

CENTRAL STATES SYNOD COUNCIL
ADAM'S MARK HOTEL
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
JUNE 8, 2017

The meeting of the Central States Synod Council was called to order by Dennis Allerheiligen, Synod Vice-President, at 11:00 a.m. The meeting, which was held in the Monarch Room, preceded the annual Synod Assembly. Council members present included: Bishop Roger Gustafson, Dennis Allerheiligen, Loren Mai, Scott Schulte, Linda Lockhart, Jack King, David Strommen, Lorna Paulus, Doug Reed, Dan Friberg, Chad Langdon, Valorie Bratcher, Janis Hutchinson, Tom Nelson, Mindy Tillberg, Daniel Lilienkamp, and Jeanie Schuler. Present from the Synod staff were Susan Candea and Donna Simon. Also present was Stephen Phelps, Regional Gift Planner. Synod Council members absent were Jill Hayden, Lois Viebrock, and Austin Krug.

Vice-President Dennis Allerheiligen welcomed the members of the Council. A time of introductions followed. Dan Friberg led the Council in a time of "Dwelling in the Word," based on Matthew 28: 16-20 (the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday, the Holy Trinity). Council members reflected on the passage in small groups and later in plenary session. The devotional time concluded with a prayer by Dan Friberg.

SC17.6.6. OTHER BUSINESS – DONNA SIMON, SYNOD MISSION TABLE.

Pastor Donna Simon, Synod Director for Evangelical Mission, was introduced. She reminded the Council of the progression of mission congregations: Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities, congregations under development, and new congregations. At the present time, there are seven developing congregations on the territory of the Central States Synod; six of these are ethnic-specific congregations. In most cases, these developing congregations are led by pastoral leaders who are in a track leading toward ordination. Pastor Simon remarked that the Synod is in need of a Mission Table that would assist in identifying new mission starts; members of a Mission Table are being sought. It was also noted that some existing congregations are in need of redevelopment; in these cases, congregation vitality is explored.

Pastor Susan Candea, the other half of the Director for Evangelical Mission, spoke of the necessity of securing grants from ELCA Churchwide for assisting congregational development. Such grants are combined with Synodical and local support to advance development. Pastor Candea pointed out that Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities are required to be accountable for their mission strategies in order to receive funding. "The Table," a SAWC in Overland Park, is currently failing to be so accountable. It was further noted that two Synod congregations are in a re-development stage: Children's Memorial, Kansas City, MO; and St. Mark's Hope and Peace, Kansas City, MO. Area Ministries are encouraged to develop Mission Tables to seek out and assist congregations in re-development.

Pastors Candea and Simon were thanked for their report.

SC17.6.3A. SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Loren Mai, Secretary, presented the minutes of the May 12, 2017, meeting—via zoom/teleconference—of the Synod Executive Committee.

SC17.6.3A1. It was MSC to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2017, meeting of the Central States Synod Executive Committee.

SC17.6.3B. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Scott Schulte, Treasurer, gave an overview of the financial status of the Synod for the first three months of the Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2018. Referring to his printed summary, Scott reported that income from congregations through April 30 totaled \$413,892—which was \$13,608 less than what was anticipated in the revised spending budget, a variance of -3.3%; the amount received is \$36,502 less than was received in the same period of the previous year, a 8.8% decrease. A total of \$206,821 has been remitted to ELCA Churchwide--\$8,179 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget (a variance of -4.0%), and \$18,451 less than the amount contributed in the previous year (a -8.9% variance). Synod expenditures to date totaled \$228,241—which was \$1,961 less than the amount in the revised spending budget (a -0.9% variance), and \$14,320 less than the amount spent in the first three months of the previous year (a -6.3% variance). The amount of \$436,129 has been received in total support and revenue (\$9,073 less than anticipated, and \$35,494 less than the previous year). Expenditures have totaled \$435,062 (\$10,140 less than anticipated and \$32,771 less than last year). The current net surplus of \$1,066 compares to a net surplus of \$3,790 last year.

Scott commented on the trends, presenting a graph that compared the mission support received to date to that received through April in the previous year. Income in the first two months was encouraging, but income in April was the lowest monthly income in some time. Expenses are on track with the spending budget thus far, largely due to the spending reductions driven by staff changes implemented last year. The continued shortfall in mission support is cause for concern, but it was observed that May receipts to date have been encouraging.

Scott was thanked for his report and work as treasurer.

A break was taken at 12:00 Noon to secure box lunches. The meeting of the Synod Council continued through mealtime. Vice-President Dennis Allerheiligen requested that Council members serve as Communion assistants at the Assembly's evening worship service. He also spoke of his Assembly report that would be presented to the Assembly on Saturday morning.

SC17.6.3C. REPORT OF THE BISHOP.

Noting that his report was posted on the Synod web-site, Bishop Gustafson spoke of efforts to promote and recruit ministry teams, particularly in the St. Louis area, to assist in serving congregations and groupings of congregations. The accelerating retirements of clergy and the shortage of new candidates have combined to produce an historic shortage of professional leaders for interim and called positions.

SC17.6.5A. NEW BUSINESS – ESTATE GIFT AND SYNOD GIFT POLICY.

It was reported that the Central States Synod had received a bequest (undesignated) from the estate of William R. Betcker, a member of St. James, Kansas City, MO, in the amount of \$383,607.36. According to a continuing resolution adopted by the Central States Synod Council in June 2001, the first 10% of all undesignated bequests shall be placed with the earnings of the Central States Synod Mission Endowment Fund for distribution by the Endowment Committee.

The remaining principal from such gifts shall be placed in and under the management of the Central States Synod Mission Endowment Fund. There was discussion about the gift policy.

It was moved and seconded that the first 10% of the Betcker bequest be placed with the earnings of the Mission Endowment Fund to be available for distribution by the Central States Synod Mission Fund Committee, according to the distribution guidelines approved by the Synod Council; and that the remaining 90% of the funds be invested with Synod Mission Endowment Funds, while a Task Force appointed by the Synod Council determines whether or not the current policy on the disposal of undesignated gifts continues to serve the Synod well, and if not, recommends a change.

After action was taken to close debate on the motion, the motion was defeated.

SC17.6.5A1. It was MSC to establish a Task Force to review the Synod's gift acceptance policy to see if the current policy meets the needs of the Synod as we move into the future.

Scott Schulte and Daniel Friberg volunteered to serve on the Task Force; other members will be appointed in the near future.

SC17.6.5B. NEW BUSINESS – ROSTER OF MINISTERS REPORT.

Bishop Gustafson presented the Roster of Ministers report.

SC17.6.5B1. It was MSC to extend a call from the Synod Council to Odir Flores to serve as a Mission Developer under 7.44.A05.b.1.6—Congregational Ministry, Pastor in a congregation under development, effective June 9, 2017. Pastor Flores will be received onto the roster of the ELCA on June 9, 2017, at the Synod Assembly. He serves Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus, Garden City, KS; and Parroquia El Divino Nino, Dodge City, KS.

In other roster news, it was noted that Zach Sturm has resigned his call to Trinity, Kirkwood, MO, and has accepted the call to serve as Associate Pastor of Atonement, Overland Park, KS, effective July 1, 2017. Wayne Baldyga has accepted a call to serve at Seeds of Faith, Hoisington, KS, effective July 1, 2017. Rick Brenton, On Leave from Call, has transferred to the Rocky Mountain Synod.

It was reported that Trinity Lutheran Church, Abilene, KS, has taken a first vote to leave the ELCA. A required second vote is scheduled for July 9. As a congregation of the former Lutheran Church in America, Trinity will need permission from the Synod Council to terminate their relationship with the ELCA.

It was reported that Salem Lutheran Church, Axtell, KS, will take a first vote to leave the ELCA on June 4, 2017. Salem was also a congregation of the former Lutheran Church in America.

The meeting of the Synod Council was adjourned at 1:28 p.m., with Vice-President Dennis Allerheiligen offering a closing prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Loren D. Mai
Secretary, Central States Synod