

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
May 17, 2018

This Summary does not constitute official minutes of this meeting.

St. Olaf's Lutheran Church
W653 Roosevelt Road, Rubicon

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. Pamela Lange	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

Also present were Rev. Jennifer Arnold, Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership; Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse, Lutheran Campus Ministry Board; Rev. Matthew Short, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission; and Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, Anti-Racism Team.

Report on Grant Monies from Good Shepherd (Waukesha) Sale

Mr. Dave Chappell, a member of the Meru Partnership Committee, provided an update on the Kikwe water project, for which funding was provided by the synod from funds from the sale of the Good Shepherd church building in Waukesha, following the closure of the congregation.

This was, he said, a lesson and a journey in providing water, but also an opportunity to walk in accompaniment. He went on to say that partnership is a major part of our ministry, more so than water. The Meru Partnership, begun in the 1990s, has encompassed education, the water project, medical concerns, and the coffee project.

This project was begun in response to a lack of running water. As part of the Good Shepherd Fund granting program, a request was submitted in September 2013, with a grant made of \$95,000, \$9,500 of which was held back as a tithe for another nonprofit in keeping with the grant program design. Work began in March 2014, with technical surveys and a visit. In 2015 Ground Water Tanzania was contracted, and Water Solutions selected to drill a borehole. The original bore was not feasible, leading to a redesign of the project. The possible use of the original borehole for water for animals only was deemed too dangerous because of the likelihood that people would also access the water, which had a high level of fluoride.

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The new project plan was to use an artesian well at Tengeru Springs. The project, including refurbishing a large storage tank, was completed in 2018. With this design there are no pumps, so no energy is required to move the water, what Dave Chappell called a “simple but elegant solution.”

The project costs, including the abandoned initial drilling effort, amounted to \$77,398. With the original net grant amount of \$85,500, and additional parish gifts totaling \$6,922, the project was completed with \$15,023 remaining.

Mr. Chappell shared the project’s lessons, key among them that “water projects are challenging.” Challenges included the high fluoride levels present, the very deep water table levels, diminishing government support, and the impact of the government’s 18% Value Added Tax on all expenditures. Beyond these practical findings, the group was reminded that “Americans don’t have all the answers,” and that “walking in accompaniment requires trust and patience.”

This became, he concluded, a project of the Meru Diocese, and was not “our project.” There are, he noted, continuing needs and opportunities, including pipeline extensions, for which more funds will be needed. He thanked the synod for funding this project and was thanked for sharing this report.

Appointment to Synod Council

Following the resignation of Rev. Bill Knapp, Milwaukee Cluster 4 nominated Rev. Pamela Lange to serve the remainder of his term.

Council Action

Appointment to Synod Council

The Council voted to appoint Rev. Pamela Lange to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Rev. Bill Knapp, representing Milwaukee Cluster 4 through August 31, 2019.

Consent Agenda

Items on the consent agenda included approval of voice for visitors; adoption of the agenda for this meeting; approval of minutes from the Synod Council meeting on March 15, 2018; approval of on leave from call status for Rev. Maren Hooper, effective June 1, 2018, Rev. Dean Willich, effective May 1, 2018, and Rev. Diane Olson, effective April 1, 2018, all for the standard three-year leave period.

Council Action

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve all items in the consent agenda as presented.

Approval of Synod Calls

Rev. Michael McAllister has a non-stipendiary call which requires annual review and renewal. He was granted this call about two years ago, to explore the development of a creative new-start ministry. With staff turnovers, the process has been slower than expected. This will be the last renewal of this call without a clearly defined ministry plan. It was noted by the bishop that non-stipendiary does not indicate that there is no pay, simply that it is below the level of pay for a called position.

Council Action

Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a non-stipendiary synod call for Rev. Michael McAllister for a period of one year.

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Vice President's Report

Vice President Caldwell began her report with reflections on a trip to Tanzania in 1997 as part of a sabbatical, and reminded the Council that at the last meeting she had led discussion on curiosity, courage and compassion, which is a framework for discussion at the Assembly. The discussion on curiosities included the idea that congregations view themselves as welcoming and open, but that in reality the perception by others can often be that the congregation is off-putting. The questions stemming from this include “how healthy are the congregations of the synod?”, “what will we look like in 20 years?”, “will we still be in buildings?”, “what will the mission of the church be if we are not in buildings?”, “how might we transition to this?” and “do we want to?”

Questions specific to the Council were “what are the questions we as Council hear?”, “what do we need to ask?” and “what does it mean to be church?”

She went on to say that the synod mission has not been re-examined for a number of years. To begin a process of examining the question of mission, she said that she will add in small group table discussions during her report, in order to engage the synod in looking at who we are and what God is calling to be and do. This will be followed by a Council retreat in late summer or early fall, to begin to draft the mission. That will then be taken back to the congregations. The goal is to create a mission to guide us for a number of years.

For this meeting, Ms. Caldwell said, she wanted the Council to contemplate the notion of compassion. Those assembled broke into groups of three for this purpose, and to look at the question of where we need to be.

Reconvening, members related parts of their conversations:

- The report on the water project was cited as a good example of walking with compassion, where someone else owned the project and shaped it in the best way possible
- A desire to know more about “that other person,” more than the original assessment one might make.
- A theological problem, “moving from modern to post-modern Christianity.” Younger people don’t share a lot of the hopes and dreams of older people – facilitating a sharing – standing between two worlds of things opening and things not.
- How when people come into the office, a sense of guilt if you help, and guilt if you don’t. Fear of being taken advantage of.
- What your relationship is with God. “I don’t give to everybody I see, but it is not my call to figure out how honest you are in what you are asking.”
- Attempting to get to know people without judging from the get-go.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Erickson referred to his written report, noting especially the current focus on preparations for the Synod Assembly. He said that registrations are coming in well; on pace with last year, with about 333 voting members. There are also about 140 registered for the Women in Justice hearing slated for the afternoon that the Assembly opens. The hearing had to move to a different room because of the high registration. Voting members will still be able to register as walk-ins. The bishop was not sure the exact percentages for lay and clergy representation.

He followed up on his letter to retired clergy regarding proposed changes to their continuing status at the congregations they have served. Most, but not all, direct response has been positive, though he is aware he will not hear all of the negative responses directly. He shared with the Council his

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thoughts on his role as it pertains to this question, that he is called to be the synod's pastor, not a pastors' pastor, and so is responsible not just to the clergy.

The bishop said that he will have information to share at the July meeting on the granting of retired status, noting that a decision not to grant retired status can be made by the bishop and reported to the Council, while a recommendation by the bishop to grant retired status is decided by action of the Council.

Other notes in his report included the plan for Bishop Elias Nasari to appear at the Synod Assembly, and for the 2019 Synod Assembly to be held at the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee. He ended by reporting on a continuing education opportunity, funded by the Siebert Foundation, to extend his understanding of his role as bishop, and by letting the Council know that he will be soliciting questions from them for his review by the executive committee.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Gauthier noted that there were "a few" items in the dropbox. Some changed today. There were no questions from the Council.

He presented several small, technical updates to the budget being recommended to the Synod Assembly. These included an increase in the Facility Expense (line 83) from \$30,000 to \$32,600, a change in nomenclature for line 6 ("Transfer from Designated Funds"), and clarification of line 39 as being for "Cross Generational-Programs (Designated Funds)", which was noted at the March meeting. He called for action to recommend these revisions.

Council Action

Recommendation of Budget

The council voted to recommend approval of the revised proposed budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2020 to the 2018 Synod Assembly.

The Council then considered allocation of surplus funds from the fiscal year ending January 31, 2018. Following adjustments made during the synod's financial audit, those funds totaled only \$5,338, less than originally thought.

When this issue was raised in March, the Council asked the bishop and staff to develop recommendations for the use of these funds. With the low final amount, and a significant planned deficit for the current fiscal year, the recommendation was simply to hold the money in the undesignated synod account to help defray the budgeted deficit. Since the funds can remain where they are to accomplish this goal, no action by the Council was required.

Mr. Gauthier asked that Council members carefully review the proposed budget before the Synod Assembly. He went on to highlight the documents available for the Assembly, including information on designated fund reserves, and to report that the completed audit is expected soon, so that it can be reviewed by the Council at the July meeting.

New Business

Recommendation of 2018 Synod Assembly Rules as Revised

Upon review of voting procedures and identification of position (pro or con) at microphones, it was determined that several modifications to the Assembly Rules were necessary for clarity and the smooth functioning of the Assembly.

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Council Action

Recommendation of Rules and Procedures

The Council voted to recommend the revised 2018 Synod Assembly Rules and Procedures to the 2018 Synod Assembly.

Synodically Authorized Ministers

Bishop Erickson again referred to his written report, which included detail on his proposed actions regarding Synodically Authorized Ministers. No action is required by the Council; this is simply the necessary consultation before finalizing these actions.

Those whose authorization will continue are Venice Williams, at The Table, and Jay Thorson, at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church. A new authorization will be granted David Rebey, at Redemption Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, who is in candidacy and will be supervised by Rev. Ari Mattson at Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. Authorization for Janice Navarro, who served as transitional pastoral leader at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Racine, which has now called a pastor, is being discontinued with her retirement on June 1, 2018.

There was a question about where The Table is now meeting. It has become a house church, with some presence planned at Alice's Garden during the summer. Information on services is available on Facebook, with staff having contact information.

Review Status of Nominations for Action by the Synod Assembly

The Council reviewed a table showing nominating slots filled or empty, and were urged to take action to recruit nominees for positions still not slated. Special attention needs to be paid to positions for voting members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; unfilled openings include Milwaukee Cluster 2, the Racine Cluster, and the Kenosha/West Racine Cluster, as well as several at-large positions. Also still open are positions on the Discipline and Consultations committees.

Cluster and Elections Working Group

The Council received a brief report on technical problems with the next cycle of at-large elections to the Synod Council, which, as it stands, would have no at-large lay members over 30 years of age, and systemic problems with uneven results from clusters in the nominating process, where some clusters are generally unable to field nominees. It was agreed that a task force be created to study these inter-related questions, with a goal of having recommendations for the Council to consider at the September 2018 meeting.

Those volunteering for the task force were Joyce Caldwell, Jerry Key, Matthew Brockmeier, Bishop Paul Erickson, and Mark Christiaansen.

Synod Council Meeting Schedule

A proposed schedule for Synod Council meetings for November 2018 through July 2019 was presented, consisting of the third Thursdays of odd-numbered months. The dates were November 15, 2018; January 17, 2019; March 21, 2019; May 16, 2019; and July 18, 2019.

Council Action

Approval of Meeting Schedule

The Council voted to approve the schedule of meeting dates as presented, consisting of the third Thursdays of odd-numbered months from November 2018 through July 2019.

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2019 Synod Assembly Venue

Bishop Erickson reported that a contract has been signed with the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee to serve as the venue for the 2019 Synod Assembly, which will take place on May 31st and June 1st, 2019.

Reports

Evangelical Mission – A written report was submitted, with additional detail and background provided by Rev. Matt Short. Highlights included activity with The Table, which received a significant grant for a rainwater harvesting project, that was featured on NPR. There will be a significant gift through the ELCA from an employer. Action is needed for SAWC Exploration status for Wayfarer's Faith Collective. This is in essence a feasibility study that comes before a ministry can become a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community. Over a six-month period, the goal will be to try to develop an initial house worship community. A \$4,000 grant is sought from the ELCA, out of a total grant project budget of \$5,500. The remainder will come from synod funds available for new starts. That fund is budgeted at \$5,000, with the remainder earmarked for distribution to the two existing SAWCs and perhaps one additional new effort. Rev. Short also mentioned as a highlight from his written report a collaborative grant received by the synods serving Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula.

Council Action

Approval of SAWC Exploration

The Council voted to designate Wayfarer's Faith Collective as a SAWC Exploration of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

Congregations in Mission – A written report was submitted. The bishop noted good news on the transition front, as he will participate in three ordinations in next month.

Missional Leadership – A written report was submitted, with additional information provided. Leadership events include the Women and Justice listening session, with former synod vice president Sue Cyr acting as convener. One hundred forty people have signed up for the first session, the afternoon of May 31st at the Synod Assembly site. A second session will be held the morning of June 16th at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa. Plans are also being developed for expanded opportunities for ministries to have tables at the Together in Mission event on February 9, 2019. The focus will continue to be on participating leaders defining the event; not just speaking to people.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – A verbal report was shared by Pastor Matthew Schlake-Kruse. Highlights for the last year included both pastors being closer to compensation guidelines, while having a smaller budget shortfall than anticipated. The ministry's main fundraiser is a chili cook off, with \$4,500 to \$5,000 raised from that event. Congregations also engage in pre-cook off fundraising. A major accomplishment was the completion of two full quadrennial reviews of pastors and ministries, with Marquette completed in January and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in April. He cited the excellent campus pastors whose tenure and longevity foster building relationships on campus. Both, he said, have been there more than eight years. These are, he added, thriving ministries, and ministries that are actively supporting RIC. The request for permission to submit a grant Rev. Schlake-Kruse presented was a continuation of work previously conducted by Campus Ministry and funded by the Siebert Foundation.

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Council Action

Approval of Grant Submission

The Council voted to approve submission of a grant request by Lutheran Campus Ministry to the Siebert Foundation for funds totaling \$24,000; including \$9,600 in Peer Ministry Stipends each for Marquette University and for UWM; \$3,000 for a graduate student position shared by both campuses, \$1,200 in support of the Fall Retreat, and \$600 in support of a Spring Training event. Rev. Schlake-Kruse also asked for permission from the synod to hold a chili cook off in January 2019. Permission is required for such fundraising events in the synod's constitution.

Council Action

Approval of Fundraising Event

The Council voted, consistent with constitution provision S15.21., to approve a Chili Cook Off on Saturday, January 26, 2019 as a fundraising event for Lutheran Campus Ministry.

Finally, Rev. Schlake-Kruse reported that the LCM board is seeking new members.

Reconciling in Christ – A written report was submitted. Bishop Erickson urged members of the Council to read the RIC resolution, which will be presented at the Synod Assembly.

Anti-Racism Team – A verbal report was presented by Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, who spoke of momentum building with training events being planned. Jerry Key added that the team is developing a youth ministry event at Lutherford with a focus on anti-bullying and anti-racism. The team is looking for people to assist in this project.

Women of the ELCA – A written report was submitted.

Outreach for Hope – Bob Reinders reported that work continues on governance and committee structure and policies for the executive director. The annual fundraising bike ride is scheduled for September 8th, with the companion Ozaukee County ride also scheduled again this year. The bishop added that there will be an Outreach for Hope report at the Synod Assembly.

Next Council Meeting

Thursday, May 17, 2018

Bishop Erickson's Home, 3072 South 47th Street, Milwaukee

Future Meetings

- Thursday, May 31 – Saturday, June 2, 2018 – Synod Assembly – Country Springs Hotel, Pewaukee
- Thursday, September 20, 2018 – Jackson Park Lutheran Church, 4535 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee
- Thursday, November 15, 2018 – Location TBD
- Thursday, January 17, 2019 – Location TBD
- Thursday, March 21, 2019 – Location TBD
- Thursday, May 16, 2019 – Location TBD
- Friday, May 31 – Saturday, June 1, 2019 – Synod Assembly – Italian Community Center, 631 East Chicago Street, Milwaukee
- Thursday, July 18, 2019 – Location TBD

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

Submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Synod Secretary