

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council
Haugo Room, Synod Office
October 21, 2022**

Present: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, Dennis Thompson, Terry Johnson, the Rev Jonathan Vehar, Marlee Braun, the Rev. Jackie Braun, Jim Iverson, the Rev. Becky Senner, Jeff Clark, Michael Miller, the Rev. David Lund, Stan Jung, Rhonda Hansen, Pam Seefeldt, Anne Rieck McFarland, Dave Poppens, the Rev. Wilbur Holz, Kelly Nelson, Jake Hoffner, Deacon Christie Meier, the Rev. Jim Fowler

Staff: Lois Borchardt, the Rev. Jonathan Steiner, the Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Kathy McHenry

Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:40 am on Friday, October 21, 2022.

Land Acknowledgment

South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes that the Oceti Sakowin (the Seven Council Fires of the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota), the Arikara, the Ponca and the Cheyenne, are the historic inhabitants of South Dakota; and South Dakota is the current home of the Cheyenne River Tribe, Crow Creek Tribe, Flandreau Santee Tribe, Lower Brule Tribe, Oglala Tribe, Rosebud Tribe, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Standing Rock Tribe, and Yankton Tribe.

We recognize that we are called to be in good relationship with our neighbors, that the tribes are sovereign nations, that there is a history of broken treaties and broken trust, and that there is lots of work to be done. And we also recognize that as Christians, we have faith in new life, in hope for mending what is broken, and in our calling through the Holy Spirit to do this work.

Synod Council Appointment

The Rev. Pam Power of the Bear Butte Conference has resigned. The conference has lifted up the Rev. Wilbur Holz to fill the position.

**to elect the Rev. Wibur Holz to the Synod Council, until the next Synod Assembly,
to the unexpired term vacated by the Rev. Pam Power.**

MSC

SC.2022.10.01

Ms. Marlee Braun led in an open devotion with a prayer from katyandtheword.com

Roll Call and Introductions

Agenda

The agenda is in the Google Drive.

to approve the agenda in the order that the chair deems most appropriate.

MSC

SC.2022.10.02

Approve the Minutes

Minutes for the Synod Assembly are available in the Google Drive.

There was one correction to the spelling of Bishop Hagmaier's name.

to approve the minutes of the June 3-4, 2022 Synod Assembly as corrected.

MSC

SC.2022.10.03

Minutes for the August 19-20, 2022 Synod Council Retreat are available in the Google Drive.

to approve the minutes of the August 19-20, 2022 meeting of the Synod Council.

MSC

SC.2022.10.04

Woyatan Lutheran

Mr. Thompson welcomed a delegation from Woyatan Lutheran Church; Vicar Jonathan Old Horse, Jackie Hylland, Carla Price, and Janet Lustig. The delegation shared parts of Woyatan's history as a Lakota congregation. Some of the current ministries include The Wambi Ska Center hosting a teen youth program that supports young people and teaches traditional Lakota culture. Vicar Old Horse is active in a "Presence Patrol" in a Rapid City neighborhood. The patrol is similar to a neighborhood watch and takes proactive steps at crime prevention. The congregation is active in suicide prevention and overdose education.

Ms. Lustig, Ms. Hylland, and Ms. Price also shared about their travels to other native ministries in the South Dakota Synod. These are valuable partnerships to which they are grateful to show support.

The delegation also spoke frankly about some of the challenges of being a native congregation in a church body with deep connections to German/Scandinavian heritage. And that the partnerships between native and white people have not been on an equal footing. There is a challenge to the synod to live a new life together.

Bishop Hagmaier restated the intent of the synod to transfer ownership of the building and land to Woyatan Lutheran Church. It is hoped that this process may be completed in the Spring and celebrated at the 2023 Synod Assembly.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Terry Johnson overviewed the financial statements of the synod. At the end of September, Mission Support was at 60.4% of the annual budget, which is below the five-year trend. About 80% of budget decline comes from 7-8 congregations. The Bishop reports that she has reached out to those congregations with a pastoral letter to check in. Typically the explanation is that things in the congregation are fine, and with transitions in the treasurer's position, certain things have fallen through the cracks. We will need to be attentive to Mission Support and respond accordingly if needed.

The Endowment Fund is down about 20% for the year. The Endowment Committee is meeting next week for their regular meeting. These are typical market conditions right now.

Bishop's Report

In January, the Bishop will convene a team to take the budget down to the bones and evaluate it. More than concerns over a budget shortfall, this is an opportunity to ensure that the budget as a missional document is in line with the ministry priorities of the synod.

Conference of Bishops – there will be a new Congregational Vitality report being developed. It is in beta form. These tools help congregations, and the ELCA assesses congregations' health beyond tracking worship attendance.

A new discernment tool called Journi will be launched in the next 30 days as a way to help people understand how they can be a part of this church.

A Memorial adopted by the Churchwide Assembly asked the church to reconsider the idea of “bound conscience” from the ELCA Social Statement, Gift and Trust. A task force has been formed to evaluate this key part of social study and its continued relevance for the church today.

A Memorial adopted by the Churchwide Assembly asked for a restructuring of the ELCA. This will be a long-term process. The Bishop has advocated that an outside mission partner help lead this process.

The Bishop has volunteered to serve on a task force to evaluate the Roster Manual. This process is being undertaken as a result of a Memorial adopted by the Churchwide Assembly submitted by the South Dakota Synod.

Another Memorial at the Churchwide Assembly called for participation in the “land back” movement, where lands once belonging to native peoples are returned. The Memorial ended in a much different place than it started, but it still requires deep reflection on how we mend relationships with native peoples.

The Bishop is now hosting a once-a-month coffee and conversation time on the first Wednesday of each month in Sioux Falls from 8am-9am. All are welcome to join.

Associates to the Bishop Reports

Pastor Splichal Larson's written report is in the Google drive. In her verbal remarks, Splichal Larson went into more detail and shared stories about the mobility transitions, ways that rostered leaders are caring for one another, and updates in candidacy. Of the highlights is the number of individuals undergoing lay education in order to better serve their congregations. Of concern is the continued challenge of rural areas to receive pastoral candidates.

Pastor Steiner's verbal report included sharing about the celebration of his daughter Sophia's baptism and recent travel for Mission Developer and DEM training in Chicago. A new DEM manual will greatly aid his work in navigating the churchwide organization's systems.

The Rev. Becky Senner is beginning at Spirit of Hope Lutheran in Scotland, SD. Spirit of Hope is a new start congregation in Scotland, SD, and Pastor Becky has been called to serve half-time. Pastor Steiner recently reported to DEMs on the synod's work in rural ministry and how we are responding to the needs of these communities with creative ministry.

The Synod Council will be asked later this meeting to approve two Synod Authorized Worshiping Community explorations. This is a new designation and the first step in forming a new start congregation. The intent is that formation work has already taken place during the exploration phase that will lead to better success once a mission developer is called. The two ministries are in Box Elder, SD, and Shepard's Table in Sioux Falls.

Pastor Steiner continues to meet with congregations to consult using the FaithX tool for a better understanding of the neighborhood.

Executive Committee Report

Thompson reminded the Synod Council of the at-times delicate balance of sharing and confidentiality of the work of the Synod Council. While we want to celebrate the work we do together as synod, certain matters, especially around personnel, need to be kept confidential.

The Executive Committee met the previous evening and heard reports from Bishop and Associates, approved funds for continuing education, and referred three actions to the Synod Council for consideration; the formation of two new starts and the designation of a new fund.

Recess for Lunch

SD Synod Domestic Hunger Grant

ELCA World Hunger has an active Domestic Hunger Grant process. Recent changes in the priorities of that grant to highlight innovative efforts make it more difficult for smaller grant requests to receive funding. The synod task force gathered to approve funds and recommended the creation of a designated fund to solicit donations and use for unfunded applications of the ELCA Hunger Grant.

to approve the formation of the South Dakota Hunger Grant Fund, to solicit and receive gifts for the purpose of awarding grants to applicants not awarded an ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant during each year's grant cycle. This grant shall be administered by the synod's Domestic Hunger Grant Task Force or similarly formed committee.

MSC

SC.2022.10.05

Roster Matters

The Synod moved into Executive Session. See separate minutes.

The Synod Council come out of executive session.

to report in the minutes of the Synod Council actions taken while in executive session.

MSC

SC.2022.10.09

Actions taken while in executive session:

to approve the constitution of St. Paul Lutheran, Clark, SD.

MSC

SC.2022.10.06

to approve the constitution of Calvary Lutheran, Rapid City, SD.

MSC

SC.2022.10.07

to vacate the call of the Rev. Dr. Chris Croghan as Co-Director of Luther House of Study effective 10/21/2022 as the South Dakota Synod is no longer the appropriate calling body as provided in 7.44.A19 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.

MSC

SC.2022.10.08

Woyatan discussion

The council reflected on the visit from the Woyatan delegation. In particular, there was concern over how the Land Acknowledge was interpreted by our guests, who are native. The Land Acknowledge is one act of recognizing past trauma and part of the work that we do as a dominant culture. It is also true that not all native people feel the same about Land Acknowledgements, and more attention is needed to listen to a variety of voices.

Pine Ridge

A task force of the Evangelical Outreach Committee is being formed to work on policies around our ministry partners. In particular, the process for applying for and receiving grants for those ministries under the synod's EIN and for updates to synod-owned buildings. Pine Ridge was blessed to receive several grants to support current and expanded ministries. However, several of these grants have come with unintended consequences. These policies should help to aid communication between the synod and ministry partners.

Voting Members to the Synod Assembly

The Synod Constitution allows for the synod to permit voting members from Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities. While this has been the practice of the synod, the specific authorization for such has not been located.

to adopt as a Continuing Resolution of the South Dakota Synod:

S7.21.E22 Each Synod Authorized Worshipping Community under the purview of the South Dakota Synod shall be afforded voting members, in addition to the Synod Authorized Minister, in accordance with S7.21. and S7.21.A07

MSC

SC.2022.10.10

Break

Heartland Ephphatha

Jason Andera, Co-Director of Heartland Ephphatha ministries, brought a greeting from the ministry. Heartland Ephphatha is a worshipping community whose primary language is American Sign Language. They currently worship at Peace Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, although they stream worship and have a wider audience. In addition to worship, Heartland Ephphatha holds Bible Studies, is a leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association, and offers free ASL courses.

Lutheran Social Services

The South Dakota Synod elects rostered leaders to the Board of Directors for Lutheran Social Services. The Rev. Rebecca Breddin has been nominated to a full term.

to elect the Rev. Rebecca Breddin to the Board of Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota.

MSC

SC.2022.10.11

Synod Constitution

Vehar shared with the Synod Council changes adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly that are required to be incorporated into the synod's constitution. These are done automatically.

Vehar also stated he would review other recommended provisions and, if needed, ask for a special meeting to consider them before the March meeting.

Synod Assembly Fees

The Synod Council sets the registration fees for the Synod Assembly. The current fee is \$150. After much discussion, it was recommended to keep the fee the same.

to maintain the current registration fees for the Synod Assembly.

MSC

SC.2022.10.12

Policy for non-ELCA displayers

There is currently no policy for who is permitted to be a vendor at the Synod Assembly. The Synod Staff does not want to be in the place of setting criteria for who can or can't be at the assembly.

moved that Vendors to the Synod Assembly will be limited to ELCA-affiliated or endorsed organizations.

to postpone indefinitely.

MSC

SC.2022.10.13

Lay Academy

The Bishop is working on a Lay Academy to help support and train leaders in congregations. More details will be coming as the academy develops.

Synod Authorized Worshipping Community Exploration

The Executive Committee discussed the formation of two mission development explorations. Each ministry has been endorsed by the Evangelical Outreach Committee, but an official resolution needs to be adopted to submit the necessary application to the churchwide organization. The Executive Committee submits two requests for consideration.

Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Synod Council of the South Dakota Synod at its meeting on 10/21/2022, officially designates Box Elder Exploration as a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) Exploration and designates: the Rev. Carla Nelson as the exploration leader.

MSC

SC.2022.10.14

Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Synod Council of the South Dakota Synod at its meeting on 10/21/2022, officially designates Shepard's Table Exploration as a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) Exploration and designates: Vicar Sawyer Vanden Heuvel as the exploration leader.

MSC

SC.2022.10.15

Congregation Council Visits

The list of Congregation Council visits is available in the Google Drive. It is encouraged that members divide up and reach out to all of the congregations in their conference. A simple reporting form should be submitted after each visit.

What will you share?

- Synod Assembly details and the need to have voting members.
- The Holy Spirit is at work in the synod and the vacancies that have been filled, new starts, Neighbors in Solidary.
- Hard work being done to fill vacancies.
- The joys and complexity of being on Synod Council.
- Podcast for advent
- Coffee with the Bishop
- Sign Language classes available
- Importance of everyone's voice at the Synod Assembly
- A place where people are willing to help
- Shepard's Table authorization
- Marlee's prayer

Future Meeting

Exec: Dec 2, 2022, 3:00 pm central – synod office/Zoom

Exec: Feb 14, 2023, 2:00 pm central – synod office

Exec: Mar 9, 2023, 6:00 pm central – synod office

Synod Council: Mar 10, 2023, 8:30 am central – synod office/Haugo Room

Devotions: Rev. Wilbur Holz

Synod Assembly June 2-3, 2023 – Our Savior’s Lutheran, Sioux Falls

Synod Council June 3, 2023 after close of the assembly

Synod Retreat: Aug 17-19, 2023 – Rapid City or Outlaw? With road trips to Woyatan and Pine Ridge

Exec: Oct 19, 2023, 6:00 pm central – synod office

Synod Council: Oct 20, 2023, 8:30 am central – synod office/Haugo Room

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Jonathan Vehar, secretary