

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council
Zoom Meeting
August 14, 2020**

Present: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, Carla Borchardt, Rev Jonathan Vehar, Bonnie Lange, Pam Seefeldt, Stan Jung, Rhonda Hansen, Terry Zell, Rev. Dave Lund, Deacon Kris Wollman, Erik Gilbertson, Malcom Chapman, James Iverson, Rev. Shelly Gehring, Valarie Parsley, Rev. Ramona Hayes, Dave Poppens, Rev. Jim Fowler, Rev. Layne Nelson, Tom Stotz, Jan Haugen-Rogers, Rev. Tera Kossow

Staff: Lois Borchardt, Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Rev. Jonathan Steiner, Kathy McHenry, Rev. Dan Johnson, Sawyer Vanden Heuvel

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

Sawyer Vanden Heuvel, SD Synod Director of Communications, gave an overview of the Zoom platform and best practices for the meeting.

Bishop Hagmaier led in an opening prayer and devotion.

Rollcall and introductions were made with members sharing wisdom learned from our parents.

Adoption of the Agenda

**MSC to adopt the agenda with changes.
SC.2020.08.01**

Appointment of New Members

**MSC to appoint Terry Zell to fill the unexpired term for the Praire Rivers Conference effective immediately, and Rev. Jackie Braun to fill the clergy position from the Medary Conference, effective September 1, 2020.
SC.2020.08.02**

New members of synod council were seated.

Adoption of the Minutes

There was one addition of a member present and changes to the Bishop's Report.

**MSC to adopt the minutes of the Synod Council for June 5, 2020, as amended.
SC.2020.08.03**

Treasurer's Report

Gilbertson gave an overview of how to read the synod's financial reports. There are sample documents in Google Drive with links that explain the different parts of the report. The Endowment Reports are a part of the synod's finances, but mostly represent designated and restricted gifts. A separate Endowment Committee helps to manage those accounts. Gilbertson responded to a member's question regarding the annual distribution. He stated that the annual

distribution from the Endowment is around 4%, but the committee makes a recommendation each year after considering market conditions.

Gilbertson stated the current financial position of the synod is positive. Mission support is at historical levels from congregations. That was not the case earlier in the year, as at one point, Mission Support was down 45% from the previous year. Year-to-date, the operating reserve for the year is higher than the last year. Mission Support from congregations has been restored to budgeted levels by the start of the third quarter.

**MSC to receive the Treasurer's Report.
SC.2020.08.04**

The council took a short recess.

Bishop Report's

Early on in COVID-19 the synod staff decided to stop in-person visits. Visits to congregations occurred through Zoom and phone meetings. The synod staff will now be available to meet in person with congregations. When synod staff visit, it is expected that masks will be worn, social distancing is maintained, and that refreshments not be shared.

Bishop Hagmaier reflected that COVID-19 is revealing underlying conflict in congregations. While decisions over in-person worship are contentious, what is more important is how congregation members, leaders, and rostered leaders work together for the well-being of the ministry.

COVID-19 is also exposing the stress in the lives of rostered leaders. Leaders under stress are more susceptible to bad boundaries and misconduct. The Bishop's office has been working through several issues of pastoral misconduct. The mental and spiritual health of our leaders is important to address, especially during these times.

An interfaith prayer service was held in July, occurring simultaneously at three locations across South Dakota and was also live-streamed. It is great to find places of connection with interfaith partners and to help bring a sense of peace and unity.

A Memo of Understand with the Episcopal Church and Presbyterian Church for ministry on the Pine Ridge Reservation is being worked on.

There was a 5-year goal to offer online opportunities for confirmation and other education. The hope was to aid rural congregations with only a few confirmation students who might be widely spread apart. Given the current need for online learning the work on this goal has been kickstarted and will launch this fall with online confirmation.

While the South Dakota Synod made the decision to cancel the Synod Assembly, there are other synods that are proceeding with electronic meetings of the Synod Assembly, most of whom have bishop elections.

November 7 has been designated as “Synod Day”. This celebration (live-streamed), will be a time to give thanks for the anniversary milestones, 50 years since the ordination of women, 40 years since the ordination of the first woman of color, and ten years since policy change that allowed for the rostering of persons in same-sex relationships. We will also take the opportunity to officially install the Associates to the Bishop that did not happen at the Synod Assembly.

The Bishop recognized the life and service of the Rev. August Borchardt, father of Carla and Lois, who died in late July and was laid to rest on August 3.

Associate Reports – Rev. Renee Splichal Larson

Candidacy – a number of new members have been elected to the Candidacy Committee. With the number of candidates for rostered ministry, they will have two upcoming meetings on October 22 and November 13. There are between 40-50 candidates for rostered ministry. This is a blessing for the synod.

Small groups of rostered leaders are gathering over Zoom, either as mentor groups, First Call pastors, and Synod Authorized Ministers. These have been important gatherings for continuing education, peer-ministering, Bible study, and mutual support.

Congregations are finding creative ways to engage in the call process for rostered leaders. As the pandemic has continued, pastors’ mobility has started to increase, and congregations needing to call pastors. Splichal Larson has made lots of visits with congregations over Zoom.

Faith Formation Taskforce- a task force is being formed to be creative in meeting the needs of faith formation and support families teaching in the home. An online confirmation program is under development and will soon start an online Sunday School that focuses on home-learning. While driven partly by necessity because of COVID-19, it fits a historical understanding of parents taking responsibility for passing the faith to children.

The process for establishing, reviewing, and supporting Synod Authorized Ministers is underway. This involves new covenant paperwork and a review process. Synod Authorized Ministers are lay people who serve in congregations in preaching and sacramental ministry.

Select Learning is a lay education school that gives seminary-level education to lay people to benefit their local congregations.

Parish Agreements – A Parish Agreement is a formal covenant between congregations to share ministry. There are many ways that congregations may choose to share in ministry, but most often, this means the sharing of a pastor. The synod office is working to help parishes define the partnerships and assist congregations looking to form a partnership agreement.

An optional provision in the Model Constitution for Congregations provides for meetings of the congregation to be held electronically. The synod is preparing a resource for congregations to adopt C10.08. and allow for electronic meetings. An in-person meeting is still needed to adopt this provision.

Rev. Jonathan Steiner

Woyatan Retreat Center

The leadership of Woyatan Lutheran has renamed the retreat center at the Woyatan Indian Center. With the name change comes more focus on connecting with ministry partners in Rapid City. There is still the possibility of a retreat-style ministry, but at the moment, given the pandemic, it is not possible. There is still about \$60,000 needed to finish the building, not including equipment or furnishings.

Steiner has worked to secure several grants from the ELCA COVID-19 Relief Funds \$20,000 from COVID Relief, \$30,000 from ELCA Disaster Response. The Executive Committee has been approving applications from South Dakota ministries for those funds.

The Churchwide Organization of the ELCA is entering another process of restructuring to become effective in 2021. The restructuring is in response to reduced Mission Support that is necessitating more focused ministry at the churchwide level. The Future Directions 2025 will organize around five themes, A Thriving Church, An Equipping Church, a Welcoming Church, a Visible Church, a Well-governed, connected, and sustainable Church. A 20% reduction in staff, with more leadership falling to synods will be a part of the reorganization.

There are several online opportunities coming to support congregations: Cultivating Generous Congregations is one example of a churchwide resource to help develop greater stewardship ministry in churches.

Discipleship focus with developing skills for individual members and families.

Coach Launch is training leaders in the skills of Coaching to help support each other.

Steiner is working on developing a listing of endorsed stewardship programs. He gets regular calls from companies, consultants, and stewardship ministries, and instead of selecting one for use across the synod, he will do some legwork to lift up potential programs for congregations to evaluate which one will fit their context.

There is a lot of energy for sharing faith in a digital way, from worship, education, professional development, meetings, giving, and should be a tool for evangelism in the church as well.

Staff Reports

Companion Synod Coordinator

The position is yet to be filled.

Seminary Resource Recruiter

Jake Hansen has resigned as the Seminary Resource Recruiter. The Bishop is evaluating the position goals and a staffing model for the future. The salary is paid through designated gifts from the Listen! God is Calling Appeal.

Youth Gathering Coordinator

Kelsey Lyndoe is the Coordinator for the SD Synod. The Youth Gathering has been postponed until the summer of 2022. Kelsey has been leading Zoom meetings for youth leaders to keep working on Youth Gathering planning and developing youth ministry skills.

Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center

Rev. Dan Johnson is getting settled in. The food ministry is continuing and is now delivering food to children in the neighborhood.

There has been a request for an upgraded security system for the center and church next door. The Executive Committee acted on that request.

Pastor Johnson also requested that a pay increase be considered for members of the Job Corp who haven't received a raise since starting. The Executive Committee will address that request.

Report from the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has been busy meeting throughout the summer to keep a close eye on the synod's financial statements. In addition, the Executive Committee adopted a Memorial Gifts policy to recognize the ministry of former synod staff and rostered leaders, approved grants from COVID-19 Relief and Disaster Relief, approved applications for scholarship applications from the Listen! God is Calling Appeal, and approved an upgraded security system for the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center.

Audit Committee

The Synod Council position on the Audit Committee is open.

Rev. Hayes volunteered for the position and has a background in bookkeeping.

MSC to elect the Rev. Ramona Hayes to the Audit Committee.

SC.2020.08.05

Synod Assembly Offering

Bishop Hagmaier recommended that the offering for the Synod Assembly be designated to Neighbors in Solidarity as essential expressions of the joint work we do as the community of Lutherans in South Dakota.

MSC to designate the offering of the 2021 Synod Assembly to Neighbors in Solidarity.

SC.2020.08.06

Recessed for Lunch

Breakout Groups

Upon the returning from lunch, council members rotated through four breakout groups and gained a greater understanding of the responsibilities of the Synod Council as the stewards of the Roster of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service; Partner Ministries; the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continue Resolutions of the synod and congregations; how members of the Synod Council function together and the expectation of confidentiality.

Roster Matters

Bishop Hagmaier informed the Synod Council of rostered leaders who are transferring to the synod, Rev. Agapito Aviles, Rev. Dan Johnson. The following leaders have transferred to other synods, Rev. Kevin Bergeson, Rev. Tammy Craker, and Rev. Dan Nelson. Rev. Jim Steen has resigned the roster of the ELCA effective 7/14/2020.

The Bishop recommends the change in roster status of Rev. Suzanne Benidt, Rev. Jonathan Hallenbeck Ask, Rev. Cassandra Lamb, Rev. Karen Ressel, and Deacon Susan Marone.

**MSC to grant retirement roster status to Rev. Suzanne Benidt effective 8/1/2020.
SC.2020.08.07**

**MSC to grant Family On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Rev. Jonathan Hallenbeck Ask effective 9/1/2020.
SC.2020.08.08**

**MSC to grant Family On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Rev. Cassandra Lamb effective 9/1/2020.
SC.2020.08.09**

**MSC to grant On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Rev. Karen Ressel effective 9/1/2020.
SC.2020.08.10**

**MSC to renew the On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Deacon Susan Marone for one additional year, effective 9/1/2020.
SC.2020.08.11**

Congregation Constitutions

The following congregations have submitted constitutions for approval and have been recommended by the Constitution Review Committee.

**MSC to approve the constitution of Zion Lutheran, Hartford.
SC.2020.08.12**

**MSC to approve the constitution of Piedmont Valley, Piedmont.
SC.2020.08.13**

**MSC to approve the constitution of Split Rock Lutheran, Brandon.
SC.2020.08.14**

**MSC to approve the constitution of Faith Lutheran, New Effington.
SC.2020.08.15**

St Dymas Board

A Synod Council Representative to the St Dymas Board will need to be appointed at the October meeting.

Church Council Visits

It is the practice of the synod that Synod Council members have visited with church councils to give thanks for the ministry that is done together. Synod Council members will be asked to make phone calls to congregation presidents.

Lutheran Planned Giving Name Change

Kathy McHenry is working through the history of the organization and is unable to find bylaws or governing documents outlining Lutheran Planned Giving. While they work to form those, there is the desire to change the name to Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota.

MSC to change the name of Lutheran Planned Giving of South Dakota to Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota.

SC.2020.08.16

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected by the Synod Council at the annual retreat and serve for a period of one year. The committee consists of the officers, a vice-chair, and three members-at-large.

Nominations were opened for Vice-chair.

Jan Haugen-Rogers was nominated. There being no other nominations, a motion was made to close nominations.

MSC to close nominations.

SC.2020.08.17

MSC to elect Jan Haugen-Rogers as Vice-chair of the Synod Council for a one year term.

SC.2020.08.18

Nominations were opened for members-at-large.

Nominated to the committee were Malcolm Chapman, Tom Stotz, and Rev. Tera Kossow.

There being no other nominations, a motion was made to close nominations.

MSC to close nominations.

SC.2020.08.19

MSCo elect to the Executive Committee for a one year term: Malcom Chapman, Tom Stotz, and Rev. Tera Kossow.

SC.2020.08.20

Future Meetings:

A. Executive Committee: Thursday, October 15, 2020; 6:30 pm central

B. Synod Council: Friday, October 16, 2020; 8:30 am central

Devotions: Rev. Lon Kvanli

C. Executive Committee: February 2021 TBD

D. Executive Committee: March 2021 TBD

E. Synod Council: March 2021 TBD

F. Synod Assembly: June 4-5, 2021

G. Synod Council: June 5, 2021, following assembly

Council Takeaways

The generosity of congregations in providing financial support.

Remembering to support in prayer our rostered and synod authorized leaders.

Meeting Evaluation:

The breakout session went really well.

St Dysmas Board

Pastor Lund offered to serve on the St Dysmas Outside Council.

**MSC to appointed the Rev. David Lund as the Synod Council representative to the
St Dysmas Outside Council.**

SC.2020.08.21

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jonathan Vehar", is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Rev. Jonathan Vehar, Secretary