

## Indiana-Kentucky Synod Council Meeting

Location: Pleasant View Lutheran Church; 801 W. 73<sup>rd</sup> Street; Indianapolis, IN 46260

April 21 and 22, 2023

### In Attendance

Officers: Pr. William O. Gafkjen, Bishop; Ted Miller, Vice-President, Chris Walda, Treasurer

Rostered: Pr. Jane Rothman, Deacon Jody Winter, Pr. Ryan Bailey, Pr. Tim Graham, Pr. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar, Pr. Joshua Burkholder, Pr. Bimen Limbong

Laity: Dee Ann Daniels, David York, Vicky Carron, Mike Hoover, Betsy Kirk

Staff: Susie Swenson (FRIDAY only)

Guests: Tina Smith (WELCA).

Voting Members Absent: Pr. Ladona Webb, Noah Smith, Pat McIntyre (Synod Council Secretary), Pr. Vicki Garber, David Zehr, Nicole Lee, Dylan Kissling

### Minutes: Friday Evening, April 21, 2023. All times in EDT

Tina Smith – Filling in for Pat McIntyre, Synod Council Secretary

Meeting was called to order at 7:03pm.

Deacon Jody Winter – Friday Evening Open – Reflection

VP Ted: Provided information about the meeting space. Synod Office was unavailable this weekend due to the Candidacy Committee meeting; Staff is not here due to other commitments for this weekend. Original Meeting was scheduled for last weekend, but the NRA had their national convention in Indy last weekend and no hotels were available.

Everyone at the meeting - Sharing of where God is at work. Bishop Bill closed that session in prayer

Bishop Bill brought greetings from the pastors and congregation of PVLC who are hosting our meeting this weekend.

Small Group Conversation - 8:13pm

Introduction by Bishop Bill.

Questions identified in the agenda.

In what ways do you see synod ministries and leadership (Synod Council, Synod Staff, Synod Committees and Task Forces, Deans) currently addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB)? What ideas do you have that might further the work of DEIB in synod ministry, especially in and through Synod Council?

Small group notes are to be taken and given to Ted or Bishop Bill for review with Executive Committee.

Concluded at 8:50pm

Concluding Remarks – Bishop Bill

Some congregations disagree with the Synod Approach to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Quotes from **Stuck Together** shared with Synod Council April 22, 2023

It pays to listen closely to someone with whom we disagree, and to convey respect. “Deep listening is an act of surrender,” writes civil rights activist and Sikh faith leader Valarie Kaur. “We risk being changed by what we hear.” She allows that it is extremely difficult to listen well to someone whose beliefs we find abhorrent or terrifying. But the most critical part of listening is asking what is at stake for the other person. As Kaur notes, “The goal of listening is not to feel

empathy for our opponents, or validate their ideas, or even change their mind in the moment. Our goal is to understand them.” What life experiences or deep needs shape the perspectives of the other person? Kaur emphasizes that listening well “does not grant the other side legitimacy. It grants them humanity—and preserves our own.” (p. 99)

Using such freedom requires faith communities to exercise discernment, a skill that pastor and theologian Richard Kauffman believes the church needs to recover. “Too many Christians have made a fateful turn from dealing with conflictual issues through discernment to using advocacy instead,” he asserts. “Discernment is collaborative, while acknowledging difference and disagreement. Advocacy assumes that my position is correct, and the rest need to come over to me.”<sup>2</sup> Advocacy may be helpful, but in the end, the faith community functions best by corporate discernment. (p. 109)

In his recent book *The Church of Us vs. Them*, evangelical theologian David Fitch laments the current “strife, antagonisms, and vitriol” in North American society. But he grieves even more that Christians “appear to be caught up in the same antagonism and disgust for one another that is evident elsewhere.” Addressing that disfunction within the church is essential for proclaiming the gospel in society, Fitch contends. To be effective, “we must first become the place the world can recognize as beyond enemies. We must first deal with our own antagonisms. Once freed, we then can enter the world in peace, opening up space for Christ to work.” (p. 113)

**Stuck Together: The Hope of Christian Witness in a Polarized World**, by J. Nelson Kraybill © 2023 Herald Press

9:08 – Closing by Deacon Jody  
Meeting adjourned for the evening at 9:15p.

**Minutes: Saturday, April 21, 2023. All times in EDT**

Worship began at 9:30a. Worship ended at 10:17a.

10:23a – Meeting commenced

Greetings from Guests

Tina Smith – WELCA – The Church wide WELCA Triennial Conference and Gathering will be held in Phoenix, AZ, September 19-24, 2023.

Secretary's Report –

Minutes need updates so the approval of the minutes is deferred until the next Executive Committee or next Synod Council Meeting.

Review of EC/2023/03: Employ Mrs. Julie Walda as Interim Bookkeeper January 1-March 31 at the rate of \$25.00 per hour not to exceed 20 hours in a given **week**.

- Julie is working on sorting out the books and developing the process and procedures for the next bookkeeper. The audit is taking longer than original thought due to the condition of the records. Extension is requested through June 30, 2023. May extend longer. Consulting firm is causing some of the confusion.
- Interim title due to conflict of interest as Chris Walda (spouse) is the Synod Treasurer. Once this limited period is over, the position will be filled by someone other than Julie.
- Conflict of Interest is being mitigated by the involvement of Bishop, Finance Committee and Audit Firm

**ACTION – SC/2023/07 –**

Executive Committee is asking the Synod Council to extend interim for Julie Walda to June 30, 2023. Rate: \$25 an hour not to exceed 20 hours per week. Motion carried.

**ACTION – SC/2023/08**

Executive Committee is requesting Synod Council ratify Action EC/2023/04: Pastor Karleen Jung and Pastor Grace Alworth be designated Disaster Resiliency Coordinators pursuant to their work as Relief Coordinators responding to 2022 tornadoes in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Compensation in the amount of \$50,000.00 (allowed administrative costs included in the Lutheran Disaster Relief grant of 2022) dispersed in the amount of \$25,000.00 to each Pastor. Motion Carried

Vice President Report: Ted Miller

- Annual Report is in dropbox.
- The Executive Committee received with regret that Shawn Hall has resigned Synod Council (prior to the end of his term in June) due to his wife's illness.
- Nomination committee update.
  - Rostered Positions - Enough nominations for position to take Synod Assembly Rostered
  - Secretary and Youth: No nominations have been received
  - Lay Positions: Conference Representatives (To be selected by Conferences)
    - Open this year:
      - East Central Indiana –(Vacant this year) Lay male for 1 year remaining in the current term
      - Evansville Indiana– Lay Female for 3 years (Dave Zehr's term is ending)
      - Indianapolis Indiana – Lay Male 3 year term (Vicky Carron's term is ending)
      - North Central Indiana –(Vacant this year) Lay female for 2 years remaining in the term
      - Northeast Indiana – Lay Male 3 year term (David York is not running for reelection)

- South Central – Lay Female for 3 years (Shawn Hall’s term is ending)

Treasurer’s Report: Chris Walda

- Mission Support received in February 2023 was 50% of budget; March receipts were close to budget.
- Reviewed Revenue v Expense
  - Travel expense is high –working to get all expense reports current.
  - Julie is working to get expenses accrued into the correct period.

2024-2025 Budget Review

BREAK 11:22 – resumed at 11:35

**ACTION – SC/2023/09**

- Finance Committee recommended the Feb 2024 thru Jan 2025 Budget to budget Mission Support at \$1.7 M, resulting in an overall deficit of \$46.9K.
- Motion made and seconded by Synod Council to Amend the Mission Support to \$1.75M resulting in an overall deficit of \$18.4K. Motion to Amend Carried (2 opposed)
- Motion made and seconded to recommend amended Feb 2024/Jan 2025 Budget to Synod Assembly. Motion Carried (2 opposed)

Congregational Concerns – Bishop Bill

Many but none specific except Zion in Bristol, IN considering disassociation.

**ACTION – SC/2023/10**

Bishop recommended to change status of Pastor Max Johnson to Retired Status. Motion Carried

**ACTION – SC/2023/11**

Bishop recommended to call Deacon Jody Winter as Interim Minister at Holy Trinity Newcastle, IN. Motion Carried

**ACTION – SC/2023/12**

Bishop recommended to change status of Pr. Robert Lim to On-Leave from Call status; this would be the first year of this status. Motion Carried

**ACTION – SC/2023/13**

Pr. Josh Burkholder has requested an additional year for on call from leave. This request had to go to the Conference of Bishops for approval, which they did. Bishop is requesting that the Synod Council ratify the request for the additional year of extension. Motion Carried

Regional Gift Planner Report – now in DropBox

Synod Assembly Offering -

Synod Council usually votes on where the offerings for Synod Assembly will be designated. Since Synod Assembly is on-line and not in-person, Synod Council would like the offering to be done at the regional meetings not at the Zoom Assembly. Deferred to the Regional Meetings Task Force.

Executive Committee 2023 - 2024 Elections

For the rostered position, the Synod Nominating Committee has advised me that all three rostered persons eligible for second three-year terms on Synod Council have agreed to be nominated for second terms, so all current rostered members are eligible for election to the

Rostered Position Alphabetically, that includes Pastors Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar (who serves on the Executive Committee this year), Ryan Bailey, Joshua Burkholder, Vicki Garber, Tim Graham, Bimen Limbong, Jane Rothman and Ladona Webb and Deacon Jody Winter.

Lay Female Position currently filled by Vicky Carron (whose term on Synod Council ends this year after six Spirit-filled years of service), continuing members eligible for election are Dee Ann Daniels, Betsy Kirk and Nicole Lee.

Lay Male Position currently filled by Noah Smith, continuing members eligible for election are Mike Hoover and Noah Smith.

**Results of Election**

Lay Male: Mike Hoover (First Ballot)

Lay Female: Betsy Kirk (Second Ballot)

Rostered Position: Pastor Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar (Third Ballot)

Synod Assembly Discussion

Proposed Agenda (from Pr. Dan Fugate’s Report dated April 21, 2023)

9:30 am Eastern/ 8:30 am Central	Opening of the Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prayer/Call to Order/Opening Remarks</li> <li>▪ Credentials Report</li> <li>▪ Adoption of Proposed Agenda/Rules</li> <li>▪ Notification of Appointment of Committees</li> <li>▪ Nominating Committee Report</li> </ul>
10:00 am Eastern/ 9:00 am Central	ELCA Churchwide Report Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
10:30 am Eastern/ 9:30 am Central	Elections
10:45 am Eastern/ 9:45 am Central	Report of Synod Vice President Ted Miller
10:55 am Eastern/ 9:55 am Central	Adoption of Compensation Standards
11:00 am Eastern/ 10:00 am Central	Break
11:15 am Eastern/ 10:15 am Central	Report of the Bishop The Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen
11:40 am Eastern/ 10:40 am Central	Report of the Elections Committee 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ballot, if needed
11:50 am Eastern/	Report of Synod Secretary

10:50 am Central	Patricia McIntyre
Noon Eastern/ 11:00 am Central	Treasurer's Report Chris Walda
12:20 pm Eastern/ 11:20 am Central	Presentation of Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee
12:30 pm Eastern/ 11:30 am Central	Adoption of Budget
1:00 pm Eastern/ Noon Central	Final Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Closing Remarks by the Bishop</li> <li>▪ Motion to Adjourn</li> <li>▪ Installation of Newly Elected/Deans</li> <li>▪ Sending Rite</li> </ul>

#### **ACTION – SC/2023/14**

Bishop recommended for consideration the Synod Assembly Agenda, final approval to be voted on at the Synod Assembly. Motion Carried

Synod Assembly Committee Assignments (from Pr. Dan Fugate's Report dated April 21, 2023)

#### **Minutes**

- Pat McIntyre (ex officio)
- Ted Miller
- Pastor Vicki Garber
- Pastor Ladona Webb

#### **Reference and Counsel**

- Pastor Erik Allen, Chair
- Mike Anderson
- Marilyn Saum
- Josh Tatum
- Pastor Dan Fugate, staff

#### **Elections**

- Pastor Paul Offhaus, Chair
- Noah Smith
- Pastor Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar
- Pastor Dan Fugate, staff

#### **Credentials**

- Pastor Lecia Beck, Chair (awaiting confirmation from person)
- Alec Broc
- Pastor Amy Beitelschees Albers
- Dawn Wells
- Pastor Dan Fugate, staff

### **ACTION – SC/2023/15**

Bishop recommended for approval for Synod Assembly Committee Assignments to Minutes; Reference and Counsel, Election, Credentials. Motion Carried

### 2023-2024 Compensation Standards

### **ACTION – SC/2023/16**

Bishop recommended for consideration the 2023- 2024 Compensation Standards, final approval to be voted on at the Synod Assembly. Motion Carried

### Mission Support Conversation – Facilitated by Bishop Bill

### Synod Staff Reports – included in Dropbox

- What more is needed in these reports
- Highlights and Future Plans
- Possible Staff Report Template
  - What brings you joy?
  - What keeps you up at night?
  - What can Synod Council do to help?

### Synod Committees, Task Force and Tables

#### Constitution Committee

With Dave Zehr's resignation from Synod Council, the Constitution Committee is in need of another Synod Council representative to be appointed the Committee.

### **ACTION – SC/2023/17**

Bishop recommended appointing Pr. Jane Rothman to this committee for one year, her remaining term on Synod Council. Motion carried.

#### Racial Justice Task Force – Pr. Tim Update

- Retreat – See Report. The committee has a group of 8-12 people .
- Task Force recommendations have been forwarded to Executive Committee and Synod Council
- Aware of other social justice issues beyond race

#### Regional Gathering Task Force – October 2023

- Meeting biweekly now
- 4 dates pick out -- South Bend, Louisville and Indy to be held on a Saturday from 10a-4p
- Lunch Church Idea
- Devotions, Breakout Sessions,
- Theme: Impact
- Feedback on Breakout Sessions –Deacon Jody will send an email to gather all ideas on presenters. Who can talk to these topics? Please respond to email by next Friday, April 28, 2023. Here is the list:
  - Synod Level Disaster Response
  - Practicing and Facilitating Difficult Conversations about DEIB
  - Welcoming and Hospitality
  - Peer Ministry Training
  - Nuts and Bolts serving on Church Council
  - Synodical and Church-wide Events – YTG
  - How to do local outreach – community involvement

### Bishop Report – Bishop Bill Gafkjen

- Actions of Church wide Council – 35 people have been appointed to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. Which will first meet in July 2023 and will report to the Church wide Assembly in 2025 in Phoenix, AZ.
- Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) - Proposal being considered to partner with IK Synod for 3 years to create a sustainable position within the Synod. Part time/Half time – fully funded by LDR.
- Lilly Grant Request - Bishop and Pr. Cory Driver – Lay preaching and working in partnership with NE Ohio Synod.

### Future Meetings

- May 31, 2023 – 7:30 – ZOOM - Pre-Synod Assembly
- September 15 – 16, 2023 – Synod Office
- November 3 – 4, 2023 – Benedict Inn, Beech Grove
  - *Benedict Inn – Being demolished in 2024 and not rebuilt*
- January 20, 2024 – ZOOM Meeting
- April 12-13, 2024 – Synod Office

Meeting adjourned at 2:09p

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tina Smith  
Acting Secretary