

South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council Retreat
St. John American Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD
August 9-10, 2024

Present: Dennis Thompson, Jill Beers, Terry Johnson, Kristie Anderson, Rev. Michael DeKraai, John Rasmussen, Rev. Jackie Braun, Marlee Braun, Gary Kaufmann, Deacon Christie Meier, Cristy Harkness, Jake Hoffner, Rev. Jeff Otterman, Kelly Nelson (online), Chad Nilson, Rev. Justin Van Orman, Bonny Hansen, Rev. Becky Senner, Rev. Wilbur Holz, Craig Pfeifle, Juan Angel, Danielle Toates, Lois Borchardt, Kathy McHenry, Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Rev. Jonathan Vehar

Guests: Victoria Flood, Sr. Director for Mission Support ELCA, Rev. Andrea DeGroot Nesdahl

Call to Order

Dennis Thompson called the meeting to order.

Land Acknowledgement read by Rev. Jonathan Vehar

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.

Opening Prayer

Rev. Renee Splichal Larson led the opening prayer from The Book of Awakening.

Roll Call

Roll call and introduction of guests was taken. Any corrections should be forwarded to Lois at lborchardt@sdsynod.org.

Approve Agenda

The agenda was available in Google Drive.

MSC to approve the agenda in the order as the chair deems most appropriate.
SC.2024.08.01

Approve Minutes

The minutes from the June 1, 2024 Synod Council meeting are available in Google Drive.

**MSC to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2024 Synod Council meeting.
SC.2024.08.02**

Board Orientation, Development and Education

The Synod Council was introduced to the Synod Council Board Book which is available in Google Drive.

A new item for the Synod Council is a board covenant. As members of the Synod Council of the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA, we are entrusted with the responsibility of the leadership of our synod. We seek to honor our responsibility through covenants to God; the synod; its congregations and ministries; our churchwide ministries; and to each other. Each synod council member would be asked to read and sign the covenant.

**MSC to adopt the South Dakota Synod Council Covenant.
SC.2024.08.03**

Dennis Thompson discussed the importance of confidentiality. Confidentiality forms were passed out and the members signed and returned the forms.

Bishop Election Survey committee

Rev. Cassandra Lamb discussed the Bishop Election Survey that went out on July 31. The questions are based on the model from churchwide. September 4, 2024 is the end date for surveys to be filled out. Council members are asked to encourage people to fill out the survey. She will give a report on the results at the October meeting.

Board Orientation, Development and Education, continued

Constitutions - Rev. Jonathan Vehar explained that constitutions help us offer structure to our mission.

- a. ELCA Constitution
- b. Synod Constitution
Congregation Constitution
- c. Structure of the ELCA

Changes at churchwide assembly must also be recognized in our local constitutions. Dennis suggested looking at the bishop election in the constitution.

First talk by Victoria Flood, Sr. Director for Mission Support in the ELCA

Victoria had each member answer the question "What is the SD Synod". She also discussed Pew research and explained that a lot has come out after the pandemic.

Board Orientation, Development and Education, continued

Council Responsibilities for the Roster - Renee Splichal Larson

Christie Meier discussed SAMs. Council responsibilities for the Roster document is in the Board book. Renee discussed the Roster Management Glossary. Sabbatical is a policy with each congregation. Renewals can be requested for leave from call.

Shepherd's Table - Rev. Sawyer Vanden Heuvel

Rev. Sawyer gave an overview of Shepherd's Table. It was launched in December of 2023. They meet at the Prism Center. The format is dinner church is a basic service with worship and communion followed by a full meal for all. They have partnered with COTS for a Pride service this spring. They joined at the Multicultural Center and used round tables.

Church on the Street - Rev. Chris Matson

This church was built in Sioux Falls for the unhoused or sparsely housed. The idea is taking the gifts of the church out to the people. Currently they worship at Heritage Park on the second Saturday of the month.

Break for lunch

Afternoon Session

First Lutheran African Ministry

A field trip was planned, but timing didn't work out. Rev. Jonathan Vehar gave a presentation on FLAM. They now worship just off of Kiwanis & 12th Street where they are renting two store fronts. Congregants are basically from Liberia. It is decorated with Liberian flags. Worship is in English. Rev. Jonathan worshiped with them on Father's Day. Challenges are that they were basically formed out of one church. The congregation is basically born out of poverty. Offering goes to rent. They get help from churchwide, Neighbors in Solidarity (NiS) and the synod. Worship is very lively. It is suggested that outside groups, such as confirmation classes, visit and try to form relationships.

Board Orientation, Development and Education, continued

Partner & Supported Ministries-Rev. Jonathan Vehar

Rev. Jonathan Vehar listed the different ministries that we currently partner with. He noted that DSU in Madison is looking into Campus Ministry. Box Elder is working to get a mission start and call a Mission Developer. They have met with the Zoning Board. They are filling out paperwork and hope to have it together by the end of the year. Box Elder doesn't have community space to rent.

Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center

Work is being done to get the Articles of Incorporation finished. The model follows the job corps model. We need the cooperation of the Job Corps.

New Business

Lutheran Planned Generosity Charter recommendation

Lutheran Planned Generosity (LPG) operates under the synod's EIN. LPG has its own governing board and separate financial statements. No governing documents have been found.

The LPG board and executive director Kathy McHenry request that the synod council approve the charter for LPG.

MS to approve the *Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota* charter as presented.

Motion did not pass.

Discussion was held on the language surrounding dissolution.

MSC to approve the *Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota* charter as presented with the addition of the language any proposal to dissolve shall be approved by the Council.

SC.2024.08.04

Farm to Table

Farm to Table will be September 8 at Grand Valley Lutheran Church, rural Canton. RSVP is due by September 4. In the future this will be a biannual event. Farm to Table is a fundraiser for rural ministry.

Round Table Discussions

The committee was divided into three groups for Round Table Discussions. Presenting were Rev. Jonathan Vehar and Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, associates to the bishop and Dennis Thompson, Executive Committee. Rev. Jonathan and Rev. Renee's reports can be found in Google Drive. The three rotated between the groups.

Remove S9.01.A20 from the SD Synod Constitution

Language was added to the constitution regarding election of synod council members after the 2020 synod assembly was cancelled due to COVID.

MSC to rescind S9301.A20 from the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the synod.

SC.2024.08.05

Review S7.21.A04 in the SD Synod Constitution

S7.21.A04 in the SD Synod Constitution regards synod assembly voting members. The constitution should be updated to conform to churchwide language defining the term 'youth' and 'young adult'. Language should also be updated to where congregational baptized membership total come from since a South Dakota Synod Handbook is no longer publish.

MSC to amend S7.21.A07 as follows: Any congregation of this synod which elects as a voting member a youth or young adult as defined in the Principals of Organization 16-21 year old as a voting member shall be granted one additional voting member. The term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service.

The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service. Any congregation of this synod which elects a person of color and/or a person whose primary language is other than English as a voting member shall also be granted one additional voting member. The number of lay voting members per congregation is determined by the following scale: (table inserted) Figures used are the published baptized membership totals from the most recent South Dakota Synod Handbook most recently reported by congregations through the annual Parochial Reports.
SC.2024.08.06

Executive Committee election

The Executive Committee consists of the Synod Bishop, the Synod Vice President, the Synod Secretary, the Synod Treasurer, the vice chair of the Synod Council and three members at large, elected by the Synod Council from its own membership for a one-year term.

MSC to elect Bonny Hanson to a one-year term as vice-chair of the Synod Council.
SC.2024.08.07

MSC to elect Rev. Jackie Braun, John Rasmussen and Jeff Clark to a one-year term as members-at-large on the Executive Committee.
SC.2024.08.08

Synod Assembly

Terry Johnson reviewed the 2024 synod assembly financial report. It can be found in Google Drive.

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.

MSC to transfer \$30,000 from the Synod Assembly fund to the Bishop Transition Fund.
SC.2024.08.09

Afternoon break

Roster Matters

Inform Only

Rev. David Bacon - Transferred to Virginia Synod effective 5/29/24

Other roster matters will be addressed in Executive Session

MSC to enter executive session for roster matters.
SC.2024.08.10

Synod Council met in Executive Session.

Exit Executive Session

**MSC to come out of executive session and report all actions taken in the minutes.
SC.2024.08.16**

Rev. Jim Fowler is requesting retirement effective 09/01/24

**MSC to grant Rev. Jim Fowler retirement effective 9/01/24.
SC.2024.08.11**

Rev. Greg Johnson is requesting retirement effective 7/01/24

**MSC to grant Rev. Greg Johnson Retirement effective 7/01/24. S
C.2024.08.12**

Rev. Joel Pakan is requesting a Specialized Synod Letter of Call to serve as Director for Rural Ministry for the South Dakota Synod effective 7/01/24

**MSC to grant Rev. Joel Pakan a Specialized Synod Letter of Call to serve as
Director for Rural Ministry effective 7/01/24.
SC.2024.08.13**

Rev. Dr. Ann Pederson is requesting retirement effective 5/31/24

**MSC to grant Rev. Dr. Ann Pederson retirement effective 5/31/24.
SC.2024.08.14**

Rev. David Zellmer is requesting a Specialized Synod Letter of Call to serve as Interim Executive Director of Lutheran Outdoors in SD effective 7/29/24

**MSC to grant Rev. David Zellmer a Specialized Synod Letter of Call to serve as
Interim Executive Director of Lutheran Outdoors in SD effective 7/29/24.
SC.2024.08.15**

Congregational Matters

Inform only

Lake Preston Lutheran, Lake Preston - 2nd vote to leave the ELCA on 8/25/24

North Preston Lutheran, Lake Preston - 2nd vote to leave the ELCA on 8/25/24

Audit Committee members election

The audit committee consists of 3-6 persons. Members are elected by the Synod Council for a term of 3 years and are eligible for re-election to a second consecutive 3-year term. Dick Ellis and Holly Brunick have completed their first 3-year term.

**MSC to elect to the Audit Committee for a second three-year term Dick Ellis and
Holly Brunick.
SC.2024.08.17**

Buntrock Scholarship

Rev. Renee Splichal Larson and Rev. Andrea DeGroot Nesdahl serve on the Buntrock Scholarship committee. They reported that there were 87 applicants for the scholarship. Thirty-five were selected: 21 from South Dakota, 11 from Minnesota, 1 from Iowa and 2 from Wisconsin. The Synod Council will provide the first meal of the scholars as a cohort in late September.

Meeting recessed for supper with Pueblo de Dios at Augustana Lutheran Church.

Saturday, August 10, 2024

Dennis Thompson reconvened the meeting.

Victoria Flood, Sr. Director for Mission Support, ELCA led the devotion. Her talk was based on the statement "By being church together we are part of a greater plan."

Kathy McHenry from Lutheran Planned Generosity presented to the group the benefits of LPG and services that it offers to congregations and individuals.

Future Meetings

- A. Farm to Table: September 8, 2024, 4:00, Grand Valley Lutheran, rural Canton
- B. Exec: October 17, 2024, 6:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls
- C. Synod Council: October 18, 2024, 8:30 am First Lutheran, Mitchell
- D. Exec: February 12, 2025, 2:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls
- E. Conference ASsemblies: February 23, 2025
- F. Exec: March 13, 2025, 6:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls
- G. Synod Council: March 14, 2025, 8:30 am, TBD
- H. Synod Assembly: May 30-31, 2025, Our Savior's Lutheran, Sioux Falls

The meeting was adjourned. The Synod Council was invited to attend a church service with Church on the Street at Heritage Park in Sioux Falls.

Respectfully submitted

Jill Beers, Synod Council Secretary