

Minutes from the  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 23-24, 2020**  
Via Zoom

Present on Friday: Bishop Susan Candeia, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Daniel Lilienkamp, Rev. David Frerichs, Susan Boxberger, Dallas Rakestraw, Rev. Lorna Paulus, Mindy Tillberg, Rev. David Strommen, Joanie Saltzman, Chelsea Deines, Terrance Freeman

Absent: Theo Keesee, Linda Lockhart

**CALL TO ORDER**

Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

**DEVOTION**

Bishop Candeia led us in a devotion based on a book by Walter Bruggemann. We broke into small groups and talked about the various things that we are lamenting right now.

**“HOT AIR BALLOON” EXERCISE**

Nancy led us in a visioning exercise and asked us to focus on what Kansas & Missouri will look like in June 2021.

**BISHOP’S REPORT**

Bishop Candeia presented a written report. Verbal highlights included:

- Fall Theological Conference seemed to go really well using a virtual format. There were about 100 participants.
- She has been getting out a bit more into the congregations and trying to be as careful as possible.
- Most congregations in the synod have started worshipping again in-person in some form or fashion.
- Additional Staffing – We have hired Rev. Adam Wutka to a ¼ time position to be the director of lay ministry. He will be starting Nov. 1.
- Rev. Donna Simon has been on family leave and will be coming back on December 1.
- She’s starting to think about new plans & visions and about what comes next after this pandemic.
- She wants to focus a bit more on advocacy in the future.
- She’s excited about doing a bit more collaborative work with the Presbyterians & Episcopalians.

**VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Nancy thanked the Council for their work on the “Loving God, Loving Others” document that was sent to the congregations in September.

### **SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Chad presented the minutes from the August 14, 2020 Executive Committee meeting.

- **SC 20.10.23.A1**            **It was MSC (Susan B., Lorna) to approve these minutes.**
- **SC 20.10.23.A2**            **It was MSC (Joanie, Susan B.) to ratify the At Large Members of the Executive Committee: Dallas Rakestraw, Rev. Lorna Paulus, and Terrance Freeman.** These three people will each serve on the Executive Committee for one year, finishing their term at the June 2021 Synod Council meeting.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Scott presented a written report reflecting our financial position as of 9/30/20, after 8 months of the FYE January 31, 2021. Verbal highlights included:

- Income from congregations
  - \$1,030,340 received –
    - This amount is \$2,993 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -0.3% variance
    - The amount received is \$47,772 more than received last year, a 4.6% variance
- ELCA Churchwide Contribution
  - \$515,295 contributed to Churchwide
    - This is \$4,705 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -0.9% variance
    - The amount contributed is \$23,302 more than last year, a 4.5% variance
- Synod Expenditures
  - \$473,750 spent
    - The amount spent is \$87,550 less than budgeted, an -18.5% variance
    - This is also \$93,411 less than spent last year, a -19.7% variance
- Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures
  - \$1,064,191 received in Total Support & Revenue
    - \$17,103 less than anticipated but \$21,928 more than last year
  - \$989,045 in Total Expenditures
    - \$92,255 less than anticipated, and \$70,103 less than last year
  - Net surplus of \$75,146 as compared to a \$16,884 deficit last year
- Analysis of Financial Status
  - The amount of support received from the congregations continues to be a very pleasant surprise. Giving increased with the onset of the pandemic and has remained remarkably consistent from March through July. Giving in the month of August was surprisingly low compared to the consistent monthly giving this year. Giving is 4.6% higher when compared to last year.

- Synod expenditures are significantly lower than budgeted and lower than last year. This is largely due to the actions we took earlier this year to defer or eliminate some of our expenses and our synod staff and costs and Campus Ministry grants are lower due to staffing changes. We also do not have moving expenses this year. Since congregational giving has remained consistent thus far, we have begun or resumed paying some of the expenses that were deferred. This would include work on the audit for last year.
  - It should be noted that our Total Support & Revenue is less than budgeted, but is more than last year. This despite the fact that last year we had received a generous donation from Salem in Lenexa of about \$21,000. At the mid-point of the year, we have a \$75,146 surplus. This will likely decrease in the coming months as we continue catching up on the expenses that we deferred earlier this year, but that hasn't happened yet.
  - The Paycheck Protection Program loan is not reflected in our income numbers yet. When this loan goes through the forgiveness process, this will make our financial even stronger.
  - We had a conversation about what it might look like reinvest any carryover funds that we may have from the Paycheck Protection Program relief. The fundamentals of worship & how we do church are likely changing significantly and permanently. Some ideas included:
    - Supporting struggling ministries
    - Consultants, workshops or grants for technology upgrades & improvements
    - Helping congregations move to electronic giving
- We need to develop a framework for how to make these decisions. The officers will work on this in the future.

### **REPORTS FROM AROUND THE SYNOD**

Written reports were submitted from:

- Synod Staff
  - In Rev. Dave Whetter's report, he noted that there has been a lot of transition among clergy recently, even during the pandemic. Calls to congregations are being filled and changed.
- Teams & Committees
  - Candidacy Committee by Rev. Dave Whetter
  - Companion Synod Team by Rev. Gary Teske
  - Congregational Vitality Team by Rev. Kendra Nolde (based on notes from Rev. Donna Simon)
  - Endowment Committee by Scott Schulte
  - PMA Team by Rev. Adam Wutka
- Ministries
  - Camp Tomah Shinga by Jacob Spilker
  - Coaching Coordinator Jane Brda
  - Kansas Interfaith Action
  - Once We Were Refugees by Rev. William Say

- Lutheran Planned Giving Partnership by Stephen Phelps
- CSS Women of the ELCA by Alice Burnett
- Conference Ministries
  - Eastern Missouri Conference
- Campus Ministry
  - University of Kansas by Rev. Peter Rehwaldt - Rev. Shawn Norris has recently retired. Rev. Peter Rehwaldt is working as a part-time interim pastor and helping them through this transition.
  - LuMin St. Louis by Rev. Tina Reyes - Rev. Tina Reyes has started as the campus pastor in St. Louis.
  - Kansas State University by Rev. Kevin Clark
- Lutheran Disaster Response by Ben Perrin – He presented the Executive Summary for a “Central States Synod Preparedness and Response Plan.”

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **SYNOD CONSTITUTION**

There are two kinds of amendments that we are proposing in order to change the Synod Constitution. These were marked in green on a draft of the constitution that we were working with.

- Language changes - In 2019, the Churchwide Assembly made several changes to the model constitution. These automatically become part of our constitution and no vote is necessary to make these changes (these were marked in yellow). However, there are some changes we can make to our constitution in order to make the language consistent and mirror the changes that Churchwide made. Several of these language changes do require a vote by the Synod Assembly.
- Synod Assembly changes – There are some proposed changes to some continuing resolutions regarding the Synod Assembly location.
  - S7.11.E04 SYNOD ASSEMBLY LOCATION – This is the continuing resolution that addresses the location of the Synod Assemblies. We discussed deleting this continuing resolution to allow for the possibility of having Synod Assemblies online and not specifying the location in the constitution.
  - **SC 20.10.23.A3                    It was MSC (Lorna, Dan) to eliminate S7.11.E04 from the constitution.**
  - **SC 20.10.23.A4                    It was MSC (Lorna, Dan) to adopt the changes in green, to be forwarded on to the congregations 6 months prior to the Synod Assembly.**
  - **SC 20.10.23.A5                    It was MSC (Susan B, Dallas) to hold the 2021 Synod Assembly on June 4-5, 2021 virtually.**
- If we can publicize these at least 6 months prior to the Synod Assembly, then we can make all the necessary changes at one assembly and will not be required to go back for a second vote a year later.

### **ZION LUTHERAN, HUTCHINSON, KS**

After conversation and consultation with Bishop Candeia, Zion Lutheran in Hutchinson, KS has voted unanimously to disaffiliate with the ELCA. Everything is in order and they just need Synod Council approval to make it official.

- **SC 20.10.23.A6**            **In compliance with C6.05.g 1 & 2, it was MSC (David, Scott) to approve Zion Lutheran's (Hutchinson) disaffiliation with the ELCA.**

### **END OF THE YEAR APPEAL**

Dallas gave a quick update on the end-of-the-year appeal letter. He has written a letter and Nancy has edited it. The letters are printed, stuffed, and ready to be mailed out at the end of October to all synod congregations.

*We adjourned for the evening at 8:45pm.*

### **SATURDAY**

*We reconvened at 9:05am on Saturday, October 24, 2020.*

Present on Saturday: Bishop Susan Candeia, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Daniel Lilienkamp, Rev. David Frerichs, Susan Boxberger, Dallas Rakestraw, Rev. Lorna Paulus, Mindy Tillberg, Rev. David Strommen, Joanie Saltzman, Chelsea Deines, Terrance Freeman, Linda Lockhart, Theo Keesee

Also present: Rev. Kendra Nolde (Bishop's Associate)

Bishop Candeia opened us with a short devotion related to Reformation Sunday and being able to know the Lord.

### **SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY**

Rev. Kendra Nolde submitted a written report on all of our Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities. Verbal highlights included:

- Every mission leader was interviewed by a member of the Mission Table using the same set of questions. The Mission Table then came together to discuss each situation and whether or not to make a recommendation. There are two that are facing difficult situations:
  - Oromo Christian Community is struggling due to political situations in Ethiopia. The online ministry continues to bear fruit, but the overall ministry warrants a closer evaluation of their mission plan because there is not much going on locally.
  - The Bridge is also undergoing a transition and struggling to develop a faith community. It is being recommended that they redevelop their mission plan.
  - In addition, prayers are requested for:
    - Rev. Odir Flores, whose close family in El Salvador is facing a dire health situation.

- The Gathering Table - The weather & the pandemic have put some strain on the homeless community that surrounds them, and it has caused some issues. They are reaching out and working closer with Metro Lutheran Ministries.
- **SC 20.10.24.A7**           **It was MSC (Linda, Lorna) to reauthorize the following Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities as recommended in the report:**
  - **Sagrado Corazon de Jesus/El Divino Nino (Rev. Odir Flores)**
  - **Mision San Juan de Dios (Rev. Ivan Gonzalez)**
  - **South Sudanese Ministry (Philip Deng)**
  - **Holy Cross South (Rev. Joel Hinck)**
  - **Gathering Table (Rev. Ann Rundquist)**
  - **Hope Local Site (Kevin Mikalous & Mark Brandt)**
- **SC 20.10.24.A8**           **It was MSC (Dallas, David F.) to reauthorized the Oromo Christian Community & the Bridge contingent upon receiving and approving their revised mission plan at the January Executive Committee meeting.**
- Kendra led us in prayer and then left the meeting about 9:45am.

## **ROSTER REPORT**

Bishop Candeia presented a written roster report.

- On Leave from Call
  - **SC 20.10.24.A9**           **It was MSC to grant Rev. Jennifer Obermueller one year of On Leave From Call status effective November 1, 2020.** This is her first year.
  - **SC 20.10.24.A10**       **It was MSC to grant Rev. Jerry Reynolds one year of On Leave From Call status effective October 1, 2020.** This is his second year.
- Mission Developers – Per synod constitution 7.44.A19.b.1.6, these mission developers are eligible for Synod Council term calls.
  - **SC 20.10.24.A11**       **It was MSC to grant a Melaku Tizazu a one year Synod Council call to serve as mission developer of Oromo Christian Community effective January 1, 2021.**
  - **SC 20.10.24.A12**       **It was MSC to grant Rev. Ann Rundquist a one year Synod Council call to serve as mission developer of the Gathering Table effective January 1, 2021.**
  - **SC 20.10.24.A13**       **It was MSC to grant Rev. Odir Flores a one year Synod Council call to serve as mission developer of Sagrado Corazon and El Divino Nino effective January 1, 2021.**
- Specialized Ministry – Per synod constitution 7.44.A19.b.5.1, rostered ministers are eligible for Synod Council calls to specialized ministry.
  - **SC 20.10.24.A14**       **It was MSC to grant Rev. Sally Baehni a Synod Council call to specialized ministry to serve as a chaplain at St. Luke’s North hospital effective October 1, 2020.**
- Interim Ministry - Per synod constitution 7.44.A19.b.5.1, rostered ministers are eligible for Synod Council calls to specialized interim ministry.

- **SC 20.10.24.A15** It was MSC to grant Synod Council calls to interim ministry effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 to Rev. Elizabeth Backus, Rev. John Backus, Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, Rev. Keith Hohly, Rev. Dean Apel, and Rev. Jennifer Thomas.

#### **HOUSING ALLOWANCES**

- **SC 20.10.24.A16** It was MSC (Scott, Susan B.) to approve the following housing allowances for the rostered ministers on synod staff:

Bishop Susan Canda	\$20,000
Rev. Dave Whetter	\$40,000
Rev. Peter Rehwaldt	\$9,862.50
Rev. Tina Reyes	\$12,275
Rev. Kevin Clark	\$17,000

#### **RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM**

A Racial Justice Team has been formed and they are beginning to meet and have conversations.

#### **SYNOD ATTORNEY**

Bishop Canda is recommending Brian Markley to be our synod attorney (pro bono).

- **SC 20.10.24.A17** It was MSC to appoint Brian Markley as the attorney for the Central States Synod.

#### **CONGREGATION CONSTITUTION**

- **SC 20.10.24.A18** It was MSC to approve the updated constitution for Walsburg Lutheran in Leonardville, KS.

#### **UPCOMING DATES**

- January 22, 2021 Executive Committee
- March 19-20, 2021 Synod Council
- May 14, 2021 Executive Committee
- June 4, 2021 Synod Council
- June 4-5, 2021 Synod Assembly

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Nancy adjourned the meeting at 10:25am. Susan B. led us in prayer.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Rev. Chad Langdon*

*Central States Synod Secretary*