

# MINUTES

**Nebraska Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Synod Council Minutes  
November 20, 2021**

**APPROVED**

**Voting Members present:**

Tanny Akerson	Sharon Bohling	Pr. Sarah Cordray	Gwen Edwards
Dan Friedlund	Pr. Gary Harris	Nancy Hinrichs	Pr. Donald Hunzeker
Pr. Cara Jensen	Leann Kersten	Pr. Lori Kitzing	Bp. Brian Maas
Elysia McGill	Gary Overfield	Pr. Travis Panning	Hannah Ruch
R LaDene Rutt	Pr. Ellen Stelzle	Dara Troutman	

**Staff and Organizational Presidents present:**

Pr. Juliet Focken	Diane Harpster	Stephanie Lusienki	Pr. Jon Mapa
Pr. Megan Morrow	Dn. Sunni Richardson	Dn. Timothy Siburg	

**Also Present** (briefly for a presentation):

Ramona Edwards	Pat Gregory, PMA	Pr. Brad Meyer
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**Absent:**

Bill Biggs	Pr. Mariam Blair	Juan Castro	Pr. Carol Mapa
Pr. Nathan Metzger	Lisa Kramme	Dn. Connie Stover	Pr. Kristen Van Stee

Vice President Dara Troutman called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

The roll was called and a quorum was present.

MOVED and SECONDED to approve the agenda as presented and revised. APPROVED.

MOVED and SECONDED to approve the minutes of September 18, 2021. APPROVED.

Diane Harpster led the morning devotions reminding us to welcome the Holy Spirit and to become present with the Presence.

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

Bishop Brian reported they were currently reviewing the Retired Roster, it is reviewed every three years. The Nebraska Synod grants retired status and can pull retire status. Bishop Brian also shared two announcements. This was also followed with a PowerPoint presentation led by Vice President Troutman, then into small groups to discuss the information learned.

## Seeking the Spirit Advisory Board

Advisory Board Chair Pr. Brad Meyer and two members spoke the synod council sharing they are under a nationwide search for a new director, with intention of having this position hired by March/April 2022. They are seeking a partnership with the Nebraska Synod Council with a financial request of \$24,300 from Nebraska Synod.

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

**Diane Harpster, Pr. Jon Mapa, Sunni Richardson, and Timothy Siburg** indicated no need for verbal reports. **Pr. Juliet Focken** added the numbers for opened pastor's position is growing and there were four more retirements since August in the Omaha area. **Pr. Megan Morrow** added there were two more retirements since her report was written.

## SC21.11.29: 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>
Heather Grell	3/24/22 Family leave
Martha Atkins	11/15/21
Anna Speiser	11/6/21 Family leave
Trudy Powell	10/16/21
Peter Speiser	11/13/17 Family leave, 2018 2nd yr. 2019 3rd yr., 2020 4th yr., 2021 5th yr.
Samantha Nichols	12/19/20, 2021 2nd yr.
Chris Alexander	1/1/2021, 2022 2nd yr.
Susan Claire Meyer	1/15/2021, 2022 2nd yr.
Rob Garton	2/15/2021, 2022, 2nd yr.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered person's On Leave From Call status (3 years) be approved as On Leave From Call-Family Leave (6 years), and that approval be requested from the Conference of Bishops at their March meeting:

Breen Sipes	12/1/20, 2021 2nd yr.
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**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for transfer to the retired roster:

Greg Gabriel effective	effective 10/1/2021
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**RECOMMENDED:** That the synod council call be extended to the following rostered persons:

Deacon Bogart Nomad, to serve as Chaplain, Pastoral & Spiritual Care Department., Children's Hospital and Medical Center

This is a half-time call, effective November 20, 2021

Deacon Sue Simmons, to serve as Chaplain at Papillion Manor, Papillion, NE. This is a half-time call, effective November 21, 2021.

Pr. Katherine Woolf, to serve as Intentional/Transitional Minister, 3-year renewable. She is currently serving at Faith Lutheran and Christ Lutheran, Talmage.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Retired Roster of the Nebraska Synod be received as reviewed by the Bishop's office. (See attached pages from Materials for Review section from synod council packet for complete list).

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.11.30: EN BLOC**

**1. CONGREGATIONS**

RECOMMENDED: That the bylaws revision for Sheridan Lutheran, Lincoln, be approved.

RECOMMENDED: That the constitution for Immanuel, Wymore, be approved.

**2. COMMITTEES**

RECOMMENDED: To affirm the action of the executive committee's appointment of the following to serve three-year terms on the Audit Committee:

- Rev. Travis Panning – newly elected to Synod Council from the Homestead Cluster; serving at First Evangelical Church in Wilber since October 2011. Ordained in 2006.
- Robin Matthes - member of Rejoice in Omaha. She is a CPA with public accounting experience, was the Director of Finance at Lutheran Family Services for several years, worked in Accounting at Mosaic, and currently employed in the for-profit world.

They will join current members Rob King, Rev. Annette Minderman, and Marty Malley.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.11.31 RECOMMENDED:** To approve the following rostered synod staff housing allowance requests, effective January 1, 2022, until changed by future action of the Synod Council.

Gok Kuany Badeng	\$20,000
Ted Carnahan	\$25,000
Robert Corum	\$50,000
Juliet Focken	\$40,000
Brian Maas	\$50,000
Jon Mapa	\$18,000
Megan Morrow	\$24,000
Ricardo Riqueza	\$ 4,000
Kristin Van Stee	\$ 7,500
Omar Sadi Vila	\$12,060
William Voss	\$29,500

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED (one abstain)

**SC21.11.32 RECOMMENDED:** That Seim Johnson be appointed auditors for the Year Ending January 21, 2022 (FY 2021).

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Synod Audit Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC21.11.33 RECOMMENDED:** Approve a 2% increase in the defined compensation provided to Bishop Maas as recommended by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will discuss its recommendation at a meeting immediately preceding the Synod Council meeting.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED (one abstain)

**SC21.11.34 RECOMMENDED:** To require participants (i.e. voting members, visitors, vendors, volunteers, staff) over the ages of 5 attending the 2022 Nebraska Synod Assembly to either show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or the negative result of a COVID-19 test taken no more than 3 days before the start of the assembly, and to require those who are not fully vaccinated to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth while indoors except when eating or drinking.

SPONSOR: Dara Troutman, Vice President

MOVED – SECONDED – AMENDED – APPROVED (two abstains)

**SC21.11.35 RECOMMENDED:** To appoint a committee to facilitate on behalf of the Synod Council a fair and impartial election/call process for Bishop of the Nebraska Synod.

Members of the Committee would include:

- Rev. Steve Berke
- Ramona Edwards
- Vicar Emma Grinde
- Deacon Karen Melang
- Synod Council Vice President Dara Troutman

Staff support for the committee would be provided by Diane Harpster and Stephanie Lusienski.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee  
MOVED – SECONDED –APPROVED

### **Reports of Officers and Organizations**

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

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

**Treasurer's Report:** Dan Friedlund commented the budget was on target with income and expenses are below budget. Investment portfolio is performing well. A discussion was held regarding the equity in the Synod's properties.

**SC21.11.36:** It was MOVED, SECONDED, and AMENDED that \$20,000 a year for two years would be reserved from the Equity in Synod Properties Fund to support the future business plan of Seeking the Spirit Within. APPROVED.

**Nebraska Synod Women's Organization:** A written report was available. Elysia McGill added after their recent Convention and Gathering, a board member had reached out to a congregation to see if they had a women's group. The pastor stated no and then the board member asked for a contact name so information could be sent. The pastor responded why would they want to receive information from NSWOW?

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

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

- A discussion was held regarding a travel microphone would be beneficial to hybrid meetings.
- It was asked how the Synod Council can pray for more specifically for the Assistants to the Bishops.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Edwards  
Secretary