

Minutes from the
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING

June 9, 2022

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. David Frerichs, Rev. David Strommen, Rev. Janice Hawley, Chelsea Deines, Joanie Saltzman, Ben Bennight, Terrance Freeman, Mindy Tillberg

Absent: Dallas Rakestraw, Susan Boxberger

Also present: Nick Kiger (representative from Churchwide), Rev. Aimée Appell (Director of Evangelical Mission)

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 2:05pm, led us in prayer and did introductions.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Central States Synod wishes to acknowledge and honor the Kickapoo, Kaw, Osage and Sioux peoples upon whose ancestral homelands we gather for Assembly. The Central States Synod is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Kickapoo, Kaw, Osage, Kiowa, Comanche, Pawnee, Sioux and Kaskaskia peoples, and 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 care for this place - this land - and call it their home.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written treasurer's report that reflects our financial situation through the end of April 2022.

Income from congregations:

- \$370,752 received
- The amount received is \$16,748 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -4.5% variance
- The amount received is also \$12,812 less than received last year, a -3.5% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution:

- \$185,376 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$8,374 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -4.5% variance
- The amount contributed is \$6,406 less than last year, a -3.5% variance

Synod Expenditures:

- \$210,714 spent
- The amount spent is \$15,615 less than budgeted, an -7.4% variance
- This is also \$16,259 less than spent last year, a -7.7% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures:

- \$400,370 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$19,709 less than anticipated and \$8,735 less than last year
- \$396,090 in Total Expenditures, \$23,989 less than anticipated, and \$22,665 less than last year
- Net surplus of \$4,280 as compared to a \$9,649 deficit last year (disregarding the PPP loan forgiveness)

Analysis of Financial Status:

- The congregational support for March and April were below average. This has pushed our variance to the budget and to last year to 4.5% and 3.5 respectively. Obviously, that is not good news, but this is not the first time that we have experienced these types of variances. It is likely that we will see some better months ahead that will help to reduce the variances, but it is something to keep a close eye on.
- Synod expenditures are lower than budgeted due to lower the timing of some expenses being later than we typically see. Specifically, the grants that we provide for the seminaries and other ministries were not issued until May. As a result, our expenses are artificially lower than expected and they will normalize as we go through the next couple of months. Last year at this time we had spent over \$14,000 on grants for congregations to enhance their technologies. We have spent nothing on that this year and that has contributed to the variance with last year's expense amount.
- Our Total Support & Revenue amount is lower the expected due to the decreased support from our congregations as discussed above and in timing differences for the support amounts that we receive from Churchwide for Campus Ministry. This will normalize over the coming months. In addition, we have budgeted to release \$65,000 of temporarily restricted funds to support the budget. This would be \$16,250 per quarter. We haven't released those funds, yet and when we do that will improve this picture significantly.

Other discussion included:

- It was noted that we don't receive very many Statements of Intent from the congregations.
- With the exception of the year of 2020, we've had many years in a row of slow financial decline, and this year continues that trend.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the May 2022 Executive Committee meeting.

- **SC 22.06.09.A54** **It was MSC to approve these minutes as presented.**

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candea gave a verbal report. Highlights included:

- She attended the Nebraska Synod Assembly recently and will be serving as the mentor bishop for their newly elected bishop.
- She attended the Festival of Homiletics for some continuing education.
- She has been visiting various congregations around the synod.
- She gave us an update on Hillside Community in Spring Hill, KS.
 - They have taken 2 votes to disaffiliate from the ELCA, but because they still owe money to Churchwide their disaffiliation has not been finalized.
 - Conversations are continuing between them, Churchwide, and our synod to resolve this situation.

- Trinity Lutheran in Great Bend, KS has taken both votes to disaffiliate and their disaffiliation has been finalized.
- Bethany Lutheran in Webster Groves, MO is having problems. They have not worshipped together in two years and the pastor has not been leading the congregation. Bishop Candeia traveled to St. Louis to discuss the situation with them in person. The situation is not settled, but we will likely need to institute synod administration of this congregation within the next few months.
- Rev. Aimée Appell gave an update on the property that formerly belonged to Resurrection Lutheran in St. Louis.
 - There are several community activities happening in the building and work is moving forward with the non-profit organization called “Urban 21.” The alderman we were working with has resigned his position, but there are other community leaders we are in conversation with.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding has been reached with Urban 21 for them to use the building. Urban 21 is paying for insurance, utilities, and some other expenses. Central States Synod is providing the space.
 - The Eastern Conference of the synod is working to form a nonprofit organization to function as the caretakers and managers of the property to ensure that the building will continue to be used for mission.
- The bishop gave us an update on the situation in the Sierra Pacific Synod, the resignation of their bishop, and all the controversy surrounding those events.

ROSTER REPORT

- On Leave From Call
 - **SC 22.06.09.A55** **It was MSC to grant Rev. Elizabeth Kocher another year of On Leave From Call status, effective June 17, 2022.** This is her second year of OLFC status.
 - **SC 22.06.09.A56** **It was MSC to grant Rev. Brenda Ulrich On Leave From Call status, effective July 1, 2022.** This is her first year of OLFC status.
 - **SC 22.06.09.A57** **It was MSC to grant Rev. Melaku Tizazu On Leave From Call status, effective July 1, 2022.** This is his first year of OLFC status.
- Retirements
 - **SC 22.06.09.A58** **It was MSC to grant Rev. Jim Brandt retirement status, effective July 1, 2022.**
 - **SC 22.06.09.A59** **It was MSC to grant Rev. Noni Strand retirement status, effective August 1, 2022.**
- Specialized Ministry
 - Rev. Jealaine Marple has agreed to be the interim pastor at First Lutheran, Mission Hills, KS beginning June 1, 2022. According to the constitution (7.44.A19.b.1.5) an interim pastor can be considered to be the regularly called pastor if there is prior approval from the synod council (as permitted by *C9.07).
 - **SC 22.06.09.A60** **It was MSC to grant a synod council call to interim ministry to Rev. Jealaine Marple, effective June 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023, with the approval that she is eligible to be considered for the regular call.**

- **SC 22.06.09.A61** **It was MSC to grant a synod council call to Linda Conway to serve as a deacon in specialized ministry, serving as a chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Washington, MO, effective June 10, 2022.**

CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS

- **SC 22.06.09.A62** **It was MSC to approve the constitutional changes for Atonement Lutheran, Overland Park.**
- The updated constitution for St. James, Kansas City, still has many problems, so we decided not to approve it until they fix the errors. They are encouraged to resubmit it for approval at a later date.

CONVERSATION WITH NICK KIGER

Nick Kiger is the Director for Mission Support for the ELCA and is with us as the Churchwide representative. He asked us to think about mission support more as a relationship we have with one another, instead of just a financial transaction. He also encouraged us to hold each other accountable as a synod council.

ADJOURNMENT

We adjourned at 4:40pm and Chad led us in prayer.

FUTURE MEETINGS

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|-----------------------|-------------|--------|--------------------------|
| ● Executive Committee | July 6 | 3:00pm | via Zoom |
| ● Executive Committee | August 26 | 1:00pm | via Zoom |
| ● Synod Council | October 7-8 | TBD | in person in Kansas City |
| ● Executive Committee | January 13 | TBD | |

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Chad Langdon,
Central States Synod Secretary*