

Minutes for the
CENTRAL STATES SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
on Friday, May 3, 2019
via Zoom video conference

Present: Bishop Roger Gustafson, Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Susan Boxberger, Chelsea Deines, Rev. David Strommen
Dennis Allerheiligen (Synod Vice President) joined at 10:25am.
Synod Staff Present: Rev. Susan Candea

CALL TO ORDER

Bishop Gustafson called the meeting to order at 10:00am and began with a prayer.

INFORMATION AND CONSENT ITEMS

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on March 15-16, 2019. They were accepted with no corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written Treasurer's Report. This report covered the Synod's financial status as of 3/31/19, representing two months into the fiscal year ending January 31, 2020. Verbal highlights and discussion included:

- Things are not going well. February & March 2019 were both worse than any month in 2018.
- We have received \$227,550, which is \$54,310 less than we received last year at this point, and a -23.9% variance. It is much less (\$45,783) than anticipated.
- Some of the reasons for this downturn could include:
 - Income from congregations is down.
 - Some grants and reimbursements have not yet come in.
 - Weather impacted attendance at many worship services, including several Sundays when churches cancelled services altogether. This was a common trend among other synods.
- There are some reasons for hope or that will help during this time, including:
 - Some grants and reimbursements should come in, they just haven't arrived yet.
 - This is the last year of using the Mission Fund Appeal campus ministry funds, so that money is still available.
 - We have a couple deposits to still process for April, and we're already at almost \$100,000 for April. We can maybe anticipate some larger deposits related to Easter, either at the end of this month or when we start processing May's receipts in early June.
 - Our expenses are up a bit because of moving expenses. But as we save money throughout the year on rent and utilities, we should gain some ground as the year goes on.

- Our budgeted amount of giving to Churchwide will be less because it is a percentage of our overall income. This is not a good thing, but it will help with the way the budget looks.
- It was noted that the Mission Budget Team may need to be convened at some point in the near future to look at spending contingency plans if this trend continues.
- Scott mentioned a correction from the end of year report from last year. \$13,000 had not yet been transferred from restricted funds by the end of the year. Once that transfer was complete, it actually gave us a surplus for FYE 2019. Instead of an \$8000 deficit, we ended up with a \$5000 surplus. We did still receive \$61,000 less in FYE 2019 than we did in FYE 2018.
- It was decided to do a special mailing to congregations to make them aware of our financial situation. This letter will be from the Bishop and the Treasurer. Included in the letter will be a suggestion for congregations to explore ways to promote automatic giving among their congregants. We also discussed the possibility of setting up automatic online giving from congregations to the synod, but because there are expenses associated with setting this up, we decided to look into it further before suggesting it as an option to congregations.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Gustafson presented a written report. It was accepted with little discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

SYNOD ASSEMBLY UPDATES

- Nominations Report – A written nominations report was submitted. In addition to the written report, it was noted that there have been 6 nominees for the position of bishop. Each of these 6 nominees have submitted bios that have been publicized to the synod. Other people could be nominated at the Assembly via ecclesiastical ballot.
 - Dennis reviewed the bishop's election process. He noted that the Synod Council members will need to hustle on Thursday night to contact any new potential nominees for bishop. Jim Dalbeck will coordinate the counting. The first 2 ballots will be paper. The 3rd ballots and beyond will be done by electronic voting.
- Voting Member Waivers – Blue Ridge Trinity submitted their voting member waiver late. They would like to send 2 women and no men.
 - **EC19.05.03A1 It was MSC (David, Chelsea) to grant this waiver.**
- Compensation Guidelines – This committee decided to continue producing a chart labeled Appendix A because people are familiar with this document. Changes from 2018 include:
 - Increasing overall recommended salaries by 2.4% to compensate for the average inflation rate.
 - Recommending that years-of-service increases be a flat rate of \$500/year. Previously it was done by percentage, but the committee felt that a flat rate was a better way to do it.
 - Not recommending a specific health insurance plan (ie Gold, Silver, etc.). The committee would encourage dialog on this issue between the congregation and its pastor(s) so that the congregation could offer “the best possible healthcare plan.”

- **EC19.05.03A2** It was MSC (Chelsea, Susan) to accept the guidelines presented by the committee.

ROSTER REPORT

A written roster report was submitted.

- **EC19.05.03A3** It was MSC (Chelsea, Scott) to grant Rev. Kimberly Knowle-Zeller a fourth year of parental on leave from call status.
- **EC19.05.03A4** It was MSC (David, Scott) to grant Rev. Dinah Dutta a second year of on leave from call status.
- **EC19.05.03A5** It was MSC (Susan, Scott) to grant Rev. Larry Block retirement status.
- Rev. Rebecca Boardman has resigned her call at Lutheran Campus Ministries in St. Louis to take a new call. It was noted that the LCM board in St. Louis is working with Don Romsa, head of LCM at Churchwide, to locate a new candidate. They are thinking they may have a new person in place by the end of the summer.

CONGREGATION CONSTITUTION

Holy Trinity Lutheran in St. Louis submitted changes to their constitution for approval. It was noted that there are still some issues with the changes they would like to make. The issues are primarily formatting, but they are not in a form that is consistent with the required ELCA Model Constitution.

- **EC19.05.03A6** It was MSC (David, Susan) to not approve this constitution until the necessary changes have been made.
- Chad agreed to write a letter to their congregation president encouraging them in the process and highlighting the changes that still need to be made. This letter will also invite them to participate more fully in the life of the synod by sending voting members to the Synod Assembly and contributing mission support.

AUDITORS' REPORT

Scott reported that our financial records are currently under review by our auditor, but the audit is not yet complete. It is usually completed before the Synod Assembly. There will be a special Executive Committee meeting on Friday, May 31 at 9:00am to review the completed audit.

GRANT APPLICATION APPROVAL

The Central States Synod has applied for a Congregational Vitality Grant from the Domestic Mission unit of the ELCA. This grant has been written by Donna Simon and needed approval from Synod Council.

- **EC19.05.03A7** It was MSC (David, Chelsea) to approve the grant application as written and apply for the grant. Further, the Central States will pay for our portion of the program by using funds that are restricted to congregational vitality, not out of the operations budget.

OTHER BUSINESS & UPDATES

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

At the Executive Committee meeting on January 19, 2018, there were changes proposed to the Mission Endowment Fund Committee's By-laws. These changes were primarily about a 2001 Gift Acceptance

Policy. This was again discussed at the October 2018 meeting of the Synod Council, and the Council adopted a new Gift Acceptance Policy for the Central States Synod (SC18.10.6A1). The Mission Endowment Committee would now like to make these changes part of their by-laws, replacing a continuing resolution from June 2001. There are two primary parts that were proposed to now read:

- *It is the general policy of the Synod Council that all undesignated gifts received will be designated to the Central States Mission Endowment Fund.*
 - *The Synod Council retains the discretionary authority to designate a portion or the entirety of a gift to other areas of need within the synod aside from the Central States Mission Endowment Fund.*
- **EC19.05.03A8 It was MSC (Scott, Chelsea) to accept the amended by-laws by the Mission Endowment Fund Committee as submitted.**

CAMP TOMAH SHINGA

Rev. Susan Candea offered an update on the changes at Camp Tomah Shinga. Over the last few months, a new governing board was recruited and has begun working. They have appointed Jacob Spilker as the Interim Executive Director. They have also allocated some funds to allow Jacob to hire a Program Director. They have a goal to get through the summer and then move to a more permanent Executive Director status.

BISHOP'S ELECTION PROCESS

Since the last Synod Council meeting, Bishop Gustafson has announced his retirement and that he will not be seeking another term as bishop. Because we now know with certainty that we will be having a bishop transition, it allows us to be a little more prepared. Dennis has been working in consultation with Churchwide and to create a Transitions Task Force. Verbal highlights of this discussion included:

- Potential Costs – From his experience, Scott offered an update on potential costs. In many cases we will not know the total costs of the transition until they happen. Here's what we do know:
 - Severance Pay – We will need to pay severance to some of the employees and this will likely be the largest cost of the transition.
 - Bishop Gustafson will not get a severance package because he is retiring.
 - Each of the staff members will get up to 3 months of severance pay.
 - Unused vacation – We will need to pay for any unused vacation.
 - Unused sabbatical time – In previous transitions, we've had to pay for unused sabbatical time, but that will not be an issue with the transition this time.
 - Moving expenses – We may have costs associated with moving and temporary living expenses, depending upon who the new bishop is.
 - Installation service – In 2013, the installation service costs were about \$8,000. This included travel costs for Bishop Eaton & others, supplies, musicians, etc. We can expect about the same (or more) this time around.
 - Celebration for Outgoing Bishop – In 2013, the celebrations for the outgoing bishop was about \$1,500.
 - Supplies & printing – In 2013, these costs ran about \$5,000.
 - Other items – Decisions will need to be made in conjunction with the new bishop & staff regarding vehicles, computers, etc.

- We currently have about \$50,000 set aside for this transition. It is hard to say if this will be enough. The largest question mark is the severance and we won't know those costs until they happen.
- The Executive Committee will need to have some additional meetings this summer, including within a week or two of the Synod Assembly with the new officers.
- Newly elected officers officially begin August 1, 2019.
- Transitions are awkward. Scott reminded us to be prepared for awkward discussions and moments.
- The new bishop will be installed on October 20, 2019. Bishop Eaton will be in attendance and doing the installation. Bishop Eaton's staff needs to know the agenda for the day by August 15, 2019.
- We will need to continue to discuss this at the Executive Committee meeting on May 31, 2019.
- Dennis plans to have a Transition Team recruited and in place by May 20, 2019.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Executive Committee will meet on Friday, May 31 at 9:00am via Zoom video conference call.
- The Synod Council will meet on Thursday, June 6 at 1:00pm, just before the Synod Assembly begins.
- The Synod Council and the Bishop's Election Team will meet on Thursday, June 6 at 2:30pm to go over final election details with ELCA Vice President Bill Horne.
- The Executive Committee will meet on Thursday, June 20, to welcome newly elected officers and talk about post-Assembly matters.

ADJOURNMENT

The Executive Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary