

South Dakota Synod, ELCA  
Synod Council  
Haugo Room, Augustana University  
Sioux Falls, SD  
October 6, 2017

Members present: Vice President Carla Borchardt, Bishop David Zellmer, Treasurer Erik Gilbertson, Doug Olawsky, Charles Engelstad, Rev. Shelly Gehring, Rev. Jackie Braun, Jan Haugen-Rogers, Tim Olson, Rev. Greg Myrmoe, Robert Nelson, Joyce Vasgaard, Kent Baumberger, Rev. Ryan Gage, Deacon Kris Wollman, Rev. Lon Kvanli, Jon Schmitz, Cynthia Wall, Jody Johnson, Rev. David Piper, Dennis Thompson

Staff Present: Lois Borchardt, Deacon Suzanne Hansen, Jake Hanson, Deacon Susan Marone, Kathy McHenry, Rev. Karen Ressel, Sawyer Vanden Heuvel

Guests Present: Reid Christopherson (ELCA Church Council)

Vice President Carla Borchardt called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Deacon Kris Wollman opened with a devotion.

A roll call sign-in sheet was passed and introductions of the Synod Council, staff, and guests were made.

**MSC to approve the agenda.**

**SC.17.10.01**

**MSC to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2017 meeting.**

**SC.17.10.02**

The Council reviewed the Synod Vision and Core Values statements

The Council discussed designation of the offering to be received at the Reformation 500 worship service on November 1. Bishop Zellmer related that synods in hurricane-affected areas are requesting financial assistance.

**MSC to use offering funds received at the Reformation 500 worship service to pay final expenses associated with the event, not to exceed \$2000, with the balance of the offering designated to the Caribbean Synod, ELCA.**

**SC.17.10.03**

**MSC to include with the offering to the Caribbean Synod the balance of any funds raised for the Reformation 500 event after all expenses are paid.**

**SC.17.10.04**

Bishop's Report:

- a. Bishop Zellmer reported on the recent Conference of Bishops meeting, and the ELCA Fund for Leaders event he attended. He noted that the Buntrock family has given \$3 million cash to fund new full-ride seminary scholarships for ELCA candidates. Shadoe Hansen from Mt. Vernon, SD is one of this year's recipient.
- b. The Synod received two rostered ministry candidates in the assignment process: Patrick Jenkins (Word & Sacrament) and Laurel Vogel (Word & Service).
- c. Phil Harris, ELCA General Counsel will be retiring at end of January 2018. Beth Lewis is retiring as Augsburg Fortress Publishing CEO and a new CEO is being lifted up from within the organization.
- d. There will be eight synod bishop elections in 2018 (four open seats), and 25 synod bishop elections in 2019 (15 open seats). Bishop Zellmer has volunteered to assist with synod bishop elections in other synods due to the lack of Churchwide staff available for that many simultaneous elections.
- e. Bishop Zellmer explained that five synods have been participating in an experimental mission support program, retaining locally some of the mission support dollars that would ordinarily have gone to Churchwide. All five synods have seen improvement in mission development, redevelopment, and mission support, and Churchwide is considering adding two more synods to join the two-year experiment, pending Church Council approval.

**MSC to authorize Bishop Zellmer to apply for this experiment, and if approved by the Church Council, for the Synod to remain in the program contingent upon our participation not creating a net deficit to the Synod's budget.**

**SC.17.10.05**

- f. Seven people are participating in the Synod seminary debt refinancing program. This program is unique within the church, and South Dakota is gaining a good reputation among seminarians. \$184,000 is currently being utilized for seminary debt reduction grants.

Report of Associate to the Bishop Susan Marone:

- a. Deacon Marone thanked the Council for her recent sabbatical and illustrated her experience with a presentation.
- b. Forty-three individuals are currently in the candidacy process, with 26 in the Kairos Project. There are currently ten parishes participating in Kairos.
- c. Deacon Marone related Fall Theological Conference presenter Rolf Jacobson's comment: "North Dakota and South Dakota do the best job of candidacy in the ELCA." She encouraged the Council to thank their conference Candidacy Committee members for their work. Synod seminary debt reduction and refinancing programs are attracting seminarians from outside the region.
- d. An EQ workshop is scheduled for January 8-12, 2018 at Joy Ranch.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Erik Gilbertson presented the financial report. He noted that the Synod is typically utilizing operating reserves at this point in the year, but current mission support has been able to cover

expenses. He remarked that this is likely due to checks coming in earlier than usual. Gilbertson also noted that the Executive Committee reallocated funds within the Appeal categories at their October 5 meeting.

**MSC to receive the financial report.**

**SC.17.10.06**

Staff and Guest Reports:

Reid Christopherson gave a brief report outlining his work on the Church Council. When asked what it was like to be on Church Council he replied: "It's interesting..."

Jake Hanson, Synod Seminary Resource Recruiter presented an overview of his work with seminary recruiters and congregational leaders. He stated that his goal is to attend each conference pastor's meeting and visit all of our campus ministries before the end of the year, as well as visiting as many congregations as possible.

Deacon Suzanne Hansen, Synod Youth and Family Coordinator gave a report of her meetings with youth and youth leaders at the Pie & Coffee with the Bishop events. She will be attending the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in Houston, TX, November 2-5, 2017.

Written reports from Pastor Bob Hansen, Interim Associate to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission, and Pastor Charlie Bunk, Companion Synod Coordinator, were reviewed

2019 Churchwide Assembly:

Allocation of Voting Members for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee, WI, August 5-10, 2019, was discussed. Bishop Zellmer highlighted the importance of congregations submitting their annual reports, since membership numbers impact the number of voting members allocated to the Synod.

**MSC to allocate the 23 South Dakota Synod Voting Members to 2019 Churchwide Assembly:**

**Northern Plains Conference: 1 Lay Female, 1 Lay Male, 1 Clergy**

**Bear Butte Conference: 1 Lay Female, 1 Lay Male, 1 Clergy**

**Crossroads Conference: 1 Lay Female, 1 Lay Male, 2 Clergy**

**Medary Conference: 1 Lay Male, 1 Clergy**

**Prairie Coteau Conference: 1 Lay Female, 1 Clergy**

**Prairie Rivers Conference: 1 Lay Male, 1 Clergy**

**Southeastern Conference: 1 Lay Female, 1 Clergy**

**Synod Council: 1 Youth, 1 Person of Color/First Language Other than English, 3 Synod Officers**

**SC.17.10.07**

Roster Matters:

Council was informed that the Rev. Obed Nelson (retired) has been transferred to the St. Paul Area Synod.

**MSC to grant the Rev. Paul Bly Disability Status effective 10/18/2017.**

**SC.17.10.08**

**MSC upon recommendation of Bishop Zellmer to remove the Rev. Jim Florence from the Retired Roster for non-compliance with *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.**

**SC.17.10.09**

Congregational Matters:

**MSC to approve the constitutions of First Lutheran, Mitchell and St. Paul Lutheran, Humboldt.**

**SC.17.10.10**

Old Business:

Vice President Borchardt opened discussion on SD Synod Bylaw S8.51 regarding term limits for synod officers. The Council focused on term limits for bishop. The ELCA conducted a survey in 2014 regarding bishop term limits. No synods had a one term limit, 17 synods had a two term limit, three synods had a three term limit, and 46 synods had no term limit. Discussion with other vice presidents indicated that the office of bishop is a calling which should not be limited. A discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of term limits for bishop.

**MSC to recommend to the 2018 SD Synod assembly that SD Synod Bylaw S8.51.10 be repealed.**

**SC.17.10.11**

Sawyer Vanden Heuvel distributed congregational visit packets and gave brief instructions to Council members regarding these visits.

Vice President Borchardt informed the Council that Emily Mueller, Prairie Coteau Conference, has resigned from the Synod Council. The Prairie Coteau Conference is to nominate a candidate to fulfill Mueller's unexpired term.

Support to Ministries Committee:

**MSC to appoint Candy Anderson to the Support to Ministries Committee to fill the unexpired term of Donna Jensen.**

**SC.17.10.12**

Executive Committee:

Vice President Borchardt informed the Council that the Executive Committee has authorized the disbursement of funds from the *Listen! God is Calling!* Appeal. Pastors Chris Baesler, Heidi Binstock, Dan and Laura Overbo, and Becky Piper have been selected to attend the Senior Pastor Academy at Gettysburg.

The Synod Personnel Policies are in the process of being discussed and revised. The Executive Committee serves as the Personnel Committee.

Financial Authority of Synod Council:

Vice President Borchardt presented the results of her informal survey of synod vice presidents regarding limitations (if any) that other synods have placed on their council's financial authority. It was the sense of the Council that no modifications to the Synod's bylaws were required at this time.

Report of Pastor Karen Ressel, Pine Ridge Retreat Center:

Pastor Ressel invited the Council to come and visit and see the changes that have taken place. Pricing structure for visiting groups has been modified, and expectations for groups and programming have been clarified. Three men and three women are participating in the Lutheran/Lakota Job Corps, and a new video regarding the Job Corps has been posted online. Pastor Ressel has entered the process for applying for a \$150,000 grant to cover operating expenses at the Retreat Center for one year. A dance group of two boys and eight girls performed at several events this summer and has been visiting the local nursing home routinely.

New Business:

Vice President Borchardt reviewed the bishop election process and the ecclesiastical ballot procedure. A synod study must be presented to the synod council by October 2018. Borchardt suggested three committees be formed: Synod Study Committee, Election Process Committee, Bishop Installation Committee.

**MSC to form a Synod Study Task Force for the 2019 Bishop Election to be comprised of Rev. Jackie Braun and Dennis Thompson, Co-Chairs, and five additional members to be appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the co-chairs.**

**SC.17.10.13**

Board Orientation, Development, and Education was deferred until the next meeting.

Bishop Zellmer invited members of the Council to the first Interfaith Day at the Capitol which will be January 10, 2018.

Pastor Jackie Braun updated the Council on the plans for the Reformation 500 worship service on November 1.

Future meetings:

Executive Committee: Tuesday, February 13, 2018, 3:00 pm, SD Synod Office

Executive Committee: Thursday, March 8, 2018, 6:30 pm; Jan Haugen-Rogers, devotions

Synod Council: Friday, March 9, 2018, 8:30 am

Synod Assembly:

Friday, June 1 – Saturday, June 2, 2018, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls

Synod Council: following the close of assembly Saturday, June 2, 2018

Executive Committee: Thursday, August 16, 2018, 3:30 pm, NeSoDak

Synod Council Retreat: Thursday, August 16, 2018, 6:30 pm & Friday, August 17, 2018, NeSoDak  
Executive Committee: Thursday, October 4, 2018, 6:30 pm  
Synod Council: Friday, October 5, 2018, 8:30 am

Closing prayer.

Adjourned at 4:06 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Gage".

The Rev. Ryan Gage  
Secretary Pro-tem