

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA  
Synod Council  
Froiland Science Center, Augustana University and Zoom  
August 20-21, 2021**

Present: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, Dennis Thompson, the Rev Jonathan Vehar, Terry Johnson, Bonnie Lange, the Rev. David Lund, Anne Rieck McFarland, Dave Poppens, the Rev. John Paulson, Bonny Hansen, Tom Stotz, Rhonda Hansen, the Rev. Jackie Braun, Valerie Parsley, Jim Iverson, the Rev. Jim Fowler, the Rev. Tera Kossow, Malcom Chapman, Pam Seefeldt, Terry Zell, Michael Miller, the Rev. Layne Nelson

Staff: Lois Borchardt, the Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, the Rev. Jonathan Steiner, Kathy McHenry, the Rev. Aaron Matson, the Rev. Dan Johnson

Absent: the Rev. Ramona Hayes, Kelly Nelson, Stan Jung, Truman Stoller, Caylee White Eagle

The meeting of the South Dakota Synod Council was called to order at 9:00 AM by Vice-President Thompson.

The Rev. Jonathan Steiner led the council in the Land Acknowledgement.

Council members introduced themselves.

**Approve the Agenda**

**MSC to approve the agenda.**

**SC.2021.08.01**

**Approve the Minutes**

**MSC to approve the minutes of the June 4-5, 2021 Synod Assembly.**

**SC.2021.08.02**

The minutes for the June 5, 2021 meeting were in Google Drive.

**MSC to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2021 meeting of the Synod Council.**

**SC.2021.08.03**

**Board Orientation**

All documents were available in Google Drive. Please see Lois if you have any issues. Confidentiality is important to the discernment of the Synod Council to allow for open and honest discussion. Draft minutes will be sent out and are confidential in draft form and are public documents once approved by the Synod Council.

Thompson reviewed some of the responsibilities of the Synod Council. A list of responsibilities is listed in Chapter 10 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the South

Dakota Synod. Vice-president Thompson encourages all members to read and memorize this chapter.

### **Companion Synods Report**

The Rev. Aaron Matson shared updates on our Companion Synods. The country of Nicaragua is undergoing lots of civil unrest as the national leadership is seizing more control. The focus of the local church is shifted from seed distribution after the hurricane to hunger and food distribution. The Lutheran Church of Cameroon has elected a new bishop, and an official welcome from the South Dakota Synod has been drafted.

### **Vision for the Synod**

Bishop Hagmaier shared the Mission Statement, Journeying Together in Christ, and one of the videos produced to tell the story of the synod.

### **Report of the Audit Committee**

Angie Hillestad joined the meeting to present the Report of the Audit Committee. The role of the Audit Committee is to oversee the audit process, review findings, and approve the audited financial statements. The auditors presented a clean audit report except for deviation from how congregation receivables are recorded. In response, the executive committee, in February 2021, moved to change financial statements from a modified cash basis to VAAP with a departure from GAAP for pledges. Angie pointed out one additional note from the auditors, a deficiency in internal control related to segregation of duties. Meghan from Thurman, Comes, Foley explained that this deficiency is not uncommon in an organization of the synod's size and the committee considered and found no need to recommend a change.

### **Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center**

The Rev. Dan Johnson shared updates from the PRRC. In addition to the written report, he highlighted several areas. First, Pastor Dan is exploring ways to use the Reconciliation Center's gifts, which hasn't had a retreat group since the beginning of 2020, to address short-term homeless needs. The ministry received a grant from the State of South Dakota to combat homelessness on the reservation.

### **Dwelling in the Word**

The council recessed to participate in Dwelling in the Word, an opportunity for devotion provided by the synod office every Friday.

### **Break**

### **Board Training**

### **Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions**

The governing documents of the church help us to organize the life and ministry of our communal life. There is a Model Constitution for Congregations, the South Dakota Synod, and the

ELCA Churchwide Organization. Within each of these, the **Bold type** is the Constitution, regular type is the Bylaws, and *italics* are Continuing Resolutions. The Synod Council has a role in ensuring that the synod is operating under these governing documents and approving constitutions amended by congregations.

### **The Roster**

The ELCA maintains a roster of persons who have been qualified and approved for public service in the church. The Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors) and the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) contains several distinctions. *Under Call* are those who are active and serving congregations or related ministries under a Letter of Call from either a congregation, the Synod Council, or the Church Council. *On-Leave-From-Call* is those who have requested a leave of absence, typically for family matters (to care for a sick family member) or pursuing further education. *Disability* for pastors and deacons who are not actively under call due to medical reasons, either short-term or long-term. *Retired* roster status for pastors and deacons who wish to no longer be on the active roster of ministers. Being on the *Retired* roster status does not preclude pastors and deacons from serving in ministry, but it might look different. The Synod Council has the responsibility of managing the roster on behalf of the synod and does an annual review.

### **Associate to the Bishop Reports**

A written report from Rev. Jonathan Steiner was available in Google Drive. In addition, the Rev. Jonathan Steiner offers a few additional comments. First, there are two synod committees established in the constitution that he relates to, the Evangelical Outreach Committee and the Multicultural Ministry Committee. Second, one of the primary ways congregations are aware of this work is through Neighbors in Solidarity. This is one way to help make connections between congregations and ministries of the synod.

Some of the Neighbors in Solidarity partners include Woyatan Lutheran Church in Rapid City as a congregation amongst the Lakota people, the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center that has many ministry areas including a Retreat Center, Job Corp, youth after school program, and community worship. First Lutheran African Ministry is a congregation mostly of Liberian descent, Pueblo de Dios as a Spanish-speaking congregation, and Church on the Street amongst the under-housed in Sioux Falls.

### **Partner Ministry - St Dysmas**

St Dysmas is a congregation behind the prison walls in Sioux Falls and Springfield. The Rev. Wayne Gallipo brought a greeting and update from the ministry. Changes to the prison system administration are raising lots of questions. He assures the council that visiting St Dysmas worship is safe, and congregations are encouraged to plan a visit.

Prison Reentry Program. St Dysmas has a reentry program that utilizes resources from Prison Congregations of America and matches released inmates with a congregation for mentoring and support. It's a new program and has had two matches so far. In addition, they are exploring a

partnership with Kingdom Waters to provide dedicated housing for the reentry program, as housing is one of the most challenging aspects of reentering society.

## **Board Training continued**

### **How to Read Financial Statements**

A sample financial report is available in Google Drive; it is dated 2015 and includes comments to explain the different parts of the reports.

Reports will be presented that give year-to-date income and expenses, along with historical ranges for gifts, expenses, cash-on-hand, an Audit Report, and reports for the Endowment Committee.

As of July 31, the midpoint for the fiscal year, Mission Support from congregations is trending at 52%, in line with historical trends.

### **Executive Committee Elections**

The Executive Committee is made up of four officers: three members-at-large, and a vice-chair. The vice-chair and members-at-large are elected from and by the Synod Council.

Thompson opened nominations for Vice-chair. Bonnie Hansen and Malcom Chapman were nominated.

**MSC to close nominations.  
SC.2021.08.04**

Ballots were distributed to in-person and a zoom poll for online.

**Malcom Chapman was elected as Vice-chair of the 2021-22 Executive Committee.  
SC.2021.08.05**

Thompson opened nominations for the three members-at-large. Bonny Hansen, the Rev. Tera Kossow, Tom Stotz, the Rev. Jackie Braun, Val Parsley were nominated.

**MSC to close nominations.  
SC.2021.08.06**

Ballots were distributed to in-person and a zoom poll for online.

**The Rev. Tera Kossow, Tom Stotz, and Bonny Hansen were elected as Members-at-large for the 2021-22 Executive Committee.  
SC.2021.08.07**

### **Audit Committee**

The Synod Council appoints members to the Audit Committee. Currently, there are two vacancies. Dick Ellis and Holly Brunick have agreed to serve.

**MSC to appoint Dick Ellis and Holly Brunick to a three-year term on the Audit Committee.**

**SC.2021.08.08**

### **Seminary Debt Reduction Committee**

The Synod Council elects members to the Seminary Debt Reduction Committee. The committee has five members with rotating terms. The committee had not functioned with terms for several years, so it is desired to elect committee members to the terms listed below.

**MSC to elect to the Seminary Debt Reduction Committee with staggered terms of service as follows:**

**Dennis Thompson, one-year**

**Linda Sanden, two-years**

**The Rev. Dan Ofstehage, three-years**

**Bob Scott, four-years**

**The Rev. Jonathan Vehar, four-years**

**SC.2021.08.09**

### **Kairos Program**

Bishop Hagmaier outlined the history of the development of the Luther House of Study into the Kairos program. Memos of Understanding have outlined the partnership between Augustana University, Sioux Falls Seminary, and an additional MOU with Luther Seminary to fulfill the internship and Lutheran year requirements. One stipulation of the MOU was for an annual program evaluation, which had not been done before. An evaluation was approved by the Executive Committee and conducted by resource staff at Luther Seminary. The evaluation has been conducted with past and current students, mentor teams, internship sites, and others involved. The review committee is currently reviewing the evaluation and will have results by early 2022.

### **Break**

### **Executive Committee Report**

The Executive Committee met on Thursday evening. Most items addressed appear on the Synod Council agenda. Of special note, Sawyer Vanden Heuvel will be taking a sabbatical and taking a course in the Holy Land.

### **Associate to the Bishops Report continued**

A written report from Rev. Renee Splichal Larson was available in Google Drive. The Rev. Renee Splichal Larson reviewed the Call Process and how the synod's website has been revamped to better outline the steps in a call process, resources, and where open congregations are in the process.

There are currently 11 congregations receiving names for rostered leaders and South Dakota has received four first call candidates since June.

Changes in the Assignment Process for the ELCA means that candidates are assigned to the synod of candidacy for first call. This does not mean that new pastors must come to South Dakota, but given the number of seminary students who come from the synod does increase the number of first call rostered ministers who are assigned here.

The Rev. Jonathan Steiner

One of the roles of Synod Council members is to make visits to congregation councils. These are opportunities to thank congregations and celebrate the work we do together. Congregations are divided up so that a visit is made about every three years. Information packets will be given out, and members of each conference can decide how best to make the visits.

Since FaithX was announced at the Synod Assembly, Steiner has visited with leaders of several congregations to generate demographic reports and explore mission opportunities. Congregations are asked to pay \$150 to offset the cost.

### **Old Business**

Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center Lutheran Lakota Job Corp – The Job Corp is working to form a separately incorporated 501(c)3. The expansion of the Job Corp had increased the number of synod employees to over 20 employees, at which the synod's status with Medicare would be affected. Separate incorporation will allow the ministry to continue to grow as there is a need.

CARES ACT Grant – Pastor Dan Johnson is working with the state for reimbursement for services provided through the grant. The grant looks to provide solutions for those who are homeless or under-housed on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Pastor Johnson noted that homelessness looks different on the reservation than in other places. Very few people don't have a roof over their head at night, as they stay with family or friends. But one house may provide for several families. This was of particular concern earlier this year when one housefire displaced several families. Unfortunately, there currently aren't places equipped to meet such emergencies. Pastor Johnson is considering if the Retreat Center might be a resource during these times, especially as there are currently no retreat groups due to COVID-19.

Internal Controls/Advisory Board – Pastor Johnson is also working to form a local Advisory Board that can help manage the ministry finances. Lois Borchardt, Dennis Thompson, Terry Johnson, Pastor Jonathan Steiner, and Pastor Dan Johnson are meeting to develop Internal Controls that offer financial oversight, yet recognizes that the ministry needs to respond quickly to emergencies in the community at times.

### **LSS Board**

The South Dakota Synod is responsible for appointing ministers of Word and Sacrament to the Board for Lutheran Social Services.

**MSC to appoint the Rev. Rebecca Breddin to the Board for LSS to fill the unexpired term of the Rev. Nick Collin concluding 12/31/2022.**

**SC.2021.08.10**

**MSC to extend the term of the Rev. Becky Piper on the Board of LSS by one year, to expire 12/31/2021.  
SC.2021.08.11**

### **Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center Healing proposal**

In light of the discovery of remains from Indian Boarding Schools and Bishop Hagmaier's letters expressing repentance for the history of church participation, the PRRC is discussing how to respond in more meaningful ways. The Executive Committee had an initial discussion and wants to support the effort but needs more specifics before knowing how to respond. The Executive Committee offered the following recommendation:

**MSC forward from the executive committee, "As we Journey Together with our native relatives in South Dakota, the South Dakota Synod affirms our commitment to seek ways to accompany survivors of Indian Boarding Schools in reconciliation and spiritual healing through the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center."  
SC.2021.08.12**

### **Roster Matters**

#### **Inform Only**

Elan Ashby – Transferred into SD Synod from Southwestern MN Synod effective 08.01.2021

Randy Fett – Transferred into SD Synod from Southeastern MN Synod effective 06.20.2021

Erin Heidelberger – Transferred to Nebraska Synod effective 08.16.2021

Nancy Hong – Transferred to Northeastern MN Synod effective 07.27.2021

Dave Nerdig – Transferred into SD Synod from Northeastern IA Synod effective 06.10.2021

Susan Sinclair – Transferred to Western IA Synod effective 07.01.2021

Chris Strohm – Transferred to South-Central Synod of Wisconsin 04.18.2021

Bishop Hagmaier presented requests needing the council's action

The Rev. Fred Bartelt is requesting On-Leave-From-Call.

**MSC to grant On-Leave-From-Call roster status to the Rev. Fred Bartelt effective 7/17/2021.  
SC.2021.08.13**

The Rev. Kris Garlick is requesting On-Leave-From-Call.

**MSC to grant On-Leave-From-Call roster status to the Rev. Kris Garlick effective 9/4/2021.  
SC.2021.08.14**

Deacon Susan Marone has requested retirement roster status.

**MSC to grant Retired Roster status to Deacon Susan Marone effective 9/1/2021.  
SC.2021.08.15**

The Rev. Keith Smith is requesting On-Leave-From-Call.

**MSC to grant On-Leave-From-Call roster status to the Rev. Keith Smith effective 7/29/2021.**

**SC.2021.08.16**

### **Congregation Matters**

Savo Lutheran, Frederick and St. Paul's Lutheran, Frederick approved a second vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA.

**MSC to remove Savo Lutheran, Frederick and St. Paul's Lutheran, Frederick from the roster of congregations of the ELCA.**

**SC.2021.08.17**

### Future Meetings

Executive Committee, Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 PM

Executive Committee, Thursday, October 21, 6:00 PM

Synod Council, Friday, October 22, 8:30 AM, 2021 (Pastor Jim Folwer, opening devotion)

Synod Council, March 2022, TBA

Synod Assembly, June 3-4, 2022 – Our Savior's Lutheran Church

### Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn.

**MSC to adjourn.**

**SC.2021.08.17**

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Jonathan Vehar, secretary