

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Summary of the Synod Council Meeting
November 16, 2017

ELCA Churchwide Offices
8765 Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois

This Summary does not constitute official minutes of this meeting.

Ignited by God's love, Burning for Justice, We embrace the world

Attendance

Name	Cluster/Position	Term Ends 8/31	Present	Absent	Anti- Racism
Mr. George Sorenson	Kenosha/West Racine	2021		X	Pending
Mr. George Monis	Lake Country	2019		X	Pending
Rev. Tim Tahtinen	Milwaukee 1	2021	X		Pending
Ms. Janet Wunrow	Milwaukee 2	2021	X		Pending
Ms. Claire Zautke	Milwaukee 3	2019	X		Pending
Rev. Bill Knapp	Milwaukee 4	2019		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
Rev. Angela Khabeb	Waukesha	2019	X		10/2015
Rev. Lindsay Jordan	At Large	2019	X		2/2016
Mr. Jerry Key	At Large	2019	X		10/2017
Ms. Amber Davis	At Large	2019		X	Pending
Ms. Joyce Caldwell	Vice President	2021 (1)	X		Pending
Mr. Matthew Brockmeier	Secretary	2019 (2)	X		10/2017
Mr. Tom Gauthier	Treasurer	2021 (1)	X		10/2017
Rev. Paul Erickson	Bishop	2022 (1)	X		10/2017
Ms. Anja Logan	Youth Representative	6/2018		X	Pending
Ms. Aliliywa Mbise	Young Adult Rep.	2021		X	10/2017

Attendance by Ms. Zautke and Rev. Khabeb was by electronic means.

Also present were Rev. Jennifer J. Arnold, Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership; and Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, Anti-Racism Team.

Vice President's Remarks

Vice President Caldwell expressed her hope that the Council can engage in substantive discussion in their meetings. She is asking to meet with the executive committee to explore use of a consent agenda format. Among issues she wants the Council to address are racism, structural inequalities, and the role of clusters. She also wants to use the executive committee to help identify topics for discussion.

She said she believes in relationships, in sharing and building up, and in taking a chance. She wants to invite the Council to see how God engages. Her belief in God, she said, builds her up, and facilitates being a change agent: the power of the Spirit.

Bishop's Report

In his verbal report, Bishop Paul Erickson highlighted the new sexual misconduct policy. He also discussed boundaries workshops, discussing feedback on the most recent session. Focusing on

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how power works, and effective ministry, future trainings will be revamped with a more interactive approach. He noted dialogue education scheduled for the first week in February.

At the Council's next meeting he plans to discuss the use of the consultation process for congregations in conflict. He anticipates greater use of this process, which typically takes six to eight weeks to run its course for a congregation.

Planning for the 2018 Synod Assembly continues, with a possible change in 2019 to a Friday evening-all day Saturday schedule.

Annual staff reviews will take place, with the bishop requesting that the executive committee conduct his review, all before the end of the calendar year.

Roster Matters

Approval of On Leave from Call Status

The Council voted to approve On Leave from Call status for Rev. Timothy McIntosh, effective September 10, 2017.

Rev. Alexis Twito has been serving part-time, and is going full-time with the Salvation Army. She was previously at Lake Park Lutheran Church. It was noted that this is akin to a hospital chaplaincy in response to a question about the nature of such a call. The Salvation Army will pay salary and benefits.

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call for Rev. Alexis Twito to Chaplain at Salvation Army, effective October 23, 2017.

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a synod call for Rev. Jon Breimeier to Interim Ministry at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Hartford, effective September 14, 2017.

Regarding retirements, the bishop spoke of an increased clergy shortage, with the ranks of those coming up not enough to replace those leaving. Many synods, he said, are having increased challenges as a result.

Approval of Retired Status

The Council voted to approve retired status for Rev. Robert Thays, effective November 1, 2017; Rev. Jon Jacobs, effective December 1, 2017; for Rev. Janis Kinens, effective January 1, 2018; and for Rev. James Bickel, effective January 1, 2018.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Gauthier reported on all available financial reports, saying that in general the overall trends continue as projected. He will check on why payroll deductions appear to be behind budget.

With giving trending down somewhat, there was discussion on fiscal year-end projections. It is likely that income will be down roughly \$100,000 at the end of the year. The special fundraising effort tied to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation fell below expectations.

There were several questions on budget detail related to Rev. Gabriel Marcano relationship with Emaús and the synod, which remains his employer of record through approximately spring 2018.

Work on the 2019 budget is beginning, which will also help in planning Siebert grants. This budget is scheduled for Synod Council review at the March meeting.

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The most recent synod leadership grant from Siebert totals \$50,000, which is split between 2017 and 2018.

Acceptance of Financial Statements

The Council voted to accept the October 2017 financial statements.

Old Business – Action Items

A. Review and Approval of Sexual Misconduct Policy

For this agenda item the Council was joined electronically by synod attorney Stephen Knowles.

The bishop introduced the topic, noting that members of the Council have had time to review prior to this meeting. If the policy is approved, the new webpage that has been created will be made available.

Mr. Knowles provided history on the white paper that was created during Bishop Peter Rogness' tenure, and which formed the foundation for guidelines created by the ELCA legal department. He noted that it is long because it combines practice and procedure in a comprehensive structure.

The bishop emphasized that this is a descriptive, rather than a prescriptive, document. In short, it lays out what will usually happen, but does not create requirements for specific actions. Mr. Knowles concurred on this point.

Rev. Lindsay Jordan expressed appreciation for the thorough responses to questions and concerns raised in the September Council meeting.

The bishop spoke again of the train the trainer event, saying that he is grateful to work for a church that takes this issue seriously. This policy, he added, represents significant progress in addressing issues of sexual misconduct, and is an "important piece of our ecology." He thanked Mr. Knowles for his efforts.

A final question concerned whether it is up to the bishop to determine the appropriateness of using the procedures outlined in the policy (it is). Final notes were that two ELCA attorneys are available to bishops, and that congregations must create their own policies, especially for situations involving individuals who are not rostered.

Approval of Policy

The Council voted to approve the Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Against Rostered Ministers as presented.

B. Misconduct Webpage

Bishop would like one additional non-synod staff male to take reports. Training will be provided for those who will take reports and for synod staff.

Bishop Eaton

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton visited the Council. Following introductions, she was asked about the prospects for continued improvement in the relationship between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, and whether there is a possibility of being in full communion. After responding that "with God all things are possible," Bishop Eaton went on to say that this is more likely now than it would have been 50 years ago, or even ten years ago. There was, she said, a continuation of work with US Catholic bishops. She added that other countries, such as Finland, have also seen movement in the connections between Lutherans and Catholics, though there remain factions within both the Lutheran and Catholic churches that are resisting.

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Other brief topics included inter-Lutheran relations, the range of opinions on social and political issues within the ELCA's membership, and what gives the presiding bishop joy in her work. On the latter point, Bishop Eaton said that her joys included meeting with those working for the ELCA "to see what we do across this church," working with other faith leaders on global issues, and seeing things like a resurgence in church activity in China.

New Business – Action Items

A. Proposed Table for Nominations for 2019 Churchwide Assembly

Secretary Matthew Brockmeier presented changes recommended to Appendix 1, which is part of Continuing Resolution S9.01.01.B11. in the synod's governing documents. This table guides selection of Voting Members for the Churchwide Assembly. The changes were necessary to select the allocated number of Voting Members for 2019, using the synod's and ELCA's representational requirements.

These modifications required the selection of three clusters sending lay Voting Members to provide either youth or young adult or Persons of Color or persons whose primary language is other than English. Envelopes containing these characteristics, or no additional characteristics, were distributed to cluster representatives on the Council (and to Bishop Eaton), with the following designations made:

- Milwaukee Cluster 1 – Lay Female Youth or Young Adult
- Milwaukee Cluster 4 – Lay Female Person of Color or person whose primary language is other than English
- Racine Cluster – Lay Male Youth or Young Adult

The resulting table was then submitted for a vote.

Amendment Continuing Resolution S9.01.01.B11.

The Council voted to approve revisions to Continuing Resolution S9.01.01.B11., Appendix 1 to the Greater Milwaukee Synod Constitution, as recommended.

B. Housing Allowance for Synod Staff

Housing allowances for 2018 for rostered synod staff were presented. Brief discussion on the lawsuit challenging housing allowances for clergy. Portico is involved. There is no resolution yet.

Approval of Housing Allowances

The Council voted to approve synod clergy staff housing allowances for 2018 of \$40,000 for Rev. Jennifer Arnold, \$35,000 for Bishop Paul Erickson, \$16,974 for Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, and \$19,500 for Rev. Kristin L Nielsen.

C. Reschedule January 2018 Meeting to January 25

Because of conflicts for the bishop, he requested that the next regular Council meeting be rescheduled to one week after the original scheduled date.

Approval of Meeting Reschedule

The Council voted to reschedule its January 2018 meeting to January 25, 2018.

D. Approval of Synod Council Meeting Locations

Discussion on possible meeting locations for January and September 2018. Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church in Milwaukee was suggested for January, and members were urged to contact Mary Romskog in the synod office with suggestions for September.

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E. Synod Bylaw Amendment Regarding Allocation of Votes to Rostered Retired Ministers for the Synod Assembly

Discussion on a recommendation by Bishop Erickson to allocate a limited number of seats at the Synod Assembly to retired rostered ministers, in light of their increasing number and the difficulty in maintaining the required lay/clergy balance for representation. The requirement is for a 60/40 lay/clergy split for Synod Assembly. The last two Synod Assemblies were right at the required level.

The synod has discretion on the voting status for clergy who are retired, on leave from call or designated as disabled, all of whom currently may attend the Synod Assembly as Voting Members. The bishop reported that there are approximately 125 retired clergy now on the synod's roster, a number that is expected to grow. Another factor is that not all available slots for lay Voting Members are filled. The bishop believes that the only way to continue abiding by the 60/40 split requirement is to limit voting by retired clergy.

If the bylaw recommendation is approved, the bishop will present this to retired clergy at a meeting in January.

Discussion as to whether this creates a class with less voice and power, with concern that retired clergy have earned the right to vote. Additional discussion on the question of increasing lay representation.

Recommendation of Bylaw Amendment

The Council voted to recommend to the 2018 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly an amendment to synod bylaw S7.22.01., and the creation of synod bylaw S7.22.02., as follows:

S7.22.01. All ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are retired, on leave from call, or designated as disabled and whose names appear on the rosters of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.02. All retired ministers of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall elect 10 percent of their number to be voting members; all others shall be advisory members with voice but no vote. All retired ministers of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.

F. Status Report on New Outreach for Hope Executive Director

Bishop Erickson reported that there has been an accepted offer for a new executive director for Outreach for Hope. The selection will be announced at the end of November.

G. Report on Funds from the Good Shepherd and St. Andrews Church Funds

Rev. Matt Short is working to meet with Waukesha Cluster to follow up on questions of use of funds in the cluster, consistent with the intent from the original grant program to use a portion of the funds there.

Reports

A. Evangelical Mission – No report submitted.

B. Congregations in Mission – A written report was submitted during the meeting, but not reviewed before discussion of reports.

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- C. Missional Leadership** – A written report was submitted. Rev. Jennifer Arnold provided additional highlights, including shadowing Rev. Kristin Nielsen on the mobility process. She said that she is involved in weekly conversations, and working with some congregations on her own, consulting with colleagues as she does this work. Plans for the February 10th event are “moving along,” with initial registration during the first week of December.
- D. Lutheran Campus Ministry** – No report submitted.
- E. Reconciling in Christ** – A written report was submitted.
- F. Anti-Racism Team** – A verbal report was presented by Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, who thanked synod council members who participated in the recent anti-racism training. The team is working on the Reggie Jackson presentation scheduled for November 30th, and on a cross-generational event at Lutherdale in February. The Anti-Racism Team continues to meet monthly. Discussion from members included the possibility of looking at the use of resources for anti-racism training, in an effort to do more, and concern that changes to the anti-racism training regimen might simply be made in order not to discomfort white people.
- G. Women of the ELCA** – No report submitted.
- H. Outreach for Hope** – No report submitted. Mr. Bob Reinders, who is one of two new OFH board members, reported on the recent retirement event for Rev. Jim Bickel, and on the grant allocation committee’s recommendation to the OFH board to grant \$341,500 to 19 congregations. Policies for financial controls were also mentioned.
- I. Good Shepherd Trinity Administration Commission** – No report submitted. Update, with input from bishop. The commission’s work has been hampered by strained relations with the former congregation council. A final plan for the use of proceeds from the possible sale of the Good Shepherd building is not complete.

Next Meeting

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, 1000 South Layton Boulevard, Milwaukee

Future Meetings

- Thursday, March 15, 2018 – Jackson Park Lutheran Church, 4535 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee
- Thursday, May 17, 2018 – St. Olaf’s Lutheran Church, W653 Roosevelt Road, Rubicon
- Thursday, May 31 – Saturday, June 2, 2018 – Synod Assembly – Country Springs Hotel, Pewaukee
- Thursday, July 19, 2018 – Bishop Erickson’s Home, 3072 South 47th Street, Milwaukee
- 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