

MINUTES

**Nebraska Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Synod Council Minutes**

March 18, 2023

Approved

Voting Members present:

Tanny Akerson	Pr. Mariam Blair	Pr. Sandra Braasch	Gwen Edwards
Dan Friedlund	Nancy Hinrichs	Blaine Jelden	Pr. Cara Jensen
Bp. Scott Johnson	Elysia McGill	Pr. Nathan Metzger	Gary Overfield
Pr. Travis Panning	Pr. Steven Peeler	Nathan Peterson	R LaDene Rutt
Anna Woods	Jim Yankech		

Staff and Organizational Presidents present:

Stephanie Lusienksi	Dn. Sunni Richardson	Dn. Timothy Siburg	Morgan Tranmer
Pr. Kristen Van Stee	Pr. Heidi Wallace		

Also Present (briefly for a presentations):

Cubwa Divine	Kevin Karas
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Absent:

Sharon Bohling	Joel Pedersen	Sarah Purcell	Pr. Greg Berger
Ms. Laurel Berry	Ms. Amy Buch	Pr. Kathy Montira	

The morning began at 10:04 a.m.

Bishop Scott Johnson introduced Pr. David Pinkston, the new Seeking the Spirit Within Director. Pr. Pinkston led the Spiritual Practice, "Who cares for the caregivers?"

VP Elysia McGill called the meeting to order at 10:21 a.m.

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 November 19, 2022, as amended. APPROVED.

Cubwa Divine, ELCA Churchwide Council Member, greeted the council and shared they are attending Synod Council meetings to gather information. "What are the joys and opportunities happening in the Nebraska Synod? What in the church has made you smile?"

Bishop's Report: A written report was available.

Bishop Scott reflected on changes with the staff and his travels as Nebraska Bishop.

Staff Reports: Written reports were available.

Dn. Sunni Richardson and **Dn. Timothy Siburg** indicated no need for verbal reports. **Pr. Heidi Wallace** shared she finished her last of pastoral duties. She is working with fourteen congregations in the call process with three more to soon be in the process. Five congregations are in shared ministries, with the potential of a dozen more. She has been relating with clusters, have meet with five in person. **Pr. Kristen Van Stee** highlighted changes for mobility staff.

2023 Proposed Amended Budget and 2024 Proposed Budget

Treasurer Dan Friedlund and Budget and Finance Committee Chair Kevin Karas led the discussion. Mr. Karas shared there has been a continued decline in Mission Share. They wanted to be realistic on what is expected and adjusted the budgets accordingly. Treasurer Friedlund shared there was a subgroup consisting of members from both the Budget and Finance Committee and the Audit Committee who worked on the budget and tried hard to balance the budget. Dan reflected on the line items reduced. Discussion was held. Dn. Timothy Siburg stated Mission Intent forms are being received and more than typically received; 100+ received with many larger congregations showing a decrease.

Meeting recessed at 11:30 a.m. for lunch.

Meeting resumed at 11:50 a.m.

Staff Reports continued:

Morgan Tranmer and **Stephanie Lusienki** indicated they didn't have anything to report.

Reports of Officers and Organizations

Vice President's Report: VP McGill shared her thoughts and stated she is still working with Dara during the transition.

Secretary's Report: Written report available in packet. Secretary Edwards reported nothing to add.

Treasurer's Report: Written report begins on page 16. FY2022 numbers are preliminary and there could be adjustments based on the year-end closing process. It will be recommended to move some investment funds to local institutions which have higher return rates. Further discussion was held including answering questions asked.

Nebraska Synod Women's Organization: Elysia McGill reported their Winter Retreat had tremendous attendance. Spring Gatherings have started, two have been held with five more in the months of March and April. The Panhandle event had the largest attendance in years. She extended an invitation to all to attend.

SC23.03.01: EN BLOC

1. SYNOD ASSEMBLY ITEMS

A. Agenda for the Synod Assembly – June 2-3, 2023

RECOMMENDED: That the proposed Synod Assembly agenda be adopted as the order for business for the 2023 Synod Assembly being held June 2-3 and that the proposed agenda be presented to the Assembly for adoption.

B. Agencies and Causes:

RECOMMENDED: That the following agencies and causes be authorized to present their needs to the congregations of the Nebraska Synod and that congregations be encouraged to receive special offerings for them in 2024:

Immanuel
Lutheran Family Services
Midland University
Mosaic
Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
Oaks Indian Mission
Tabitha
Blue Valley Lutheran Homes
Table Grace Ministries

and that this recommendation be presented to the Synod Assembly.

C. Committees:

RECOMMENDED: That the following committee members be ratified by the Synod Council:

Minutes

Ron Lofgren, St. John's, Norfolk
Gwen Edwards, Synod Council Secretary
Pr. Doug Hjelmstad, American, Gothenburg
Pr. Day Hefner, St. John's, Schuyler
Morgan Tranmer - Staff Liaison

Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee

Gwen Edwards, Lord of Love, Omaha
Rev. Kathy Gundell, Sonrise Parish, Cozad
Ron Gunderson, St. Pauls, Grand Island
Dn. Timothy Siburg - Synod Staff Liaison

RECOMMENDED: That Ric Miller be appointed as chair of the Registration Committee.

D. Auditor's Report:

RECOMMENDED: That the Synod Council recommend to the Nebraska Synod in Assembly that the auditor's report for 2022 be accepted once the report is received, conditional upon such report being a clean opinion.

E. Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities:

RECOMMENDED: Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Church Council April 2007, Exhibit G part 2, it is required that all Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities be approved annually by the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. Motion: that the following assemblies be reauthorized as Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities:

Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, Lincoln
Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
Lakota Lutheran Chapel, Scottsbluff
Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
Sudanese Dinka Community (Formerly Sudanese Messiah
Worshiping Community, Ralston)

And that this recommendation be presented to the Synod Assembly.

F. Voting Privileges:

RECOMMENDED: That in accordance with Synod Constitution provision S7.26. (This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with *S7.21.) the following persons be granted voting privileges at the 2023 Synod Assembly:

Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
Two lay members (to be identified)
Lakota Lutheran Chapel and Center, Scottsbluff
Two lay members (to be identified)
Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
Two lay members (to be identified)
Sudanese Dinka Community
Two lay members (to be identified)

RECOMMENDED: By continuing resolutions of the Nebraska Synod Council adopted March 13, 2020, in accordance with S.7.21.c of the Nebraska Synod

Constitution, persons serving as ministers of Nebraska Synod congregations by Authorization of the Bishop of the Synod are granted voice and vote in the Assembly, as are ministers of Word and Sacrament of Full Communion partners serving Nebraska Synod congregations, in accordance with 8.62.12 of the Constitution of the ELCA.

G. Assembly Offering: That the 2023 Synod Assembly offerings be designated to support the Nebraska Synod Mission Field Nebraska Ministries, to be split among its designated recipients.

2. 2023 COMPENSATIONS FOR ROSTERED PERSONS – including parsonage guidelines (Proposed Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service for 2023, pp. 57-70).

RECOMMENDED: That the 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service be approved and presented to the 2023 Synod Assembly.

3. CONGREGATIONS:

4. COMMITTEES:

5. AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS:

RECOMMENDED: To affirm the Nebraska Lutheran Outdoors Ministries (NLOM) Board of Directors' recommendation of the following appointment to the board: (pg 71-74)

Deacon Coco Lyons, to complete a first three-year term on the NLOM Board commencing June 1, 2023 expiring in 2026, with the opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Deacon Lyons is a Campus Minister University of Nebraska-Lincoln Lutheran Center. Deacon Lyons is a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Lincoln where her husband, Rev. Jacob Krueger, serves as pastor.

Ms. Emily Meehan, to complete a first three-year term on the NLOM Board commencing June 1, 2023 expiring in 2026, with the opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Ms. Meehan is an alumna of Camp Carol Joy Holling as both a camper and counselor. Ms. Meehan is a member of Life Church in Omaha.

Mr. Conrad "Ted" Swanson, to complete a first three-year term on the NLOM Board commencing June 1, 2023 expiring in 2026, with the

opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Mr. Swanson grew up in Omaha, practiced law for 32 years in the Denver and Fort Collins area, and has served on numerous boards. Mr. Swanson is a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, CO.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC23.03.02: ADDITIONS TO BISHOP'S REPORT

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

Name	Date
Marilyn Hasseman	11/5/2022
Ernesto Medina	3/72/2022, 2nd yr. 2023
James Sells	1/1/2023

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

Jon Mapa	12/2/2022
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RECOMMENDED: That a synod council call be extended to the following rostered persons:

Pr. Twila Schock, to serve MOSAIC, as Vice President of Church Relations and International Programming, effective March 6, 2023. (pg. 75-76)

Pr. Megan Morrow, to serve as transitional/interim minister, three-year renewable. She will serve as Pastor at St. John's, Alliance, effective January 6, 2023.

Pr. Glen Thomas, to serve as transitional/interim minister, three-year renewable. He will serve as Pastor at First, Blair, effective January 2, 2023.

To affirm the following motions approved by the Executive Committee at their January 25, 2023, meeting.

RECOMMENDED: To amend the motion to state that the diversity training will take place as a pre-assembly workshop on Thursday, June 1 in Kearney, NE as a full-day training in order to make it more broadly available throughout the synod to any interested persons or synod groups. (pg. 50)

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC23.03.03 RECOMMENDED: to authorize the following as **Mission Field Nebraska** ministries through March 2024:

Mission Field Nebraska

Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, Lincoln
Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
Lakota Lutheran Center and Chapel, Scottsbluff
Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
Seeking the Spirit Within, Statewide
Sudanese Dinka Worship Community, Omaha

Mission Field Nebraska Affiliates

Barnabas Community, Lincoln
Bridges to Hope, Lincoln
Lutheran Service Corp, Omaha
Serving Hands of Hope Foundation, Omaha

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED as Amended – APPROVED

SC23.03.04 RECOMMENDED: That the following Rules of Procedure for the 2023 Nebraska Synod Assembly be recommended to the Synod Assembly.

2023 NEBRASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Proposed Rules

1. Any voting member of the Synod Assembly who desires to add an item of new business to the agenda of the Synod Assembly shall present such item by 4:00 p.m. Thursday, June 2, to the chair, who shall immediately refer it to the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee.
2. A two-thirds vote of the Synod Assembly shall be required to add an item of new business to the agenda.
3. The Synod Assembly may consider and act on business agenda items en bloc, provided those business agenda items were recommended for such consideration by the Synod Council. En bloc business agenda items shall be acted upon without debate or amendment. Upon the request of a Synod Assembly voting member and a second by nine other voting members, any agenda item may be pulled from en bloc consideration and be considered and acted upon separately following action on the remainder of en bloc business agenda items.
4. Voting members desiring to present resolutions shall submit them to the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee by 4:00 p.m. Thursday, June 2. These resolutions (submitted after the 90-day deadline) will be brought to the Assembly and require a

majority vote to be debated on the floor and a two-thirds majority vote for passage. Any resolution properly before the Assembly and recommended by the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee, but not disposed of by the end of the time allotted for action on resolutions will automatically be referred to Synod Council for study and action at its next regular meeting.

5. The Synod Assembly may consider and act on resolutions en bloc, provided those resolutions were recommended for en bloc consideration and approval, either as submitted or amended, by both the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee and the Synod Council. En bloc resolutions shall be acted upon without debate or amendment, except that the presiding officer may allow the introducer of each en bloc resolution to speak to his or her resolution once for no longer than two minutes. Upon the request of a Synod Assembly voting member and a second by nine other voting members, any resolution may be pulled from en bloc consideration and be considered and acted upon separately following action on the remainder of en bloc resolutions.

6. All speeches in debate shall be limited to two minutes.

7. No motion or parliamentary action, other than a motion to adjourn, shall be in order outside of the time scheduled on the Assembly agenda entitled Assembly Business Session, except by the consent of the Assembly.

8. The ELCA churchwide representative to the Assembly will chair all portions of the business sessions that are related to the Bishop's election.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson, on behalf of the Synod Assembly Planning Team

MOVED – SECONDED Discussion Held APPROVED

SC23.03.05 RECOMMENDED: Pursuant to Section *C.9.07, the Synod Council of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does hereby authorize Vicar Janet Anderson to be available for a call as Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Louisville, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider her for a call following the conclusion of her term as interim vicar there.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED Discussion Held APPROVED

SC23.03.06 RECOMMENDED: That the Synod Council accept the FY2024 (year ending January 31, 2025) proposed operating budget as presented by the Budget and Finance Committee, and to recommend the proposed budget to the Synod Assembly for approval.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

APPROVED

SC23.03.07 RECOMMENDED: To approve the transfer of funds to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries of the Synod for FY2022 (year ended January 31, 2023):

- To transfer an additional \$15,000 from the Director of Evangelical Ministries (DEM) Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries,
- To transfer \$30,000 from the 150th Anniversary Campaign Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries,
- To transfer \$20,000 from the Immanuel Vision Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries, and
- To transfer \$10,000 from the Equity in Synod Properties Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

Discussion Held APPROVED

SC23.03.08 RECOMMENDED: Recommended to the Synod Council, a 3.5% increase in defined compensation for Bishop Scott Johnson for FY2023 starting on February 1, 2023.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

APPROVED

SC23.03.09 RECOMMENDED: To allow the Budget and Finance Committee to transfer funds currently on deposit with Mission Investment Fund (MIF) to local financial institutions in order to optimize the return on cash investments through the purchase of CD's or other money market instruments.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

APPROVED

SC23.03.10 RECOMMENDED: That the Synod Council adopt the FY2023 Amended Budget, as proposed.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

APPROVED

SC23.03.11 RECOMMENDED: To transfer the positive FY2022 (year ended January 31, 2023) net operating results, upon final determination, to the Synod Contingency Fund.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

APPROVED

SC23.03.12 RECOMMENDED: To release Immanuel Lutheran Church of Wymore, Nebraska, from the roster of congregations of the Nebraska Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

SPONSOR: Gwen Edwards, Synod Council Secretary

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC23.03.13 RECOMMENDED: that the recommendation and rationale of the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee pursuant to this resolution be approved.

SPONSOR: Bishop Johnson on behalf of the Resolutions, Reference, and Counsel Committee
MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

Old Business:

Secretary Edwards shared there are four vacancies on the Synod Council from the following events:

- One from the removal of Juan Castro at the September 2022 Synod Council meeting
- Resignation Rev. Ellen Stelzle
- 2022 Synod Assembly, no names on the ballot for lay female from Lewis & Clark Cluster
- Resignation of Rev. Sarah Cordray

She reminded the Council of the actions taken at the September 2022 Synod Council meeting regarding filling these vacancies. She will work with Executive Assistant Tranmer in getting the letters of invitations sent to the persons discussed at the Executive Committee meeting and Synod Council meeting.

New Business:

An email will be sent regarding the Synod Assembly Registration.

Open Comments/Feedback:

What time is the June 2 Synod Council meeting in Kearney, 8:30 a.m.

Bishop Johnson ended the meeting in prayer.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Edwards
Secretary