

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council  
Executive Committee  
Minutes  
August 29, 2005**

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

Vice president Shirley Gangstad called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM in the conference room of the synod office, Assisi Heights, Rochester, Minnesota. Jeff Setterlund led devotions.

The agenda was reviewed and accepted with two additions: Old Business: status of staff job manuals; New Business: grant application approval.

Ms. Gangstad welcomed consultant Mr. Jon Christensen, Healthcare Management Initiatives, St. Cloud, Minnesota. Mr. Christensen's expertise is in the healthcare management area but he has experience in church related management assessment. He presented the findings of his operational assessment of the synod staff and synod council structure to the Executive Committee. Mr. Christensen complimented the synod on the excellent strategic plan of the synod. The assessment of staff and structure was conducted to see how they support the strategic plan. He reviewed and explained his recommendations.

The Executive Committee took the following action relating to the recommendations of the operational assessment:

- Bishop Usgaard will discuss the recommendations with the synod staff at the August 31<sup>st</sup> staff meeting.
- Each staff member will meet with Bishop Usgaard in September to discuss job descriptions and how those jobs support the strategic plan.
- The Executive Committee will meet September 16 at 4:00 prior to the Synod Council meeting to review the bishop's findings.
- Staff will meet in retreat October 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss the job pieces to support the strategic plan and how they fit together.
- Bishop Usgaard and Deborah Norrie will meet October 6<sup>th</sup> to develop proposals for the Executive Committee meeting October 25, 2005.
- The Executive Committee will prepare recommendations for the Synod Council meeting in November.
- Bishop Usgaard and Ms. Norrie will begin conversation with Assisi and Mayo regarding remodeling to the synod office.

After discussion on the assessment report, the committee agreed to table the following items: revisions to 2006 assembly rules; revisions to the assembly display policy; revisions to the publication policy; and discussion of congregation constitutions.

Ms. BettyAnn Hernke presented the minutes of the meeting June 7, 2005. Ms. Ann Beatty made a motion to accept the minutes as written.

**Voted**

**EC05.08.01 to accept the minutes of the meeting June 7, 2005 as written.**

Mr. Jeff Setterlund presented the treasurer's report.

1. August Mission Support as of August 25, 2005 was \$131,197 which is behind \$3100 from the same time last year.
2. The committee reviewed the accounting report for July 2005; and the list of transactions for August. The checkbook balance was \$94,700.59.

The committee discussed Mission Support for August. Bishop Usgaard reported that he, Larry Iverson and Rev. Audree Catalano will be holding stewardship meetings with church councils in September.

Ms. Beatty made a motion to accept the treasurer's report.

**Voted**

**EC05.08.02 to accept the treasurer's report.**

**Old Business**

Ms. Norrie presented the Electronic Communication Policy which the committee revised at the June meeting. Synod staff and an outside computer consultant have reviewed the policy. Mr. Setterlund made a motion to recommend that the Synod Council adopt this policy.

**Voted**

**EC05.08.03 to recommend the Synod Council adoption of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Electronic Communication Policy.**

Bishop Usgaard updated the committee on the strategic plan.

- Natural Church Development has been well received and is in process
- Mission Planning & Action will begin with assistance from Rev. Richard Mork to assess mission sites in the synod to outline a strategy for mission.
- Good Earth Village and BLOChads are working on a Thrivent grant proposal for youth leadership.
- Will attend the consecration of the new bishop in the Central Diocese of Tanzania in December.
- Worship and music leaders continue to meet regularly and have been focusing on how to support small congregations.
- Kick off event for 2006 synod in Bible study is October 1
- Stewardship meetings will be held in September.

- 2006 focus on spiritual growth for rostered leaders will be the theme of the fall theological conference; opportunities for 2006 will be announced at the conference.
- Working with Good Earth Village on a grant proposal for long term planned giving to support on going synod programs.
- August Communication Workshop was well received.
- Comprehensive media follow-up to Churchwide Assembly

Ms. Gangstad commented on the positive evaluations from the Communication Workshop. Annie Lysen did a very good job putting this event together.

Ms. Norrie announced that there is a vacancy on the Synod Nominating Committee. The Cannon River Dean was to have appointed someone to the committee and he has not done so. Bishop Usgaard asked Ms. Norrie to talk to Rev. Craig Ellingboe, St. Peter, Northfield and ask him to suggest a name. This name will be taken to the next Conference of Deans meeting.

Ms. Gangstad asked Ms. Norrie how synod support staff were progressing on writing their job manuals. Ms. Norrie answered that the Communications Director has completed her manual. She is not sure how the others are doing but will discuss this in the upcoming staff discussions.

### **New Business**

The committee reviewed the plans for the September Synod Council meeting. It was decided that the Friday night program would be a report on the Churchwide Assembly rather than a review of the synod council structure. Ms. Norrie will ask two additional assembly voters to attend the meeting for the assembly report. Council members who attended the assembly are: Bishop Usgaard, Shirley Gangstad, BettyAnn Hernke and Rev. James Ahlquist. The highlights video will be shown.

- Bishop Usgaard would like to discuss with the council ways to get youth representation on the Synod Council and as Churchwide Assembly voters.
- Bishop Usgaard will be responsible for Friday night worship and Shirley Gangstad will plan Saturday morning worship.

There is a vacancy on the Lay & Clergy Leadership Development Team. That team will nominate someone to fill the vacancy until elections at the 2006 Synod Assembly.

The Executive Committee meeting scheduled for January 17 has been re-scheduled for January 24, 2006.

Bishop Usgaard, Shirley Gangstad, David Herder, Good Earth Village Executive Director, Deborah Smith, Mission Investment Fund, ELCA, and Mr. Tim Valen, Thrivent, have been working on a grant proposal to support leadership development in the synod and Good Earth Village. Ms. Ann Beatty made a motion to approve the grant proposal.

**Voted**

**EC05.08.04 to approve the grant proposal of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA and Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, Minnesota: a Charitable Gifting Initiative Grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans titled Leadership for the Church: Today and Tomorrow.**

There was some time remaining prior to adjournment. Ms. Norrie asked the committee to discuss the report of congregation constitutions. Ms. Norrie purchased a software package for Rev. Rick Lund that compares two documents and highlights the differences. The cost of the software was \$254. The software looks at a master document (the *ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations*) and compares the second document (a congregation's constitution) and reports all instances of language inserted, deleted or moved. The resulting report makes it very easy to see where the congregation constitution varies from the model.

- There are 15 congregations that have not updated constitutions since the beginning of the ELCA in 1988. The Vice president will write to those congregations asking them to update constitutions and offer the help of the synod office.
- In the past the constitutions of congregations have been approved even if they have been in the old ALC format. The Executive Committee will no longer approved constitutions that are not in the updated format.
- Bishop Usgaard will talk to pastors at the fall theological conference and ask them to work on constitutions. Ms. Norrie will have resources available to assist pastors.
- Synod staff will be asked to work with congregations in the call process to have congregations update constitutions as part of the preparation for the call process. Ms. Norrie will talk with the Interim Pastors Colleague group and ask them to put this on the list of things to do during an interim.

Next meeting: September 16, 4:00

October 25, 4:00; Devotions: Deborah Norrie

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary  
Deborah Norrie, Recorder