

Minutes from the
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING
of the Central States Synod
October 7-8, 2022
Atonement Lutheran
9948 Metcalf Ave,
Overland Park, Kansas

Present on Friday: Bishop Susan Candeia, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrence Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Susan Boxberger, Dallas Rakestraw, Chelsea Deines, Tullia Hamilton, Rev. David Frerichs

Absent: Rev. David Strommen, Mindy Tillberg, Joanie Saltzman, Ben Bennight

Also present: Rev. Aimée Appell (Director of Evangelical Mission)

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:38pm.

- Nancy acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Kickapoo, Kaw, Osage, Kiowa, Comanche, Pawnee, Sioux, and Kaskaskia Nations.

INTRODUCTIONS

- We welcomed new Synod Council member, Tullia Hamilton, and did introductions.

INTERCULTURAL DIVERSITY INDEX

Aimée led a presentation on the Intercultural Diversity Index, which measures a person's capacity for navigating intercultural situations. Over the last couple months, each Synod Council member took the inventory and Aimée has met with each Synod Council member individually to go over their personal results. Tonight, she talked about what this looks like from our organization's perspective using the Group Profile Report. Highlights and discussion included:

- Our perceived orientation score is 126, which is within the range of Acceptance. Our developmental orientation score is 104.4, which is within the range of Minimization.
- The hope is that as we reflect and do intentional work in intercultural settings, we will become better at it. There is room for us to grow in our intercultural capacity as a Synod Council.
- Aimée is asking that Synod Council members work through the Intercultural Diversity Plan by pairing up with another Synod Council member for accountability, encouragement & growth, hoping to grow their own personal intercultural capacity.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candeia presented a written report. She highlighted:

- It's been good to be out and about in congregations and conference gatherings. The conference gatherings haven't been well attended, so she's wondering if there are better ways of connecting in the future.
- The situation at Hillside Community Lutheran Church in Spring Hill, KS has finally ended. Their disaffiliation with the ELCA became effective September 1, 2022.

- The situation at Bethany Lutheran in Webster Groves, MO continues to be difficult. The locks have been changed and their funds have been transferred to the Synod accounts, which is about \$93,000. These funds will be used for upkeep & utilities until further decisions are made. Pastor Starr said that they are planning to appeal the Synod Council's decision at the next Synod Assembly, which is within their rights. Regarding Pastor Starr, we need to decide if we will be paying his back salary and if he will be granted Retirement Status.
- Peace Lutheran in Sullivan, MO has taken their first vote to disaffiliate.
- Friends Home Lutheran in Savonburg, KS has set a date to take a first vote to disaffiliate.
- The staff is doing well and she is pleased with how everyone is working together.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Nancy gave an oral report. This summer she gave a presentation to the WELCA gathering about how her home church (Peace Lutheran, Washington, MO) was able to retire \$3 million in medical debt through an organization called R.I.P Medical Debt. In response, WELCA also made a significant contribution to help reduce medical debt.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Executive Committee meeting on August 26, 2022.

- **SC 22.10.07.A73** **It was MSC to approve the August 26, 2022 Executive Committee minutes as presented.**

As the composition of the Executive Committee changes each year, we needed to ratify the new at large members for the coming year.

- **SC 22. 10.07.A74** **It was MSC to ratify the new at large members of the Executive Committee as Chelsea Deines, Terrence Freeman, and Rev. Janice Hawley.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

Financial Status as of 8/31/2022, after 7 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2023.

Income from congregations

- \$854,820 received
- The amount received is \$49,347 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -5.8% variance
- The amount received is also \$14,980 less than received last year, a -1.8% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$426,410 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$25,673 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -6.0% variance
- The amount contributed is \$8,490 less than last year, a -2.0% variance

Synod Expenditures

- \$511,211 spent
- The amount spent is \$16,890 less than budgeted, a -3.3% variance
- This is also \$26,402 more than spent last year, a 5.2% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$919,089 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$61,095 less than anticipated but \$13,767 more than last year
- \$937,621 in Total Expenditures, \$42,563 less than anticipated, but \$17,912 more than last year

- Net deficit of \$18,532 as compared to a \$14,387 deficit last year (disregarding the PPP loan forgiveness)

Analysis of Financial Status

- Since a solid month for contributions in May, contributions have been below average and gotten worse with each successive month. In fact, August was our lowest month of giving for the year by a few thousand dollars. It is disappointing that contributions are about \$50,000 less than we had anticipated, yet we trail last year's giving amount by just \$15,000. Hopefully, the last five months of the year will be like last year where three of the months were above average.
- Synod expenditures continue to be lower than budgeted in several areas, which is causing overall expenses to be lower. These areas are Travel, Leadership Training, Technology Enhancements and Enhanced Outreach & Evangelism. While expenses were lower than budgeted, they were higher than our expenses for the same period last year by \$26,000. This was primarily driven by the compensation arrangement for DEM Aimee Appell that was not part of the budget last year.
- Our Total Support & Revenue amount is greater than last year due to the reimbursements we are receiving from Churchwide for the DEM purchase of services arrangement mentioned above. We currently are showing a deficit of \$18,532, but we have budgeted to release \$32,500 of temporarily restricted funds to support the budget. We haven't released those funds yet, but when we do that will flip the deficit to a surplus.

BETHANY LUTHERAN, WEBSTER GROVES, MO

- **SC 22. 10.07.A75** It was MSC (Susan B., Terrence) to pay \$25,060 to Rev. Stephen Starr conditional upon a signing a release against the Central States Synod, the ELCA, and Bethany Lutheran to be drafted by the Synod attorney. He will be paid from the Bethany Lutheran funds that we now control. Please note the next resolution.
- **SC.22.10.10.A86** It was MSC (Dallas, David F.) to change the pay to Rev. Stephen Starr from \$25,060 to a new amount of \$27,745, conditional upon signing a release against the Central States Synod, the ELCA, and Bethany Lutheran to be drafted by the Synod attorney. He will be paid from the Bethan Lutheran funds that we now control. On Monday, October 10 (two days after our meeting), it was discovered that we had incorrectly calculated the amount of backpay that Rev. Starr could receive. The Synod Council held an electronic vote via email on October 10 to correct the amount and make sure we were paying Rev. Starr the proper amount.

We adjourned for the evening at 8:45pm by doing a short prayer service based on the wisdom of indigenous cultures, incorporating Psalm 104 & a reading from Job.

Saturday, October 8, 2022

Present on Saturday: Bishop Susan Canda, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrance Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Susan Boxberger, Dallas Rakestraw, Chelsea Deines, Tullia Hamilton, Rev. David Frerichs

Absent: Rev. David Strommen, Mindy Tillberg, Joanie Saltzman, Ben Bennight, and Scott Schulte (Scott was at the College Gameday and KU football game)

Also present: Rev. Aimée Appell (Director of Evangelical Mission)

We reconvened at 9:00am and Bishop Canda led us in a devotion based on "God's Glorious Creation," incorporating Psalm 65 and Genesis 1.

REPORTS FROM SYNOD STAFF, TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

We received written reports from:

- Rev. Dave Whetter
 - There are 40 congregations/parishes in some type of transition process.
 - Of the Central States' 153 congregations, 90 are unable to afford a full-time pastoral leader.
- Rev. Barb Jones and the Candidacy Committee
- Bethany College
- Hollis Center
- Central States Synod Hunger Team
- Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA)
- Stephen Phelps, ELCA Regional Gift Planner
- Rev. Tina Reyes and LuMin St. Louis
- Lutherans Restoring Creation
- Once We Were Refugees
- Central States Synod Women's Organization of Women of the ELCA

The Bishop also gave us brief updates on the Racial Justice Team, Healing Hands Across the Heartland, and Camp Tomah Shinga.

SYNOD AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

Aimée presented updates from each of the Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities. She & Rev. Donna Simon have recently completed ministry reviews for each of these communities.

- Holy Cross South has closed. Their pastor, Rev. Joel Hinck, has been called to serve as an associate pastor for Holy Cross, Overland Park, KS.
- The Gathering Table (Kansas City, MO)
- South Sudanese Congregation (St. Joseph, MO)
- Parroquia El Divino Nino (Dodge City, KS)
- Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Garden City, KS)
- Mision San Juan de Dios (Wichita, KS)
- Hope Local Site (Kansas City, MO)

We discussed ways to promote these ministries and get their stories out, including the possibility of producing short videos (3 minutes or less). This could be tied into a year-end campaign.

We also discussed ways that our polity sometimes gets in the way of being creative and nimble. We want to find the best ways to be supportive of these ministries, and be thinking about these ministries more as community chaplaincies than traditional congregations.

- **SC 22. 10.08.A76** It was MSC (Janice, Terrence), per the recommendation of the Central States Synod Mission Table, to reauthorize these six ministries for the year 2023:
 - Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Garden City, KS)
 - Parroquia El Divino Nino (Dodge City, KS)
 - Mision San Juan de Dios (Wichita, KS)
 - Gathering Table (Kansas City, MO)
 - Hope Local Site (Kansas City, MO)
 - South Sudanese Congregation (St. Joseph, MO)

Aimée also shared about a SAWC Exploration that is just starting in the St. Louis area. They are exploring the idea of a multi-cultural, affirming, justice-oriented community in the Delmar Loop area. This will be led by Perrin, a candidate for diaconate in the Methodist church. Grants for this ministry can come from both the ELCA Churchwide and the Central States Synod Endowment Fund.

- **SC 22.10.08.A77** It was MSC (David F., Susan B.) to approve the Delmar Loop SAWC Exploration.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written roster report.

- On Leave From Call
 - **SC 22.10.08.A78** It was MSC to grant Rev. Mike Malone On Leave From Call status, effective November 1, 2022. This will be his second year of OLFC.
- Retirements
 - **SC 22.10.08.A79** It was MSC to grant Rev. Jerry Reynolds retirement status, effective October 1, 2022.
 - **SC 22.10.08.A80** It was MSC to grant Rev. Dinah Dutta retirement status, effective October. 1, 2022.
- Synod Council Calls
Mission Developers
 - **SC 22.10.08.A81** It was MSC to grant one year term Synod Council calls for mission development to:
 - Rev. Ann Rundquist (Gathering Table, Kansas City, MO),
 - Rev. Odir Flores (Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus, Garden City and Parroquia El Divino Nino, Dodge City, KS),
 - Rev. Ivan Gonzales (Mision San Juan de Dios, Wichita, KS),
 - and Rev. Philip Deng (South Sudanese Worshipping Community, St. Joseph, MO).These calls are all effective January 1, 2023.

Interim Ministry

- **SC 22.10.08.A82** It was MSC to grant one year term Synod Council calls for interim ministry to:
 - Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, currently serving St. John Parish, Lancaster & Bendena, KS,
 - Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, currently serving at St. James Lutheran, Kansas City, MO,
 - Rev. Dean Apel, currently serving Assaria Lutheran, Assaria KS,
 - and Rev. Merle Brockhoff, currently serving Bethel Lutheran, University City, MO.These calls are all effective January 1, 2023.

Additional Retirement Request

Rev. Stephen Starr, who had been serving Bethany Lutheran in Webster Groves, MO, has requested retirement status.

- **SC 22.10.08.A83** It was MSC (Susan B., Chad) to deny Rev. Stephen Starr retirement status. This effectively removes him from the ELCA roster.

HOUSING ALLOWANCES

- **SC 22.10.08.A84** It was MSC to designate the following requested amounts of salary as Housing Allowances for 2023:
 - \$44,000 of Rev. Dave Whetter's salary as Housing Allowance for 2023.
 - \$12,275 of Rev. Tina Reyes' salary as Housing Allowance for 2023.
 - \$25,000 of Bishop Susan Canda's salary as Housing Allowance for 2023.
 - \$65,080 of Rev. Dan Baldwin's salary as Housing Allowance for 2023.
 - \$17,000 of Rev. Kevin Clark's salary as Housing Allowance for 2023.
 - \$30,000 of Rev. Aimée Appell's salary as Housing Allowance for 2023.

YEAR END FINANCIAL APPEAL

It would be good to share some of our stories and the stories of our ministries during the end-of-year financial appeal.

SYNOD CONSTITUTION UPDATES

Bishop Canda, Chad and Dallas reviewed the Central States Synod Constitution. At the recent Churchwide Assembly, several changes were made to the required provisions in the model synod constitutions. Chad will work to make these changes. He reported the substantive changes to the Synod Council. The new model synod constitution also had some options and recommended changes to make. We discussed these and made some decisions. In addition to required changes, we changed the following:

Change #1 was made to address the ability to have online assemblies. We deliberately kept an annual assembly:

S7.11.01. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually. The ~~time and place~~ time, place, and format of the synod assembly shall be determined by the synod council.

Change #2 was recommended by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and made so that it is easier to have a quorum for Synod Assemblies:

S7.14. ~~One-half~~ One-third of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, as defined by †S7.21., S7.24., S7.27., shall constitute a quorum.

Change #3 was made to combine the following two provisions into one, ensuring that all rostered ministers (retired, on disability, and on leave from call) may attend the Synod Assembly as voting members:

~~**S7.22.01.** — All retired ministers, and those designated as disabled on the rosters of this synod shall serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly. All registration fees (not including housing and meals) will be waived for all retired ministers on the rosters of this synod. In the event at least 60 percent of the assembly membership is not lay, the retired ministers of word and sacrament together with the ministers of word and sacrament on leave from call will caucus and elect the appropriate representation.~~

~~**S7.22.02.** All rostered ministers on the roster of the synod who are on leave from call, may serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. In the event at least 60 percent of the assembly membership is not lay, the retired ministers of word and sacrament together with the ministers on leave from call will caucus and elect the appropriate representation.~~

S7.22.01. All retired ministers, those designated as disabled on the rosters of this synod, and all rostered ministers who are on leave from call may serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21. All registration fees (not including housing and meals) will be waived for all retired ministers on the rosters of this synod. In the event at least 60 percent of the assembly membership is not lay, the retired ministers, those designated as disabled on the rosters of this synod, and the rostered ministers on leave from call will caucus together and elect the appropriate representation.

Change #4a recognizes a change in the required provision coming from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. The required provision struck the words “proclaiming God’s love for the world” and replaced them with a broader description of what that might look like. We felt it was important however, to keep the words “proclaiming God’s love for the world” so we are recommending the adoption of a new by-law (**Change #4b**).

Change #4a: The required provision change:

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

[...]

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

Change #4b: The proposed new by-law:

S14.12.01 As part of the responsibilities of ministers of Word and Sacrament, this synod affirms that every minister of Word and Sacrament shall, consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Church in America, proclaim God’s love for the world.

Change #5a recognizes a change in the required provision coming from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, but seeks to make the same correction listed above in Change #4. Whereas Change #4 addresses the duties of a minister of Word and Sacrament, this change addresses the duties of a minister of Word and Service. Again, we felt it was important to keep the words “proclaiming God’s love for the world” so we are recommending the adoption of a new by-law (**Change #5b**).

Change #5a: The required provision change:

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

[...]

c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world, witnessing to the

~~realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad~~ advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Change #5b: *The proposed new by-law:*

S14.32.01 As part of the responsibilities of ministers of Word and Service, this synod affirms that every minister of Word and Service shall, consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Church in America, proclaim God's love for the world.

- **SC 22.10.08.A85** **It was MSC (Dallas, Janice) to make the 5 changes listed above to the Central States Synod Constitution.** Chad will make these changes and send them on to Churchwide for approval.

Two additional notes about the synod constitution conversation:

- We plan to take a deeper looker at the Travel Equalization section (S7.11.B.18) to see if there are better or less complicated ways to achieve the same intent.
- We need to update the list of congregations in each conference (S12.01.A.18) and make this an annual practice.

ADJOURNMENT

- **SC.22.10.08.A86** **It was MSC to adjourn.** Nancy adjourned the meeting at 11:55am.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Budget Committee Thursday January 12, 2023
- Executive Committee Friday January 13, 2023 via Zoom
- Synod Council Friday-Saturday March 10-11, 2023 via Zoom
- Executive Committee Friday May 5, 2023 via Zoom
- Synod Council Friday June 2, 2023 via Zoom
- CSS Synod Assembly Saturday June 3, 2023 via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary