

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
November 17, 2016

Redeemer Lutheran Church
631 North 19th Street, Milwaukee, 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	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 Khabeab	Waukesha	2019	X		10/2015
Rev. Lindsay Jordan	At Large	2019	X		2/2016
Vacant	At Large	2019			-
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 was Rev. Jim Bickel, Executive Director, Outreach for Hope.

Devotions were offered by Bishop Paul Erickson, based on the premise that an individual cannot hold to both gratitude and fear at the same time.

Roster Matters

Bishop Erickson spoke of the need for synod calls to interim ministry to be for specific settings rather than general service.

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Rev. Dean M. Natterstad for Interim Ministry at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West Allis.

The bishop noted that Rev. Aasen's proposed call is for part-time youth ministry, in anticipation of the congregation seeking to fill a full-time call in a year or so.

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Rev. Cynthia Aasen for Interim Ministry at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Kenosha.

The proposed call to Rev. Karen Pahl should be made effective March 2, 2016, the date service began, according to ELCA Secretary Rev. Chris Boerger.

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Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Rev. Karen A. Pahl for Interim Ministry at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha, effective March 2, 2016.

Bishop Erickson noted that Rev. Paul Overvold has been on disability leave, though he has continued to serve part-time at Bay Shore Lutheran Church in Whitefish Bay, and will probably continue to do so for a year or more.

Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. Helen A. Nickel, effective February 1, 2017; and Rev. Paul M. Overvold, effective December 1, 2016.

Vice President's Remarks

Vice President Manske presented an overview of the Council retreat scheduled for Saturday, January 28, 2017. The retreat will run through the morning and into the afternoon. He will send out a proposed schedule. Topics will be informed in part by the bishop's report, also taking into account feedback from the bishop's current round of cluster meetings. This will also include discussion on possible changes to the structure of the Synod Assembly.

Mr. Manske raised the issue of where Synod Council meetings are held in light of racial harassment by police of an individual attending the September meeting, and concerns over the safety of people of color traveling to attend meetings. Bishop Erickson, after consultation with September's host congregation, intends to meet with the police chief in Fox Point to present the synod's concerns. Ideas for future meetings included possible ride sharing or centralized meetings. This issue will be reviewed at the next Council meeting, which will be moved to Milwaukee.

Approval of Change in Meeting Location

The Council voted to approve a change in location for the January 19, 2017 Synod Council meeting from Grace Lutheran Church in Kenosha to the synod offices in Milwaukee.

Mr. Manske then turned to the question of open positions on the Council and for other boards and the nominating committee, saying that he was not sure how to proceed. Beyond simply filling vacancies, though, he spoke about the need for commitment by all those serving. For members of the Council this means reading documents, attending meetings and expressing thoughts – a commitment to being present. He will talk to all Council members individually before the next meeting about their commitment.

In response to the question of filling vacancies, Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland presented three names for open at-large positions on the nominating committee: Rev. Andrew Nyren of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee (for clergy term ending after the 2017 Synod Assembly); Ms. Erica Jones of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Milwaukee (for lay female term ending after the 2018 Synod Assembly); and Mr. Stephen Cave of Lake Park Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee (for lay male term ending after the 2019 Synod Assembly).

Secretary Matthew Brockmeier presented the name of Mr. Jerry Key to fill the Council seat (at-large lay male person of color) left vacant by the resignation of Mr. Steven Hruska. The Council appointment would be through the 2017 Synod Assembly, with the remainder of the term (through August 2019) decided by vote of the Synod Assembly. Mr. Manske asked that all four individuals named be sent nominating forms, with action on these nominations to take place in January.

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The vice president ended his remarks by calling attention to the bishop's report, saying that there will be changes and that members of the Council need to engage in discussions about these changes. If members do not express themselves on these questions, he added, it will be assumed they will be behind the bishop 100% in making these changes.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Erickson said that he is really glad to be in this work – thankful. “It feels like a good place to live and move.” So far there have been four listening sessions, with six to come. Council members are encouraged to attend. He said that things are still coming into focus with these sessions. After all comments are received they will be coded for themes, with those themes informing the cluster assemblies event on Saturday, February 25, 2017.

The bishop then outlined that assembly, which is meant for Synod Assembly voting members, rostered leaders and any others interested. The day will begin with a presentation based on common themes, followed by break-out groups to discuss the themes. Clusters will then have their own sessions, chaired by cluster deans, for business, including making cluster nominations for the Synod Council and/or the nominating committee, as needed. Clusters would also be encouraged to review and act on any proposed resolutions for the Synod Assembly, with the added benefit of getting people thinking about these issues earlier.

Brief discussion with support for event, and bishop asking for input on possible locations, which must be able to support break-out areas for the ten clusters.

Endorsement of Cluster Assembly Event

The Council voted to endorse the concept of the Cluster Assembly event tentatively scheduled for February 25, 2017.

The bishop will provide an introductory session for deans about the event.

He then spoke of the Synod Assembly, which he wants to see come together around a statement of core values and mission, which he sees developing by then. The Assembly will begin with worship, followed by visioning. Those participating will be invited to return to the visioning work on Saturday morning. Plenary sessions will begin Friday morning.

The Friday evening meal will be optional and open to anyone, including those not participating in the rest of the Assembly. It will be followed by a hymn sing, with no further business that evening.

Saturday lunch will be a “ministry buffet” with display tables and an opportunity for people to hold free-flowing conversations on their ideas and interests during this two-hour timeframe. There will probably be solicitation for people who wish to present discussions. A consultant may be involved in creating this opportunity.

There will also be a keynote presentation, with a very brief closing worship for the Assembly.

Planning meetings will be held monthly, including work on the 2017 Assembly at Country Springs, and at alternative sites for 2018. Rev. Lindsay Jordan asked how this event can be raised up as a priority, and made as affordable as possible to encourage participation.

The bishop then outlined his concerns and thoughts on interim calls and on lay people presiding at communion. He wants interim calls tied to work at a specific location rather than being open-ended, connecting directly to employment. He plans to provide more specifics in January, and to look at cases where individuals have not been active under call.

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Also in January the bishop wants to discuss in more detail lay people presiding at communion. While there is variation in how this is handled across the ELCA, there are clear constitutional guidelines on oversight and the role of the Council in approving and renewing such approval. Lists will be provided of those needing renewal and of those not meeting established criteria.

There were questions from the Council about the rationale for this change in approach. Avoiding inconsistency and confusion were the primary reasons. This led to further discussion about the history of different traditions within the ELCA (specifically the ALC and LCA traditions), and reinforcement of the need for training and supervision for those licensed to preside at communion.

The bishop provided an update on staff, with information on progress toward staff performance and position reviews, job descriptions, and the interview process for a new Director of Evangelical Mission, the latter with assistance from Mr. Tom Gauthier. A final staff note is that Director of Finance Dave Groenewold may retire as early as next summer. The finance committee is setting up a process to identify a successor. Treasurer Lee Johnston noted that his second term also ends next summer, meaning a major transition for financial management for the synod in a short time.

In presenting the Director of Rostered Leadership's written report the bishop noted that there is a new category, Covenants for Shared Pastoral Ministry. This is for situations, which are increasingly common, where one pastor serves more than one congregation without any formal relationship between the congregations.

Finally, the bishop addressed the likely closure of Good Shepherd Trinity Church, the federated Lutheran-Presbyterian congregation formed in a merger just over a year ago. As part of the closing process a commission will be formed to discuss disposition of the congregation's property, which includes two church buildings. Details of this work were discussed, with more information due before the January Council meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lee Johnston began by telling the Council that September was the worst month in five years for income, but October "was off the charts," better than any October since 2011. The net result has been that both income and expenses are closely tracking expectations. With income close to budget and costs below budget (due largely to staff vacancies), it is possible that the synod will meet or exceed the \$2 million income goal.

Mr. Manske added that the General Mission Support Summary is now included with the Council's reports for each meeting. This document is used extensively by staff for tracking and planning.

Receipt of Financial Statements

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

Old Business – Action Items

Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Mt. Meru Coffee Growers Association – Item on hold.

Updates to the Synod Constitution – Secretary Brockmeier explained the nature of the changes proposed, which are to non-required provisions of the synod constitution. All required provisions

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were automatically implemented when they were published by the ELCA's Office of the Secretary. The Council agreed on the minimum period for announcing a regular Synod Assembly and the inclusion of a provision allowing for the appointment of the treasurer.

Recommendation of Amendments to the Synod Constitution

The Council voted to recommend that the 2017 Synod Assembly approve non-required amendments to the Constitution of the Greater Milwaukee Synod as presented, including details agreed during this meeting.

Open Positions – There was no discussion on this topic beyond that held during the vice president's report.

New Business – Action Items

Consideration of Synod Office Staff 2017 Cost of Living Increase – This topic will be addressed at the January meeting.

Approval of 2017 Housing Allowance for Synod Rostered Staff – Housing allowances for 2017 for rostered synod staff were presented and approved.

Approval of Housing Allowances

The Council voted to approve synod clergy staff housing allowances for 2017 of \$30,000 for Bishop Paul Erickson, \$35,000 for Rev. Jim Bickel, \$16,644 for Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, and \$19,500 for Rev. Kristin L Nielsen.

Cluster Assembly for February 2017 – There was no additional discussion on this item.

Subcommittee to Look at Racism Issues – Vice President Manske provided an overview of issues related to racism that need to be addressed within the synod. Part of this is required anti-racism training. Saying that there are no easy answers, he went on to suggest providing opportunities and events where people can come together to discuss issues and develop bonds. The bishop noted that over six years only 40 rostered leaders had participated in anti-racism training, and added that their training status will be added to their roster files, in part as an incentive to participate.

There were a number of comments and questions, including a question from Rev. Angela Khabebe about whether the synod makes use of resources from the Women of the ELCA. The bishop said he used some of these in St. Paul. Rev. David Schoob provided a brief history of the use of Crossroads training, which he said had been determined to best meet the institutional needs of the synod. Rev. Bickel, while endorsing the major training event, opined that more options are needed: "we need to make this part of who we are; part of the fabric of our community." Rev. Khabebe said she felt an overwhelming amount of privilege in the conversation, adding that people do not get to opt out of dealing with racism.

The conversation moved into a question of tools for congregations. While there was a concern that we did not have a strong overall approach, Rev. Schoob said he thought the synod had come some distance since the inception of anti-racism work.

ELCA Future Directions Statement – Bishop Erickson reported that amendments have been made, and a final version will be released once the approved edits are made, following adoption by the Church Council. He said it should be ready by the January Council meeting or the retreat, and will be made available before then so that it can be considered more fully. Rev. Jordan said that he recognized our church in this document. Mr. Manske said that once it is available in final

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form we will make it available to congregations. Rev. Schoob addressed the question of accountability, which he said was lacking in the church structure. He explained that one of his frustrations as a pastor is getting other congregations to work with him and his congregation. To enhance the ELCA perspective, the bishop asked that Ms. Carolyn Jewett, who was elected to the Church Council as a lay representative at the Churchwide Assembly, be invited to participate in the January retreat. Mr. Manske will invite her.

VIII. Synod Assembly Actions – Old Business

2016 Resolution 4 – Mr. Manske prepared a report looking at the magnitude of the synod’s indirect investments in companies from which the Synod Assembly mandated divestiture. These are held through the ELCA’s Mission Investment Fund and ELCA Endowment Fund A, and constitute a small fraction of the account totals. After discussion about whether these should be deemed “substantive” holdings, it was agreed to do more research, including discussion with the creators of the resolution and exploration of alternative investment options. There will also be further discussion with the ELCA, which appeared to Mr. Manske not to have been asked similar questions by other synods, on the status of possible social justice screens that would apply, and which the ELCA was called to explore by the Churchwide Assembly.

Approval of Investment Exploration Team

The Council voted to approve the creation of a team, formed by Vice President Manske and Treasurer Johnston, to examine options for investments to meet the requirements of 2016 Synod Assembly Resolution 4.

2016 Resolution 6 – Rev. Schoob expressed concern that the change in presidential administration may make a difference in federal policy, making the resolution on Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities that much more important.

Reports

Director of Evangelical Mission – No report submitted.

Director of Discipleship – No report submitted.

Director of Rostered Leadership – A written report was presented.

Cross+Generational Ministry – No report submitted.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – No report submitted.

Reconciling in Christ – No report submitted.

Anti-Racism Team – A written report was presented. Rev. Schoob, with a desire to have discussion, encouraged the Council to join the Anti-Racism Team at their meetings, which are held at 4:00 pm on the third Sunday of every month. This month’s meeting is at Trinity Lutheran Church in West Bend, with December’s at Reformation Lutheran Church in Milwaukee.

Women of the ELCA – No report submitted.

Outreach for Hope – A written report was presented. A new case statement was presented by Rev. Bickel, who said that was a lot to celebrate, including the issuance of the final checks of 2016. He gave background on the move to solidify Outreach for Hope’s long-term financial situation through the growth of their endowment fund, aided by recently-hired Advancement Director Ms. Maripat Monahan. He also spoke of a good board retreat, OFH’s ten-year goal of attaining \$10 million in investments, and strong assistance from Mr. Phil Smith of the synod staff,

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who spends part of his time assisting OFH with database support. He ended by saying that the results of this year's fundraising bike ride were "stunning."

Diakonia – A written report was presented. Update on requests included in report for action in January.

Old Business

ELCA Capital Campaign – No discussion or action.

Cluster Task Force – Item on hold.

Next Meeting

Thursday, January 19, 2017 – 5:30 Dinner; 6:15 Meeting

Greater Milwaukee Synod Office, 1212 S Layton Blvd, Milwaukee

Future Meetings

- Thursday, March 16, 2017 – Christ the King Lutheran Church, 1600 Genesee St, Delafield
- 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