

# MINUTES

**Nebraska Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Synod Council Minutes  
September 18, 2021**

DRAFT

**Voting Members present:**

Tanny Akerson	Pr. Mariam Blair	Sharon Bohling	Pr. Sarah Cordray
Gwen Edwards	Dan Friedlund	Pr. Donald Hunzeker	Pr. Cara Jensen
Leann Kersten	Bp. Brian Maas	Elysia McGill	Pr. Nathan Metzger
Gary Overfield	Pr. Travis Panning	Hannah Ruch	R LaDene Rutt
Pr. Ellen Stelzle	Dara Troutman	Nancy Hinrichs (late)	

**Staff and Organizational Presidents present:**

Pr. Juliet Focken	Diane Harpster	Pr. Megan Morrow	Dn. Sunni Richardson
Dn. Timothy Siburg	Pr. Kristen Van Stee	Sandy Terry (NSWO)	

**Also Present:**

Pr. Carol Mapa (Spiritual Direction)

**Absent:**

Juan Castro	Pr. Gary Harris	Lisa Kramme	Stephanie Lusienki
Bill Biggs	Dn. Connie Stover		

Vice President Dara Troutman called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

The roll was called and a quorum was present. Bp. Brian noted that Pr. Gary Harris was presiding at a funeral at his congregation.

Dara announced a change to the agenda. MOTION 1 was withdrawn. Correction to the Actions to be Taken En Bloc, chair for the Budget & Finance Committee is Kevin Karas. Additional to New Business, a request from John Badeng. MOVED and SECONDED to approve the agenda as presented and revised. APPROVED.

MOVED and SECONDED to approve the minutes of June 4, 2021. APPROVED.

Pr. Carol Mapa, Certified Spiritual Director, began with reading Psalm 133 and then led a spiritual practice of breath prayer also reminding us to be quiet and let God work and speak. She closed with prayer.

**Bishop's Report:** A written report was available.

Bishop Brian reported that Road Shows are returning in-person beginning November 6, Synod Council is invited to attend them as able and some will be called to attend. Church of the Way attempted to gather in person and had no one attend, they have a good online attendance and now need to work on physical attendance. Nebraska Synod is allowed a total of twenty-four voting members to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly including the Bishop and Vice-President, twenty-four members were elected in June when it should have only been twenty-two. **The consensus of the Council was the two at-large members with the lowest votes will become our alternates.**

**SC21.09.22<sup>1</sup>: ADDITIONS TO BISHOP'S REPORT**

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for On Leave From Call status for one year:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
LuRae Hallstrom	7/1/21
Cara Jensen	7/1/21
Rebecca Mangelsdorf	8/2/21
Suzanne How	9/27/21
Sarah Ruch	6/22/20, 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr.
Katherine Woolf	10/13/19, 2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr., 2021 3 <sup>rd</sup> yr.
Glenn Palmer	11/2/20 (Study Leave), 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for transfer to the retired roster:

Connie Stover	effective 7/1/21
Donna Fonner	effective 7/1/21
David Smith	effective 8/1/21
Paul Coen	effective 9/1/21
Greg Gabriel	effective 10/1/21

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following Synod Council calls be approved for approved:

Pr. Doug Hjelmstad, to Transitional/Interim Ministries for a period of three years, renewable. He is currently serving as transitional minister at Zion, Haigler, effective 8/1/21.

Pr. Carl Sirotzki, to Transitional/Interim Ministries for a period of three years, renewable. He is currently serving as transitional minister at Family of Christ, Kearney, effective June 13, 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> An updated numbering system is being used per the information received from the ELCA Office of the Secretary at the "Orientation to the Responsibilities of the Synod Secretary" held on 9/20/2021.

Pr. Steve Meysing, to serve as Rector, Episcopal Church of Our Savior, North Platte, effective September 1, 2021.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.09.23: EN BLOC**

1. CONGREGATIONS

RECOMMENDED: That the constitution for Our Savior’s, Wymore, be approved.  
RECOMMENDED: That the constitution for Immanuel, Wymore, be approved.

2. COMMITTEES

RECOMMENDED: To approve the following as chairs of synod committees:

Audit Committee – Rob King  
Budget & Finance Committee – Kevin Karas  
Candidacy Committee – Jennifer Carnahan  
PMA Steering Committee – Maurine Roller, PMA

3. AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS

RECOMMENDED: To approve bylaws amendments requested by Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Board of Directors.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**Staff Reports:** Written reports were available.

**Diane Harpster, Sunni Richardson, Timothy Siburg, and Kristen Van Stee** indicated no need for verbal reports. **Pr. Juliet Focken** added there is an additional congregation in transition, St. John’s/Columbus. They are contemplating leaving the ELCA, prayers are needed. **Pr. Megan Morrow** added that Essential Boundaries added new members to their facilitation team. They are considering having future levels of training be a hybrid of online and in-person formats.

**Reports of Officers and Organizations**

**Vice President’s Report:** No report.

**Secretary’s Report** was accepted as presented.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Dan Friedlund commented on the written report. He highlighted that the Synod received \$147,000 from the CARES Act and the surplus is now in the contingency fund. Both the 2021 and 2022 budgets approved reflect deficits and we will be trying to have a balanced budget for 2023. More revenue and mission share should be received in the latter part of year. Monies are sent to Churchwide based on actual Mission Share, therefore we have sent less than budgeted amount year to date. 2020 had a surplus of \$150,000 which was placed in the contingency fund.

**Nebraska Synod Women’s Organization:** A written report was available. Sandy Terry added that their upcoming Biennial Convention and Gathering’s logo was designed by Diane Harpster based on the theme “Listening for God’s Call.”

After lunch Pr. Omar of Igelisa Luterana San Andres brought greetings to the Council.

**SC21.09.24 RECOMMENDED:** That the recommendation of the PMA Steering Committee that Linda Jasch (Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Hastings) be certified as a Parish Ministry Associate be approved.

SPONSOR: Bp. Brian Maas, on behalf of the PMA Steering Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.09.25 RECOMMENDED:** Pursuant to Section \*C.9.07, the Synod Council of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does hereby authorize Rev. Patrick Sipes to be available for a call as a Pastor at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Platte, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider him for a call following the conclusion of his term as Interim/Transitional Pastor there.

SPONSOR: Bp. Brian Maas

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.09.26 RECOMMENDED:** to extend a Synod Council call to the Rev. Jon Mapa to serve as Assistant to the Bishop

SPONSOR: Bp. Brian Maas

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.09.27 RECOMMENDED:** To designate \$18,000 of the annual compensation for Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Jon Mapa, as Housing Allowance, effective October 1, 2021, until changed by future action of the Synod Council.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

APPROVED

**SC21.09.28 RECOMMENDED:** To suspend the Rules to elect three at-large members of the Nebraska Synod Council Executive Committee following the process described below:

- Develop an initial ballot listing all members of the Nebraska Synod Council eligible to serve as an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee
- Provide an opportunity for each eligible member to withdraw his/her name from consideration
- Close nominations and make any required adjustments to the electronic and written ballot by removing or striking out the names of those withdrawing from consideration
- Distribute the final election ballot via email to elected members of the Nebraska Synod Council participating in the meeting online and by hard copy to those participating in the meeting in-person
- Offer a prayer before voting
- Allow all Nebraska Synod Council members to vote anonymously
- Tabulate the votes of the electronic and written ballots

- Declare the three persons receiving the highest number of votes elected regardless of whether they receive more than 50% of all votes cast, provided there is not a tie affecting those positions
- Use a run-off election ballot to break a tie if needed
- The Vice President will distribute the electronic ballot and announce election results; the Bishop will distribute the written ballot

SPONSOR: Dara Troutman, Vice President

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

### **Election of Executive Committee At-Large Members**

The top three persons with the highest votes on the first ballot were:

Rev. Sarah Cordray, 11 votes

Elysia McGill, 10 votes

Rev. Donald Hunzeker, 7 votes

Rev. Nathan Metzger, 7 votes

Rev. Sarah Cordray and Elysia McGill were elected on the first ballot.

Results of the run-off ballot were:

Rev. Donald Hunzeker, 11 votes

Rev. Nathan Metzger, 8 votes

Rev. Donald Hunzeker was elected on the run-off ballot.

### **Appointment to Immanuel Vision Foundation Synod Review Committee**

The Executive Committee recommends that the Synod Council no longer elects members as we need to ensure members are selected that are able to attend the annual review meeting each year. Dara Troutman asked for Synod Council members interested in serving and able to attend the October 2021 meeting to contact her. The Executive Committee will make the appointments. Everyone who is interested should have the opportunity to be appointed during their term on Synod Council.

**Old Business:** None

### **New Business:**

John Badeng, Nile Lutheran Chapel, requested funding from the Nebraska Synod to send monies to a village in Sudan. After discussion, it was decided to encourage John to visit with Serving Hands of Hope for assistance.

### **Open Comments/Feedback:**

This was the first hybrid meeting of the Synod Council. Dara asked if there were suggestions to have a better hybrid experience. Technology can make a difference.

Rev. Nathan Metzger closed with prayer. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Edwards  
Secretary