

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council
Pine Ridge, SD
August 18-19, 2023**

Present: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, Dennis Thompson, Terry Johnson, the Rev. Jonathan Vehar, the Rev. Michael DeKraai, Kristi Anderson, SAM, John Rasmussen, Deacon Christie Meier, Dave Poppens, Jeff Clark, Bonny Hansen, Malcom Chapman, the Rev. Wilbur Holz, the Rev. Jackie Braun, Marlee Braun, Gary Kaufmann, Chad Nilson, the Rev. Dave Lund, Rhonda Hansen, the Rev. Alyssa Mitchell, the Rev. Becky Senner, Jody Johnson, Juan Angel

Staff: Lois Borchardt, the Rev. Jonathan Steiner, the Rev. Dan Johnson, Kathy McHenry

Virgil Red Cloud Goode, Jr. led in an opening prayer and smudging ceremony.

Thompson called the meeting to order on Friday at 10:10 a.m.

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.

The council members introduced themselves.

Approve the Agenda

The agenda is available in the Google Drive.

to adopt the agenda as the chair deems most appropriate.

MSC

SC.2023.08.01

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the 2023 Synod Assembly are available in the Google Drive.

to approve the minutes of the 2023 Synod Assembly.

MSC

SC.2023.08.02

The minutes of the June 3, 2023 meeting are in the Google Drive.

to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2023 meeting of the Synod Council.

MSC

SC.2023.08.03

Board Orientation

All documents are 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. They are public documents once approved by the Synod Council. Approval can be either by email or at the next synod council meeting..

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. Vouchers for travel expenses associated with official travel are available from Lois Borchardt.

Vision for the Synod

Bishop Hagmaier shared the Mission Statement, *Journeying Together in Christ*, which was developed after listening posts conducted right after the 2019 Synod Assembly. While this work was done pre-pandemic, she feels that much of the joys and concerns are the same and may be even more true.

ELCA Structure

The Rev. Secretary Jonathan Vehar offered a review of the ELCA structure in three expressions. He also outlined, in general, the governing documents of the various expressions of the church.

Partner and Supported Ministries

The Rev. Jonathan Steiner outlined the partnership between the synod and supported ministries. Many of these ministries are referred to as “Neighbors in Solidarity” or Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities. Some are both. A full description of the synod’s partner ministries is available on the synod website.

Reports

Treasurer’s Report

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the synod’s financial reports and how to read the reports. One half into the year, Mission Support has been received at 51% of the budget and is right in line with the 5-year trend. Expenses to the synod are at 50.4% of the budget and are also in line with the historical trend.

To address an expected deficit in Mission Support after receiving statements of intent from congregations, an appeal letter was sent out to all congregations describing the need and highlighting the synod's expanding work in supporting rural ministry. So far, 39 congregations responded with an additional gift totaling \$24,000.

The endowment is doing well at this point in the year, following more turbulent fluctuation at the beginning of 2023.

Executive Committee Report

The Executive Committee met on the previous evening. As a part of their work, they approved grant requests for Rostered and Lay Leaders and selected Portico Silver+ Level A as the benefit level for the synod staff. At a previous meeting, the committee also authorized savings to be placed in a money market account and anticipated a gain of \$30,000 in this current fiscal year.

Election of Executive Committee

The Synod Council needs to elect one vice-chair and three members-at-large.

Dave Poppens was nominated as vice-chair.

to elect Dave Poppens to a one-year term as vice-chair of the Executive Committee.

MSC

SC.2023.08.04

Malcom Chapman, the Rev. Jackie Braun, and Bonnie Hansen were nominated as members-at-large.

to elect Malcom Chapman, the Rev. Jackie Braun, and Bonnie Hansen to a one-year term as members-at-large on the Executive Committee.

MSC

SC.2023.08.05

Lutheran Planned Geneoristy

Kathy McHenry thanked the synod for being called to this work and feels she has the best job in the synod. August is National Make a Will month, and she stressed both the importance and benefits of having a plan in place.

Associate Report

The Rev. Renee Splichal Larson is on sabbatical.

The Rev. Jonathan Steiner

Pastor Steiner will be concluding his call as Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM) and Associate to the Bishop at the end of September. He thanked the synod for the time he has been able to spend and feels accomplished in many ways. He noted that the Bishop will invite leaders from Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWC) to accompany synod staff on visits to congregations to help form relationships and tell the story of what those ministries do.

Spirit of Hope is at the end of one grant cycle and the synod plans to ask for renewal. Grants from the ELCA will be applied for to cover the startup of the Box Elder mission development as soon as a Mission Developer can be identified. It was highly recommended that the developer be an individual who has current or past military credentials that would allow them access to the Ellsworth Air Force base.

A grant will also be sought for Shepherd's Table in Sioux Falls. Action is needed by the Synod Council to formally declare Shepherd's Table a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community.

Resolved:

Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the South Dakota Synod

**Council at its meeting on August 18, officially designates Shepherd's Table as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) and designates as their servant leader: Sawyer Vanden Heuvel.
SC.2023.08.06**

FaithX - 20 congregations have used this tool in helping to understand their community better.

Recessed

As a part of the afternoon, the Synod Council members were invited to tour the town of Pine Ridge, seeing a number of the important ministries of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center (PRRC) at work, visit a buffalo ranch, and visit the historic site of the Wounded Knee massacre led by the grandson of an eyewitness to the events. The evening concluded with fellowship and Holy Communion worship.

Thompson called the meeting to order on Saturday, August 19 at 9:00 a.m.

Bishop's Report

Lilly Grant: The synod has applied for a grant from the Lilly Foundation to promote faith formation in the synod in creative ways. Awards will be announced sometime in the Fall.

DEM Call Process – The Director of Evangelical Mission is a churchwide position embedded in the South Dakota Synod; therefore, the call process is initiated by the churchwide organization. Interviews have begun, and November 1 is a likely start date for the new DEM. There had been some discussion as to whether to continue with the position as a churchwide employee or to switch the employer to the synod. It was determined to keep the position at the churchwide level because they would offer a severance package in the case of a bishop transition.

Kimball Protestant Parish

The Bishop shared that she is working with the Kimball Protestant Parish after the United Methodist faction of the congregation disaffiliated with the UMC and joined a church body that does not have a full communion agreement with the ELCA. The Lutheran segment of this community wishes to remain in the ELCA.

Staff Reports – See Google Drive for written reports from Rev. Dr. Aaron Matson, Companion Synods and Rev. Alan Blankenfeld, Rural Ministry Liaison.

Board Book

A Synod Council policy and procedures book is still in development and will assist in defining the work of the Synod Council, Executive Committee, and other entities of the Synod.

Synod Assembly

Due to staff transitions at Calvary Lutheran in Rapid City, they have formally asked that the Synod Council reconsider hosting the Synod Assembly at Calvary in 2024.

to relocate the 2024 Synod Assembly to Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD.

MSC

SC.2023.08.07

Each year the Synod Assembly generates a revenue that has traditionally been saved to cover the cost of bishop election and transitions in the Office of the Bishop.

to transfer \$25,000 from the Synod Assembly fund to the Bishop Transition Fund.

MSC

SC.2023.08.08

Extraordinary Gifts – The Synod Council had previously approved a plan to use extraordinary gifts resulting of the generosity of congregations at the beginning of the pandemic. Elements of that initial plan will not be realized, nor the funds expended. The synod staff will be presented a revised plan at a future meeting of the council.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has two vacancies and a third position that is eligible for reelection.

to elect to the Audit Committee for a first year-three term Eric Gilbertson and John Rasmussen, and to a second three-year term, Angie Hillestad.

MSC

SC.2023.08.09

Roster Matters – inform only.

Ralph Egbert – Transferred to Northeastern MN Synod effective 6/23/23

Randy Fett – Transferred into SD from Northwest Synod of WI, effective 8/16/23

Joy Proper – Transferred into SD from Oregon Synod effective 7/17/23

Kyle Svennungsen – Transferred into SD from La Crosse Area Synod effective 9/25/23

Other Roster Matters will be addressed in Executive Session.

to enter executive session for personal matters.

MSC

SC.2023.08.10

Synod Council meet in Executive Session.

Exit Executive Session

to come out of Executive Session and to report all actions taken in the minutes.

MSC

SC.2023.08.16

****Actions Taken While in Executive Session****

Marcia Brennan is requesting On-Leave-from-Call effective 4/10/23.

to grant the Rev. Marcia Brennan On-Leave-from-Call effective 4/10/23.

MSC

SC.2023.08.11

Randy Fett is requesting a Letter of Call from the synod to serve as Intentional Interim at Calvary, Rapid City, effective 8/16/23.

to issue a Letter of Call to the Rev. Randy Fett as Interim Pastor at Calvary Lutheran, Rapid City, effective 8/16/2023.

MSC

SC.2023.08.12

Erika Lehmann is requesting Retirement status effective 8/01/23.

to grant the Rev. Erika Lehmann retirement roster status effective 8/1/2023.

MSC

SC.2023.06.13

Lars Olson is requesting renewal of On-Leave-from-Call effective 7/01/22.

to grant the Rev. Lars Olson a renewal of On-Leave-from-Call begun on 7/01/22.

MSC

SC.2023.08.14

Becky Piper is requesting On-Leave-from-Call effective 8/27/23.

to grant the Rev. Becky Piper On-Leave-from-Call effective 8/27/2023.

MSC

SC.2023.08.15

End of Actions Taken While in Executive Session

Congregation Constitutions

The Synod Council approves constitutions from congregations upon recommendation of the a member of the Synod Constitution Committee.

to approve the constitution adopted by Good Shepherd, Aberdeen.

MSC

SC.2023.06.17

Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center

The Synod Council was able to spend a significant amount of time with leaders of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center. On note, Pastor Dan requested assistance in the development of a board that would be able to assist in the oversight of the ministry. The Rev. Wibur Holz, the Rev. Jackie Braun, Mr. Malcom Chapman, and the Rev. Jonathan Vehar volunteered.

The ministry of Pine Ridge falls under five pillars.

Threshold ministry – that dispurses needed items to the community (food, diapers, other donated items)

Kids Program – summer and afterschool program for elementary school aged students.

Immersion Ministry – hosts groups throughout the year for a cultural immersion to understand the people, traditions, challenges, and blessings of living on Pine Ridge.

Teen Program – Works to mentor teen.

Energy Matching Program – distributes funds to cover utilities in the winter for propane or electric – \$65,000 was given last year in energy assistance.

The Homeless Shelter has been an additional program run by the reconciliation center, which is outside of the core mission, but was an immediate need that tribal leadership asked the PRRC to coordinate.

Future Meetings

A. Exec: November 2, 2023, 6:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls

B. Synod Council: November 3, 2023, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, WestSide Lutheran, Sioux Falls

C. Exec: February 13, 2024, 2:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls

D. Exec: March 14, 2024, 6:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls

E. Synod Council: March 15, 2024, 8:30 am, TBD, Sioux Falls

F. Synod Assembly: May 31-June 1, 2024,

G. Synod Assembly: May 31-31, 2025, Our Savior's Lutheran, Sioux Falls

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Jonathan Vehar, secretary