

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council
Zoom Meeting
October 16, 2020**

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

Staff: Lois Borchardt, Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Rev. Jonathan Steiner, Kathy McHenry, Rev. Dan Johnson, and Nathalie Fida Lassang

Absent: Cynthia Wall, Truman Dick, and Caylee White Eagle

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

The Rev. Lon Kvanli led in the opening devotion reflecting on the reading for the coming Sunday, where we are called to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and God what is God's.

The Rev. Shelly Gehring transferred call to the Crossroads Conference and is ineligible for service on the Synod Council. The Medary Conference selected the Rev. Jackie Braun. Pastor Braun was seated on the council. Welcome, Pastor Braun.

Roll call was taken as members introduced themselves and shared activities that help to destress.

Bishop Hagmaier introduced Nathalie Fida Lassang as the newly appointed Companion Synod Coordinator. At this time, the coordinator will be a volunteer position. Ms. Lassang grew up in Cameroon, came to the United States first as a camp counselor at NeSoDak, attended Concordia College and medical school. She is excited to begin this work and help to form connections between the synod and our companion synods.

Adopting the Agenda

There was one addition to the agenda under Roster Matters.

MSC to adopt the agenda.

SC.2020.10.01

Adopting of the Minutes

The minutes of the August 14, 2020 meeting are in Google Drive.

There were no corrections.

MSC to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2020 meeting of the Synod Council.

SC.2020.10.02

Bishop's Report

The Conference of Bishops met in September for the first time as a virtual-only meeting. They accomplished a lot of work but certainly missed the opportunity to connect in person and meet newly elected bishops. Of note from the conference:

- Changes in the assignment process. Candidates for rostered ministry will now be initially assigned to the synod of candidacy. This change responds to the reality that so many of those preparing for ministry are restricting to a geographical region and not open to call throughout the church. It is still possible to be assigned to a different synod for the first call, and bishops will facilitate those cases when they come.
- There are two first call candidates assigned to the South Dakota Synod. Their names will be announced shortly.
- The ELCA document Vision and Expectations (V&E) is no longer a document of the church. V&E had started to be improperly used as a means of discipline. The church policy that manages the ministry standards for the church is Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline. Revisions are being considered to address matters not covered, such as social media use, plagiarism, and “isms.”

The Bishop will be participating in a churchwide conversation on Parish Agreements and how best to help congregations form partnerships for the sake of ministry.

There has been much work around a partnership with ecumenical and interfaith leaders in South Dakota. Of note would be the Statement of Understanding for ministry on the Pine Ridge Reservation, which is jointly done with the Episcopal and Presbyterian Church. The council endorsed Bishop's continued participation in this collaborative dialogue.

As the church continues to respond to the needs of the world, the Bishop is working on models of adaptive leadership. The world is changing quickly, and our staff needs to be able to respond.

Bishop DeGroot of the Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls has responded to Bishop Hagmaier's request for conversation. The South Dakota Synod and the Diocese of Sioux Falls had a rich history of work together, especially in responding to social concerns.

Associate to the Bishop Reports

Rev. Renee Splichal Larson

- Mobility & Congregational Care – Mobility with rostered leaders, is much more active now than in the past year. The transition of Bishop and staff and then COVID-19 temporarily affected the desire of rostered leaders seeking calls in different congregations. One role of the synod is to help congregations and rostered leaders entering a transition end one season of ministry well and prepare for the future.
- Candidacy – Six candidates for rostered ministry will have approval interviews in October. More interviews will take place in November for entrance and endorsement interviews. Internship placements will be a significant focus on the next year. Karen Gieseke will be leaving her position at Luther Seminary; however, she will continue to serve as the coordinator for interns in the South Dakota Synod. The Candidacy Committee had five vacancies at this point last year and are now filled.

- Minister Support – There is ongoing support being offered to rostered leaders in the formation of Peer Mentor Groups, zoom calls with rostered leaders, rostered women, senior pastors, and SAMs. A Faith Formation Task Force is helping to connect congregations, especially rural congregations.

Rev. Jonathan Steiner

- Repudiating Doctrine of Discovery – A Memorial to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery was adopted at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. The ELCA has yet to fulfill the benchmarks set by the assembly. The churchwide organization has begun again the work for how the church can live fully into healing, through repentance, honest examination of our history, and land reparations.
- Woyatan Indian Center – The mission and purpose of the Woyatan Indian Center is in flux, especially given the current pandemic. There are several suggestions on how the facility can be used now to support the work of the congregation and community. The name change to the Woyatan Indian Center reflects a wider possibility in ministry.

Break

Lutheran Outdoors of South Dakota

The council was joined by Paul Hanson, Executive Director of LOSD. In the spring of 2020, the Board of LOSD decided to close the camping ministry at the four sites across South Dakota due to COVID-19. While the decision to not hold camp was a faithful choice given campers' health and safety, this has left a financial shortfall in the ministry. There is an estimated loss of revenue of \$2,000,000. After reducing expenses with staff and other program expenses, there is an estimated shortfall of \$1.2 million through May of 2021. The Board of LOSD is requesting the Synod Council authorize a congregational appeal in compliance with S15.21.

**MSC the Synod Council, in accordance with S15.21, consents to the Lutheran Outdoors of South Dakota, Keep the Campfires Burning Appeal to congregations and members of the South Dakota Synod with an appeal goal of \$1.2 million, and running through an estimated time of May 2021.
SC.2020.10.03**

Steiner Report Continued

- Justice Table – The table is organized into three sub-groups: Education, providing resources on various topics; Community Organizing, helping to organize groups to participate in response to community, for example, the recent Native American march in Rapid City; and Advocacy, looking at policies and laws that affect the national, state, and local communities.
- Storyteller Network – The Storyteller Network is reworking how we share faith stories in action across the synod. Some may remember the older model of Mission Interpreters; but moving forward there will be three coordinators who will invite others to share all that God is doing in our communities.
- ELCA COVID-19 Response Fund – The South Dakota Synod has benefited greatly from the ELCA COVID-19 Response Grants that have helped to support ministries across the

synod in responding in creative ways to the pandemic or helping to sustain ministries at particularly vulnerable communities.

Roster Matters

The Synod Council manages the roster of the synod.

MSC to grant On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Rev. Nancy Eckels effective 10/25/2020.

SC.2020.10.04

MSC to issue a Synodical Letter of Call to Rev. Shelly Gehring for interim ministry effective 9/16/2020.

SC.2020.10.05

MSC to renew the Family On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Rev. Elizabeth Johnson for one additional year, effective 9/1/2020.

SC.2020.10.06

MSC to grant Family On-Leave-From-Call roster status to Rev. Katherine Olson effective 11/15/2020.

SC.2020.10.07

MSC to grant Retired Roster status to Rev. Greg Wilcox effective 10/01/2020.

SC.2020.10.08

MSC to grant On-Leave-From- Call roster status to Rev. Herb Wounded Head effective 9/01/2020.

SC.2020.10.09

Inform only: Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson has transferred to the South Dakota Synod from the Western North Dakota Synod effective 8/18/2020.

Staff Reports

Rev. Dan Johnson, Director of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, has written a report available in Google Drive. In addition, he noted that life in quarantine is challenging but hopes to be out of quarantine before the reservation locks down.

Kathy McHenry, Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota (LPGSD), shared the new name and logo of Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota. A new website is now live with additional resources for living out our faith.

LPGSD has established a way to receive non-cash gifts, such as stock, livestock, or crops, and turn them into cash for designated ministries.

The ELCA Foundation has released updated Endowment and Gift Policy documents that are easy for congregations to use. The church council or endowment committee needs to make a few decisions and fill in the blanks.

The ELCA has a new society for anyone who has committed to a planned gift in their estate plan.

Continuing Resolution

One consequence of the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly was the election of Synod Council members. Vacancies were filled by the Synod Council, but without action, there would be a higher than usual turnover rate in one year. Rev. Jonathan Vehar presented a Continuing Resolution designed to maintain the staggered offices.

MSC to adopt continuing resolution S9.01.A20

S9.01.A20 The election of Synod Council members by the Synod Council as a result of the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, shall be ratified by the 2021 Synod Assembly in accordance with S10.03.f. with the terms of office expiring with the election of a successor at the 2024 Synod Assembly. For the purposes of S9.01.10.a., such ratification shall be considered a full term.

SC.2020.10.10

Executive Committee Report

The Executive Committee has met three times since the last Synod Council meeting. The ongoing work of the committee keeps a close eye on the Mission Plan and Mission Support from congregations, hear reports from staff and the Woyatan Indian Center, disburse funds from various dedicated funds such as the Listen! God is Calling Appeal, appropriate grant funding from the COVID-19 response from the ELCA and ELCA Disaster Response, and the Endowment. The Executive Committee also acted to increase the liability insurance coverage for the synod and approve building repairs to the roof of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center.

Voting Members for the ELCA 2022 Churchwide Assembly

The 2021 Synod Assembly will elect voting members for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. In preparation for nominations, the Synod Council allocates positions that are nominated by each conference. The South Dakota Synod will have 23 voting members for the 2022 assembly. Previous allocations for the 2016 and 2019 assemblies were reviewed. The council wished to use a more inclusive term to represent the sought after diversity in our church, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). One of the Crossroads Conference Clergy was designated as BIPOC Clergy nominated by the Synod Council. This change meets the representational principles stated in the Constitution of the ELCA.

MSC to adopt the allocations for voting members of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Conference	Female	Male	Rostered Leader	Youth	BIPOC/ 1 st language other than English	Officers	
Northern Plains	1	1	1				3
Bear Butte	1	1	1				3

Crossroads	1	1	1				3
Medary	1		1				2
Prairie Coteau		1	1				2
Prairie Rivers	1		1				2
Southeastern		1	1				2
Synod Council				1	2^a	3^b	6
TOTAL	5	5	7	1	2	3	23

^a One lay and one rostered leader

^b Bishop, vice president, secretary/treasurer

SC.2020.10.11

Lunch

Conflict of Interest Forms

The Conflict of Interest form was distributed at the last meeting. If you have not submitted a form, please return one to the synod office.

Luther Seminary – Marge Hegge

Marge Hegge, chair of the Board of Directors for Luther Seminary, brought a greeting on behalf of the theological schools of the ELCA. Each synod of the ELCA has a primary seminary to which they relate and support. The landscape of theological education and the formation of rostered leaders is rapidly changing. Much thanks is given for the ways we work together.

Treasurer’s Report

The Audit Committee is finalizing their report before being sent to the external auditor.

Gilbertson described the financial position of the synod as strong. Year-to-date giving is at 69.9% of annual giving. For comparison, the percent of the budget for 2019 was 63.9%, 2018 was 66.5%, and 2017 was 64.0%. The Operating Reserves of the synod is strong as congregational support is higher than expected. The financial position is even stronger given the PPP loan received when Mission Support was trended at 50% below the previous year. In response to the strong financial position, the staff has prepared options for ministry due to this Extraordinary Giving.

Endowment Report – Nothing of special note from the Endowment Committee.

MSC to receive the Treasurer’s Report.

SC.2020.10.12

Extraordinary Gifts

Bishop Hagmaier presented the Extraordinary Gift Plan. It is anticipated that \$132,000 will be available in “extraordinary giving.” The proposal includes keeping \$32,000 in operating reserves. The remainder will be divided as following:

Tithe to the ELCA - \$10,000

Leadership Education - \$20,000

Anti-racism training, Peer Mentor Groups, DWU Leadership program, coaching for first call pastors and deacons, and other valuable continuing education programs.

Seeds for Next Season - \$50,000

Neighbors in Solidarity, new starts funding, chaplaincy in the workforce, Canvas or another digital education platform, small group ministry programs, Skaynos initiative

Inclusion and Support - \$20,000

YAGM/Woyatan volunteer position, continued salary support for First Lutheran African Ministry, cultural immersion facilitator at Pine Ridge Retreat Center, Two by Two program for Neighbors in Solidarity.

The funds available will not be able to support all of these projects in full, but we should see the Extraordinary Gifts as the opportunity to plant seeds and invite other partners into new ministry opportunities.

Moved to accept the recommendation as presented for the use of Extraordinary Gifts.
Second.

Moved to amend by inserting “and \$10,000 to LOSD from the portion allocated for operating resources.”
Second.

**MSC to move the previous question.
SC.2020.10.13**

Amendment adopted.

Moved to amend by addition, “and designated 10% as a tithe to the ELCA”
Second.
Amendment adopted.

**MSC to accept the recommendation as amended for the use of Extraordinary Gifts, and designate 10% as a tithe to the ELCA and \$10,000 to LOSD from the portion allocated for operating reserves.
Adopted as amended.
SC.2020.10.14**

Break

Gilbertson responded to an earlier question about how PPP income should be reflected. He took a few moments to review guidance from the auditor, and both the method followed by the synod and by an example from a congregation are permissible according to guidance.

Congregation Visits

Instead of making in-person visits to congregation councils, members are asked to make phone calls to council presidents. Since the time commitment to make a call is less than an in-person

visit, it is hoped that every congregation can be called. A script is available to use, with an introduction and a question about ministry. Steiner will assign members.

Synod Day

On November 7, 2020, the long-awaited Synod Day celebration will occur. The whole synod is invited with online options. Staff will be broadcasting from Our Savior's Lutheran in Sioux Falls. Featured speakers will share about the 50/40/10 anniversaries. The worship service will also include the installation of the Associates to the Bishop.

Seminary Debt Reduction/ Refinancing

McHenry presented the report from the Seminary Debt Reduction Committee with revised promissory notes and agreement of the Seminary Loan Refinancing Program. These documents help to clarify the intent of the program and offer safeguards to the synod if a loan were to default. The Council affirmed previous action SC.2020.03.14 to suspend new applications to the Seminary Debt Refinance Program of the SD Synod.

MSC to approve the Replacement Promissory Note and the Restated and Amended Seminary Loan Refinancing Program Agreement. SC.2020.10.15

New Business

Spring Conference Assemblies – as conferences scheduled the assembly dates, please touch base with the synod staff to ensure the availability of the bishop or associates.

Take-Aways

Borchardt asked what is memorable from the meeting today.
Synod Day, Extraordinary Generosity, Churchwide Assembly voting members are 60% lay, the introduction of Nathalie as the Campaign Synod Coordinator.

Meeting Evaluation

Positive experience overall, Zoom worked well and there was good conversation.

Needs improvement: Use of Robert's Rules of Order, a "friendly amendment," isn't very friendly to the secretary of this synod.

Next Meeting:

March 19, 2021, 8:30 AM Central, Zoom
Devotions by Deacon Kris Wollman

Respectfully Submitted,



Rev. Jonathan Vehar, Secretary