

Minutes from the
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING
October 22-23, 2021
Via Zoom

Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrance Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Susan Boxberger, Rev. David Strommen, Linda Lockhart, Rev. David Frerichs

Absent: Dallas Rakestraw, Chelsea Deines, Mindy Tillberg, Joanie Saltzman

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

- Bishop Candea led us in introductions.
- Nancy led us in a devotion about times and seasons using the passage from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EVANGELICAL MISSION

Rev. Donna Simon joined us to talk about Faithful Innovations. We've had 5 congregations sign up to participate and they have had one training session. They are beginning to have faithful conversations both in and outside of church. The next trainings are in January and April, which will wrap up their cohort. The three workshops are centered around "Listen, Act and Share."

REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S ASSOCIATE

Rev. David Whetter joined us to talk about the new leadership/transition process. They are changing how they work with congregations in transition, whether the congregation is in the call process, or if their pastor is nearing retirement, or if they have a called pastor but need to change how they do ministry. There are three trained Leadership Developers who are working with six different congregations in the synod to undergo this new kind of process.

Rev. Donna Simon & Rev. David Whetter left the meeting after their presentations.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written report. Verbal highlights include:

- Hillside Community in Spring Hill, KS is struggling and there are a lot of issues. They want to disaffiliate with the ELCA, but they have yet to follow the constitutional process correctly. If they do disaffiliate, per constitution and covenant/contract, they will need Synod Council approval and they will need to pay back \$93,000 in grant money that they have received from ELCA Churchwide. We talked about possible paths going forward and now need to wait until they follow the proper procedures.
- Rev. Tim Meyer from Christ Lutheran in Eureka, KS, is leaving the ELCA to join the roster of the LCMS. The congregation is discerning if they want to leave the ELCA also.
- Trinity Lutheran in Great Bend, KS has a group in the congregation that is pushing disaffiliation.
- She also briefly talked about various staffing situations.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Nancy shared that she has been attending meetings for other synod vice presidents. She been doing some coaching through Faithful Innovations and is working with a cohort of St. Louis congregations.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Executive Committee meetings on August 6 and August 24. The August 6 meeting was a regularly scheduled meeting, but the August 24 meeting was a specially called meeting to discuss the situation at Hillside Community in Spring Hill, KS.

- **SC 21.10.22.A1** **It was MSC to approve the minutes from the August 6, 2021 Synod Executive Committee meeting.**
- **SC 21.10.22.A2** **It was MSC to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2021 Synod Executive Committee meeting.**
- **SC 21.10.22.A3** **It was MSC to ratify the membership of the Synod Executive Committee to include Dallas Rakestraw, Joanie Saltzman, and Rev. David Frerichs for the period of June 2021 – June 2022.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

Financial Status as of 9/30/2021, after 8 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2022.

Income from congregations

- \$1,012,914 received
- The amount received is \$20,419 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -2.0% variance
- The amount received is \$16,734 less than received last year, a -1.7% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$506,457 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$13,543 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -2.7% variance
- The amount contributed is \$8,838 less than last year, a -1.7% variance

Synod Expenditures

- \$563,419 spent
- The amount spent is \$44,960 less than budgeted, an -8.0% variance
- This is also \$88,977 more than spent last year, a 15.8% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$1,111,217 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$17,162 less than anticipated and \$47,206 more than last year
- This includes \$60,000 of the forgiven PPP loan
- \$1,069,876 in Total Expenditures, \$58,503 less than anticipated, and \$80,139 more than last year
- Net surplus of \$41,341 as compared to a \$74,274 surplus last year
- With inclusion of full forgiven PPP loan, net surplus of \$148,541.

Analysis of Financial Status

- For the first time in a while, we have a moderate shortfall in expected giving from congregations and have received less than last year as well. The giving this year is more uneven as compared to last year thus far. To underscore that point, the month of July was easily our

worst month of the year so far for giving, but June and September were much better than average.

- Synod expenditures are lower than expected by about 8%. That is primarily due to Travel, Operations, and Candidacy expenses being lower than budgeted. Synod expenditures are significantly greater than last year by \$89,000 due to the new expense items that we added to share last year's surplus and due to the expenditures that we delayed last year. We've already spent funds to support the Faith Innovations, Leadership Training, and Enhanced Outreach & Evangelism areas.
- Our Total Support & Revenue amount is less than budgeted by \$17,162. This includes \$60,000 of the PPP funds that were forgiven in this fiscal year. This highlights the shortfall in giving from congregations. Because the forgiven PPP loan will be included as income for 2021, we will use those funds to supplement our income this year, instead of releasing a portion of last year's surplus that we had set aside, as originally planned.

Verbal highlights and discussion included:

- Because of the pandemic, our regular audit schedule was interrupted. Our audit company is working on the audits and getting caught up. It will likely be next summer before we are able to get back on the normal schedule.

We adjourned for the evening at 8:30pm. Linda Lockhart closed us in prayer.

October 23, 2021

We reconvened at 9:00am.

In addition to those previously absent, Scott Schulte was absent when we reconvened.

Rev. Janice Hawley led us in a short devotion and prayer.

REPORTS FROM SYNOD STAFF, TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

Written reports were submitted from:

- Rev. Adam Wutka, Director of Lay Ministry
 - Bishop Canda remarked what a great job Rev. Adam Wutka is doing leading the PMA program.
- Rev. Barb Jones, Director of Candidacy
 - There are 16 active people in candidacy.
- Lutheran Campus Ministry
 - Lutheran Campus Ministry – KU
 - Lutheran Campus Ministry – K-State
 - LuMin St. Louis

It was noted that we have two new campus pastors (Rev. Tina Reyes and Rev. Dan Baldwin) who seem to have new ideas and energy for these ministries.
- The Mission Endowment Fund Committee
- The ELCA Foundation
- The Central States Synod Hunger Team
- Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA)
- Camp Tomah Shinga

- Hollis Renewal Center
- Lutherans Restoring Creation
- Ben Perrin, Director of Disaster Response for the Central States Synod
- CSS Companion Synod Team
- The Eastern Missouri Conference
- Once We Were Refugees
- Central States Synod Women’s Organization of Women of the ELCA

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Through a declaration from 2016, the ELCA is encouraging the various expressions of the church to research and present land acknowledgments. We had a discussion about what this might look like in our synod.

- **SC 21.10.23.A4** **It was MSC (Linda, Janice), to follow the bishop’s direction and make land acknowledgments at any Synod gathering, including the Synod Council.**
 - Here are a couple helpful websites to help with land acknowledgments:
 - <https://nativegov.org/resources/>
 - <https://native-land.ca>

BUDGET PROCESS

Nancy talked briefly about the budgeting process. We broke into small groups to discuss three mission-related questions. The answers will be used by the officers in the budgeting process.

1. What do our staff, ministries and programs do well in carrying out the mission?
2. What are the main obstacles that stand between the CSS and its mission?
3. Pick one core value per person. How do you see the CSS currently embodying that value and what would you like to see in the future?

SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

Bishop Candeia presented a written report and short verbal updates on the various Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities.

- **SC 21.10.23.A5** **It was MSC (David, Susan B.), per the recommendation of the Central States Synod Mission Table, to reauthorize these seven ministries for the year 2022:**
 - **Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Garden City, KS)**
 - **Parroquia El Divino Nino (Dodge City, KS)**
 - **Mision San Juan de Dios (in Wichita, KS)**
 - **Gathering Table (Kansas City, MO)**
 - **Hope Local Site (Kansas City, MO)**
 - **South Sudanese Congregation (St. Joseph, MO)**
 - **Holy Cross South (Overland Park, KS)**
- It was noted that the South Sudanese Congregation is doing a comprehensive ministry review in 2022, but they were still recommended for reauthorization.

The Mission Table recommends doing a full ministry review before we reauthorize the Kansas City Oromo Mission (Kansas City, MO).

- **SC 21.10.23.A6** It was MSC (Janice, Linda), per the recommendation of the Central States Synod Mission Table, to place the authorization on hold for the Kansas City Oromo Mission while they undergo a ministry review.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written roster report.

- On Leave From Call
 - **SC 21.10.23.A7** It was MSC to grant Rev. Beth Rutten-Kempes On Leave From Call status, effective September 10, 2021. This is her second year of OLFC status.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A8** It was MSC to grant Rev. Mike Malone On Leave From Call status, effective October 31, 2021. This is his first year of OLFC status.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A9** It was MSC to grant Rev. Jennifer Obermueller On Leave From Call status, effective November 1, 2021. This is her second year of OLFC status.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A10** It was MSC to grant Rev. Jerry Reynolds On Leave From Call status, effective October 1, 2021. This is his third year of OLFC status.
- Specialized Ministry
 - **SC 21.10.23.A11** It was MSC to grant Rev. Ann Rundquist a one year Synod Council call to serve as the mission developer for The Gathering Table (Kansas City, MO) beginning January 1, 2022.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A12** It was MSC to grant Rev. Odir Flores a one year Synod Council call to serve as the mission developer for Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Garden City, KS) and Parroquia El Divino Nino (Dodge City, KS) beginning January 1, 2022.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A13** It was MSC to grant Rev. Ivan Gonzalez a one year Synod Council call to serve as the mission developer for Mision San Juan De Dios (Wichita, KS) beginning January 1, 2022.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A14** It was MSC to grant Rev. Phillip Deng a one year Synod Council call to serve as the mission developer for The South Sudanese Congregation (St. Joseph, MO) beginning January 1, 2022.
 - **SC 21.10.23.A15** It was MSC to grant Rev. Peter Rehwaldt a one year Synod Council call to interim ministry beginning January 1, 2022. He is currently serving at St. John Parish (Lancaster & Bendena, KS).
 - **SC 21.10.23.A16** It was MSC to grant Rev. Cynthia Schnaath a one year Synod Council call to interim ministry beginning January 1, 2022. She is currently serving at St. James Lutheran (Kansas City, MO).
 - **SC 21.10.23.A17** It was MSC to grant Rev. Dean Apel a one year Synod Council call to interim ministry for beginning January 1, 2022. He is currently serving at Assaria Lutheran (Assaria, KS).
 - **SC 21.10.23.A18** It was MSC to grant Rev. Ashley Huber a Synod Council call to specialized ministry as she serves as the Manager of Spiritual Wellness at Bishop Spencer Retirement Center, effective November 8, 2021.
- Retirement
 - **SC 21.10.23.A19** It was MSC to grant Rev. Lorna Paulus retirement status, effective October 1, 2021.

Updates to the written report include:

- Rev. Elwin Bergstraesser died on October 22, 2021.
- Rev. Tim Meyer is resigning from the ELCA roster, effective October 31, 2021.

HOUSING ALLOWANCES

- **SC 21.10.23.A20** It was MSC (Susan B., Terrance) to approve and designate the following amounts as housings allowances in 2022 for these rostered ministers:
 - Rev. Dave Whetter for \$40,000.
 - Rev. Tina Reyes for \$12,275.
 - Bishop Susan Canda for \$20,000.
 - Rev. Dan Baldwin for \$56,582.
 - Rev. Kevin Clark for \$17,000.

YEAR-END FINANCIAL APPEAL

Nothing has been done toward a year-end financial appeal, but we will be checking to see if Dallas Rakestraw will be able to help coordinate this again.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

- **SC 21.10.23.A21** It was MSC (David S., Susan B.) to approve the constitutional changes for St. Paul (Nevada, MO).
- **SC 21.10.23.A22** It was MSC (Susan B., Terrance) to approve the constitutional changes for Zion State Line Lutheran (Washington, KS).

CHURCHWIDE VOTING MEMBERS

We were unable to approve a voting member for the Western Kansas Conference at the 2021 Synod Assembly due to a late withdrawal. Therefore:

- **SC 21.10.23.A23** It was MSC to appoint David Frederking, St. John, Ellis, KS as a Churchwide Voting Member from the Western Kansas Conference.

LAWSUIT

We have been named as a defendant in the lawsuit of *Rebecca Hess et al. v. Bethany Home Association of Lindsborg, Kansas* regarding the death of Duane Drown at Bethany Nursing Home on January 14, 2021 (after falling on January 8, 2021).

UPCOMING DATES

- Budget Committee January 13, 2022
- Executive Committee January 14, 2022
- Synod Council March 11-12, 2022
- Executive Committee May 13, 2022
- Synod Council June 9, 2022
- Synod Assembly June 9-11, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Nancy adjourned the meeting at 11:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary