



Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council Meeting Minutes
September 9 & 10, 2016

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council met on Friday, September 9th and Saturday, September 10th, 2016 at Trinity Lutheran in Owatonna.

Members present: Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, John Odegard, Rev. Ashley Osborn, Rev. Mark Johnson, Cheryl Kylo, Rev. Heather Culuris, Rev. Kerry Eversole, Amanda Gebhart, Rev. Dave Klawiter, Craig Nelson, Rev. Jay Dahlvang, Regina Seabrook, Vice President Ann Peterson, Secretary Jodie Archer, Treasurer Jeff Chestnut and Bishop Steve Delzer.

Staff: Kari Maclver, Rev. Susan Miller, and Kathy Chatelaine.

Absent: Rev. Regina Hassanally and Maria Nielsen.

Special Guests: Jodi Harpstead, CEO Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota; Kim Wilder; and Rev. Jerod Freeburg.

The Synod Council members gathered together on Friday, September 9th, 2016. The Council listened to the reflections from Churchwide Voting Members, Rev. Jerod Freeburg, Kim Wilder & Synod Council member Cheryl Kylo. Kari Maclver, from the Office of the Bishop staff, also attended and gave her perspective. Kari was not a voting member but assisted with registration.

The Bishop shared that there is a new roster title for AImS, Deacons and Deaconesses which is Ministers of Word and Service. Pastors who are ordained are now Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The entrance rite for those listed under the Word and Service roster is under discussion. The entrance rite will be Consecration until then.

Kathy Chatelaine, Director of Global Mission/Companion Synods was introduced to the Council. She shared information in regards to her position and the working of the Table.

Jodi Harpstead, CEO of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota was introduced and she shared information on the next focus of LSS.

The Bishop shared an evening prayer and the Council members retired to the local hotel for a social gathering.

The Synod Council members gathered at Trinity with refreshments on Saturday, September 10th, 2016.

The morning began with worship at 9am. Devotions were led by Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner and Rev. Dave Klawiter.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Ann Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:35am.

She asked the group to remember what is the mission of the Synod was as a reminder as we do our work.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice President Ann Peterson made one change in the Agenda under the Fiduciary section.

SC.16.09.01 Motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion approved.

FIDUCIARY WORK

Ann explained the consent agenda and that those items are not discussed. One person can ask that a specific item can be removed if there needs to be discussion on that item.

Ann asked to have the roster changes removed from the consent agenda.

- Consent Agenda
 - *Minutes April 9th, 2016 & July 21st, 2016
 - *Reports: Executive Committee, Bishop, Staff
 - *Approval of Congregational Constitution: St. Paul's, Meriden
 - Inform St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Meriden, that its draft constitution and bylaws document dated May 1, 2016, is generally 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 St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Meriden, 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 May 1, 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.

*Approval of job descriptions of Executive Committee, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

SC.16.09.02 Motion to approve the consent agenda en bloc.
Motion approved.

- Approval of Roster Changes
Ann explained our duty and responsibility as the Synod Council when it comes to roster changes. This is done truly with the Bishop reading the paperwork and bringing to the attention of the Council anything that the Council needs to know regarding these call requests. In that most of that information is confidential, it is at his discretion to share. As a Council, we are responsible for approving the whole.

The Bishop explained specific details in regards to the Interim Ministry, Call to Specialized Ministry and Synodically Authorized Minister headings.

On Leave from Call New Request:
Kip Groettum and Matthew Williams.

On Leave from Call Renewal:
Rev. Todd Walsh, Rev. Brian Scott, Rev. Barbara Finley-Shea, Rev. JoAnn Siverling, Rev. Cheryl Szabo, and Rev. David Jore.

Call to Interim Ministry Through Synod Council:
Rev. Gerry Giese, On Leave From Call to Interim at Our Savior's, Cleveland; Rev. Heather Hammond, Minneapolis Synod, On Leave From Call to Interim at Christ, Faribault; Rev. David Hurtt, On Leave From Call to Interim at 2-point of Faith, Janesville and North Waseca, Waseca; and Rev. Lanny Westphal, Northeastern Iowa Synod to Interim at Central, Winona.

Retirement Status: (Acknowledge Only)

Craig Breimhorst; Gary Harris and Paul Meierding.

Death: (Acknowledge Only)
Sister E. Jean Wangand and Rev. John Heruth.

SC.16.09.03 Motion to approve Roster Changes.
Motion approved.

- Financial Reports
 - ✚ Current financials
Treasurer Jeff Chestnut reviewed the budget documents. There was discussion regarding the Synod Assembly offerings having been directed to Campus Ministries in 2016.

SC.16.09.04 Motion to clarify that the Synod Assembly offering designated to campus ministries was in addition to the budgeted amount to those ministries.
Motion approved.

- ✚ Profit & Loss Form
Jeff clarified the different lines and how accounting practices work compared to offering.

Regarding the DEM (Director of Evangelical Mission) support – when the 2016 budget was presented it was not reflected. The DEM position is a deployed Churchwide position. Jeff moved the line item budget for his salary (paid by CW) and did not reflect the \$\$ put in to cover 'additional expenses', not part of salary. Bishop explained that we put it in our budget so that if that position went away from CW, we would already have it in our budget for that position. The DEM position is the greatest factor in the changes reflected on this sheet.

Jeff shared that there has been a great change within the finance. In-house accounting has now been outsourced, new treasurer, new Office of the Bishop finance staff. Jeff assured the Council that transparency will occur and it is his hope that the expectations from each side will begin to align. He will be

meeting with both the auditors and the accountants in the near future in regards to this situation.

- ✚ Audit Update
Jeff shared with the Council information in regards to the Audit.

SC.16.09.05 Motion to receive the financials.

Motion approved.

- ✚ Renewal of Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) status: Rochester House Churches; Trinity Fellowship, Rushford.
Ann shared information in regards to Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities.

SC.16.09.06 Motion to renew the Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community status for Rochester House Churches and Trinity Fellowship, Rushford.

Motion approved.

- ✚ Churchwide Assembly Recap Regarding Resolutions From Southeast Minnesota Synod
The Bishop shared with the Council in regards to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery at the 2016 Synod Assembly came to the CWA. The Southeast Minnesota Synod was not included but as it was referred to the Churchwide Council, the Synod is now included.
- ✚ Veterans Support, Small Prayer Book Supporting military personnel and their families does not indicate that a war is supported. This came out of this Synod.

STRATEGIC WORK

- Review of Exit Interviews from Out-Going Synod Council Members
Ann recapped the information that she received.
- Updates: Diversity & Faith Formation Tables
Ann shared the philosophy regarding the table structure and how it has changed over the past few years. She shared the status of each current table.

There are two topics that proposed as far as potential tables - Diversity and Faith Formation. The Bishop shared more information regarding these.

Diversity Table – this has grown out of concern for racial inequity/equity, gender violence, etc. In August 2016, Rev. Pete Reuss called a meeting of synod members to discuss the diversity topic and to determine who should be at the table and what needs to be the primary function of this table. “How do we best have difficult conversations” may be the driving force of this table in helping equip congregations in this area. It is not a Minnesota Nice conversation topic. Clarification will be pondered.

Faith Formation Table – Recognizing that faith formation is something that begins with baptism and never ends. Faith Formation grows out of the Children, Youth and Family conversation. The goal of this table is: communication (how best to do), resources (collecting and sharing), and events.

SC.16.09.07 Motion to affirm the work that is being done by the Diversity and Faith Formation groups looking towards each becoming a table.

Motion approved.

GENERATIVE WORK

- Framework for Conversation: A Place for All, For the Sake of the World.
Ann shared background information setting the stage for the conversation about to take place. Where better to have these conversations than within our Church as Jesus said to love our neighbor.

The group watched a video “Confronting Racism” that was originally a live webcast from the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). Bishop Eaton and William Horne II, ELCA Church Council member and is now the new Vice President of Churchwide, had an intentional conversation regarding racism.

After watching the video, the Council members separated into small groups and shared their own personal stories.

The group broke for lunch at 12:15pm.

The group reconvened at 1pm.

- Small Group Discussion – A Place For All, For the Sake of the World.
The Council members stayed in their small groups and were each asked to ponder 4 discussion questions.
 1. What is God’s vision for our church and community?
 2. How will we know we are making progress?
 3. Barriers?
 4. Where could we as council have the most input?

Group 1

1. Unity – Being One
 - A. God’s Action toward unity
 - B. Man’s response
2. Celebration of each other
 - Opportunity to share gifts
 - Commitment to stay in the process
3. Lack of trust
 - Lack of authenticity
 - Facilitate conversation
4. Faith formation Activity
 - Conversations/Listening
 - Actions to follow – conversation

Group 2

1. God’s Vision – God present in the world and in our neighborhood and in the face of people.
Inclusive, one, all attired the same and worshipping the Lord God. Diversity has transformed into unity.
We each have our own image of God and relationship with God.
2. Progress toward God’s vision (success?)
More outward focus.
The needs of our neighbor are being met.
3. Barriers to God’s Vision
Change is hard.
Being challenged is difficult, vulnerable.
Denial, ignor(ance), status quo.

Need more opportunities for community. Synod impact in our congregations/ Little or no leverage in congregations. Congregational leadership needs to encourage conversation, people need to want it, we need to be engaged in and with the world.

Group 3

1. If the Word is in our neighborhood it makes our homes and our neighborhood a holy place. The Word WENT to the neighborhood. The Word (God) is already in the neighborhood; He is already at work and in the people in the neighborhood. One of a kind; we are all unique – each one of us in the neighborhood. 99% of our genetic material is the same; only 1% brings out the distinguishing characteristics that we see as different. We are all more united than we give credit to.

2. If we are no longer in the pews but out in the world making a difference. We will let go of our traditions to make room for other traditions within our relationships in the congregation. To preserve the holiness of worship in one culture you can exclude the power of worship for another culture. We are deeply tied to our historical cultural tribes’ traditions. Hope that a lot more of what we call church will happen outside of the building.

When it is no longer us going to them but for all of us to be a part of the same conversation. When we are serving with them not to them.

Bridging the gap between what our community organizations are doing and what our churches are doing. We can be doing it together to show what we all have to offer.

3. A. How are we perpetuating systemic issues?
- B. What structures do we put in place that are barriers to welcoming and including others?
- C. How can we as a church be more effective at removing these barriers?

Membership – why do we have membership – so we can keep statistics. What if we kept different statistics? Learn from campus ministries – change the matrix. Start talking about with how many people did you have contact over the past week, etc. How many repeat conversations? Look at the ministry as the entire campus. How do we minister to faculty and staff? Campus ministries are on the leading edge of what the future church will/may look like. Public campuses are experiencing all the diversity that the conversation is speaking of. Not all leaders need to attend seminary to be effective leaders. Provide level of training that is necessary for a leader to be effective. Shortage of clergy is pushing this new dynamic.

Spend time with new group (Spanish, Dinka, etc.) to find out who they feel would be a good leader or who they would like to be a leader. Support that person so they can be an effective leader.

We do service really well but don't share what is meaningful to us well and invite to share with us.

4. TEEM program – balance a seminary education with an adequate education. Costs are an important component to the conversation. Seeking invitations to the tables of our neighbors and listening to their stories.

God is already there – we need to help people see Him.

Identity of Lutherans is tied in many areas to Northern European culture and has been perpetuated in many ways.

Wanting people to be more like us needs to change – we need to help others see God in their life and help them where they are.

General comments: what are our next steps?
Keeping our mission in mind, what is our role?

Answer the question why? Why are we encouraging this conversation/direction? Why as a people of faith is this important? How will this shape what we look like as a church?
Find ways to make this accessible to our congregations to begin? To use? To help the see this is important.
Does it have to start in a congregation? One –to –one conversations.... Start there? And it may/will move to the congregation?
The synod structure has changed. If this falls in to our mission and priorities as a synod, the events attendance is rising, feed them well there to bring attention so those congregations may take place. Equip people to go have the conversation with their neighbor and schools and colleagues, not just inside the church.

The Bishop's comments: These are difficult conversations as they instruct fear and guilt. These conversations evoke the same discomfort as Genesis – the fall. Really, God wants us to stop hiding in the bushes and walk in there and accept it and keep working on it. If we are bold enough to trust that God works with us.

One Council member commented: There are people who count on people to do this work. It can change lives. To be a person of faith, we keep moving forward. People of faith with resources can do so much more.

Meeting Evaluation Key points for video

- *Reference video August 2015 with Presiding Bishop and Vice President Horne framed our conversation for the afternoon.
- *Include Jodi Harpstead – new study on race will be available at the end of September "Who is My Neighbor".
- *Level of mission support – thank you.
- *Themes of Church for the sake of the world – actions of the Church at Churchwide Assembly, mutual accompaniment
- *accompaniment/partnering language - definition.

Process observation
Friday evening - a lot of information given without time to process.
Saturday morning/business meeting – there was engagement by all folks. Stories that were shared before lunch – a lot of stories were shared and did not end quickly. Conversations have shown that we can struggle with things. Early in the relationship of council members – positive engagement.

SC.16.09.08 Motion to adjourn
Motion approved

Meeting adjourned at 2:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodie Archer
Synod Council Secretary

Kari Maclver
Recorder

Important Dates:
September 24, 2016 – Bishop's 5K, Rochester
November 5, 2016 – Synod Council meeting,
Assisi Heights, Rochester