guidelines.

Mr. Manske noted that the compensation table for lay leaders is the same as that for ordained clergy, though there is no housing allowance for lay leaders.

Council Action

SC 16.09.19. Approval of Revised Compensation Guidelines for Lay Rostered Leaders

The Synod Council voted to approve the Revised Compensation Guidelines for Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers and Lay Professionals for 2017, subject to changes in references to Word and Service ministry and other minor editing.

H. Approval of Health Insurance Options for GMS Staff – Discussion on continuing with the current Gold+ coverage for synod staff.

Council Action

SC 16.09.20. Approval of Health Insurance Option for GMS Staff

The Synod Council voted to approve continuing Portico Gold+ health coverage for synod staff for 2017.

I. Open Positions – No action on vacancies. Mr. Manske reported that Mr. Stephen Hruska may resign from the Council due to other commitments.

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- J. Synod Assembly Resolutions** – Council members received copies of resolutions approved by the 2016 Synod Assembly. There will be discussion at future meetings on actions required of the Council or staff.

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. Nielsen added information on dates. She asked for feedback about whether to provide different information, saying she could present information differently if desired. Noting a high level of activity, she suggested that perhaps we need to find a new way of connecting calls in schools and chaplaincy.
- D. **Cross+Generational Ministry** – No report submitted.
- E. **Lutheran Campus Ministry** – No report submitted.
- F. **Reconciling in Christ** – A written report was presented. Ms. MaryBeth Hoffman highlighted inclusive church training in fall, done in conjunction with the South Central Synod, in Whitewater in early 2017.
- G. **Anti-Racism Team** – A written report was presented. Mr. Key suggested involvement of Council in Anti-Racism Training, saying that diagnosis is needed, and suggesting that we be engaged. He also urged use of the Anti-Racism Team in congregations. The annual Anti-Racism Training is scheduled for October.
- H. **Women of the ELCA** – No report submitted.
- I. **Outreach for Hope** – A written report was presented.

Other Business

- Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland asked for a review of the bishop election process. This will be done at the November meeting.
- Mr. Jerry Key reiterated that the synod's Anti-Racist identity needs to come back. Mr. Manske said that this will be central to the retreat.
- Mr. Manske announced the Employment Law training workshop on September 24th. He also described the Council's gift of a canoe paddle to former Bishop Jeff Barrow.

Council Action

SC 16.09.21. Adjournment

The Council voted to adjourn this meeting at 9:18 pm.

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

- Thursday, November 17, 2016 – Redeemer Lutheran Church, 631 N 19th St, Milwaukee
- Thursday, January 19, 2017 – Grace Lutheran Church, 2006 60th St, Kenosha
- Thursday, March 16, 2017 – Christ the King Lutheran Church, 1600 Genesee St, Delafield

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- Thursday, May 18, 2017 – Martin Luther Lutheran Church, 9235 W Bluemound Rd, Milw.
- Thursday, July 20, 2017 – To Be Determined
- Thursday, September 21, 2017 – The Lutheran Center, 8765 W Higgins Rd, Chicago*

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

*The Lutheran Center meeting in September 2017 will be an all-day session.

Submitted,

Mr. Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary