

**South Dakota Synod, ELCA  
Synod Council  
Haugo Room, Augustana University & Zoom  
October 22, 2021**

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

Absent: Caylee White Eagle

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

Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:33 am.

Rev. Jonathan Steiner read the Land Acknowledgment.

Bishop Constanze led in an opening prayer.

Terry Zell has resigned from the Synod Council. The Prairie Rivers Conference is working on a replacement.

Approve the Agenda

The agenda for the special meeting is on Google Drive. There is an addition to item 12.B.

**MSC to adopt the agenda as amended.**

**SC.2021.10.01**

The previous meeting minutes were distributed electronically.

**MSC to adopt the minutes of the August 20-21, 2021 minutes.**

**SC.2021.10.02**

### **Bishop's Report**

Bishop Hagmaier reminded the council of the confidentiality of the council preceding. Minutes released are in draft form and remain embargoed until approved and placed on the website.

The review of Luther House of Studies has been conducted, and findings made available first to the Luther House of Studies Executive Committee, Advisory Board and now Synod Council. A final recommendation with suggested changes to the curriculum and program is being finalized. For this work to continue, confidentiality is essential as a number of questions still need to be addressed.

Insurance Renewed— rates will rise in two areas, first to cover the sweatlodges at Woyatan Lutheran. This type of ministry is hard to cover by underwriters but is an important aspect of

Woyatan's ministry and spiritual practice. Second, the increase in cyber attacks against businesses has raised rates as there are concerns about adequate coverage.

Youth Gathering Coordinator – Tami Steffensen has been hired as the synod's Youth Gathering Coordinator. She will help congregations prepare for the Youth Gathering the summer of 2022. Kelsey Lyndoe had previously serviced in this role and resigned when she moved. The subsequent Youth Gathering will occur in 2024.

Staff Affirmation – Reviews of the staff have been completed. This is an opportunity for the bishop to perform evaluations and identify areas of needed growth and support and celebrate the excellent ministry that we do together.

Data-entry – at the end of the fiscal year, there is a large influx of data entry with updates from congregations. A student worker will be hired for short-term data entry projects to help alleviate this backlog from current staff.

Churchwide Restructuring – the positions of Director of Evangelical Mission are changing throughout the ELCA. There is a proposal to change the employment status of the DEMs from churchwide to synod staff with a grant provided by churchwide. This would not affect the South Dakota Synod as we are already prepared for that switch in our mission plan and organizational structure.

Churchwide Assembly - will convene in August of 2022. Of interest at next year's assembly, an election of the ELCA Vice-president and a member of the ELCA Church Council. More information on these elections will be coming from churchwide.

The bishop was able to be present at the Crossroads Conference WELCA Gathering. She reflected that the church women's organization has shaped congregations in an unmeasurable way, often leading the way in such areas as the ordination of women and conversations on racism. Unfortunately, congregations leaving the ELCA often don't realize what is being lost.

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

The Rev. Renee Splichal Larson:

A written report was available in the Google Drive with updates on congregation openings, students in candidacy, and assignments. In addition, Pastor Renee overviewed the process for call and how the synod has changed how openings are listed to make it clear where each congregation is at in the process. She noted that there is not a pastor shortage in the ELCA, but a distribution problem. Areas like the Twin Cities have an abundance of pastoral candidates, which is not the case for rural areas. The synod continues to be creative in how the spiritual needs of congregations are addressed.

The Rev. Jonathan Stiener:

Neighbors in Solidarity (NiS) has added two new ministries to the existing six partnerships, the Community Alliance Group in McLaughlin and Spirit of Hope Lutheran Church in Scotland, SD. CAG is a separate 501(c)3 out of Redeemer Lutheran Church looking at meeting community needs. Spirit of Hope Lutheran is a new start congregation in Scotland, SD, where the ELCA congregation is undergoing disaffiliation.

FaithX is a tool the synod is using to help understand local demographics. It is being used in the Ministry Site Profiles for congregations entering the call process. Over twenty congregations have used it in the second half of this year. Six other congregations have gone through a consultation with Pastor Steiner that allows them to take a deeper dive into the community demographics.

At the 2021 Synod Assembly, Steiner made the challenge for congregations to include NiS in their budgets along with establishing a covenant relationship with a partner ministry. These connections are important ways that congregations and mission partners journey together and mutual grow. Mission partner covenants are about more than financial gifts and can be creative in how the relationship forms.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Mission Support year-to-date is at 67.2% of the budget and within the historical trend from congregations.

The current operating reserves are at \$183,721, also within the range of the past five years. Overall, there is nothing of particular note. The Executive Committee monitors budget revenue and spending and makes revisions to the adopted budget in February after the congregation has submitted estimates of giving for the next fiscal year.

### **Companion Synod Report**

There is a written report in Google Drive. On highlight, the Lutheran Church of Cameroon has a new bishop. However, information is still coming out slowly about the transition.

The Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope in Nicaragua is in a tenuous political environment. However, a ministry out of Flandreau, SD, Helping Kids Round First, has supported hunger relief. Val Parsley inquired about support from the synod for shipping a food container. Thompson reported that the Executive Committee approved \$5,000 for these efforts.

### **Executive Committee Report**

The committee met the previous evening and approved \$5,000 for Helping Kids Round First to address hunger issues in Nicaragua. The "Beyonce Mass," a worship experience being planned by Augustana University in partnership with Our Savior's Lutheran and the SD Synod, has been canceled. Funds were approved to replenish the synod's Sabbatical Grants program. Sabbatical grants have in the past been made available at \$1,000 for the rostered leader and \$1,000 for the congregation for pulpit supply.

Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center – approved credit cards for center staff, reviewed fiscal controls for Energy Assistance Fund, and added Nicholas Briening to the PRRC checking account to sign checks when Pr. Johnson is not available.

### **Old Business**

Synod Assembly offering. The Bishop recommended that the offering for the 2022 Synod Assembly be split in three for Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, Woyatan Lutheran, and McLaughlin Community Alliance Group.

**MSC to designate the offering from the 2022 Synod Assembly to the Native Ministries of the SD Synod: Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, Woyatan Lutheran, and McLaughlin CAG.**

**SC.2021.10.03**

Incorporation – The synod attorney is still working on the process and documents needed to change the synod’s incorporation from Minnesota to South Dakota.

**New Business**

Spirit of Hope Lutheran Church – Spirit of Hope is a new start congregation in Scotland, SD. As a new ministry, they will need to be designated as a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC), which will open up resources from the synod and churchwide organization. This new start is formed from a remnant of Zion Lutheran that is undergoing much conflict as leaders are pushing to disaffiliate from the ELCA. Representatives of the mission start greeted the council and shared about the developments in their community.

**MSC to designate Spirit of Hope Lutheran Church, Scotland as a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community.**

**SC.2021.10.04**

Transfer of Property to Woyatan Lutheran

There is a desire to transfer the legal ownership of the property of Woyatan Lutheran Church and Wambli Ska Center from the synod to the Woyatan congregation. However, the process of transferring the property comes with legal questions, and we want to make sure that the congregation is prepared that receiving the building is a gift and that it does not become an unmanageable burden.

**Synod Assembly COVID-19 Policies**

The 2022 Synod Assembly will be held at Our Savior’s Lutheran in Sioux Falls. The congregation currently has COVID-19 protocols in place. Since many congregations elect voting members at annual meetings in January, it would be good to let churches know now what the requirements will be.

**MSC to facilitate an in-person Synod Assembly, the Synod Council establishes as the COVID-19 policy of the 2022 Synod Assembly:**

- 1) require either proof of vaccination or a negative test within 72 hours of the assembly**
- 2) to follow the policy of the host church in regards to mask protocols.**

**These policies are subject to change.**

**SC.2021.10.05**

## **Lutheran Planned Generosity of SD**

Kathy McHenry presented two documents for consideration by the Synod Council. The first would establish a Non-Advised Charitable Fund, which would allow individuals to designate gifts to a specific ministry over a multi-year period. This fund is being created with the primary benefit to allow those who are 70 ½ and over who receive required minimum distributions from a qualifying retirement account. Current policies would require that the whole amount be given in one year.

**MSC to establish a Non-Advised Charitable Fund and adopt as policies and procedures the Statement of Mission Objectives and Strategies for Investment and Management of Assets of the Non-Advised Charitable Fund of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA.**  
**SC.2021.10.06**

**MSC to approve the donor material and application for the Non-Advised Charitable Fund of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA.**  
**SC.2021.10.07**

## **Congregation Visits**

Pastor Steiner explained that synod council members visit congregations to thank them for the partnership that we share. A list of congregations to be visited in each of the conferences and a script for calls are in the synod council Google Drive. Council members should reach out to arrange a time to visit Congregation Councils.

## **Roster Matters**

Inform only

Charles Bunk – Transferred to Northwest Synod of WI effective 09/08/2021  
Barb Bunk - Transferred to Northwest Synod of WI effective 09/08/2021  
Ben Eisele – Transferred to Saint Paul Area Synod effective 10/01/2021  
Kristen Eisele – Transferred to Saint Paul Area Synod effective 10/01/2021  
Debra Jones – Transferred from Southern Ohio Synod into SD Synod effective 10/11/2021  
Arlyn Rusche – Transferred from Lower Susquehanna Synod into SD Synod effective 09/01/2021

## **Action Needed**

Elizabeth Johnson - Requesting renewal of Family On-Leave-from-Call effective 09/01/2016.  
**MSC to grant renewal of Family On-Leave-from-Call first approved on 9/01/2016 to the Rev. Elizabeth Johnson.**  
**SC.2021.10.08**

Greg Myrmoe – Requesting Retirement effective 01/01/2022  
**MSC to approve retirement roster status for the Rev. Greg Myrmoe effective 01/01/2022.**  
**SC.2021.10.09**

Paul Rohde – Requesting Retirement effective 11/01/2021  
**MSC to approve retirement roster status for the Rev. Paul Rohde effective 11/01/2021.**  
**SC.2021.10.10**

Susan Rohde – Requesting Retirement effective 11/14/2021  
**MSC to approve retirement roster status for Deacon Susan Rohde effective 11/01/2021.**  
**SC.2021.10.11**

Dwight Stensgaard – Requesting Retirement effective 01/01/2022  
**MSC to approve retirement roster status for the Rev. Dwight Stensgaard effective 01/01/2022.**  
**SC.2021.10.12**

Rhia Strohm – Requesting On-Leave-from-Call effective 09/15/2021  
**MSC to grant On-Leave-from-Call status to the Rev. Shia Strohm, effective 09/15/2021.**  
**SC.2021.10.13**

The synod's constitution provides that the Synod Council shall annually review those who have received a Letter of Call through the Synod Council. Bishop Hagmaier requested a report and update from all rostered ministers with a synod call and was delighted to hear about the ministries where these individuals serve.

1. Chris Anderson – Avera St Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen
2. Richard Bowman – Augustana University, Sioux Falls
3. Maria Cabello – Pueblo de Dios, Sioux Falls
4. Chris Croghan – Luther House of Study
5. Randy Fett – Intentional Interim at Holy Cross, Sioux Falls
6. Henrique Fleming – St Matthew's Episcopal Church, Rapid City
7. Wayne Gallipo – St. Dysmas of South Dakota
8. Kristi Gullickson – Avera Dougherty Hospice House, Sioux Falls
9. Christy Hallenback Ask – The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, Sioux Falls
10. Jodi Hanson – Select Learning, Sioux Falls
11. Dan Johnson – Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center
12. Josh Johnson – United States Navy Chaplain
13. Cassandra Lamb – SDSU Lutheran Center, Brookings
14. JoAnn Lemme – Bethany Lutheran Home, Sioux Falls
15. Steve Paulson – Luther House of Study

16. Ann Pederson – Augustana University, Sioux Falls
17. Ann Rosendale – Augustana University, Sioux Falls
18. Richard Swanson - Augustana University, Sioux Falls
19. \*Constanze Hagmaier – South Dakota Synod
20. \*Renee Splichal Larson – South Dakota Synod
21. \*Jonathan Steiner – South Dakota Synod

\*Indicates South Dakota Synod Staff

No formal action is needed.

### **Church on Street**

The Rev. Rebel Hurd has accepted a call to serve as the Director of Evangelical Mission in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod. The Advisory Board of Church on the Street conducted the call process, with a Letter of Call issued by the Synod Council as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community. The Advisory Committee recommends the Rev. Chris Matson to serve as the next pastor of Church on the Street.

**MSC to extend a Letter of Call to specialized ministry to the Rev. Chris Matson to serve as the pastor of Church on the Street.  
SC.2021.10.14**

### **Synod Resources**

At a previous council meeting, a member inquired about resources available to talk with individuals and congregations about the synod and ELCA in positive ways. The synod staff prepared a few resources, Ten Reasons Why I Love This Church, Biblical Perspectives on Conflict, a piece outlining the beliefs and confessions of this church. The resources are available in the synod council Google Drive.

### **Future Meetings**

Executive Committee: November 19, 2021, 3:00 pm central  
Executive Committee: December 3, 2021, 3:00 pm central (tentative)  
Executive Committee: January (if needed)  
Executive Committee: Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 2:00 pm central  
Executive Committee: Thursday, March 17, 2022, time TBD  
Synod Council: Friday, March 18, 2022, 8:30 am central  
Synod Assembly: June 3-4, 2022: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls

Rev. Steiner led a closing devotion, Holy Spirit & Balloons.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jonathan Vehar", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Rev. Jonathan Vehar, secretary