

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council
Haugo Room, Synod Office / Zoom
March 10, 2023**

Present: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, Dennis Thompson, Terry Johnson, Rev. Michael DeKraai, Michael Miller, Pam Seefeldt, Rev. Jackie Braun, Jim Iverson, Deacon Christie Meier, Dave Poppens, Rev. Jim Fowler, Rhonda Hansen, Jake Hoffner, Stan Jung, Rev. Dave Lund, Kelly Nelson, Jeff Clark, Bonny Hansen, Rev. Becky Senner, Rev. Wilbur Holz, Mallorie Schultz, Marlee Braun

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

Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:32 am on Friday, March 10, 2023.

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. Ramona Hayes of the Prairie Coteau Conference has moved out of the conference. The conference has lifted up the Rev. Michael DeKraai to fill the position.

**MSC to elect the Rev. Michael DeKraai to the Synod Council to the unexpired term vacated by the Rev. Ramona Hayes.
SC.2023.03.01**

Rev. Wilbur Holz led an opening prayer.

Roll Call and Introductions

Agenda

The agenda is in Google Drive.

**MSC to approve the agenda in the order that the chair deems most appropriate.
SC.2023.03.02**

Approve the Minutes

Minutes for the October 21, 2022 synod council meeting and October 21, 2022 executive session were approved electronically.

**MSC to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2022 synod council meeting and October 21, 2022 executive session.
SC.2023.03.03**

Bishop's Report

Confidentiality

2022 Ministry celebration

COB report:

Churchwide reports submitted on time - thank you Lois!

Renewing Lutheran Church commission selection process

Celebration of interest in lay education: 31 of 65 bishops attended breakout session

2025 Churchwide Assembly

SD Synod now incorporated in SD

Lay Academy – online learning management system/education collaboration

LEAD Playbook - six SD congregations (Augustana Lutheran SF, LCOOR, Trinity Rapid City, St. John Hot Springs, Peace SF, Good Shepherd Aberdeen)

Conference assemblies–expectation of attendance

Synod Assembly 2023 “Cultivate”

Associates to the Bishop Reports

Pastor Splichal Larson's written report is in the Google drive.

Current openings figure is at its lowest point in three years!

Extended discussion of expected candidacy challenges

Support to Ministry Committee task force working on Call Process manuals update

Hoping to record a video for a congregation to share the Sunday after a leader leaves a call

Working database for prospects around the world; inviting pastors vacationing in SD to pulpit supply

Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) Explorations midway reports

Vicar Sawyer Vanden Heuvel-Shepard's Table in Sioux Falls

Working with Pr Jonathan Steiner, DEM

Goal & Vision: Place for all people to belong, seen, heard, welcomed & fed in the name of Jesus Christ with no discrimination or exclusion but for LGBTQIA persons, church has been a place of exclusion, based on Jesus as shepherd seeking the lost sheep and Matthew Shepard, a college student in WY who was murdered because he was gay.

Model: Dinner church with relationships of hospitality, belonging, and generosity

Activity: Transformation Project of SD, SF Pride, LGBTQ community in SF, others doing similar work in ELCA (Nashville & SW TX Synod)

Viability Expectations: Yes - St. Mark's support, Transformation Project collaboration, excited, positive conversations and real potential for something new

Pastor Carla Nelson - Box Elder (half-time exploration)

Pastor Nelson has a 30 year history of pastoral ministry and is excited about the possibility of SAWC in Box Elder. Box Elder has explosive growth (pun not intended) of community in part because of the B21 bomber located at the nearby Air Force Base.

There is a definite need for ministry and viability potential

Lots of questions still need to be answered to determine the best form of ministry. Should this be a satellite or parallel or outreach of another congregation or a completely new start?

Conversations so far have included the AFB Chaplain, developers, and the mayor.

Four-pronged approach: Community, Ellsworth, Bear Butte Conference congregations.

Other denominations also exploring.

Open Door Task Force - Vicar Sawyer Vanden Heuvel, Sally Turner, Marlee Braun, Pastor Erik Thone

St. Mark's working to become Reconciling In Christ (RIC) congregation

Two additional sub-committees (1) Accompaniment to candidates of LGBTQIA+ community; and 2) Support of congregations who want to have a conversation about calling LGBTQIA+ pastor—7 different conversations/Bible studies available by spring theological)

Next steps - time at spring theological to hear from the team and ask questions; and introduction of team and resources at synod assembly

Comments from Pr. Renee Splichal Larson about transparency and support

Woyatan

Vicar Jonathan Old Horse joined

Introduction by Bishop Constanze relating path that began after her Installation in 2019 to entrust synod-owned buildings to the Woyatan community. The decision to transfer of ownership rests in the authority of the Synod Council and would be announced at 2023 Synod Assembly.

Vicar Jonathan Old Horse - appreciation for the opportunity to share in person; a 12-year path to this point; Woyatan official congregation for 10 years this summer; many challenges and unknowns; peaceful result despite biases and theological differences because of perseverance and courage; this is part of sovereignty and repudiation of Doctrine of Discovery; appreciation for the opportunity to travel to the Holy Land that brought hope and new perspective. Arriving at this point is evidence that Tunkasila has been listening. This will be an honoring of commitments that has not been accomplished by the federal government or Churchwide.

Motion and seconded to transfer all real estate and buildings of the Woyatan campus in Rapid City, South Dakota, from the South Dakota Synod, ELCA to the Woyatan Lutheran ELCA congregation under the direction of the Synod's legal counsel.

Discussion: Support will continue for Woyatan after the June transfer - history of Woyatan since 2005 and Wambli Ska ministry by Pr. Jonathan Steiner. Full status as a congregation since 2013. This will allow the self-determination of the congregation. Transfer at assembly falls in nicely with the 10-year anniversary of the congregation. Currently, budgeted support of Woyatan will continue, and they will continue as a Neighbors in Solidarity congregation unless future changes

are adopted by the council. The synod would intend to make repairs and upkeep to transfer property in good condition. Legal counsel will advise on the next steps.

One question about the commitment of Woyatan to ELCA. The process would be the same as any other congregation. Discussion about synod balance sheet and valuation—property is currently listed and valued at \$390,000.00. \$1.833M on Pennington County assessment statement. Additional costs of transfer considered. “Scandalous” gifts come with risks - a reminder of consideration of whether fears are realistic or based on non-European congregation recipients. The gift might not make sense on paper but it does relationally. There have been racist comments in Bear Butte conference from the dominant culture. Is this a gift or “reparations?” We are “entrusting this property to them” with avoidance of trigger words to encourage reconciliation and accomplish Gospel in recognition of one God, one Tunkasila, called as the body of Christ to reconcile, living God’s call as “both/and” Lutherans. Comment that this is not about “fair” - this is about fully establishing rights to humans that have existed for years and years. They have earned the right to be there through the creation of their own living, breathing congregation.

There will be thank you/appreciation expressed to all individuals and organizations that contributed to the construction of Wambli Ska Center.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes – 20

No - 1

Motion carried

SC.2023.03.04

Treasurer’s Report

Recap for closing fiscal year-end 01.31.2023 and revising fiscal year-end 01.31.2024 2023 (FYE 01.31.2024) mission plan revised – the proposed budget is approved at last year’s synod assembly; after closing the previous year, the Executive Committee revises the next year’s budget based on statements of intent and updated expenses. Pledges were discounted pledges by 2%. Added amount to misc. income with a special appeal for operating expenses of \$50,000– attached invitation letter to be mailed to congregational council presidents and active rostered leaders as soon as possible.

MSC to approve the revised budget for FYE 01.31.2024

SC.2023.03.05

Discussion regarding proposed FYE 01.31.2025

The proposed budget recommended by the executive committee reduced miscellaneous income back to \$1,000 and decreased mission support to churchwide to 41%. This is the proposed budget that will be presented at 2023 Synod Assembly. It will be important to celebrate South Dakota Synod ministries at the time budget is presented.

	Adopted 2023	Revised 2023	Proposed 2024
Revenue			
Mission Support			
Undesignated Mission Support	1,870,465	1,750,576	1,803,094
SD Synod Mission Support	25,000	28,675	28,675
Total Mission Support-Congregations	1,895,465	1,779,251	1,831,769
Program Ministry Income			
Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center Income	45,000	45,000	45,000
Total Program Ministry Income			
Other Income			
DEM Support Staff Income	10,000	10,000	10,000
Interest Income	10,000	10,000	10,000
SDS Travel LLC Income	5,000	5,000	5,000
Misc Income	1,000	50,000	1,000
Total Other Income	26,000	75,000	26,000
Total Revenue	1,966,465	1,899,251	1,902,769

Expenses			
Churchwide Ministries	43%	43%	41%
Churchwide Support	804,300	752,748	739,269
Region III			
Region III Support	7,260	8,004	8,004
South Dakota Ministries			
South Dakota Partnership Ministries			
SD Ministries Support	10,750	12,330	11,757
Luther Seminary	74,492	69,925	71,989
Church Colleges (ELCA Pool)	6,445	6,049	6,228
Lutheran Social Services	74,492	69,925	71,989
Campus Ministry	131,356	123,302	126,942
Lutheran Outdoors	37,151	34,873	35,903
South Dakota Supported Ministries			
Heartland Ephphatha	6,445	6,049	6,228
Youth Ministry	3,600	9,600	7,200
Campus Ministry Capital	1,030	1,030	0
Good Samaritan Society	1	1	1
Chapel in the Hills	1	1	1
Woyatan Lutheran/Wambli Ska	19,000	19,000	19,000
Lutheran Planned Generosity	58,300	58,300	58,300
Total Shared Ministries	423,063	410,385	415,538

Executive Leadership			
Bishop	96,675	99,034	102,005
Assoc/Director of Ev Mission	6,375	10,533	10,849
Assoc-Mobility/Candidacy	79,909	82,132	84,596
Executive Staff Benefits	106,192	86,940	89,546
Exec Travel/Continuing Ed	34,800	36,800	36,800
Program Ministries			
Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center-Director	98,872	96,302	99,257
Youth Gathering Synod Coordinator	6,959	0	0
Companion Synod Coordinator	15,839	18,008	18,521
Support Staff and Office			
Support Staff Salaries/Benefit	167,359	171,874	176,980
Synod Office Expenses	69,264	70,681	66,791
Augustana University Occupancy Fee	27,876	30,108	30,108
Synod Committees			
Synod Council	3,000	6,000	5,000
Support to Ministries Committee	2,100	3,100	3,100
Candidacy Committee	2,250	7,000	6,000
Multi-Cultural Ministry Committee	1,550	1,000	1,000
Companion Synods Ministry Committee	200	200	200
Evangelical Outreach Committee	1,500	1,500	1,500
Mission & Outreach			
Mission Congregation Start-up	4,000	4,000	4,000
Mission Strategy Table	2,000	2,000	2,000
Contingency			
	5,122	902	1,705
Total South Dakota Ministries	731,842	728,114	739,958
Total Expenses	1,966,465	1,899,251	1,902,769
Net Total	0	0	0

**MSC to present to the 2023 Synod Assembly the proposed Fiscal Year End
01.31.2025 mission plan for the South Dakota Synod.
SC.2023.03.06**

Endowment Report

Terry Johnson recapped the endowment balances. A reminder that much of the synod endowment fund is restricted to support programs and ministries. Distributions will be made in the spring of 2023.

Discussion of letter inviting a gift of \$1 per confirmed member to each congregation president and active rostered leader to address \$50,000 miscellaneous income line in the revised FYE 1.31.24 budget.

MSC to send attached letter with clarifying amendments regarding inclusion of Deacons and SAMS with possible follow-up in Fall 2023.
SC.2023.03.07

Report of Pastor Dan Johnson, Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center (PRRC)

Feeding ministry continues, 105 applications for energy assistance in two days after it went viral. Grants are coming in with success - one, in particular, was \$12,000+ to cover insurance costs for the center and vehicles. Very busy - big immersion group coming on Sunday. Have received deposits for six visiting groups. Everyone is always welcome to visit. The biggest help would be the hiring of another administrator and awareness in the Synod.

Discussion of PRRC Organizational Status

Receipt of large grant and tension because of ministry management previously directed solely by the Executive Director of PRRC. A question has been raised about whether a separate 501(c)(3) operated as an independent partner organization instead of synod-supervised would be beneficial. No resolution to the question today, but a dynamic that has caused tension. Many strong supporters, but the majority are from outside South Dakota. Importance of having people visit in person because of the resulting support. Most SD congregations haven't visited. Need for a smaller task force; discussions about potential board members for separate 501(c)(3). Intentional promotion of ELCA, Synod and Episcopal entities. Restriction due to hiring limits hampers ministry and would be helpful to have a voice in conversations. A lot of paperwork and back and forth with Lois Borchardt. What is the "why" of PRRC? Synod Council Retreat held at PRRC to see ministry firsthand - an opportunity for deeper discussion at that time.

Associates to the Bishop Reports continued

Pastor Steiner's verbal report - no specific reports outside agenda items - expressed appreciation for Woyatan transfer vote

Companion Synod and Rural Ministry Reports in Google Drive

Bishop will travel to Cameroon for a celebration in October and a delegation will visit South Dakota in June for a centennial celebration.

Rural Ministry continues to be positive and impactful.

Executive Committee Report by Dennis Thompson

The Executive Committee met in February with a revised budget discussion. Great detail work such as boundaries workshop \$1,000 excess moved back to undesignated funds. Approved \$2,000 for continuing education grants and unused staff Continuing Education used for synod staff retreat - clearing up books for year-end. Election for Bishop and Vice President and Secretary appointment of Treasurer all in 2025.

Roster Matters

The Synod moved into Executive Session. See separate minutes.

The Synod Council came out of executive session.

**MSC to report in the minutes of the Synod Council actions taken while in executive
SC.2023.03.08**

Actions taken while in executive session:

- **MSC to grant Chris Croghan On-Leave-from-Call effective 10/21/2022
SC.2023.03.09**
- **MSC to grant Katherine Eisele Renewal of On-Leave-from-Call effective
01/01/2021
SC.2023.03.10**
- **MSC to grant Kristi Gullickson Retirement effective 04/29/2022
SC.2023.03.11**
- **SMC to grant Pam Power On-Leave-from-Call effective 11/01/2022
SC.2023.03.12**
- **MSC to grant Tim Thies Retirement effective 02/20/2023
SC.2023.03.13**
- **MSC to remove Larry Jerke from Roster effective 12/10/2022
SC.2023.03.14**
- **MSC to approve the constitution of Trinity Lutheran, Mitchell, SD.
SC.2023.03.15**
- **MSC to approve the constitution of Spirit of Hope, Scotland, SD.
SC.2023.03.16**
- **MSC to approve the constitution of Spirit of Joy, Sioux Falls, SD.
SC.2023.03.17**
- **MSC to approve the constitution of First Lutheran, Volga, SD.
SC.2023.03.18**

Appreciation to donors and volunteers contributing to Wambli Ska/Woyatan Center will be through a video telling the story of ministry at Wambli Ska, to be shared at Synod assembly and with individuals and congregations.

Question about whether the council will hear the story in advance of release. Bishop will share communication strategy or via special council meeting ahead of synod assembly. Council members should be prepared for conversations. The message could include that this is different than “land back” or “reparations” - it is a transfer of property to an ELCA congregation. No action was taken.

Synod Grant Policy – The executive committee held a discussion and decision that anyone using the synod’s EIN must come before Exec committee for approval before submitting any grant application.

MSC to approve the Executive Committee recommendation that anyone using the South Dakota Synod's EIN when applying for any grant, must be approved by the executive committee before submitting a grant application.

EC.2023.03.19

Guest - Divine Cubwa

Brought greetings as an ambassador of Churchwide. Ms. Cubwa joined the meeting to listen to what should be shared with the ELCA Church Council.

- Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center Ministry
- Rural Ministry
- Lay Education
- McLaughlin Community Alliance Group
- Work empowered to do around inclusivity in congregations
- Witnessing/experiencing reconciliation at Spirit of Hope after difficult division
- Privilege to serve with leadership at Synod, passionate, concerned, so many gifts to offer and deeply care about how we do ministry in this context and rural place
- Peer group meetings; women rostered leaders meetings
- Hopeful reports about bringing rostered leaders to serve in the synod
- Two potential new church plants

Where have you seen God in your conversations?

- God is seen every time the body gathers, unafraid to lean into the both/and of our Lutheran doctrine.
- Courageous faithful leaders who are Gospel-centered and understand we don't all agree but all hear the same promise.
- God is seen in that we're not all in lockstep - ELCA has gray areas but still siblings in Christ thankful to walk together.
- God is evident in all the new ministries that originated in the SD Synod - from Pine Ridge to Shepherd's Table and Box Elder.
- Spirit of Hope is working in a torn rural community of 850 people.
- Post-covid conversation with Our Savior's in Bryant - an average of 50 in worship. They started broadcasting worship on Facebook Live, resulting in 500+ views of weekly Sunday worship, including members of armed forces stationed overseas. Satan gave us Covid as an illness and disease and tried to shut churches down but we're reaching ten times as many people now.
- Pastor Wilbur - gather with colleagues - God is present in that support and encouragement of one another.
- Pastor Mike - many of us learned resiliency during covid and a different world on the other side of it, but the joy in reconvening was unprecedented, with children in his congregation experiencing a musical revival. 20 Jr High kids in a bell choir. Elementary kids singing the liturgy. Hard that adults are not responding similarly - see it as a return to obligations, but kids speak well for the future.
- Pride for church to be able to wade into difficult waters and have conversations about welcoming ALL to the church - joyful for a welcoming reception.
- Synod Vice President call - someone shared that some aren't ready for changes, but it was stated that, "When we say all are welcome, *All* means **ALL**."

What does Divine know about SD? She has friends who live here and has been told it can get a little cold. She has visited and it's beautiful...and cold. Changes can be difficult, but Spirit evident in the changes and it can be beautiful. Perhaps it took Covid to bring some of these things to light. Very proud of how we are responding and excited to be a part of this church. Sometimes difficult to vocalize that excitement, but knows God is working in this church, which is beautiful to her. Grateful for info shared.

Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWC)

Renewing authorizations

**MSC to renew Synod Authorized Worshiping Community authorization for Pueblo de Dios, Sioux Falls, SD.
SC.2023.03.20**

**MSC to renew Synod Authorized Worshiping Community authorization for First Lutheran African Ministry, Sioux Falls, SD.
SC.2023.03.21**

**MSC to renew Synod Authorized Worshiping Community authorization for Church on the Street, Sioux Falls, SD.
SC.2023.03.22**

**MSC to renew Synod Authorized Worshiping Community authorization for Spirit of Hope, Scotland, SD.
SC.2023.03.23**

Synod council approved policy is that assembly will be the first weekend after Memorial Day. There has been a request to have the 2024 Synod Assembly in Rapid City and with the Bishop election in 2025, that assembly be in Sioux Falls.

**MCS to have the 2024 Synod Assembly May 31 – June 1, 2024 at Calvary Lutheran, Rapid City.
SC.2023.03.24**

**MCS to have the 2025 Synod Assembly May 30 – 31, 2025 at Our Savior's Lutheran, Sioux Falls.
SC.2023.03.25**

Information was shared about how to access the Life of Faith video series housed on Synod website.

August Synod Council Retreat at Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center - informal poll of who plans to attend

Evangelical Outreach Committee (EOC) and Multicultural Committee (MC):

Multicultural Committee: Low investment in committees in the past; concern about conversations about people without them in the room - white business meeting; covid derailed plans to get more involved with ministries. Need to advocate within congregations, at synod council, and to ELCA.

Evangelical Outreach committee continues to meet, but Pr Jonathan often provides reports for most ministries; inevitably, "Pastor Jonathan, what do you think?" and that suggestion approved. Shouldn't be a rubber stamp committee. Committees should be invested in the ministries and take responsibility for engagement with ministries supported by committees. High investment work.

Hope that slate of new nominees will live into that work.

What will you share?

- Pr David Lund - rural ministry emphasis of 2023 Synod Assembly, Rapid City in 2024 and Bishop Election in 2025. Shepherd's Table & Box Elder are viable new ministries.
- Pr Becky will share at conference meetings about Woyatan - good news of things happening in the Synod and at Spirit of Hope, continuation of healing in response to roster matters and renewed authorization as SAWC.
- Stan - encouraged by all the great things happening across the synod.
- Pr Wilbur - Share news of Woyatan and an invitation to visit Woyatan and Wambli Ska to ally ungrounded fears and hesitation
- Deacon Christie - young congregation with parents steeped in mortgages and school loans and inward focus will be reminded that we are part of a greater ministry across the state and beyond
- Dennis - review of mission plan with deficit usually assumes cuts, but encouraged by ask to increase gifts instead of cutting programs. That's a positive response.

Future Meeting

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

Synod Council June 3, 2023 after close of the assembly - Deacon Christie Meier opening prayer

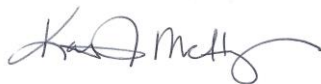
Synod Retreat: Aug 17-19, 2023 – Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center

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,



Kathy McHenry, recorder