

God's Vision: A world that embodies the fullness of life: justice, peace, equity, hope and love for everyone, including all races, genders, identities, abilities, and social status.

Our Mission: We follow Jesus, form communities, love all.

The Greater Milwaukee Synod Council met via Zoom Technologies on Thursday, May 21, 2020. These are highlights of that meeting: Detailed summaries of the Council's meetings will be available on the synod's website at <https://milwaukee.synod.org/who-we-are/synod-council/>. These highlights are not official minutes of the proceedings.

Actions

- Approved the minutes from the Synod Council meetings on March 19 and April 2, 2020;
- Approved On Leave from Call status for The Rev. Chad Kline, effective 1 April 2020; and The Rev. Jon Breimeier, effective 14 October 2019;
- Approved Retired status for The Rev. Rod Resheske, effective 1 May 2020;
- Approved the request of Lutheran Campus Ministry in Greater Milwaukee to request grant funding from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, for grants to support the peer ministry programs for the 2020-21 academic year;
- Cancelled the 2020 Synod Assembly based on continuing concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on large public gatherings.

Reports and Discussion

- **Vice President Joyce Caldwell** shared her thanks for the detailed work put toward deciding the future of the 2020 Synod Assembly; she has been in communication with many Synod Vice Presidents to learn best practices on how to adapt to the changing context.
- **Bishop Paul Erickson's** report included increases in communication between Synod staff and rostered ministers with twice-weekly Zoom conversations. He has been engaged with the Wisconsin Council of Churches in their work of discussing returns to worship and guidelines for safe gatherings. He stressed the importance of patience and judiciousness among congregational leaders.
- Lutheran Campus Pastors **Jessica Short (Marquette University)** and **Rachel Young-Binter (UW-Milwaukee)** presented to the Council on the work of Lutheran Campus Ministry. They highlighted that they had been experiencing strong years with student-leaders until campuses closed in mid-March.

Students at Marquette have developed weekly fellowship gatherings, experienced a Spring Break Learning trip to Cuba to explore the history of the relationship of the Lutheran Church in that nation, and continue to grow the ministry of ashes-to-go on

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Virtual Meetings via Zoom Technologies

campus. LCM at Marquette is an affiliated ministry of the Roman Catholic campus ministry office, and also partners with Canterbury Fellowship (Episcopal/Anglican) and Hillel (Jewish) ministries. Hillel has invited LCM students to participate in special *shabbat* services focusing on interfaith dialogue and remembering the Holocaust.

UWM's Corner House, a LCM-owned property across from the UW-M Union, involves students in weekly ministries, including weekly worship with dinner and fellowship, Monday theological study, and Wednesday breakfast, feeding the community. Peer Ministers serve both campuses, and form an intentional living community at UWM; **Young Binter** noted that Corner House is a strong bastion for LGBTQIA+ students, seekers, and lifelong-ELCA members. UWM's Civil Rights trip over Spring Break was cancelled to the pandemic; they also partner with Hillel, St. Mark's Episcopal (East Side Milwaukee) for interfaith dinner dialogues. **Young-Binter** also serves as the Region 5 Coordinator for Lutheran Campus Ministries.

Lutheran Campus Ministry is open to all individuals, not just ELCA members; both campus pastors noted hunger is a large issue among students, with more than 50% of UWM students experiencing food scarcity during the academic year. They also thanked the Synod Council for budgetary support of their ministry, which helps create "deep, important, and holy places" where God is at work in the lives of young adults.

- The council received updates on the Synod Mission Appeal, results from a Synod-wide survey of COVID-related needs, and an report from the latest meeting of the ELCA Church Council.
- Other reports included: updates on Synod-Authorized Worshipping Communities; adaptations to accompaniment of congregations in transition without in-person gatherings; Reconciling In Christ Pride Worship; and the Outreach for Hope Virtual Bike Ride.

Finances

- **Treasurer Tom Gauthier** gave an update on financial state of the Synod, noting that receipts were coming in at a good rate given the unusual times. March receipts were unusually low, in part due to some issues with U.S. Mail delivery to the Synod Office.
- The Synod received approximately \$163,000 through the Paycheck Protection Program. LCM also received PPP funds. Financial Administrator **Lee Johnston** has been working to ensure the latest government qualifications are in line with the Synod's use of the funds.
- **Gauthier** also noted there has been strong support for COVID-19 fundraising efforts. A grant from ELCA Churchwide was also received.
- The Council approved the financial reports as presented.
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Upcoming Synod Council meetings for 2019-2020

- September 17, 2020:

Unless otherwise published in advance, all meetings begin at 6:15 pm.

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Submitted,
The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse, Synod Secretary