



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod
 Council Meeting Minutes
 Saturday, April 9th, 2016**

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council met on Saturday, April 9th, 2016, at 9am. Devotions were led by the Executive Committee.

Members present: Rev. Regina Hassanally, Rev. Jay Dahlvang, Evin Lantz, Lilah Aas, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, Rev. John Petersen, John Odegard, Chad Campbell, Rev. Ashley Osborn, Rev. Mark Johnson, Cheryl Kylo, Rev. Paige Whitney, Vice President Ann Peterson, Secretary Jodie Archer and Bishop Steve Delzer and Interim Treasurer Jeff Chestnut.

Staff present: Kari Maclver, Rev. Pete Reuss, Rev. Susan Miller and Mary Kay DuChene.

Absent: Danielle Koster.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Ann Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:45am.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Ann shared announcements. The Global Mission/Companion Synod Table donated flags showing the global partners of this Synod.

The Council meetings going forward will incorporate process observers. Rev. Mark Johnson and Rev. Regina Hassanally were the two process observers for the meeting.

Rev. Ashley Osborn volunteered to be the Council member in the video recap of the meeting. Kari Maclver volunteered to record the video and will get that to Rev. Emily Carson to put on the Synod website.

Ann Peterson asked for a timekeeper for the meeting and Mary Kay DuChene volunteered.

Approval of the Agenda

SC16.04.01 Motion to approve the Agenda as printed.

Motion approved.

Mission Statement Moment

Rev. John Petersen modeled the new "grace moment" "mission statement moment" for the group today.

"Follow Jesus" - Are there some things that if we left them behind, would it truly set us free? What happened to the disciples after they decided to follow Jesus was more important than what they left behind. Rev. John shared his hope that the Council will always look to scripture first as we look to the future. Sending words from Acts 12.

Fiduciary Work

- Consent Agenda
 - *Minutes, February 28th, 2016

*Reports from the Executive Committee, Bishop and Staff and the Nominating Committee

*Approval of congregational constitutions from Elstad, Lanesboro and North Blue Earth, Bricelyn

Council Action:

to thank Elstad Lutheran Church, Lanesboro, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;

to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and

to approve the constitution approved March 29, 2016, as consistent with the 2013 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Council Action:

to thank North Blue Earth Lutheran Church, Bricelyn, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;

to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and

to approve the constitution approved November 22, 2016, and ratified January 31, 2016, as consistent with the 2013 Model Constitution for Congregations

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

- Consent Agenda (continued)
 - *Approval of roster changes
 - Call To Specialized Ministry Through Synod Council:
 - Audrey Lukasak - from On Leave from Call to Bereavement Coordinator/Grief Counselor at Heartland Hospice, Rochester, MN, effective 02/08/2016.

On Leave From Call:
 New On Leave From Call Request
Jacqueline Ziemer, start date 12/15/2015, expiration date 12/14/2018.

SC16.04.02 Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion approved.

- **Financial Reports**
 Interim Treasurer Jeff Chestnut and Rev. Pete Reuss reviewed the financials.

 Update on “sweep” account – Jeff reviewed this process. To clarify a question, there is a set amount in the checking account. Cheryse has been working diligently with the bank on this and yes, they can do this. It will help us with the auditors. A sweep account is administered through another organization. It is a positive thing. We can move forward with this if we choose to initiate this process. If we wouldn't use a sweep account, we would move money to CD's or other places within the same bank. The funds would fall under the same FDIC regulations. With a sweep account, with another organization administering the account, the funds would not fall under the same FDIC regulations for one institution.

SC16.04.03 Motion to allow the Executive Committee to engage in the establishment of a sweep account.

Friendly amendment from Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner – he asked to remove the Executive Committee from the motion and allow the Synod Council to vote on this today so the process can begin more timely.

SC16.04.03 Motion to engage in the establishment of a sweep account.

Motion approved.

Budget update

CYF endowment (\$25,500) funds were utilized and placed into the budget and the budget will be balanced when presented at the Synod Assembly.

SC16.04.04 Motion to approve the proposed budget as presented to forward to Synod Assembly.

Motion approved.

SC16.04.05 Motion to receive the current financials as presented.

Motion approved.

- **Synod Assembly**
 Planning Committee Update – Kari MacIver updated the Council on details.
 - Council members that are clergy will sit with your congregation. Non-clergy will sit up front.
 - John Petersburg will be at the Assembly at 10:30am on Friday. Ann Peterson and Bishop Delzer will call John to the stage for a small gift and to be recognized.
 - Council members are to be available for budget question during lunch times on both days.
 - The budget is to be presented on Friday morning.
 - Resolutions will be presented on Friday at various times and on Saturday. Discussion took place regarding the timing of resolutions.
 - Around 3-3:15pm on Saturday, Synod Council members will be recognized.
 - Zumbro, Rochester is letting the Assembly use their Oil Christ candle.
 - Trinity, Owatonna is letting the Assembly use their processional cross.

Review of Proposed Resolutions
 Rev. Susan Miller reviewed the proposed resolutions that have come through for Synod Assembly. Reference and Counsel has them now.

- Resolution 2016:05 Dissolution of Lutheran Camus Ministry of Minnesota. This resolution is being submitted to the Assembly by the Synod Council.

Review of Proposed Resolutions (continued)
The Bishop explained the reasoning behind this resolution. It is to take effect in January 2018. This gives time to adjust to the new normal and find the additional funding to support these ministries. The offering from Synod Assembly this year will go directly to the campus ministries and not be funneled through LCMM.

SC16.04.06 Motion to bring forward resolution 2016:05 Dissolution of Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota to Synod Assembly.

Motion approved.

Approval of Assembly Agenda

SC16.04.07 Motion to approve the proposed agenda for Synod Assembly Agenda as presented.

Motion approved.

Proposed Minimum Compensation Guidelines
Rev. Jay Dahlvang was asked to highlight the changes of the new document. Jay indicated how they chose to do things differently this year and dug deeper. In the past, clergy were compared to superintendents and now they are compared to teachers. This Synod is now in the middle and no longer at the bottom of where we stand when comparing surrounding synods. They wanted to give congregations and rostered leaders ownership with this document. Dave Knox will present this document at Synod Assembly.

There is real concern about a congregation's capacity to provide. The groups learned that many things through this process. There is value in allowing for creativity in offering options and not always financial compensation; sharing calls in new ways; there is real challenge in both the old and young spectrum; student loan debt and healthcare are concerns for all.

Rev. Jay indicated that the consensus of the group was recommended that the guidelines will stay the same – no inflation or other

increases recommended, but a step increase for the additional year of experience.

Chad Campbell shared his opinion of how low the salaries are for rostered leaders and explained his reasoning. This led to rich discussion.

The Council appreciates and values the obvious research and homework that was done in creating this document and would like the task force to know of their gratitude.

SC16.04.08 Motion to bring the Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines to Synod Assembly with a recommendation from the Synod Council for approval.

Motion approved with one dissenting.

- Policy Review of the SEMN Synod Gift Receipt Policy
Rev. Pete Ruess sent this rough draft document to several people asking for suggestions. It was also sent to our Synod attorney for his recommendation. The attorney suggested to bring a few people from the Synod Council together to go over the substantive questions were raised and then bring back to the Council for approval of this document.

The group recessed for lunch at 11:55am.

The group came back together for the afternoon at 12:52pm.

Generative Work

- Background Paper: Future Directions Table with an introduction by Bishop Delzer. There are conversations happening all across the Church through April, May and June focused around 6 questions. The intention for Bishop Eaton is to sharpen the priorities of the Church; what the Church will do and not do now and in the future.

Ann Peterson explained how the small group conversation will take place. The following is a recap of those conversations.

What is distinctive about our identity as a Lutheran Church?

Notes: Grace; theology of the cross; intention for radical hospitality; OK with living in the question; academic.
Some of these are also in other denominations, but the degree to which they are foundational to Lutheran is distinctive.
Theology, polity, worship – recognize beauty of the Catholic faith and are a bridge to other less Catholic. Protestant denominations. Grace – allows us to enter into that place.
Our theological integrity allows us to engage this changing world.

Summary statement: What is distinctive is our emphasis on grace and our comfort with mystery.

What kind of church do we believe God is calling us to be?

Notes:
Faithful; radically inclusive; service above all else (before serving itself).
Praise God.
So confident in the grace we proclaim that it becomes our lived experience.

Summary statement: So confident in the grace we proclaim that it becomes our lived experience.

What are the most important ministries we should be engaging in?

Notes:
Evangelism – growing disciples in congregations.
A just world – appeal to younger generation; carve out places in society where justice and peace can thrive.
Vibrant worship – ministries that lead to vibrant worship.
World hunger eradication!
ELCA to provide resources in working to accomplish these goals.

Summary statement: The most important ministries we should be engaging in are those that connect all generations through vibrant worship, evangelism and education, carving out places in society where justice and peace can thrive.

What institutional structure do we need for the future?

Notes:
Light structure that drives ministry locally.
Explore existing (non-church perhaps) networks and contract with them to do stewardship, youth ministry, etc. – consultant model.
Streamline the structure and move more and more ministry locally.
Power to convene needs to be more fully utilized in Churchwide and Synod.

Summary statement: Recognizing the church’s unique power to convene, continue to streamline the Churchwide structure and drive more and more ministry locally.

How do we recruit and invest in leaders to become the church God is calling us to be?

Notes:

Recruit and invest – some thought this should be changed to “invite” and “equip” to sound less top-down; others preferred the stronger language of “recruit” and “invest”.

Practice Joy.
Be purposeful.
Begin immediately (with all ages).

What does this mean for you as a member and/or leader in this church?

Notes:
Dare to be messy.
Try stuff!
Trust God (and God’s future).

The conversation as a large group was rich. Recapping the conversation:

When will we as the ELCA stop trying to define who we are and live into whom we are?

79% of congregations feel that they are thriving. What is the definition of thriving? Being able to afford a pastor? Making a difference in our community? Friends with everyone? Example: Congregations can afford a pastor but cannot get a pastor as they are seen to be “stuck in the mud”; “a lot of conflict going on in that congregation” and not willing to be able to live into the future.

- Future Directions: Rostered Leaders – Rev. Susan Miller

Rev. Susan Miller shared some startling statistics in regards to clergy details. There was rich discussion. As this discussion continues into the future, we need to continue to ask:

- What are the implications?
- Where is the intersection of the faithful servers and the future of the church?
- How do we move beyond lament and use this gift from God who has created this new church?

There is an opportunity for the leadership piece. For those that have gone to school for a long time, it is hard to remember that you can learn more.

- Reporting/Next steps for Synod Council
What can we let go of, even if from a devil's advocate perspective.

Staff has 3 year operational plan and the Council does not have a plan of action. There was discussion regarding the need to have a plan of action or is it creating a structure that is too formal. A suggestion

was made to utilize the conference meetings to engage action plans.

- Diversity Team
Rev. Pete Reuss shared that he would like to assemble a group of people and help determine how to talk about diverse topics. It has not been done before.
- Meeting Evaluation
Key points for video
 1. Compensation guidelines
 2. Lutheran Campus Ministry – affirm our support of the change and through the change.
 3. Finalized the Agenda for Synod Assembly.
 4. Excellent conversation of the future of the Church.
 5. Information on Synod Assembly is on the website – invite social media. #churchtogether 2016

Process observation – Rev. Regina and Rev. Mark

Great meeting, good conversation, flexibility, pulse check, humor.

Levity and hope in serious topics, what did we do today to equip leaders, global partners and congregations? Pace was good, people seemed engaged.

Motion to adjourn

**SC16.04.09 Motion to adjourn
Motion approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jodie Archer
Synod Council Secretary

Kari Maclver
Recorder

Important future dates:

May 6-7	2016 Synod Assembly
Summer TBA	Orientation & Gathering for new/returning Synod Council members
September 9-10	Synod Council retreat
November 5	Synod Council meeting

Next meeting will be Thursday, July 21st, 2016.