

Minutes from the
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING

June 6, 2024

at the Embassy Suites
10401 S. Ridgeview Rd
Olathe, KS

Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Rev. Janice Hawley, Julie Barstow, Rev. Zac Sturm, Mindy Tillberg, Logan Simon, Brianna Dehn, Rev. David Frerichs

Absent: Chelsea Deines, Terrance Freeman, Dallas Rakestraw, Tullia Hamilton

Guests: Rev. Sara Cutter from ELCA Churchwide, Rev. Rich Gates our new Synod Administrator, and Sarah Thomas the Assembly Parliamentarian

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

- She acknowledged that the offices of the Central States Synod are located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Osage, Kickapoo and Kaskaskia peoples. We give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.
- Bishop Candea led us in a prayer written by Rev. Jennifer Thomas.
- We did a round of introductions.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad had emailed out a copy of the minutes from the May 2, 2024 Executive Committee meeting.

- **SC 24.06.06.A36** It was MSC to accept the minutes of the May 2, 2024 Executive Committee meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

Financial Status as of 4/30/24, after 3 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2025.

Income from congregations

- \$316,600 received
- The amount received is \$4,100 more than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a 1.3% variance
- The amount received is \$15,473 more than received last year, a 4.9% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$158,300 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$2,050 more than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a 1.3% variance
- The amount contributed is \$7,736 more than last year, a 4.9% variance

Synod Expenditures

- \$165,810 spent

- The amount spent is \$18,962 less than budgeted, an -11.4% variance
- This is also \$35,948 less than spent last year, a -21.7% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$331,010 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$10,012 less than anticipated but \$10,726 more than last year
- \$324,110 in Total Expenditures, \$16,912 less than anticipated, and \$28,212 less than last year
- Net surplus of \$6,900 as compared to a \$32,039 deficit last year

Analysis of Financial Status

- The contributions from the congregations were pretty good for the first quarter of the fiscal year. We have received about \$4,000 more than we anticipated in our revised budget and \$15,500 more than received last year. I'm especially pleased about the increased giving as compared to last year, a 4.9% increase! That is encouraging, particularly during a year when we significantly reduced the amount of congregational support expected.
- Synod expenditures are less than budgeted overall. This is due to the following: lower Campus Ministry expenses due to the pastoral vacancy at the KU site, lower operating expenses, and we have already received the Q2 grant for the DEM position. Travel is significantly higher than the year-to-date budget by \$6,473.
- Our total income is less than budgeted, but more than last year at this time. There are two drivers for this situation. We have not received the Q1 grant payment from Churchwide for Campus Ministry. This is \$5,765. In addition, we have not released any of the temporarily restricted funds as called for in the budget. We typically wait until the end of the year to release these funds once we have identified how much actually needs to be used. If we released these funds on a quarterly basis, it would have added \$13,750 to our total income. In general, we are off to a much better start for the year than we were at last year's assembly. Last year a \$32,000 deficit while this year we have a \$7,000 surplus. A nice difference!

Other verbal highlights & discussion included:

- It was noted that we are doing ok financially because we have lowered our expectations significantly.

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

Scott talked briefly about the Mission Endowment Fund. Barb Jones has reached the end of her first term and the Board is asking that she be reappointed for another 3-year term.

- **SC 24.06.06.A37 It was MSC to appoint Barb Jones to the Mission Endowment Fund Board.**

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Canda presented a written report. She highlighted:

- We have been shorthanded in the office because of Ben Godwin's departure last month. We have hired Rev. Rich Gates and he officially started this week (the week before Assembly). He has done great so far and seems to be a really good fit.

- We have also hired a new Bookkeeper, Michelle Goodwin. We have started the transition process and hope to have her fully onboard by mid-late July. She commended Scott and all the work he has been doing to make this transition.
- We did get quarterly statements out to congregations recently. There are 35 congregations who have not yet given anything and they were notified about this.
- Bethany Lutheran Church is close to be finalized, but we are still working through some legal stuff. We are hoping to close on the property on June 17 if everything can get resolved by then. Our lawyers are working hard on this.

PEACE LUTHERAN, NEW CAMBRIA, KS

Peace Lutheran in New Cambria, KS is wanting to disaffiliate from the ELCA. Their Synodically Authorized Minister has retired. They now want to be an independent Lutheran church and not affiliate with any other denomination. Bishop Candea has consulted with them. They had a first vote in April and voted to disaffiliate, which was a little out of order according to the constitution.

- **SC 24.06.06.A38** **It was MSC to recognize the out-of-order vote as a valid first vote to disaffiliate.**

They will now need a second vote in July to complete the disaffiliation process.

KU CAMPUS MINISTRY UPDATE

KU Campus Ministry has been without an ELCA pastor for over a year now. They do not have the finances to call another ELCA pastor, but they do have the Westwood House. Rev. Susan Mercer, a United Methodist pastor, has been doing ecumenical campus ministry out of the Westwood House. Lutheran Campus Ministry is wanting to covenant with the United Methodists. The Methodists would provide the pastor. Lutheran Campus Ministry would continue providing the facility, operational costs, and add funding for a lay employee.

- There was discussion about if we are open to providing costs for a lay employee rather than a pastor. There was general consensus that it is ok to fund a lay employee, however...
- One of the problems is that Lutheran Campus Ministry does not have a functioning board right now. They need a fully functioning board before we plan to approve or release any funds for them. We will need to know who those board members are by the August Synod Executive Committee meeting so that they can be approved. If that happens, we can proceed with the funding of a lay employee.

GATHERING TABLE UPDATE

The Gathering Table building & ministry has had some significant challenges through the years. The most recent challenge is that their pastor, Rev. Ann Rundquist, was attacked by someone in the neighborhood. The property was also vandalized and air conditioners broken. They need some reliable security. Even more than that, we need to have a serious talk about their viability. Bishop Candea will be sitting down with Pastor Rundquist and some other key stakeholders in the near future to determine the future of the ministry.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY UPDATE

We will be voting with red, green & white cards at this Assembly. There will be some amendments & discussions regarding some of the resolutions this year. Parliamentarian Sarah Thomas and Bishop

Candea have prepared for this, and gave the Synod Council some insight about potential procedures & possible rulings.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written roster report.

- Retirements
 - **SC 24.06.06.A39** **It was MSC to grant retirement status to Rev. Janice Hawley, effective August 1, 2024.** She has been serving Holy Cross Lutheran in Creve Coeur, MO.

CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS

Bishop Candea presented 1 constitution for approval, for Peace Lutheran, Joplin, MO. It was in good order.

- **SC 24.06.06.A40** **It was MSC to approve the updated constitution of Peace Lutheran, Joplin, MO.**

ELCA CHURCHWIDE

Rev. Sara Cutter brought greetings from Churchwide and gave us some good words of encouragement.

ADJOURNMENT

Nancy adjourned the meeting at 5:00pm. We decided we will work out our next meeting dates via email.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary