

Minutes from the  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**  
**March 11-12, 2022**  
Via Zoom

*Present on Friday: Bishop Susan Candeo, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrance Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Susan Boxberger, Rev. David Strommen, Dallas Rakestraw, Chelsea Deines, Mindy Tillberg, Joanie Saltzman, Ben Bennight*

*Absent: Rev. David Frerichs*

*Also present: Rev. Donna Simon (Director of Evangelical Mission), Rev. Aimée Appell (Director of Evangelical Mission)*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

- Nancy acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Osage, Kickapoo, and Kaskaskia Nations.
- We welcomed new Synod Council member, Ben Bennight.
- **SC 22.03.11.A19 It was MSC (Dallas, Susan B.) to appoint Ben Bennight as the Synod Council representative from the Western Kansas Conference.** He will be fulfilling the remainder of a 3-year term, completing his term at the Synod Assembly in 2024.
- Nancy led us in a Lenten devotion, and we prayed for peace in Ukraine.

**MISSION STATEMENT DISCUSSION**

Nancy led us in a discussion about how each of us are living into our Synod's new mission statement within our various contexts.

**UPDATES ON CONGREGATIONS**

Bishop Candeo gave us some updates on some of the more difficult situations around the synod.

- Trinity Lutheran in Great Bend, KS took their first vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA on January 9, 2022, and it passed by a 2/3 majority (86 to leave, 37 to stay). They will be taking their 2<sup>nd</sup> vote to disaffiliate on May 1, 2022.
  - Bishop Candeo, Rev. Dave Whetter, Rev. Dan Baldwin have all been out there recently, so the Synod staff has been walking with them between these votes.
- Hillside Community Lutheran in Spring Hill, KS is also trying to disaffiliate from the ELCA. They took their first vote on December 8, 2021 and it passed by a 2/3 majority (18-0). They plan to take their 2<sup>nd</sup> vote to disaffiliate on March 13, 2022. They received mission grants from the synod and from Churchwide to get this congregation started. If they decide to disaffiliate, they are legally obligated to repay \$94,000 to Churchwide. This has been a point of great contention, and the ELCA is preparing to sue this congregation if they do disaffiliate.
  - **SC 22.03.11.A20 It was MSC that we continue to endorse and affirm the ELCA's direction and actions in dealing with Hillside Community Lutheran.**

- The Oromo Synod Authorized Worshipping Community will be closing on June 30, 2022, per recommendation from the ministry review team.

### **RESURRECTION LUTHERAN IN ST. LOUIS**

Resurrection Lutheran in St. Louis closed recently and their property was transferred to the Central States Synod on February 23, 2022. We now have some opportunities and decisions to make about what to do with this property. Rev. Aimée Appell, who has been leading the efforts on this, gave a short presentation laying out some options for us. These include selling the property or renting it out.

- The team that has been working on this proposes establishing a non-profit corporation as a ministry of a local congregation (Zion Lutheran in Ferguson), to work with local non-profits to provide space for ministry to the community. After about 18 months, we would then initiate a SAWC exploration.
- This team is asking for a few more months to continue working this plan. They will report back to the Synod Council in June with the progress that they've made.
- **SC 22.03.11.A21            It was MSC that we continue to endorse the Resurrection team's actions with regular reports to the Executive Committee and Synod Council.**

### **SYNOD VITALITY GRANT**

Rev. Donna Simon is applying for a Synod Vitality Grant. She gave a presentation explaining what this grant is about.

- In the first year, they would hope to:
  - With the buy-in of at least five congregations and all our campus ministries, launch Lutheran Link.
  - Support the Racial Justice Team in leading educational opportunities and immersive experiences in racial justice and reconciliation.
  - Form an LGBTQIA+ Justice Team.
- In year two, they would hope to:
  - Continue Lutheran Link work, with a goal of adding at least five more congregations.
  - Form a task force for synod engagement with the ELCA's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, and support the continued work of the Racial Justice Team.
  - Have the LGBTQIA+ Justice Team lead engagement across the synod and education with congregations around sexuality and gender identity.
- **SC 22.03.11.A22            It was MSC that we approve the Synod Vitality Grant application.**

*Nancy closed us in prayer, and we adjourned for the evening at 9:15pm.*

*We reconvened at 8:30am on Saturday, March 12, 2022 and Nancy called us to order.*

*Present on Saturday: Bishop Susan Candeia, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrance Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Susan Boxberger, Rev. David Frerichs, Dallas Rakestraw, Chelsea Deines, Mindy Tillberg, Joanie Saltzman, Ben Bennight*

*Absent: Rev. David Strommen (Rev. Donna Simon & Rev. Aimée Appell were no longer present.)*

Bishop Candeia led us in an opening prayer and devotion from “Grace Unbounded.”

### **SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Executive Committee meetings on January 14, 2022 and February 1, 2022. The January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting was a regularly scheduled meeting, but the February 1 meeting was a specially called meeting to discuss the closing of Resurrection Lutheran, St. Louis, and how we would handle the transfer of their property to the synod.

- **SC 22.03.12.A23** It was MSC to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2022 Synod Executive Committee meeting.
- **SC 22.03.12.A24** It was MSC to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2022 Synod Executive Committee meeting.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Scott presented a written treasurer’s report:

**Financial Status as of 1/31/2022, after 12 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2022.**

#### Income from congregations

- \$1,553,806 received
- The amount received is \$3,806 more than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a 0.25% variance
- The amount received is \$62,250 less than received last year, a -3.9% variance

#### ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$776,903 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$3,097 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -0.4% variance
- The amount contributed is \$31,125 less than last year, a -3.9% variance

#### Synod Expenditures

- \$857,135 spent
- The amount spent is \$55,433 less than budgeted, an -6.5% variance
- This is also \$26,126 less than spent last year, a -3.0% variance

#### Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$1,634,478 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$58,090 less than anticipated and \$58,293 less than last year
- This does not include usage of any of the surplus from last year
- \$1,634,038 in Total Expenditures, \$58,530 less than anticipated, and \$57,251 less than last year
- Net surplus of \$440 as compared to a \$1,482 surplus last year
- With inclusion of full forgiven PPP loan, net surplus of \$167,640.

### Analysis of Financial Status

- It was good news that we finished the year with congregational contributions slightly more than was budgeted; however, that is overshadowed by the fact that contributions were 4.0% lower than what was received in 2020. I believe this indicates that the proactive reduction that we made in anticipated contributions was well timed and accurate. In this case it's disappointing to be correct.
- Synod expenditures remain lower than expected by 6.5%. That is primarily due to Travel, Synod staff compensation, Operations, Candidacy, Leadership/Ministry Development, and Area Conferences expenses being lower than budgeted.
- Our Total Support & Revenue amount is less than budgeted by \$58,090. This is because we had originally planned on releasing \$80,000 of our surplus accumulated from recent years; however, our Reimbursements received were significantly greater which helped to compensate. Due to ending the year with a surplus without using our funds from our prior year surplus, it made no sense to use these funds simply to increase the surplus this year. We will save these funds for now and use them to support the ministries of the synod in future years.

Verbal highlights and discussion included:

- We are a bit behind on audits due to the pandemic. The audit for 2019 is almost finished and we will review it in May at the Executive Committee meeting. The plan is for the audit for 2020 to be ready and reviewed by the Executive Committee in July. And then hopefully we will be able to review the audit for 2021 by the end of this year (2022), at which point we will be back on schedule.

### **FYE 1/31/23 REVISED BUDGET**

Scott presented a worksheet containing the Revised Budget for FYE 1/31/23. Proposed changes from the Approved Budget to the Revised Budget for FYE 1/31/23 include:

- Under *Support and Revenue*, we kept the congregation support the same. But we did adjust the following:
  - *Annual Appeal* from \$10,000 to \$15,000 based on historical trends.
    - We clarified that the total amount of Annual Appeal gifts should be kept entirely in the Synod (as opposed to sending half of it to Churchwide). This is based on the wording of the Annual Appeal letter, which implies that the end-of-year gifts will be kept within the Synod.
  - *Temporarily Restricted Funds Released* from \$63,634 to \$65,116 to primarily pay for the audits that we did not have to pay for in 2021.
- Under *Expenditures*, we adjusted:
  - *Candidacy* from \$8,000 to \$7,000 because our expenses in this area seemed to have gone down recently.
  - *Synod Salaries & Benefits* from \$485,709 to \$498,491 because we have added Rev. Aimée Appell as a half time DEM and made some other minor salary adjustments.
    - We will be facing some staffing changes this coming year, which could cause the actual expenditures to change slightly. Both Dawne Bockelman (Synod Administrator) & Barbara Beadle (Bookkeeper) are retiring this year.

Unfortunately, this will result in a loss of institutional knowledge as well, as both have served the Synod for many years.

- *Travel* from \$45,000 to \$40,000 based on expected expenses.
- *Operations* from \$46,000 to \$55,000 to prepare to pay for extra audits we will have to pay for in 2022.
- *Meetings* from \$3,500 to \$2,000 because we anticipate meeting more by Zoom, even after the pandemic is over.
- *Enhanced Outreach & Evangelism* from \$10,000 to \$5,000 because we think that most congregations that would request those funds have already done so.
- This gives us a balanced budget.
- **SC 22.03.12.A25 It was MSC (Mindy, Terrance) to approve the FYE 1/31/23 Revised Budget.**

### **FYE 1/31/24 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Scott presented the FYE 1/31/24 Proposed Budget, which will be presented to the 2022 Synod Assembly. Changes from the previous year's budget include:

- *Temporarily Restricted Funds Released* was reduced to wean ourselves off of using these surplus funds.
- *Parish Ministry Associates, Leadership Training and Teams & TF Expenses* were all reduced because the totality of these funds are not being used each year.
- *Synod Salaries & Benefits* was increased to reflect a 2% raise. It also includes a change to reflect how Churchwide is expecting to pay their half of the DEM positions, but they are now reconsidering this approach. The bishop's health insurance cost was reduced because of access to Medicare.
- *Travel* was increased slightly because we are hopeful the pandemic will allow for the staff to travel more.
- *Call Process Ministries* was reduced because, while important, we haven't been using it as much recently.
- *Bethany College and Seminaries* were reduced to reflect the "normal" amount we were giving before we had this past year's surplus.
- *Operations* was reduced because we will be back on our normal audit schedule.
- *Conference Grants and Enhanced Outreach & Evangelism* were discontinued because those programs will have finished.
- This gives us a balanced budget to recommend to the Synod Assembly in June.
- **SC 22.03.12.A26 It was MSC (Mindy, Terrance) to approve the Proposed Budget for FYE 1/31/24 and present it for final approval at the 2022 Synod Assembly.**

### **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Nancy shared a bit about her activities as a volunteer coach through the Faithful Innovations and the Faith+Lead programs. She's also taking a class through the Catholic Church called "Crucial Conversations." She attended the Missouri Faith Voices kick-off that does advocacy work at the state level in Missouri. She also wrote a letter to Hillside Community Lutheran in support of Bishop Candea, among other things.

## **BISHOP'S REPORT**

Bishop Candea presented a written report. She emphasized her desire to increase connections among congregations and to be out and about in the synod as much as possible.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

Austin Krug has volunteered to help review congregation constitutions.

- **SC 22.03.12.A27** It was MSC to approve the constitutional changes for Good Shepherd Lutheran (Lawrence, KS).
- **SC 22.03.12.A28** It was MSC to approve the constitutional changes for Shepherd of the Hills (St. Ann, MO).
- **SC 22.03.12.A29** It was MSC to approve the constitutional changes for Hebron Lutheran (Burdick, KS).
- **SC 22.03.12.A30** It was MSC to send back the constitution to St. Paul's Lutheran (Wichita, KS) for further work and revision. They have submitted an updated constitution, but it is not ready for approval yet.
- **SC 22.03.12.A31** It was MSC to send back the constitution to Gloria Dei Lutheran (Wichita, KS) for further work in order to bring it up to the current required language found in the current model constitution. They have submitted their constitution, but it is not up to date with the current model constitution.

## **ROSTER REPORT**

Bishop Candea presented a written roster report.

- On Leave From Call
  - **SC 22.03.12.A32** It was MSC to grant Rev. Anita Strommen On Leave From Call status, effective April 1, 2022. This is her second year of OLFC status.
  - **SC 22.03.12.A33** It was MSC to grant Rev. Katherine Hayes-Wallenburg On Leave From Call status, effective March 17 2022. This is her second year of OLFC status. She is also switching her reason for OLFC to parental leave, which means she is eligible for 6 years of parental leave.
  - **SC 22.03.12.A34** It was MSC to grant Rev. Kristin Ross On Leave From Call status, effective January 11, 2022. This is her second year of OLFC status.

## **SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

We had a discussion about the upcoming Synod Assembly.

- Regarding the offering that will be collected at the assembly:
  - **SC. 22.03.12.A35** It was MSC that the Synod Assembly offering be split equally between Lutherans Restoring Creation, Camp Tomah Shinga & Hollis Renewal Center. This will be in keeping with the assembly's theme of creation care.
- Display Tables:
  - **SC. 22.03.12.A36** It was MSC to approve having a display table at the Synod Assembly for Hearts Across the Heartland. The requestor was Rev. Andrew Patty.

- **SC. 22.03.12.A37**      **It was MSC to approve having a display table at the Synod Assembly for Thrivent. The requestor was Rev. Jennifer Thomas.**
- Voting Member Waivers:
  - **SC. 22.03.12.A38**      **It was MSC to approve voting members waivers for Emmanuel Lutheran (Hoisington, KS), Hebron Lutheran (Burdick, KS), Immanuel Lutheran (Salina, KS), Trinity Lutheran (Topeka, KS), and Trinity Lutheran (Chesterfield, MO).**  
Emmanuel, Hebron, and Immanuel will all be sending two females. Trinity (Chesterfield) will be sending 3 females and 1 male. We aren't sure about who Trinity (Topeka) plans to send.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

- **SC. 22.03.12.A39**      **It was MSC to appoint Pat Bujland, Rhonda Templing, Rev. Larry Lemke, Melba Bangert to serve as the 2022 Nominating Committee.**

### **COVID-19 DISCUSSION**

We had a discussion about how we might want to handle COVID-19 protocols at the 2022 Synod Assembly. We realize that we need to be flexible and ready to pivot given the unpredictable nature of the pandemic. We did feel like it was too soon to make any firm decisions right now. We want to provide an environment where everyone feels comfortable attending and respects where different people are coming from.

### **REPORTS FROM TASK FORCES & COMMITTEES**

We were presented with and reviewed written reports from:

- Rev. Dave Whetter, Bishop's Associate
  - Finding interim pastors has been hard.
- Candidacy Committee
  - We have several new candidates going through this process.
- Parish Ministry Associates (PMA) Team
- Bethany College
- Companion Synod Ministry Team
- Eastern Missouri Conference
- Hollis Renewal Center
- Hunger Team
- Kansas Interfaith Action
- Lutheran Campus Ministry – KU
- LuMin St. Louis (Lutheran Campus Ministry in St. Louis)
- Lutheran Planned Giving
- Lutherans Restoring Creation
- Once We Were Refugees
- WELCA

Other verbal highlights & comments include:

- The ELCA Church Council is making new recommendations for Synod Authorized Ministers. They are also reviewing the candidacy process.
- It is heartening & encouraging to see all the ministry that is happening around our Synod.

### **CHURCHWIDE VOTING MEMBER**

- **SC. 22.03.12.A40** It was MSC to appoint Tullia Hamilton, member of Bethel Lutheran (University City, MO), as a voting member to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. She replaces Linda Lockhart, who is no longer able to attend.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Rev. Janice Hawley closed us in prayer. Nancy adjourned the meeting at 10:55am.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Executive Committee May 13, 2022 1:00pm via Zoom
- Synod Council June 9, 2022 3:00pm in-person at Embassy Suites, Olathe, KS
- Synod Assembly June 9-11, 2022 at the Embassy Suites, Olathe, KS
- Executive Committee July 6, 2022 afternoon TBD via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon  
Central States Synod Secretary