**MINUTES**

**Nebraska Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Synod Council Minutes**

**September 16, 2022**

APPROVED

**Voting Members present:**

Tanny Akerson Pr. Mariam Blair Sharon Bohling Pr. Sandra Braasch

Pr. Sarah Cordray Gwen Edwards Dan Friedlund Blaine Jelden

Pr. Cara Jensen Bp. Scott Johnson Elysia McGill Pr. Nathan Metzger

Gary Overfield Pr. Travis Panning Pr. Steven Peeler Nathan Peterson

Sarah Purcell R LaDene Rutt Anna Woods Jim Yankech

**Staff and Organizational Presidents present:**

Pr. Juliet Focken Lisa Kramme Stephanie Lusienski Pr. Jon Mapa

Morgan Tranmer Pr. Kristen Van Stee

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

Emily Wageman

**Absent:**

Juan Castro Nancy Hinrichs Joel Pedersen Dn. Sunni Richardson

Dn. Timothy Siburg

Vice President Elysia McGill called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m., she welcomed everyone, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

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 June 2, 2022. APPROVED.

Certified Spiritual Director Emily Wageman led the group in a spiritual practice. Asking everyone to “settle in the space and be still.”

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

Bishop Scott reported he is in conversations with others regarding mobility staff/Assistants to the Bishop. He is looking at staffing based more on programmatic vs. geographical. Restructuring is still happening; Nebraska Synod is under construction. A discussion was held.

**SC22.09.21: ADDITIONS TO BISHOP’S REPORT**

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

status for one year:

**Name Date**

Megan Morrow 9/16/22

Koren Lindley 9/1/22

Bogart Nomad 7/9/22

Suzanne How 9/27/21, 2022 2nd yr

Peter Speiser 11/13/17 (Family Leave-6 yrs)

2018 2nd yr, 2019 3rd yr,

2020 4th yr, 2021 5th yr,

2022 6th year (final)

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

roster:

Charlie Smith 6/1//2022

Renae Johnson 8/1/2022

Sheryl Kester Beyer 9/1/2022

Chris Kester Beyer 9/1/2022

**RECOMMENDED:** That a synod council call be extended to the following rostered persons:

Deacon Nichole (Coco) Lyons, to serve as Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries, The Lutheran Center, Lincoln, as Campus Minister, effective June 17, 2022.

Pr. Sarah Ruch, to serve as Transitional Pastor for Local Outreach and Mission, at Sheridan Lutheran, Lincoln, effective August 15, 2022. This is a 3-year renewable call.

The Rev. Emily Johnson, to serve Grace Lutheran, Lincoln, as 1-year Intentional Transitional Minister, effective September 1, 2022.

The Rev. Elizabeth Kocher, to serve Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries, The Lutheran Center, Lincoln, as 1-year Intentional Transitional Minister, effective October 1, 2022.

The Rev. Brian D. Maas, to serve as Vice President of Mission and Spiritual Care, Immanuel, Omaha, effective October 1, 2022.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.09.22: EN BLOC**

1. CONGREGATIONS

RECOMMENDED:

2. COMMITTEES

RECOMMENDED: That the following appointments to the Ecumenism Committee be affirmed:

To be appointed for a 2nd term:

Ron Drury 2022-24

Nichole Lyons 2022-24

Ricardo Riqueza 2022-24

Continuing to serve:

Rob Garton 2021-23 2nd term

Karen McNeill-Utecht 2021-23 2nd term

Barbara Oshlo 2021-23 2nd term

Omar Sadi Vila 2021-23 2nd term

RECOMMENDED: That the following appointment to the PMA Steering Committee be

approved:

Marcia Dorn, for a three year-term, 2022-2025.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

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

**Stephanie Lusienski, Pr. Jon Mapa,** and **Morgan Tranmer** indicated no need for verbal reports. **Pr. Juliet Focken** provided background on the Matthews Trust, the Supreme Court ruled in favor for VNA and Salvation Army, therefore, the $1M will be split amongst those two agencies. **Lisa Krammer** shared about *Growing Young*. She fells God is telling her it is time; she is at peace with this calling. **Pr. Kristen Van Stee** has committed to be on staff for another year, she reflected on transitional ministry and congregations being served.

**Reports of Officers and Organizations**

**Vice President’s Report**: Elysia McGill stated communication is important.

**Secretary’s Report** was accepted as presented. When making a motion from the floor at Synod Council meetings, the mover will need to submit it in writing to the secretary.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Dan Friedlund reported FY 2021 had a positive balance of $73K which was moved to the contingency fund. Investments YTD are down $250K. Our Mission Share to the ELCA is 54.1%.

**Nebraska Synod Women’s Organization:** A written report was available.

**SC22.09.23 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. Sarah Ruch to be available for a call as an Associate Pastor at Sheridan Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider her for a call following the conclusion of her term as Transitional Pastor for Local Outreach and Mission there.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.09.24 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. Douglas Hjelmstad to be available for a call as a Pastor at American Lutheran Church in Gothenburg, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider him for a call following the conclusion of his term as Interim/Transitional Pastor there.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.09.25 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. Emily Johnson to be available for a call as a Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider her for a call following the conclusion of her term as Interim/Transitional Pastor there.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.09.26 RECOMMENDED:** To release Immanuel (Stateline) Lutheran Church of rural Wymore, Nebraska, from the roster of congregations of the Nebraska Synod and the ELCA.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED –APPROVED (one abstains)

**SC22.09.27 RECOMMENDED:** To set the housing allowance of Bishop Scott Johnson at $35,607 annually, effective immediately, until changed by future action of the Synod Council.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund

MOVED – SECONDED –APPROVED

**Old Business:**

**New Business:** Juan Castro hasn’t attended any Synod Council meetings this past year since his election at Synod Assembly 2021.

* **SC22.09.28:** It was moved that Juan Castro be removed from Synod Council due to lack of attendance. SECONDED – APPROVED
* **SC22.09.29**: It was moved for the Synod Council to extend an invitation to Michael McDonald to replace Juan Castro to fill the vacancy on Synod Council until the next election. If Michael McDonald declines, the Executive Committee is to appoint another person to fill the vacancy. SECONDED – AMENDED – APPROVED

Pr. Ellen Stelzle has resigned from the Synod Council as she has taken a call outside of the Nebraska Synod.

* **SC22.09.30**: It was moved for the Synod Council to extend an invitation to Pr. Kathy Gerking to replace Pr. Ellen Stelzle to fill the vacancy on Synod Council until the next election. If Pr. Kathy Gerking declines, the Executive Committee is to appoint another person to fill the vacancy. SECONDED – APPROVED

<Return to Action on Motions>

**SC22.09.31 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

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

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

Rev. Sarah Cordray, 10 votes

Rev. Cara Jensen, 9 votes

Rev. Nathan Metzger, 9 votes

**New Business** (continued)**:**

* The Executive Committee explore names for a possible appointment for the vacancy for Lay Female Lewis & Clark Cluster.
* Seeking the Spirit Within Advisory Board will provide an update at the next Synod Council meeting.
* At the Churchwide Assembly there were changes to the Model Constitution for Synods. Some are required changes, and some are determined by the Synod Assembly. The Nebraska Synod Constitution needs reviewed before the next Synod Council meeting, so the changes be discussed. Reviewers will be Dan Friedlund, Gwen Edwards, Pr. Juliet Focken, Sharon Bohling, and Bp. Scott Johnson.

**Open Comments/Feedback:**

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Edwards

Secretary