

Minutes for the  
**CENTRAL STATES SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**  
**on March 15-16, 2019**  
at Atonement Lutheran Church  
9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS

Present: Bishop Roger Gustafson, Dennis Allerheiligen (Synod Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Dan Lilienkamp, Mindy Tillberg, Linda Lockhart, Tom Nelson, Rev. David Strommen, Rev. Kristen Koch, Chelsea Deines, Susan Boxberger

Synod Staff Present: Rev. Susan Candea

Also Present: Stephen Phelps, Regional Gift Planner from Lutheran Planned Giving Partnership; Theo Keese, youth who will be nominated at synod assembly

Council Members absent: Rev. Lorna Paulus, Terrance Freeman, Grace Vannoy

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dennis called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and began with introductions. Dennis then led the council in a devotion.

**BISHOP'S ELECTION TASK FORCE, PART 1**

Dennis Allerheiligen gave the council an update on the Bishop's Election Task Force. He went over the ecclesiastical ballot process and what the council's role is at the upcoming Assembly. He offered the following highlights:

- Synod Council will be in charge of the election
- Bill Horne from ELCA Churchwide will be the representative to help us in this process.
- The process is outlined in greater detail in some documents from Churchwide that we will review again just before the assembly.
- Here is an estimated schedule of the voting:
  - 8:35pm Thursday, first ballot will be handed out
  - 8:15am Friday, first ballot results will be announced
  - 11:40am Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> vote (if necessary)
  - 1:10pm Friday, top 7 + ties are announced
  - 1:45pm speeches start
  - 2:35pm Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot vote (if necessary) – this will be an electronic vote
  - 3:30pm Top 3 answer questions
  - 5:45pm Friday 4<sup>th</sup> ballot vote (if necessary) – this will be an electronic vote
  - 8:21am Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> ballot vote between top 2 candidates – this will be an electronic vote
- **SC19.03.15A1 It was MSC (Kristin, David) to approve this ecclesiastical ballot process for the Bishop's Election as given to us by Churchwide.**

## **BISHOP'S REPORT**

Bishop Roger Gustafson presented a written report to the council. He presented the following verbal highlights:

- Trustworthy Servants of the People of God was recently presented to the Conference of Bishops. It is now available for public comment until Monday, March 18. Comments and feedback are to be given to the Bishop so that he can pass it along to the proper channels.
  - Trustworthy Servants is a replacement document for Vision and Expectations, and presents professional standards for all ELCA pastors and deacons.
  - About half the comments Bishop Gustafson has received have been critical of the process of creating this document, not necessarily of the content itself.
  - Other comments that he has received have been positive and thankful that we have professional standards for our rostered leaders.
- The Bishop recently had to reschedule a time of listening at Bethany Lutheran in Lindsborg due to weather. He has been working closely with this congregation and remarked that it is going to take a long time to heal after the recent pastoral misconduct in that congregation.

Bishop Gustafson left the meeting at 6:45pm to attend a prayer service at a local mosque in response to the shooting at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand.

## **STATE OF THE SYNOD**

Written reports were received from:

- Lutheran Planned Giving Partnership by Stephen Phelps
- Candidacy Committee
- Hollis Renewal Center by Dave Mareske
- Companion Synod Team by Rev. Gary Teske
- Lutheran Campus Ministries at KU by Rev. Shawn Norris
- Central States Synod Women of the ELCA

Rev. Susan Canda gave some verbal highlights in addition to the written reports that the council received. These highlights included:

- K-State Campus Ministry recently sold their property to a foundation and bought 2 new properties. These new properties are currently being renovating and they need to raise about \$90,000 to fully fund this effort.
- St. Louis Campus Ministry's written report came a little late, but things seem to be going well there. The question was raised regarding why campus ministry has not been included in the synod assembly offering the past couple of years.
- The Companion Synod Team is looking to do a major visit to Papua New Guinea. They are trying to raise \$20,000 to help fund this trip and to bring some counselors from Papua New Guinea to work at Camp Tomah Shinga for the summer. This team also wants to raise \$5,000 for our companion synod in Russia.
- Hollis Renewal Center recently received some grants and is looking for additional ministry partners.

- Camp Tomah Shinga is going through some major transitions right now. Executive Director Ben Fulton resigned on good terms at the beginning of the year and wrapped up his ministry in mid-February. Following his resignation, almost all of the board has resigned and it is not functioning right now. The Synod staff is stepping in to help find new board members and help with this transition. Tom Nelson volunteered to help out.
- The Candidacy Report said that there are 21 people from the Central States Synod in various stages of the candidacy process. Important notes include:
  - Andrew Beers and Elizabeth Carr were approved for Entrance.
  - Rev. Dean Apel was approved for reinstatement to the ELCA roster for Word and Sacrament.
  - Mathew Berger, Samantha Nichols and Melissa Woeppel were Approved for Ordination of Word and Sacrament.
  - Melissa Woeppel was assigned to the Central States Synod.
- The Parish Ministry Associate program seems to be growing. There are now 30 people who are either taking classes or indicated that they are interested in taking classes. There are currently over 50 active PMAs in the Central States Synod.
- There continue to be intentional conversations among conferences around issues regarding Pastoral Transitions:
  - The Eastern Conference has been focusing on transitions and received a grant in this area. They have used that grant money to focus on anti-racism efforts, form a prayer team, create an education academy, and hire a part time communications person.
  - Wichita area churches are having conversations with Rev. Donna Simon regarding transitions as well. Recent changes to many of the clergy (retirements, moving, deaths) have led to a shortage of pastors in this area and they are trying to come up with creative ways to find pastoral coverage for the churches in the area.
  - We don't have enough Interim Pastors which is why we need to have these conversations and create new models for pastoral transition ministry.
- The Synod Council had a conversation about phone calls that members were asked to make. Council members shared the reactions they received from these conversations and from a survey that went out to the Synod. They learned:
  - Congregations are fearful about the future.
  - Congregations are frustrated with starting new forms of ministry without supporting the old ones.
  - We need to be mindful of full communion partners who are also struggling.
  - The surveys expressed hope, but people are probably more anxious than anything.
- The Lutheran Church of Hope from West Des Moines, IA has started a satellite site in the Kansas City area. This ministry was approved as a Synod Authorized Worshipping Committee by the Executive Committee in January 2019. Susan worshipped with them on a Sunday morning.

## **BISHOP'S ELECTION TASK FORCE, PART 2**

Dennis Allerheiligen gave the council some additional instructions for their role at the Synod Assembly. He mentioned that the council will need to be prepared to make several phone calls after the first ballot and will be given a script for this. The Ministry Site Profile for the Synod will soon be on the website, so the council went through the current draft. Conversation, suggestions & additions included:

- Updating and correcting the ethnic-specific ministries that we have
- Mentioning the office partnership with the Episcopalian Diocese
- Highlighting that we have good relationships with 2 seminaries & 2 companion synods
- Removing "sanctuary synod" from the goals section

The Ministry Site Profile draft was updated with this input from the council.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Chad presented the minutes from the January 2019 Executive Committee meeting.

- **SC19.03.15A2 It was MSC (Mindy, Tom) to approve these minutes.**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

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

- We received \$61,120 less than we did a year ago. This was a larger drop than we anticipated.
- FY 2018 ended with a net deficit of \$8,050.
- The 2019 Budgets were explained, including the revisions to previous versions regarding:
  - Synod Staff benefits
  - Travel
  - Rent

*The meeting was adjourned for the evening at 8:45pm, Friday, March 15, 2019 with the Lord's Prayer. The meeting was called back to order at 8:30am, Saturday March 16, 2019 by Dennis. He led us in a devotion about being an agile church.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ROSTER REPORT**

A written roster report was submitted.

- **SC19.03.16A3 It was MSC to issue a call to Rev. Laura Smith to chaplaincy and institutional ministry at St. Francis Ministries: Salina West.**

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY UPDATE**

- Offering Designation - It was recommended by the Synod Assembly Planning Team to divide the Synod Assembly Offerings equally between 3 ministries: ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission, PMA scholarships, and the Pantry Pack Program at Salem Lutheran in Lenexa.

- **SC19.03.16A4 It was MSC (Mindy, Linda) to divide the Synod Assembly Offering equally between the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission; PMA scholarships, the Pantry Pack Program at Salem Lutheran in Lenexa.**
- Voting Member Waivers – Nine congregations requested voting member waivers. All of them want to send 2 women & no men. These congregations are: Zion in Ferguson; Emmanuel in Stuttgart; Zion in Phillipsburg; Walsburg in Leonardville; Peace in Joplin; St. Mark's in Atchison; Emmanuel in Hoisington; First Lutheran in Dorrance; Faith in Oberlin.
  - **SC19.03.16A5 It was MSC (Mindy, Kristin) to grant waivers to these nine congregations.**
- Compensation Guidelines – A new draft of the compensation guidelines is not yet complete. The committee wants to make sure that the guidelines are used as a tool for conversation. The committee is wrestling with 2 primary issues:
  - What healthcare options do they want to recommend and include?
  - Is there a way to create a chart/worksheet that takes into account cost-of-living differences from around the Synod? They are looking at examples from other synods to help solve this problem.
- Nominating Committee – This committee continues to do their work. All four officers will be up for election at this year's assembly. Positions will be open on the Synod Council for an at large lay male, an at large female POC, a deacon, and a youth. There will also be openings on the Consultation Committee and the Discipline Committee.
- Display Tables – Six applications for display tables at the Synod Assembly were presented. They included:
  - St. Francis Ministries, Salina
    - **SC19.03.15A6 It was MSC (Tom, Kristin) to approve this table.**
  - Faith Inkubators
    - **SC 19.03.16A7 It was MSC (Linda, Mindy) to approve this table.**
  - Bethlehem Christian Family (olive wood crafts), Arlington, TX
  - Jeff Woodrow Designs (stoles, paraments), St. Louis
  - New Angle Technologies (Prayer Apps)
  - Guiding Outreach (websites)
    - **SC 19.03.16A8 It was MSC (Chad, Mindy) to approve tables for these four remaining organizations.**
  - It was suggested that in the future that we require a higher registration fee for for-profit companies.

#### **MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP WITH KANSAS INTERFAITH ACTION**

Rabbi Moti Reiber joined our meeting to present about Kansas Interfaith Action, which is an advocacy organization in Kansas. They focus on advocating against racism/discrimination, economic injustice, violence, and human-caused climate disruption. The question we are being asked: Would we be open to becoming an official ministry partner with Kansas Interfaith Action? The council had a conversation with

Rabbi Moti Reiber and he answered all of their questions and concerns. It was mentioned that we should eventually look at finding a similar partnership in Missouri.

- **SC 19.03.16.A9 It was MSC (Chad, Mindy) to approve becoming an official ministry partner with Kansas Interfaith Action and endorse Kansas Interfaith Action to engage in advocacy as a state public policy office on behalf of the Central States Synod.**

### **CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS**

The following congregations have submitted changes to their constitutions for Synod Council approval: Assaria Lutheran, Andover Lutheran, Kent Memorial Lutheran, and Our Savior's (Topeka) Lutheran. The Constitution Review team recommended approving Kent Memorial's constitution as presented, and approving each of the other 3 with some small changes.

- **SC 19.03.16A10 It was MSC (Mindy, David) to approve these four congregation constitutions, with the request to make the few small changes recommended by the Review Team.**

### **2020 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Scott presented a proposed budget for 2020. He talked about the clean slate process that Budget Team went through to create this budget. The process started by identifying those things that are constitutionally mandated and/or considered fixed costs (i.e. Bishop's salary, Synod Council cost, rent & depreciation). At their January 2019 meeting, the Executive Committee then discerned five priorities that summarize the work and mission of the Synod's ministry, and they weighted the importance of those priorities. The Budget Team then took the line items from the previous budget and tried to allocate those expenses among the five priorities, distributing staff salaries and operations costs among all five priorities. This draft 2020 Budget was presented to the Synod Council for discussion and approval.

The five priorities were indicated as follows:

- 1) Provide, maintain, grow congregational leadership (45%)
- 2) Nurture mission through congregations (20%)
- 3) Pastoral care & oversight for rostered leaders (15%)
- 4) Interpreting the work of the church (10%)
- 5) Strengthening relationships (10%)

Based on projected income and these priorities, the following decisions were discussed and made:

- Wartburg, LSTC & Bethany College would all receive \$10,000.
- Camp Tomah Shinga would also receive \$10,000.
- Conference Deans would each be compensated \$500 for the important work that they do. This is a new line item that totals \$5,000.
- The Synod Staff will receive a 1% raise.
- The Synod will provide health insurance through Portico at a Gold Level for all employees. For 2020, the staff will be asked to contribute one half of the expenses for any dependents listed on their health insurance. (The Synod's half of this expense will be paid out of a Lutheran Social Service refund.) This is seen as a transition year for health insurance expenses and beginning in

2021, the policy will likely be that any staff will be responsible for the entire cost of health insurance for any dependents.

- \$10,000 will continue to be set aside and saved for any future bishop's transition.

The council recognizes that this is a new kind of budgeting process and two questions do remain:

- 1) Are these the correct priorities for our Synod?
- 2) Are they weighted correctly?

The answer to these questions will need to be discussed before the next budgeting cycle and it may cause changes to the priorities and weighted percentages for next year.

- **SC 19.03.16A11 It was MSC (Scott, Mindy) to approve recommending this 2020 Budget totaling \$1,706,951 to the 2019 Synod Assembly for final approval.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- **SC 10.03.16.A11 It was MSC (Mindy, David) to adjourn the meeting.**
- The Synod Council meeting was adjourned at noon on March 16, 2019 and prayed together the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rev. Chad Langdon*

*Central States Synod Secretary*

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- The Executive Committee will next meet on Friday, May 3, 2019.
- The Synod Council will next meet on Thursday, June 6, 2019 at 1:00pm.