

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
July 20, 2017

Bishop Paul's Home
3072 South 47th 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
Vacant	Northern Lakeshore	2017			-
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		2/2016
Mr. Jerry Key	At Large	2019		X	10/2016
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. Tom Gauthier	Treasurer	2021 (1)	X		9/2013
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

Newly-Elected Council Members

Name	Cluster/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Anti-Racism
Mr. George Sorenson	Kenosha/West Racine	2021		X	Pending
Rev. Tim Tahtinen	Milwaukee 1	2021	X		Pending
Ms. Janet Wunrow	Milwaukee 2	2021		X	Pending
Rev. Elizabeth Jaeger	Northern Lakeshore	2021		X	Pending
Mr. Mark Christiaansen	Northwest	2021		X	Pending
Mr. Bob Reinders	Racine	2021	X		10/2015
Ms. Joyce Caldwell	Vice President	2021 (1)	X		Pending
Ms. Anja Logan	Youth Representative	6/2018		X	Pending
Ms. Aliliywa Mbise	Young Adult Rep.	2021	X		Pending

Also present were Rev. Mr. Lee Johnston, Financial Administrator; Rev. Kristin Nielsen, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission; Ms. Mary Romskog, Executive Assistant for Administration and Candidacy; and Rev. Matthew Short, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission.

An opening prayer was offered by Bishop Erickson, with additional devotions by Rev. Tim Tahtinen.

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Bishop's Report

Bishop Paul Erickson provided some highlights from his written report, and asked Mary Romskog to report on results from the Synod Assembly.

Ms. Romskog began her report by noting the time spent by the planning team, including their effort to gather statistics. Those details were provided on one of two written reports she presented.

Among the highlights on attendance was the fact that there were 400 attendees this year, with the necessary 60%/40% split for lay/clergy met, but exactly. She asked the Council to keep that in mind.

She also reported that 64 congregations, or roughly half, registered full slates of voting members for the Assembly. She referred the Council to the additional detail in this report.

Regarding evaluations, Ms. Romskog said that it was enjoyable to read the highly positive evaluations. She led the Council through some high points, including worship and Luther's Lounge, also pointing to the work done by the Reference & Counsel Committee in advance of the Assembly, making the event much smoother.

While the Open Space portion of the Assembly received high marks overall, there were some suggestions for improvement if this is repeated. Facility issues were the most frequent sore points for attendees, including the condition of rooms, the lack of workable WIFI, and slow lines for food.

She ended her discussion of the evaluations by reiterating that she believed people came away with a good spirit, and inviting members to read through the evaluation responses. She invited members to contact her with any questions.

Finally, she talked about timelines for planning (beginning in October for 2018), exploring professional childcare services, and the relative affordability of Country Springs compared to Carthage College of other possible venues. Economies from this year's Assembly may allow another fee reduction for 2018, along with a continuation of partial scholarships for some congregations.

The bishop told the Council that he would send an internal announcement on the new Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership on Wednesday, followed by a public announcement next Thursday. He reported there had been a strong pool of candidates.

Regarding an update of the synod's sexual misconduct policy, he asked members to take a look at documents provided. This update stemmed in part from recommendations at last year's orientation for new bishops, and is based on a much earlier report to the synod. He called the new draft document a very thorough policy.

The bishop called for at least two additional people to accept reports of misconduct who are not on staff, with at least one layperson and one clergy member, taking into account the need for overall demographic diversity amongst the report-takers. Those willing to undertake this work will receive training. Action on this policy will be requested for the September Council meeting. The bishop's goal is to make this as open and transparent as possible. Questions before the September meeting should be directed to the bishop.

Bishop Erickson expressed gratitude for those who have served on the Council and are now leaving.

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Roster Matters

Council Action

Approval of On Leave from Call Status

The Council voted to approve On Leave from Call status for Rev. Harold Epply, Rev. Maren Hooper, and Rev. Vicki Watkins, all effective July 1, 2017.

Rev. Wendy Wirth-Brock is being called in addition to existing staff at Unity Lutheran Church.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Interim Ministry for Rev. Wendy Wirth-Brock at Unity Lutheran Church, Brookfield, effective June 1, 2017.

The bishop noted that there had been a need to organize several things before the interim call could be extended to Rev. Alexis Twito, hence the delay in approving. He also asked for prayers for Rev. Twito and her family following the unexpected death of her father.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Interim Ministry for Rev. Alexis Twito at Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, effective November 1, 2016.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Interim Ministry for Rev. Steve Clingman at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger, effective June 19, 2017.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call to Interim Ministry for Rev. Michael Mueller at Trinity Lutheran Church, South Milwaukee, effective June 5, 2017.

Council Action

Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. David Echelbarger, effective July 1, 2017; Rev. Christine Thomas Echelbarger, effective July 1, 2017; Rev. Karen Natterstad, effective August 1, 2017; and Rev. Marcia Carrier, effective July 1, 2017.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Gauthier reported good news, telling the Council that things are tracking as expected. The report presented includes mission support through May. June mission support was down slightly, but July has been on track, with roughly 96 to 97 percent of the total commitment from congregations met to date.

He updated progress on the Bishop's Challenge, the matching grant, saying that 25 congregations have made commitments. He urged members to make their own contributions, saying that Lee Johnston would accept them for the synod.

There were questions about the synod's fiscal year (which ends January 31st) and the allocation of leadership development funds.

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Council Action

Acceptance of Financial Statements

The Council voted to accept the May 2017 financial statements.

Old Business – Action Items

A. Open Positions

Vacancies remain for a lay male member of the Synod Council to fill a vacancy from the Lake Country Cluster, and for members of the Nominating Committee from most clusters. Rev. Jordan noted that he provided a name for a potential Council member for the Lake Country Cluster in March, which apparently fell through the cracks. The bishop will follow up to see if this person is still interested.

New Business – Action Items

A. Approval of Continuing Resolution to Send Voting Members to the Synod Assembly from Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities

The Council discussed and approved a continuing resolution designed to allow voting representation at the Synod Assembly by Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities.

Council Action

Adoption of Continuing Resolution

The Council voted to Adopt Continuing Resolution S7.26.A17. allowing Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities to elect voting members of the Synod Assembly, as follows:

S7.26.A17. All Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities are allowed two voting members of the Synod Assembly, one of whom shall be the Synodically Authorized Worship Leader, and the other elected from the lay participants of the Worshipping Community.

B. Review and Approval of Revised Synod Staff Policy for Severance Pay and Benefits

The Council then considered a revised severance compensation policy, based on concerns that the existing policy might have unintended consequences in terms of being ruled inadequate if the mandated three-month compensation package were not exceeded in practice. While the bishop indicated that a three-month compensation package would likely still be the goal in most severance cases, both he and the synod attorney believe that flexibility is critical.

During discussion, concerns were raised about the possibility that a different bishop might not want to provide fair severance packages, or about the possibility that a difficult financial situation might tempt a future bishop to cut corners in this area. In response, it was noted that the synod attorney could participate in such decisions, making an inappropriate decision less likely. Rev. Schoob asked the Council to be mindful of the notion that this discussion indicated that the Council might be more worried about the well-being of the synod than about that of the people affected by a new policy, asking that the Council adopt a stance of caring for those individuals.

The final leg of the discussion revolved around the idea of adding checks to the power of the bishop in such cases. Action was deferred.

Council Action

Action to Table

The Council voted to Table the question of a revised synod policy on severance benefits until its September 2017 meeting.

Vice President Manske then assumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

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C. Approval of the Relocation of Spirit Alive, Kenosha

The bishop reported to the Council that all requirements for relocation by Spirit Alive Church had been met, and that the other congregation with standing for concern about the new location, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha (into whose space Spirit Alive is moving) approved Spirit Alive's move.

Council Action

Approval of Relocation

The Council voted to approve the relocation of Spirit Alive Church to 8760 37th Avenue, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

D. Approval of the Relocation of United Lutheran Church, Racine

In a second congregational move, the bishop reported that United Lutheran Church, Racine, which was the product of the merger of St. Andrew, St. Paul's and Zion, all of Racine, had satisfied all requirements for moving to a new location, with attention paid to engaging in the spirit and letter of guidelines on relocation by not competing with other congregations.

Council Action

Approval of Relocation

The Council voted to approve the relocation of United Lutheran Church, Racine, to the Trinity United Methodist Church facility at 3825 Erie Street, Racine, Wisconsin.

E. Approval of Change to Outreach for Hope Bylaws

The Council reviewed amendments to the Outreach for Hope bylaws which were approved by their board, but require approval by the Synod Council in order to take effect. There was a brief overview of Outreach for Hope's purpose, and the practices of its board. Outreach for Hope is beginning a leadership transition, with the pending retirement of its director, Rev. Jim Bickel.

Members of the Council were told to consider their willingness to serve on the Outreach for Hope board, which normally meets about ten times a year. Nominations to their board will be considered at the Council's September meeting.

Council Action

Approval of Amendments to Outreach for Hope Bylaws

The Council voted to approve the amendments to the bylaws of Outreach for Hope, Inc., as follows:

Article V, Section 2(a)

(a) Number and Term of Directors. The number of Directors of the Corporation shall be at least seven and not more than twelve, one of whom shall be ~~the Corporate Member's vice president, who shall serve as a Director ex-officio~~ a member of the Corporate Member's Synod Council nominated to serve by the Synod Council and elected by the Board of Directors of the Corporation. Except as otherwise provided with respect to ~~(i)~~ (i) the terms of the initial Directors, ~~(ii) and~~ and an interim appointment to fill a vacancy, ~~and (iii) the Corporate Member's vice president,~~ each Director shall hold office for a term of three years or until such Director's successor shall have been duly elected or until such Director's death, resignation, or removal.

Article V, Section 4

Removal. The Corporate Member may, with or without cause, remove one or more Directors or the entire Board of Directors. Further, upon the advance consent of the Corporate Member, a majority of the Board of Directors may remove one or more individual Directors (except the

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Corporate Member's vice president, who shall serve as a Director ex officio member of the Corporate Member's Synod Council nominated to serve by the Synod Council and elected by the Board of Directors of the Corporation). A Director nominated by the Synod Council who ceases to be a member of the Synod Council for any reason shall automatically cease to be a Director of this Corporation as of the date such Director's Synod Council membership ceases.

Article V, Section 5

Vacancies.

(a) Election of Replacement Director by Directors. A vacancy or vacancies in the Board of Directors (except a vacancy arising with respect to the member of the Corporate Member's Synod Council nominated to serve by the Synod Council and elected by the Board of Directors of the Corporation) occurring for any reason may be filled by a majority of the Directors then in office, even though less than a quorum, but the election of each replacement Director must be approved or ratified by the Corporate Member. Each Director so elected shall hold office for the unexpired portion of the term such Director was elected to fill and until such Director's successor is elected and qualified, or until such Director's death, resignation, or removal.

(b) Replacement of Director Nominated by Synod Council. A Director nominated by the Corporate Member's Synod Council who ceases to be a member of the Synod Council for any reason or who dies or resigns as a Director of this Corporation shall be replaced by a member of the Synod Council nominated by the Synod Council and elected by the Board of Directors of this Corporation.

Article V, Section 16

Section 16. Corporate Member's Bishop. If the Corporate Member's bishop is not a Director, the Corporate Member's bishop shall nevertheless have the privilege of voice at any meeting.

F. Approval of Changes to Synod Continuing Resolutions Regarding Outreach for Hope

In order to align the synod's governing documents with the newly approved amendments to the Outreach for Hope bylaws, the Council considered and approved the elimination of a continuing resolution noting the ex officio role of the vice president on Outreach for Hope's board of directors, while adding a continuing resolution giving an overview of the new Outreach for Hope board position.

Council Action

Approval of Changes to Continuing Resolutions

The Council voted to eliminate Continuing Resolution S8.22.B13. and to create Continuing Resolution S10.07.B17., as follows:

~~**S8.22.B13.** The vice president shall serve ex officio as a member of the Board of Directors of Outreach for Hope, Inc.~~

S10.07.B17. The Synod Council shall nominate one of its members to serve on the Board of Directors of Outreach for Hope, Inc. Formal election to that board will be by the Board of Directors of that Corporation. A Director nominated by the Synod Council who ceases to be a member of the Synod Council for any reason shall cease to be a Director of Outreach for Hope, Inc. as of the date such Director's Synod Council membership ceases.

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G. Review of Synod Assembly-Approved Resolutions

Vice President Manske explained that this item was placed on the agenda as a reminder, with the Council needing to be mindful of these items and any necessary actions to implement them. Secretary Matthew Brockmeier will prepare a summary of required actions.

The bishop added that a mailing will go out next week summarizing actions called for in this year's resolutions, along with a food pantry-related resolution from 2016. Additional information regarding the 50th Anniversary of Milwaukee's open housing marches will be mailed at a later date.

H. Review of Outstanding Commitments and Funds from the Good Shepherd and St. Andrew's Church Closures

Mr. Manske provided a brief history of these funds, which originated from the sale of property belonging to the Good Shepherd and St. Andrew's congregations in Waukesha. Part of the funds were allocated to assist in the acquisition of a new facility for Spirit Alive, with the bulk of funds dedicated to a competitive granting process that was begun in 2013.

Among the grants made as part of that process was one for \$100,000 to Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, for the development of a Latino ministry in Waukesha. That project was not concluded and is now discontinued, leaving \$60,000, along with additional funds related to other grants' tithing requirements, for a total of \$77,500 unspent from the granting program.

Following additional discussion, the Council voted to release the grant funds from committed status, and return them to the pool of funds at the synod's disposal to support other possible ministries. The funds previously allocated to Spirit Alive had already lapsed and been returned to this pool.

Council Action

Release and Reallocation of Funds

The Council voted to release \$77,500.00 in unspent funds from the St. Andrew Trust, and to reallocate them for use with possible future ministries.

Additional discussion ensued, with the bishop recommending that the Assistant for Evangelical Mission look at other options to support a Latino ministry in Waukesha, and Rev. Short responding that he wishes to revitalize some version of the old evangelism committee to review successful strategies from past efforts.

I. Consideration of Executive Committee Members from Synod Council

The three at-large members of the Executive Committee are chosen for one-year terms, beginning with the new Council year in September. Three at-large members are needed to join with the four officers. Rev. Angela Khabeb said that she is willing to serve. Action will be taken when the new Council convenes for its September meeting.

J. Approval of Grant Application to the Siebert Foundation

The Council considered submission of a grant proposal to the Siebert Foundation in support of a Community Engagement project. Among other activities included in this project will be the Learning Communities initiative involving congregations. The total project budget is \$124,000, with half, or \$57,000, requested from the Foundation. A copy of the synod's Letter of Intent for this proposal was provided to the Council.

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This proposal continues a pattern of requesting project support from the Siebert Foundation for the past couple of years, after the Foundation discontinued its previous practice of supporting select staff salaries.

Council Action

Approval of Grant Submission

The Council voted to approve submission of a grant request to the Siebert Foundation for funds totaling \$57,000.00 in support of the synod's Community Engagement project, as outlined in the synod's Letter of Intent.

K. Discussion of Council Meeting Dates

Brief discussion on meeting dates for the 2017-2018 Council year. Council meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of odd-numbered months. While some members may have difficulty with one or more dates, the consensus was to continue with this scheduling. There will be an electronic option for participation in the business portion of the all-day Council meeting in Chicago on September 21st (which was noted as Rev. Khabeb's birthday).

Decisions on venues for the meetings, which are frequently held at the home congregations of members of the Council, will be made in September.

VIII. Reports

- A. Evangelical Mission** – A written report was submitted by Rev. Short. In a brief verbal report, he highlighted the process by which the cluster-based listening sessions flowed into February's Cluster Assembly, and then into the planned Learning Communities activities. He said that this process is leading to more explicit goals and values, noting Curiosity, Courage and Compassion. Locations for the Learning Community events have not yet been selected, but dates are scheduled. The essential goal, he said, was to encourage congregations to get out of their walls and listen. Many have already signed up; there may be additional cohorts in the future.
- B. Congregations in Mission** – No report submitted in advance, though Rev. Nielsen said two reports are now available in the Dropbox: one for congregations and rostered leaders in transition, the other a table of the status of every congregation, arranged by clusters. Her presentation included an overview of an effort to provide extra pastoral support to congregations in transition, without that pastor necessarily leading the mission exploration process. For that the synod is looking at finding ways to identify transitional consultants, perhaps with multiple congregations at the same time. Some of the transitional pastors have now been placed. Regarding the congregational status table, a new key has been incorporated, indicating when a vacancy is expected in the near future.
- C. Missional Leadership** – No report submitted (position open).
- D. Lutheran Campus Ministry** – No report submitted.
- E. Reconciling in Christ** – No report submitted.
- F. Anti-Racism Team** – A written report was presented. Rev. Schoob highlighted the Crossroads Anti-Racism Training scheduled for October 26th through 28th. This included a reminder of the commitment by all Council and staff members to participate in Anti-Racism Training. Part of their current effort is to develop partnerships with other synods and individuals working in the wider community to address training needs. The bishop added that he is incorporating a record of participation in Anti-Racism Training into the files of all rostered

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ministers, whether active or retired, in the synod. He also spoke about the traditional presence of the Anti-Racism Team on the Council, either through voting members like himself and Mr. Jerry Key, or other non-voting representation, with a goal of having one person of color and one of European descent serving in some capacity at all times. With his departure from a seat on the Council, the Team has selected Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld as a nonvoting representative.

G. Women of the ELCA – No report submitted.

H. Outreach for Hope – No report submitted.

I. Good Shepherd Trinity Administration Commission – Members of the Commission from the synod who were present, Rev. Bates-Froiland, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Brockmeier, provided background and updates on the work of the commission, which is charged with walking with Good Shepherd Trinity in Milwaukee as they address questions about their future. The Commission is a Presbyterian structure, used as a result of the congregation being a federated Lutheran-Presbyterian congregation. It includes four Lutheran and four Presbyterian members. The fourth Lutheran member is Rev. Carol Hegland. The Commission has concluded a period of inquiry, in which a relatively high percentage of members of Good Shepherd Trinity were interviewed by members of the Commission. At the same time, the Good Shepherd Trinity Council is working to address the requirements of the synod and the Presbytery to provide information and plans related to a possible sale of the Good Shepherd building on 48th Street. Additional information will be provided to the Council as this process continues.

X. Items on Hold

Vice President Manske explained that the items on hold were things of which the Council should remain mindful, even if immediate action is not required. The question of the configuration and purpose of the clusters is included on this list, with other topics. Cluster, other topics covered. Went to ART mtg.

Mr. Manske concluded with a brief farewell, with profuse thanks to the Council and others he has worked with over the past four years.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 21, 2017 – 9:00 am (all-day session)

The Lutheran Center, 8765 W Higgins Rd, Chicago

Future Meetings

- Thursday, November 16, 2017 – Location TBD
- Thursday, January 18, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, March 15, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, May 17, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, July 19, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, September 20, 2018 – Location TBD

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