

Minutes from the  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
of the Central States Synod  
January 13, 2023  
via Zoom

*Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrence Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Chelsea Deines*

*Absent: none*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Nancy called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

- Nancy acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Osage, Kickapoo, and Kaskaskia Nations.
- Bishop Candea led us in a devotion on unity.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on October 7-8, 2022. After hearing from ELCA Churchwide about our previously approved constitutional changes, there was a slight change to the section related to the constitutional amendments. (At the October 2022 Synod Council meeting, we approved changing a required provision in the model synod constitution. We are not allowed to alter those required provisions in any way. In order to make the change we approved, we will need to add a by-law, which we can do at the upcoming 2023 Synod Assembly. Adding the proposed by-law will require a 2/3 vote of the Synod Assembly to be approved.)

- **SEC 23.01.13.A1** It was MSC to approve the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on October 7-8, 2022, noting that we have corrected the proposed constitutional changes, which were not quite in order.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

**Financial Status as of 11/30/2022, after 10 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2023.**

Income from congregations

- \$1,194,444 received
- The amount received is \$97,223 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, an -8.1% variance
- The amount received is also \$61,516 less than received last year, a -5.2% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$597,222 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$48,611 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, an -8.1% variance
- The amount contributed is \$30,758 less than last year, a -5.2% variance

Synod Expenditures

- \$720,773 spent
- The amount spent is \$33,657 less than budgeted, a -4.7% variance
- This is also \$30,695 more than spent last year, a 4.3% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$1,288,607 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$111,656 less than anticipated and \$20,012 less than last year
- \$1,317,995 in Total Expenditures, \$82,268 less than anticipated, and \$63 less than last year
- Net deficit of \$29,388 as compared to a \$9,439 deficit last year (disregarding the PPP loan forgiveness)

#### Analysis of Financial Status

- Contributions significantly tailed off in September, October, and November. This led to a dramatic increase in our giving shortfall compared to the budget and to last year. Our giving now trails the budget by almost \$100,000. Contributions in September were so low (\$89,000) that I had to adjust the scale for the first graph on the next page. This amount of giving is the lowest I have ever seen for one month.
- 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 \$30,000. 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 significantly less than anticipated for two primary reasons. The first is due to the decline in contributions and the second is because we have not released the temporarily restricted funds called for in the budget. We currently are showing a deficit of \$29,388, but we have budgeted to release \$48,837 of these funds to support the budget. If or when we do that it will flip the deficit to a surplus.

#### FYE 1/31/24 REVISED BUDGET

Scott presented the FYE 1/31/24 Revised Budget. Proposed changes from the Approved Budget include:

- Under *Support and Revenue*, we kept the congregation support the same. But we did adjust the following:
  - *Synod Salaries & Benefits* – Synod from \$505,454 to \$499,032.
    - Scott & Bishop Candea went through the Compensation Guidelines and realized that the salaries of the synod staff were not meeting the guidelines, so some adjustments were made to bring those salaries back into line.
    - There are also adjustments related to how Churchwide pays their part of the DEM salaries.
  - *Operations* from \$46,000 to \$52,422 in order to pay for multiple audits. We are behind on our audits (due to the pandemic and delays from our auditing firm). We expected to catch up on our audits this past year, but the firm was not able to do that. After not spending the extra money last year, we increased this line item so we can pay for multiple audits this coming year.
- This gives us a balanced budget.
- **SEC 23.01.13.A2            It was MSC to approve the FYE 1/31/24 Revised Budget.**

#### FYE 1/31/25 PROPOSED BUDGET

Scott presented the FYE 1/31/25 Proposed Budget. Changes from the previous year's budget include:

- Support and Revenue

- *Congregations* – We decreased our expected income from congregations by \$100,000 (from \$1,550,000 to \$1,450,000) to acknowledge that our income has not been as robust lately and will likely continue in the trend we were facing before the pandemic changed things.
- *Temp. Restricted Funds Released* – We increased this to \$40,000 from \$33,579 to help with the projected shortfall. (A majority of these temporarily restricted funds are from the surplus we received during the pandemic.)
- Expenditures
  - *ELCA Churchwide Ministry* – decreased to \$725,000 from \$775,000 to reflect our decrease in expected income, of which this is a percentage.
  - *Candidacy* – decreased to \$7000 from \$5000 because we expect our needs in this area to go down with the availability of electronic meetings and fewer candidates.
  - *Leadership Training* – eliminated to \$0 from \$5,000 because we didn't spend any of it in 2022.
  - *Synod Salaries & Benefits-Synod* – decreased to \$490,750 from \$499,032 to reflect changes in health insurance costs, while still giving small raises to the staff. It also includes an elimination of the Candidacy Manager position, as those duties can be filled by other staff members.
  - *Campus Ministry Salaries & Benefits* – decreased to \$136,000 from \$145,000, to equally reduce support to each of our three campus ministry sites by \$3,000 each.
  - *Travel (Synod Staff)* – decreased to \$37,5000 from \$42,5000 to reflect more closely our actual expenses, in part because we now regularly use Zoom.
  - *Call Process Ministry* – eliminated to \$0 from \$1,000 because we haven't been doing much of this, so it feels like we can cut it.
  - *Region IV* – decreased to \$500 to \$1,200 to more closely reflect our actual expenses over the last few years.
  - *Operations-Total* – decreased to \$46,000 from \$52,422 with the expectation that we will have caught up on our audits in 2023 so will not have those extra audit expenses in 2024.
  - *Synod Council Meetings* – decreased to \$1,300 from \$2,0000 to reflect that we are now just doing one in-person meeting/year.
  - *Dean's Meetings* – eliminated to \$0 from \$2,500 to more closely reflect our actual expenses over the last few years.
  - *Bishop Transition Set Aside* – decreased to \$7,000 from \$10,000 because we have been faithful through the years in saving up a good amount in this fund. This allows us to make this cut to help balance the budget
  - This leaves us with a balanced budget for the FYE 1/31/25 Proposed Budget.
- **SEC 23.01.13.A3**      **It was MSC to recommend FYE 1/31/25 Proposed Budget to the Synod Council at the March 2023 meeting.**

### **BISHOP'S REPORT**

Bishop Candea presented a written report. Verbal highlights include:

- It has been very busy lately, but the staff was able to have a day-long planning retreat.

- Rev. Dave Whetter is going to take some significant time in February to do some long-range planning and think about how to support our leadership in different ways.
- Friends Home in Savonburg, KS took their first vote to disaffiliate and it passed by 2/3.
- There is concern around finances in many of our congregations.
- There has also been some concerns about the timeliness of the reports we should be getting from the bookkeeper. If things don't improve quickly, we will need to make some changes with our current firm.

### **FORMER CONGREGATIONS UPDATES**

Bishop Canda gave us updates on the situations regarding these former congregations.

- Resurrection Lutheran in St. Louis, MO
  - The synod has owned this property for about a year now. There are a couple organizations leasing the property, but several of the initial plans have not materialized. There is a meeting scheduled in January with the Eastern Conference to see if we can actually make this work.
  - As an Executive Committee, we would like to see an effective plan in place by our March meeting, otherwise we will likely recommend to the rest of the Synod Council that we look at selling this property.
- Bethany Lutheran in Webster Groves, MO
  - Per our last meeting, we did offer to pay Rev. Stephen Starr in return for signing a release. He has not yet responded to this offer.
  - Some in the congregation initially said they wanted to appeal the Synod Council's decision to close their congregation to the Synod Assembly. We have heard nothing from them since, despite efforts to reach out.
  - We have recently been sued by some neighbors. Years ago, these neighbors errantly built a fence on church property, taking over a strip of land that belonged to the church. The church never said anything or did anything about it. Now the neighbors are suing to claim ownership of that strip of land they errantly built the fence upon. We are working with attorneys on this matter. We also feel like we can't properly respond to this lawsuit (or do anything else with the property) until the remaining members of Bethany Lutheran make their official appeal at the 2023 Synod Assembly.

### **NOMINATIONS**

We are working on making nominations and filling vacancies that need appointment, but there is nothing new to report at this time. (See the Election Grid Report below.)

### **CONSTITUTIONS**

Bishop Canda presented three congregation constitutions that have recently been updated. Everything in these constitutions is in order.

- **SEC 23.01.13.A4**      **It was MSC to approve the updated constitution for Good Shepherd Lutheran, Manchester, MO.**
- **SEC 23.01.13.A5**      **It was MSC to approve the updated constitution for Peace Lutheran, Joplin, MO.**
- **SEC 23.01.13.A6**      **It was MSC to approved the updated constitution for St. Paul Lutheran, Wichita, KS.**

### **ROSTER REPORT**

Bishop Candeia presented a written roster report.

- Specialized Ministry
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A7** It was MSC to grant Rev. Melissa Woepffel a Synod Council call to specialized ministry (7.44.A19.b10.3) to serve as Campus Pastor of Bethany College, effective January 1, 2023.
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A8** It was MSC to grant Rev. Brenda Ulrich a Synod Council call to specialized ministry (7.44.A19.b1.5) to serve as Interim Pastor at Grace Lutheran, Osage City, KS, effective January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.
- Retirements
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A9** It was MSC to grant Rev. Susan Langhauser retirement status, effective January 1, 2023. She has been serving at Atonement Lutheran, Olathe, KS.
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A10** It was MSC to grant Rev. Keith Hohly retirement status, effective January 1, 2023.
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A11** It was MSC to grant Rev. William Neuman retirement status, effective January 1, 2023. He resigned his call at Good Neighbor Parish (Herington, KS & Hebron, KS) on December 31, 2022.
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A12** It was MSC to grant Rev. Barry Hong retirement status, effective July 1, 2022. He had been serving a call to specialized ministry (professor of psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine) since 1978. He retired from the university on July 1, 2022
- On Leave From Call
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A13** It was MSC to grant Rev. Kimberly Knowle-Zeller another year of On Leave From Call status, effective January 1, 2023. This is her 8<sup>th</sup> year of OLFC and was approved by the Conference of Bishops for parental leave.
  - **SEC 23.01.13.A14** It was MSC to recommend an extension of On Leave From Call status to Rev. Bethany Rutten Kempes, whose third year of OLFC status expires on September 10, 2023. This request must be approved by the Conference of Bishops in March.
  - Rev. Ed Hatcher has been serving under call at Peace Lutheran, Sullivan, MO. The church disaffiliated on December 11, 2022. Rev. Hatcher indicated that intends to keep serving Peace Lutheran, which would require him to resign from the ELCA roster. He has not yet done so. He has 45 days from December 11, 2022 to apply for On Leave From Call status.

### **CONGREGATION UPDATES**

Bishop Candeia gave an update on three congregations.

- Peace Lutheran, Sullivan, MO took their 2<sup>nd</sup> vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA on December 11, 2022. It passed and they are no longer part of the ELCA.
- Friends' Home, Savonburg, KS took their 1<sup>st</sup> vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA on November 6, 2022. It passed by 2/3 and now they must take a 2<sup>nd</sup> vote.
- United Lutheran, Cole Camp, MO has not met for worship in over two years. They wanted to wait to officially close until they after they sold their building, which they recently did.

### **ELECTION GRID REPORT**

Chad presented an updated election grid to reflect the positions that we will need to fill at the 2023 Synod Assembly. Positions needing filled include:

- Officers

- *Vice President* – This is a 4-year term and the incumbent, Nancy Nagel, is eligible to be re-elected.
- *Treasurer* – This is a 4-year term and the incumbent, Scott Schulte, is eligible to be re-elected.
- *Secretary* – This is a 4-year term and the incumbent, Rev. Chad Langdon, is eligible to be re-elected.
- Synod Council
  - *Central Kansas Conference Representative* – This is a 3-year term and the incumbent, Rev. David Strommen, is not eligible for re-election. We are swapping the identity requirements for this with the outgoing Border Conference Representative. The new Central Kansas Conference Representative will need to be a Lay Female.
  - *Border Conference Representative* – This is a 3-year term and the incumbent, Susan Boxberger, is not eligible for re-election. We are swapping the identity requirements for this with the outgoing Central Kansas Conference Representative. The new Border Conference Representative will need to be a Clergy Male.
  - *Male Youth* – This is a 2-year term.
- Committees
  - *Consultation Committee* (6-year terms) – these positions are elected by the Synod Assembly.
    - We need to elect 1 Lay person for a full term.
    - We also need to appoint 1 Clergy to fulfill the final 4 years of a term that has opened up.
  - *Discipline Committee* (6-year terms) – these positions are elected by the Synod Assembly.
    - We need to elect 3 Lay persons and 1 Clergy to full terms.
    - We also need to appoint 1 Lay person and 1 Clergy to fulfill the final 4 years of terms that were not filled in the last election cycle.
  - *Nominating Committee* (1-year terms) – these positions are appointed by the Synod Council.
    - We need to appoint 5 members (one from each conference). There are no term limits, so everyone on the previous committee is eligible for re-appointment.
  - *Audit Committee* (3-year terms) – these positions are appointed by the Synod Council.
    - There is currently no one serving on this constitutionally-required committee. (We do regular audits through a firm, however.)
  - *Resolutions Committee* (3-year terms) – these positions are appointed by the Synod Council. We need to appoint:
    - Committee Chair – incumbent is ineligible for re-appointment.
    - Western Kansas Representative – incumbent, Mark Conn, is eligible for re-appointment.
    - Central Kansas Representative – incumbent is ineligible for re-appointment.
    - Border Representative – incumbent, Rev. Emily McQuillan, is eligible for re-appointment.
    - Osage Representative – incumbent is ineligible for re-appointment.

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

We briefly discussed the upcoming 2023 Synod Assembly and heard updates.

- **SEC 23.01.13.A15**      **It was MSC to set the registration fee for the 2023 Central States Synod Assembly at \$65.**

**BISHOP'S ANNUAL EVALUATION**

- **SEC 23.01.13.A16**      **It was MSC to go into Executive Session at 3:15pm for an hour to do the Bishop's Annual Evaluation.**
- **SEC 23.01.13.A17**      **It was MSC to come out of Executive Session at 4:15pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Nancy led us in prayer and we adjourned at 4:20pm.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- 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