

MINUTES

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

March 16, 2024

Approved

Voting Members present:

Tanny Akerson	Pr. Mariam Blair	Sharon Bohling	Pr. Sandra Braasch
Fred Bredehoeft	Pr. Liz Dieseth Pearl	Gwen Edwards	Dan Friedlund
Nancy Hinrichs	Blaine Jelden	Bp. Scott Johnson	Elysia McGill
Pr. Nathan Metzger	Pr. Travis Panning	Pr. Steven Peeler	Nathan Peterson
R LaDene Rutt	Pr. Linda Walz	Anna Woods	Jim Yankech

Staff and Organizational Presidents present:

Gretchen Ahrens	Pr. Greg Berger	Stephanie Lusinski	Dn. Sunni Richardson
Dn. Timothy Siburg	Pr. Heidi Wallace	Amy Woods	

Also Present (briefly for a presentations):

Ramona Edwards	Pr. Brad Meyer	David Pinkston
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Absent:

Pr. Cara Jensen	Gary Overfield	Sarah Purcell	Judy Stahlecker
Ms. Amy Buch	Ms. Michelle Herrick		

Vice President Elysia McGill called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Pr. Patrick Sipes, First Lutheran/North Platte opened the meeting with prayer and led the group in a spiritual practice, Web Prayer.

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 October 14, 2023, as presented. APPROVED.

Bishop's Report: A written report was available. Bishop Johnson introduced the new staff members Gretchen Ahrens and Amy Woods. After reviewing the graphs on page 7, Bishop Johnson asked what do you see, what concerns you? A discussion was held.

SC24.03.01: To approve adjusting the following dates for the 2024 Synod Council meeting calendar:

August 9-10, 2024

Friday Evening through Saturday (Location TBD)

November 22, 2024

Synod Office with ZOOM Option

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.02: EN BLOC

1. SYNOD ASSEMBLY ITEMS:

A. Agenda for the Synod Assembly – June 1-2, 2024

RECOMMEND: That the proposed Synod Assembly agenda be adopted as the order for business for the 2024 Synod Assembly being held June 1-2 and that the proposed agenda be presented to the Assembly for adoption.

B. Agencies & Causes:

RECOMMEND: 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 2023:

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

C. Committees:

RECOMMEND: Approved 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
Amy Woods - 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

RECOMMEND: Appointed Ric Miller as chair of the Registration Committee

D. Auditor's Report

RECOMMEND:

That the Synod Council recommend to the Nebraska Synod in Assembly that the auditor's report for 2024 be accepted once the report is received, conditional upon such report being a clean opinion.

E. Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities

RECOMMEND:

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

Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, Lincoln

Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha

Lakota Lutheran Chapel, Scottsbluff

Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha

Sudanese Dinka Community, Ralston

And that this recommendation be presented to the Synod Assembly.

F. Voting Privileges:

RECOMMEND:

Approved 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 worshipping 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 2024 Synod Assembly:

Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha, Two lay members

Lakota Lutheran Chapel and Center, Scottsbluff, Two lay members

Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha, Two lay members

Sudanese Dinka Community, Ralston, Two lay members

RECOMMEND:

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:

RECOMMEND: The Synod Assembly Planning Team suggests the 2024 Synod Assembly offerings be designated to support the ELCA World Hunger and Nebraska Synod One Another Hunger Grants.

2. 2024 COMPENSATIONS FOR ROSTER PERSONS

That the 2025 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service be approved and presented to the 2024 Synod Assembly.

3. CONGREGATIONS:

RECOMMEND: The constitutions for the following be approved:
Lutheran Memorial Lutheran Church, Omaha
Rejoice! Lutheran Church, Omaha
Sinai Lutheran Church, Fremont
First Lutheran Church, Blair
Zion Lutheran Church, Sutton

4. COMMITTEES:

5. AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS:

RECOMMENDED: Mrs. Jenny Hansen, to complete a first three-year term on the NeLCM Board commencing January 1, 2024 through May 31, 2026, with the opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Hansen is an alumnus of Wayne State College, and active alumnus of Campus Ministry. Jenn and Jeremy, her spouse, are members of First Lutheran Church in Fremont.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.03: ADDITIONS TO BISHOP'S REPORT

RECOMMENDED: That the following rostered persons be moved from On Leave From Call status to Study Leave

Name

Susan Claire Meyer

RECOMMENDED: To appoint the following persons to the Committee on Restoration of Impaired Rostered Minister and Parish Ministry Associates as per Resolution 2023:1 of June 2023 Synod Assembly

Eve Brank

Pr. Glenn Schacht

Jim Yankech

Lorie Thomas

Pr. Otto Schultz

Also working with the committee:
Pr. Tim Schroeder (Portico Representative)
Pr. Greg Berger Synod Staff Liaison

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

Reports of Officers and Organizations

Vice President’s Report: Synods Vice Presidents met last week in Chicago; Ms. McGill was unable to attend due to scheduling conflict. Vice Presidents generally meet monthly via ZOOM.

Secretary’s Report: The roster is updated in the packet. All Synod Council vacancies have been filled. Ms. Edwards asked if anyone want to serve on a Constitution Review Committee to review congregational constitutions.

Treasurer’s Report: Written report available and reviewed.

Nebraska Synod Women’s Organization: Elysia McGill reported their Winter Retreat in January was canceled due to weather. Spring Gatherings are in progress with two complete, and five yet to happen.

Recess for lunch, 11:50 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Tanny Akerson reported that the Synod Council elects the members for the following committees: Audit, Budget & Finance and Nominating.

The following changes were made to their report:

Rhonda Obert was removed from the Budget & Finance ballot.

Removing the words “Eligible for consecutive terms” on page 51.

SC24.03.04: Remove nominating committee member Diana Fajardo from the committee.

MOVED – SECONDED Discussion Held APPROVED

SC24.03.05 RECOMMENDED: To authorize the following as **Mission Field Nebraska** ministries through March 2025:

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 Community, Ralston

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 – APPROVED

SC24.03.06 RECOMMENDED: To suspend the Rules to conduct an election for members of various Synod Committees by electronic vote following the process described below:

- Develop an electronic initial ballot listing individuals whose names were forwarded by the Nominating Committee for each position to be elected,
- Open each election for additional nominations from the floor at the March 19 meeting,
- Close nominations and distribute the final election ballot via email from the synod office to elected members of the Nebraska Synod Council on Monday, April 8, 2022,
- Allow Nebraska Synod Council members to vote anonymously for each position,
- Declare the persons receiving the highest number of votes cast elected regardless of whether they receive more than 50% of all votes cast, provided there is not a tie number of votes,
- If there is a tie, then use a run-off election ballot to break the tie and then a third ballot and subsequent ballots as needed,
- Ballots are to be submitted by 5:00 PM Thursday, April 11. The Vice President will report on election results.

SPONSOR: Nominating Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.07 RECOMMENDED: That the following Rules of Procedure for the 2024 Nebraska Synod Assembly be recommended to the Synod Assembly.

2024 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.

SC24.03.08 RECOMMENDED: To approve the transfer of \$25,000 from the Fall Campaign Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries of the Synod for FY2023 (year ended January 31, 2024).

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund for the Budget & Finance Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.09 RECOMMENDED: To the Synod Council, a 4.5% increase in defined compensation for Bishop Scott Johnson for FY2024 starting on February 1, 2024.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.10 RECOMMENDED: That the Synod Council accept the FY2025 (year ending January 31, 2026) 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 for the Budget & Finance Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.11 RECOMMENDED: That certain Nebraska Synod Ministries be granted additional one-time gifts for FY2024 and that the 1% reduction for all Synod Ministries in the FY2024 budget be eliminated.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund for the Budget & Finance Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.12 RECOMMENDED: To transfer the positive FY2023 (year ended January 31, 2024) net operating results, upon final determination, to the Synod Contingency Fund.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund for the Budget & Finance Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.13 RECOMMENDED: To approve the appropriation of \$26,263 for FY2023 (year ended January 31, 2024) within the Nebraska Synod Endowment Fund to be used in the future for distribution from the Fund as established in the Objectives and General Guidelines of the Fund.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund for the Budget & Finance Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.14 RECOMMENDED: That Resolution 2024:1 Assistance with Diapers and Female Hygiene Products be adopted.

SPONSOR: Reference and Counsel Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

SC24.03.15 RECOMMENDED: The final slate will be distributed to the Synod Council for review. Then the final approval of the slate for Synod Council, Discipline Committee, Consultation Committee, and Churchwide Assembly voting members to be approved by the Executive Committee.

Staff Reports: Written reports were available. Brief discussion held.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Open Comments/Feedback

None

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Edwards

Secretary