

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council
Executive Committee
Minutes
October 26, 2004**

Members present: Bishop Harold Usgaard, Vice president Shirley Gangstad, Treasurer Jeff Setterlund, Secretary Betty Ann Hernke, Ann Beatty, and Rev. Scott Olson.

Staff present: Deborah Norrie, Recorder

The Executive Committee of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod met on Tuesday, October 26, 2004 in the conference room of the synod office, Assisi Heights, Rochester, Minnesota.

Vice president Shirley Gangstad called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Bishop Harold Usgaard led devotions.

Ms. Gangstad added two items of New Business to the printed agenda: d) Bishop Usgaard's Ministry Planning & Review; and, 3) request from Mount Carmel Ministries for mailing labels. One additional item was added to Old Business to discuss the 2004 assembly resolution to encourage congregations to send young people to assembly. The revised agenda was accepted.

BettyAnn Hernke, secretary, presented the minutes of the meeting of August 31, 2004.

Jeff Setterlund, treasurer, presented the treasurer's report.

1. Mission Support for October was \$123,102
2. The final historical Mission Support chart was distributed. September giving was at 98% of the historical budget.
3. Bank balance was \$150,831.22.
4. The committee reviewed the transaction report for October and asked Ms. Norrie about several items.
5. The September accounting report, which had been in the committee packet, was reviewed. Ms. Norrie noted that she continues to be concerned about office expenses exceeding budget. Office expenses will have to be reviewed carefully by staff and Executive Committee when it is time to revise the 2005 budget.

Rev. Scott Olson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report.

**Voted
EC.10.01 to accept the treasurer's report.**

Old Business

Bishop Usgaard was asked to review the strategic plan.

1. **The Bridge** – Connecting the congregation, synodical and Churchwide expressions of the ELCA – is a new feature in *River Crossings*. The Bridge is an insert formatted for congregations to insert directly into their own newsletters. It features synod news, web links, and a prayer written by Bishop Usgaard.
2. Six congregations have committed to Natural Church Development. Training will begin in January.
3. Representatives from BLOChads and LACE continue to work with him to develop a youth/education staff position.
4. Rural life issues are being studied.

Bishop Usgaard informed the committee that there were no further developments about Assisi Heights to report.

Ms. Norrie informed the committee that the new copy machine had been delivered that day. Staff members are appreciative of the speed of the new machine.

Resolution 2004:10 Call Young People into Assembly was referred to the Executive Committee for action. The resolution reads:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that voting members return to congregations and identify young members who have gifts of leadership, encouraging congregations to bring at least one voting member to future assemblies who is age 30 or less; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Assembly planning committee include events and activities appealing to younger voting members and be considerate of the schedules of younger people.

The committee discussed ways to implement this resolution. What defines “young”? Could scholarships be offered to encourage congregations to send young people? What sort of activities would appeal to young people?

Rev. Scott Olson made a motion to offer rebates on assembly registration for young voters.

Voted

EC.10.02 to offer a registration rebate of \$25 for high school aged voters. The rebates will be paid to congregations after synod assembly when attendance is confirmed by the assembly registrar. If a congregation sends two high school voters, they will receive a rebate of 50% of the total registration for two people.

Bishop Usgaard will highlight this in his conversation with pastors at the theological conference. He will also talk with youth leaders to ask what sort of programming would appeal to young people. These suggestions will be referred to the assembly planning committee for action.

New Business

The next synod council meeting is November 12-13, 2004 in the Sun Center, Assisi Heights, Rochester. Rev. Mark Peters, Executive Director of Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota will be the guest presenter on Friday evening. Members of the LCPPM board from our synod have also been invited.

The synod assembly planning committee has met and is working on preliminary planning. Jeff Setterlund made a motion to appoint the committee.

Voted

EC.10.03 to appoint the 2005 Synod Assembly Planning Committee
Jan Severson, Assembly Manager
Carol Gatti, Our Savior's, Rochester
Doris Henderson, Looney Valley, Houston
Richard Navratil, St. Paul's, Pine Island
Kathy Tanabe, Mount Olive, Rochester
Peg Mowrey, Grace, Fairmont
Rev. Mark Galbraith, Bethel, Northfield
Jon Strommen-Campbell, Bethel, Rochester – Worship Planning
John Petersburg

The other assembly item needing Executive Committee action is the designation of the assembly offering. Ann Beatty made a motion to designate the offering to World Hunger.

Voted

EC.10.04 to designate the offering from the 2005 Synod Assembly worship to World Hunger.

Bishop Usgaard received a request from Rev. Johan Hinderlie, Mount Carmel Ministries, Alexandria for congregation mailing labels. Mount Carmel Ministries is licensed by the Moravian Church to print a version of their Daily Texts. They want to propose that congregations purchase copies of the Daily Texts and give them to deployed soldiers and their families. The request will be taken to the synod council for their approval.

Synod employees receive a medical supplement allowance as part of the benefit package. The policy was defined by Executive Committee action April 4, 1995. The formula for calculating the reimbursement is based on the old Board of Pensions standard medical coverage when the coverage paid 80% and the employee paid 20% of expenses after the deductible was met. Since the Preferred Provider network has been in use in the synod, this formula no longer works. In some cases, the employee receives little or no reimbursement even when they have large out-of-pocket expenses. Ms. Norrie has contacted the Board of Pensions to see if they have a recommendation for calculating supplement reimbursements. But they have not responded to the question.

Ms. Norrie offered two revisions to the calculation. The committee discussed the supplement benefit. Jeff Setterlund made a motion to revise the Supplemental Insurance benefit for 2004 and 2005 and revisit the policy prior to the budgeting cycle in 2005.

Voted

EC.10.05 to revise the Policy for Supplemental Insurance adopted by the Executive Committee April 4, 1995, retroactive to January 1, 2004, as follows:

10.5 Supplemental Major Medical/Dental Coverage

The synod provides a medical/dental/optical reimbursement plan. This policy is reviewed by the Executive Committee annually and forwarded to the Synod Council with the salary recommendations.

10.5.1 Employees covered by ELCA Medical/Dental

- 10.5.1.1 save return forms from Blue Cross/Blue Shield/Delta Dental; submit them to the office manager at the end of each quarter
- 10.5.1.2 checks will be distributed at the following pay period
- 10.5.1.3 ~~eligible employees will receive the difference between the actual paid by the insurance and 90% of the total claim up to the maximum allowable per employee~~
eligible employees will receive 100% of the difference between the amount allowed by insurance and the amount paid by insurance up to the maximum allowable per employee. All medical, dental, eye care and prescription drug costs are eligible for reimbursement up to the maximum allowable per employee.

10.5.2 Employees not covered by ELCA Medical/Dental

- 10.5.2.1 synod employees who are eligible (and subscribe) to other employee-provided medical benefits through a spouse's employer or through a former employer will receive reimbursement to cover the contribution required by a spouse's plan. Additional out-of-pocket costs will be covered according to the guidelines in 10.5.1.3.

~~10.5.3 Eye Care~~

- ~~10.5.3.1 reimburse eye care (to include examinations, eye glasses, and contact lenses)~~
- ~~10.5.3.2 a maximum of \$300 annually may be used for this purpose out of the supplemental amount~~

10.5.4 General

- 10.5.4.1 each employee will qualify for Number 10.5.1 or Number 10.5.2
- ~~10.5.4.2 each employee will qualify for Number 10.5.3~~
- 10.5.4.2 all plans are calculated on a calendar year basis

10.5.1 - 10.5.4 adopted by Executive Committee, April 4, 1995 and revised by Executive Committee, October 26, 2004.

Bishop Usgaard distributed his self-assessment Ministry Planning & Review to the committee. He discussed his accomplishments in the last year and the goals set for the upcoming year. The Executive Committee expressed their thanks and support for the bishop. Ms. Gangstad also reminded him to take his vacation time and plan time off each month to practice self-care.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary
Deborah Norrie, Recorder

Next meeting: January 18, 2005; Shirley Gangstad, devotions