

Minutes from the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
August 14, 2020
Via Zoom

Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Rev. Lorna Paulus, Terrance Freeman, and Dallas Rakestraw.

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. Bishop Candea led us in a devotion based on the Beatitudes and asking two questions: 1) What is the soul of the synod? And 2) Who are we in the center of everything and how are we shining the light of the gospel?

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the two Synod Council meetings in June 2020.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A1** **It was MSC (Scott, Lorna) to approve the minutes from the June 5-6, 2020 Synod Council meeting.**
- **SEC 20.08.14.A2** **It was MSC (Dallas, Scott) to approve the minutes from the June 13, 2020 Synod Council meeting.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written Treasurer's Report. Verbal highlights include:

- We have received \$29,762 more than what we received last year, a 3.9% variance.
- We currently have a net surplus of \$63,131 as compared to a \$17,569 surplus at this time last year.
- Not only is giving up (even despite the pandemic), but it has been remarkably consistent, which is also unusual. Both of these have been pleasant surprises.
- Our expenses have been lower due to measures that were taken back in April in anticipation of the pandemic and because we have been operating with a reduced staff.
- Because we are doing better financially, we have started to pay some of the grants & expenses that we had previously deferred.
- We discussed the Paycheck Protection Program and how that should give us further available funds in the coming months.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written report. Verbal highlights included:

- The office has reopened, but the staff is still doing a lot of work at home.
- She's feeling more comfortable engaging on social justice issues.
- Churchwide staff is being reduced by 20% as they restructure at the Churchwide level.
- She's been doing a lot of work on the PMA & SAM programs, especially as it relates to education and authority issues.
- For the rest of the year, all synod events & gatherings will be online.
- There are pockets & congregations that are really struggling with the pandemic. There are increasing levels of stress, anxiety, disagreements about masks, which is taxing on pastors, congregations, and the Bishop. It has really raised questions about authority and highlighted the limitations of the Bishop to help guide congregations.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Nancy presented a verbal report. She has been working with the Visioning Committee. They are trying to get some traction with the 4 core values that we identified during discussion in May. She has been engaging with the LEAD Initiative out of one of the Texas synods. This connection has caused her to explore and identify our strengths, and then to build on those strengths. She led the group in a discussion about our strengths, and the following things were offered as the strengths of the Central States Synod:

- Synod staff
- Lay leadership & representation on the synod council
- Conference alignment & reorganization
- Openness to change (history of being a good place for female pastors)
- We have a rich history...a lot of national church leaders have come through or come out of our synod.
- We have faced struggles, but those have allowed us to be an incubators for solutions.
- Our PMA program
- We have a lot of diversity as we stretch from St. Louis to Goodland, KS.
- Kansas has been at the forefront of a lot of good social changes, and the synod has not been afraid to engage these issues either.
- Our leadership
- Our diversity: urban/rural; Missouri/Kansas; our theology & how we live out the gospel welcomes and includes a lot of people

OLD BUSINESS

CONTINUING EDUCATION FUNDS POLICY

Scott presented a revised policy for how to handle continuing education funds for rostered ministers called by the Synod (primarily synod staff and campus pastors). There will need to be a separate form created to address the possible withholding of money from a final paycheck.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A3** **It was MSC (Lorna, Terrance) to approve this new addition to our Continuing Education Funds Policy.**

This policy will be added to Staff Handbook & the additional form created.

NEW LOCATION FOR SALEM LUTHERAN, LENEXA, KS

Salem has identified a new location for their worshipping community. They will now be leasing space from Central Baptist Theological Seminary at 6601 Monticello Rd., Shawnee, KS 66226.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A4** **It was MSC (Lorna, Scott) to approve this new location for Salem Lutheran in Lenexa, KS.**

AUTHORIZATION OF LAY PEOPLE TO PRESIDE AT COMMUNION

The Bishop presented some additions to the Parish Ministry Associate Handbook to clarify the authority and process for lay people to preside at Communion. This utilizes the designation of Synod Authorized Ministers and provides details about who is included and what their requirements are. We had a discussion about this topic. The Bishop will make some changes to the document and send out a revised copy to the Synod Council.

UPDATE ON ZION LUTHERAN, HUTCHINSON, KS

Bishop Candeia and Chad gave an update on their conversation with Zion Lutheran on July 6. It had come to the Bishop's attention that they were proceeding with lay people presiding at Communion despite not having authorization. The Bishop gave them several options for a path forward, including:

- finding supply pastors to preside at Communion, which the Bishop would help with
- worshipping without Communion
- worshipping at neighboring congregations or talking with local pastors
- disaffiliating from the ELCA

It was made clear to them that if they continue what they are doing, they will face discipline. We are now currently waiting to hear back from them to find out what path they want to go down.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL

We discussed the proposal to move the Synod Assembly to an every 2-year schedule and always hosting it in Kansas City. There was general consensus on this idea so we will now shift this conversation to the entire Synod Council. Bishop Candeia will consult with Churchwide about how this will effect terms of elected officers and other necessary things. She will have an update at the next Synod Council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE POLICES AND PROCEDURES

The Endowment Committee offers a debt reduction program to first call pastors by offering grants to help offset student loans. It was recommended to amend this program to also make these grants available to people new to the synod, not just first call pastors.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A5** It was MSC (Scott, Lorna) to approve this change to the policies & procedures of the Endowment Committee and allow debt reduction grants to also be made available to rostered leaders who are new to the synod.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Candeia presented a written roster report.

Rev. Emily McQuillan, who was ordained on November 3, 2019, has resigned her call from St. John Parish, Lancaster & Bendena, KS.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A6** It was MSC to grant Rev. Emily McQuillan a first year of On Leave From Call status, effective August 16, 2020.

Anne Chida, a deacon, resigned her call as a chaplain at Unity Hospice in St. Louis in June 2018, and has been on leave from call since June 21, 2018.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A7** It was MSC to grant Anne Chida a 3rd year of On Leave From Call status, effective Jun 21, 2020.

Rev. Jennifer Thomas ended her call to serve on LSTC staff as a development officer on July 31, 2020. She is open to serving as an interim pastor.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A8** It was MSC to grant Rev. Jennifer Thomas a Synod Council call to be the interim pastor (7.44.A19.b.1.5) at St. Matthew, Butler, MO and St. Paul, Nevada, MO, effective August 2, 2020 through December 31, 2021.

Rev. Ivan Gonzalez has been serving at Mision San Juan de Dios (Partner's Church) in Wichita. He has completed the candidacy process, is now officially rostered, and has been assigned to our synod.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A9** It was MSC to grant Ivan Gonzalez a call to serve as pastor and mission developer for Mision San Juan de Dios (Partner's Church), a synod authorized ministry (7.44.A19.b.1.6), effective August 15, 2020 through December 31, 2021.

KU CAMPUS MINISTRY

Bishop Candeia gave us an update on the KU Campus Ministry situation. Their Campus Ministry board is proposing hiring Joanne Hickey, a deacon, as the Interim Minister. There are a couple issues at play.

- She is not a rostered pastor, but she has been through approval as a deacon.
- There does not currently seem to be a plan for how will they pay her fulltime & offer benefits during this time.

There was a discussion about whether or not this fits with the intention of the synod funds that are set aside to support this campus ministry. The key question: are those funds from the synod specifically for a campus pastor? The Executive Committee was not in favor of the proposal by the Campus Ministry board, but they did come up with an alternate proposal they would like the Campus Ministry board to consider. The Executive Committee recommends that the synod funds from the budget be used primarily to call a part-time interim pastor (likely Rev. Peter Rehwaldt), and then any remaining funds be used to pay Joanne's salary. The interim pastor can serve as a supervisor for Joanne.

YEAR-END APPEAL

We had a short discussion about a possible year-end fundraising appeal. It was recommended that this is a good year to do a fundraiser because people may be looking to give and be a part of something life-giving. Dallas offered to coordinate an effort to do this year-end fundraising appeal.

CONSTITUTIONS

Cross of Glory Lutheran, Derby, KS has submitted their updated constitution for approval.

- **SEC 20.08.14.A10** **It was MSC (Dallas, Lorna) to approve their updated constitution with certain recommended changes.**

Walsburg Lutheran, Leonardville, KS has submitted their updated constitution for approval. They have not yet made the recommended corrections. The Executive Committee did not approve their updated constitution.

PANDEMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

We recognize the need to have conversations and make some official recommendations regarding the pandemic. Nancy will be calling a special Synod Council meeting within the next few weeks to discuss and approve some recommendations that can be passed along to the entire synod. Bishop Candeia will be putting something together based on an example from the Rocky Mountain Synod.

ADJOURNMENT

Lorna closed us in prayer and we adjourned at 4:40pm.

UPCOMING DATES

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|---------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Synod Council | TBD | To discuss pandemic recommendations |
| Synod Council | Friday-Saturday, | October 23-24 |

*Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary*