

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, March 19th and in a special meeting on Thursday, April 2, 2020. These are highlights of those meetings: Detailed summaries of the Council's meetings will be available on the synod's website at <https://milwaukeesynod.org/who-we-are/synod-council/>. **These highlights are not official minutes of the proceedings.**

Actions

- Appointed **The Rev. Sarah Stobie (Bay Shore, Whitefish Bay)**, to the open Synod Council Seat for Milwaukee Cluster I through the term ending August 2021.
- Approved the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on January 16, 2020.
- Approved new On-Leave-From-Call Status for **The Rev. Elizabeth Baires**, effective 15 December 2019; and **The Rev. Larry Harpster**, effective 16 February 2020.
- Approved of Retired Status for **The Rev. Steven Clingman**, effective 1 April 2020; **Deacon Jeanne Solik**, effective 9 February 2020; and **The Rev. Vickie Watkins**, effective 1 January 2020.
- Approved a Synod Call for **The Rev. Jennifer Olson**, serving as Chaplain with Ascension at Home, effective 17 February 2020.
- Amended the 2020-2021 Budget to change projected revenue from \$1.9 million to \$1.8 million.
- Transferred funds from the St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Fund to undesignated reserves.
- Accepted Financial Statements through January 2020.
- Approved and recognized the new consolidated congregation, **Lakeside Lutheran Church, Kenosha** as a congregation of the ELCA in the Greater Milwaukee Synod
- Recommended the Synod Assembly Rules for approval by the full Synod Assembly.
- Recommended the 2020 Synod Assembly Agenda for approval by the full Synod Assembly.
- Recommended the 2020-2021 Synod Budget to the Synod Assembly for approval.

- Designated Synod Assembly offerings to the International Women Leaders Fund of the ELCA.
- Approved voice-and-vote privileges for 2020 Synod Assembly for **The Rev. Debra Trakel**, a pastor of The Episcopal Church, serving as Interim Pastor at **Adoration, Greenfield** and **The Rev. Germán Novelli Machado**, a pastor in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, serving as Bridge Pastor at **Ascension, Milwaukee**.
- Appointed **Scott Manske (Martin Luther, Milwaukee)** as Cluster IV representative and **The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse (St. Matthew's, Wauwatosa)** as an at-large member of the Nominating Committee, effective from Synod Assembly 2020—Synod Assembly 2023.
- Ratified proposed changes to the governing documents, Constitution, and Bylaws of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc.
- Recommended amendments to the Synod Constitution for ratification by the 2020 Synod Assembly to the following bylaws and constitutional provisions, as recommended by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly: **S7.22.; S7.26.; S8.11.01.; S8.14.; S10.08.; S10.07.01.; S13.25.; S13.40.; S14.14.; S14.17.; S14.42.; S15.14..**
- Postponed the 2020 Synod Assembly due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and rescheduled the 2020 Synod Assembly for August 14-15, 2020 at the Italian Community Center, Milwaukee.
- The Council voted to amend changing the Assembly Rules, extending deadlines for nominations and resolutions to 15 June 2020, and extending the deadline for any Synod Council-initiated resolutions to 17 July 2020.
- The Council voted to approve the dates and location of the 2021 Synod Assembly for April 30—May 1, 2021 at Milwaukee's Italian Community Center.

Reports and Discussion

- **Vice President Joyce Caldwell** expressed appreciation for the flexibility of leadership throughout the synod in modeling how we can continue to gather as the community of God. She also shared that the start dates and plans for the Mission Appeal have been made more fluid at this point; the Mission Appeal leaders continue to work with consultants from GSB to discern the timing and best path forward with the appeal.
- **Bishop Paul Erickson's** report included gratitude for the staff and leaders throughout the pandemic-related events and the rapid rate of change. In this time of “a crash-course in adaptive learning,” the Bishop shared the importance of caring for rostered ministers and deepening relationships in this time. Outreach for Hope Staffing decisions have been delayed; Synod Assembly 2020 will likely be postponed and will need to be flexibly scheduled until more details

are known about the length of time when people will be social distancing and changes to regulations on gathering size.

- The Council was addressed on the ministry and work of the El Salvador Committee by members **Gretchen Hauge (St. Matthew's, Wauwatosa) and Carol Witt (St. John's, Brookfield)**. They shared the history and growth of the partnerships built with the Lutheran Church in El Salvador and provided context on the nature of the church within the country's recent history of violence, gang activity, and poverty. There are currently between 15-25 congregations with connections to the El Salvador partnership, ranging from congregation-to-congregation partnership, financial support, delegation visits, and/or advocacy. The Synod Committee, which follows ELCA Global Mission's process of Accompaniment, meets monthly on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at St. Matthew's, Wauwatosa. Committee members serve to communicate with both churches, embody unity and accompaniment (relationships as primary connection) and keep congregations in the synod updated on happenings in the church in El Salvador. The El Salvador Committee also has represented the Synod and ELCA at international church partner events and international consultations on Global Mission. It remains easier for Americans to travel than Salvadorans, which means most information is shared digitally. They lifted up the important synod relationships nurtured both by the ELCA AMMPARO Initiative and individuals who have served as election observers and political interpreters.

- The Council received a draft report on proposed Conference membership, which will be considered at future meetings.
- The Council received updates from **Synod Assembly Manager Mary Romskog** regarding both rescheduling information and future contracts with the Italian Community Center (ICC). She provided context and details of the logistics and financial commitments already made toward this year's Synod Assembly. There is a conflict with the Synod's usual dates for 2021's Synod Assembly, which led to action scheduling the 2021 Assembly on a different weekend.
- Other reports included: updates on "Every Congregation Visits" from Fall 2019; updates to Synod Assembly Rules and Agenda; and regular monthly reports from the Assistants to the Bishop, Lutheran Campus Ministry, RIC Team, Women of the ELCA, and Outreach for Hope.

Finances

- **Treasurer Tom Gauthier** gave an update on financial state of the Synod. The Finance and Audit Committee met and received the 2018-19 Fiscal Year Audit with an unqualified opinion. The audit can be considered completed.
- Looking at 2019 revenues, **Gauthier** led the Council in a discussion of amending the 2020-21 Budget to lower revenues to better reflect congregational intents and 2019 actual receipts. Amending the number from \$1.9 Million to \$1.8 will provide a more accurate reflection of the synod's financial reality.

- **Gauthier** noted that a few changes have been made to financial reports to show more transparency about the salary sharing agreement between the Synod and Outreach for Hope.
- The Council discussed transferring set-apart funds to undesignated reserves to maximize fiscal flexibility during the fiscal year, especially given the uncertainty of COVID-19 and its impact on stewardship.

Meeting and Event Schedule

- **Next Meeting:** May 21, 2020

Upcoming Synod Council meetings for 2019-2020

- July 16, 2020: Bishop Erickson's Home
- September 17, 2020: St. Paul's Milwaukee

Unless otherwise published in advance, all meetings begin with dinner at 5:30 pm followed by the meeting beginning at 6:15 pm.

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