

SYNOD COUNCIL MINUTES

INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD, ELCA
 SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2022
 CONFERENCE ROOM, SYNOD OFFICE

Friday, September 24, 2022

Present:

Officers, Pr. Wm. O. Gafkjen, Bishop; Ted Miller, Vice-President; Chris Walda, Treasurer; Patricia McIntyre, Secretary.

Rostered: Pr. Nancy Nyland, Pr. J. Rothman, Pr. V. Garber, Pr. T. Graham, Pr. L. Webb, Deacon J. Winter, Pr. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar, Pr. B. Limbong, Pr. J. Burkholder (Zoom),

Laity: D. Daniels, V. Carron, D. Zehr (Zoom) Nichole Lee (Zoom), N. Smith, M. Hoover.

Staff: Pr. H. Apel, Pr. D. Fugate, S. Swenson, Synod Storyteller;

Guests: Pr. K. Biermann, J. Tatum (Synod Counsel), T. Smith (WELCA), (Zoom)

Meeting called to order by VP Ted Miller 5:45PM. Meeting Chaplains: Pr. Ladona Webb and Dee Ann Daniels. Meeting Monitor: Dee Daniels. Bp. Gafkjen welcomed the new SC members Nichole Lee, Mike Hoover, and Pastor Beemon Limbong. Synod Counsel Josh Tatum began orientation with review of the fiduciary duties of SC membership. Meeting broke for dinner.

Meeting reconvened 7:02PM by VP Miller. Pr. Webb lead devotions. Roundtable introductions followed and introduction of new members.

Action: SC2022/30 Approve Minutes of June meeting. Carried

Executive Committee Report: Pat McIntyre reported EC actions now referred for SC approval and reported information about Churchwide Assembly CWA).

Vice-President's Report: Ted Miller shared reflections on CWA. It was a more "reflective, internal" assembly than years past. Pr. Dan Fugate and Pr. Heather Apel concurred and reported youth and staff activities at the assembly.

Treasurer's Report: Chris Walda reported status of Mission Support budget and explained restrictions on distribution of Endowment funds. He advised that the 2021-22

Audit is nearly finished. Pr. Jerry O'Neal and Pr. Nancy Nyland will review it. Synod expenses are returning to pre-pandemic levels but are within budget range.

Storyteller's Report: Susie Swenson attended CWA as both a storyteller and a delegate. She reflected on the impression she brought home.

Bishop's Report: Bp. Gafkjen reflected on CWA, including the introduction of the WOO-HOO Synod tote bags, realizing that his traveling "woo-hoo" greeting supports the ongoing relationships of each mission center to another in IN-KY Synod. He reported actions from the Conference of Bishops held prior to CWA including their uneasiness about potential protests. None developed and Bp. Gafkjen concluded that the theme of lament and repentance all through CWA plenary and worship events did affect the gathered delegates and visitors, a self-reflective turn to remembering that we are in fact people of both death and resurrection.

Women of the ELCA Report: Tina Smith reported that WELCA will meet in retreat November 4-6, 2022 to develop a model for its future in this Synod. WELCA is healthy churchwide but finds it difficult to fill leadership roles locally. Her hope is that the retreat will help them discern the best direction for the organization.

Synod Assembly (SA) Taskforce Update: Bp. Gafkjen reported that, after hearing the Taskforce report in June, he followed the way other synods met this year. The recommendations are that:

1: SA 2023 be a one-day, online only, primarily business meeting on June 10, 2023. Any business unfinished after adjournment will be referred to SC for conclusion.

2: SA 2024 be traditional in-person gathering for business, worship, elections and other matters or memorials in preparation for CWA in 2025.

3: No SA in 2025 either in-person or online. IN-KY officers and delegates will be charged to attend CWA and report back to mission centers here.

4: In non-SA years, the Synod will sponsor workshops (3 in the north part of IN-KY, 3 in the south) to empower and equip members locally and to encourage best practices for congregations and other missions. These are envisioned as worship and workshop events, not business meetings.

V. Garber reminded SC that this cycle aligns with CWA cycle and will be of specific benefit to rural and distant congregations. V. Carron saw the cycle as means by which SC and Staff can listen to people in their own contexts to see what they need and want. N. Smith regretted the loss of annual assembly, advising that the new cycle's success is dependent on the Synod being intentional and specific about the regional events.

On recommendation from Synod Assembly Taskforce, and with Pr. Fugate's reminder that the date of SA 2024 is contingent on venue availability,

Action: SC/2022/31 Accept the recommendations of the Synod Assembly Taskforce as presented. Carried.

BP. Gafkjen advised that both of the clergy families who had been in limbo with Immigration now are or are soon to be fully cleared to remain in the United States. Pr. Evangeline said that the actions of EC on March 14, 2022 (and following SC confirmation) were crucial in the process and thanked SC.

Closing worship followed and VP Miller adjourned the meeting until 1:00PM, Saturday, September 25, 2022.

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Saturday, September 25, 2022

VP Miller called meeting to order at 1:03PM; Chaplains offered opening worship.

Bishop's Report: Bp. Gafkjen assigned "homework" for November meeting, requesting all members survey their areas to identify topics for the regional events that come in lieu of some future SAs, specifically what themes or needs are apparent and what commonalities and symbols are present across the mission centers. Those will be synthesized at the November SC meeting for development into events.

Bp. Gafkjen then yielded the floor to Pastor Heather Apel who offered her resignation letter to SC. She requested her resignation be effective 10/31/22 and that she be granted On-Leave status effective 11/01/22. SC accepted her resignation with regret. Meeting Chaplain Webb offered a prayer of thanks and support for Pastor Apel.

Synod Staffing: Bp. Gafken then addressed Synod staffing needs. He and staff are agreed that some redistribution of tasks will help move the mission forward. Some tasks have grown, some have redirected, and emerging ministries are becoming central to the life of the Synod. For those reasons, he proposed 2 new positions, adding an additional ½ time salary equivalent. The first position is Assistant to the Bishop for Emerging Ministers and Ministries, designed to support Transformational Leadership Academy and Lay Leadership and Spiritual Formation. On recommendation of the Bishop,

Action: SC/2022/32: Extend Synod Call to Pr. Cory Driver to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Emerging Ministers and Ministries effective 10/11/2022. Carried.

The Second Position, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry Transition, to support the Call process, assisting conferences and congregations, to assist ministers in transition,

identify and deploy Ministers of Record and SAMS, manage the Synod roster, shepherd sister-church relations. On recommendation,

Action: SC/2022/33: Extend Synod Call to Pr. Dan Forehand to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Ministers in Transition, effective 10/11/2022. Carried.

Bishop then recounted Executive Committee action concerning redistribution of the last year of the Poellman gift to the Synod to commit (1) \$15,000. to the Reimagining Conference, \$5,000. to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and (3) \$12,962.41 to staff transition.

Action: SC/2022/34: Affirm action of EC to redistribute the final year of the Poellman gift as presented. Carried.

Bishop then yielded the floor to Pr. Karl Biermann, ELCA Financial Gift Planner, to explain opportunities for legacy gifts and endowments to Synods. He charged SC to remember IN-KY Synod in estate planning and share his information in the Synod.

Congregational Concerns: Shiloh Lutheran Church, Walton, IN, has scheduled its Service of Holy Closure for January 15, 2023. Their members will likely move to Christ/Kokomo. Roots of Life Ministry will “nest” with the neighboring United Methodist Church to obtain operating facilities. Grace and Peace Lutheran Church, Evansville, IN, the result of a merger, intends to sell the real property of the former Grace Lutheran Church to gain resources as they call a new pastor.

Roster Concerns: On Bishop’s recommendation

Action: SC/2022/35: Move Pr. Church Miller to Retired status effective 11/1/2022. Carried.

Action: SC/2022/36: Move Pastor Keith Hedrick to Retired status (from on-leave status) effective 11/1/2022. Carried.

Action: SC/2022/37: Move Pr. Heather Apel to On-Leave status (1st year) effective 11/1/2022. Carried

SC approved action for Pr. Apel “with regret and with gratitude.”

Committee and Staff Reports (as per Dropbox).

Constitution Committee: On Bishop’s recommendation,

Action: SC/2022/38: Appoint Sister Nora Frost to serve on Constitution Committee for a term of three years. Carried.

Constitution Committee presented request from Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Greendale, to be exempted from being bound by article C.5.04 of the Model

Constitution (governing appointments to nominating committees). After discussion, moved and seconded,

Action: SC/2022/39 Grant Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Greendale, the requested exemption from C.5.04 of the Model Constitution for Congregations. Carried.

Pastor Nancy Nyland reminded SC that understanding constitutions must be reciprocal. Synod is required to educate laity about the governing documents but must also be aware that one constitution model does not fit comfortably all congregations.

Racial Justice Taskforce: Pr. Tim Graham reported that their breakout sessions at SA were well-attended and generated considerable excitement. Their Juneteenth Celebration was successful as well. Taskforce invited SC to find ways to work on social justice issues and further anti-racism.

Immigration Taskforce: Pat McIntyre will meet with Congressman Larry Bouchon to see how we may best support legislation that will ease the burden on immigrating church workers. Bishop recommended specific ELCA sources that will support them.

Hearing no other business, VP Miller yielded to Mission Monitor Dee Daniels for her summary, then outlined future meetings. Chaplains offered closing worship. Meeting ended with a moment of applause and appreciation for Pastor Heather Apel.

Meeting adjourned. SC to reconvene 11/18/2022 in the Synod Office Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia McIntyre,
Secretary.