

**SYNOD COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD, ELCA**  
**November 13 and 14, 2020**  
**ELECTRONIC CONFERENCE MEETING**

**ATTENDANCE**

Officers: Bishop Bill Gafkjen, V.P. Ted Miller, Treasurer Chris Walda

Clergy: Pastors Ryan Bailey, Teri Ditslear, Jane Rothman, Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar, Josh Burkholder, Vicki Garber, and Ladona Webb

Deacon: Deacon Barbara Limbach

Laity: Michael Anderson, Diane Cameron, Vicky Carron, Rebecca Daum, Don MacMillan (Saturday only), Linda Wray and David Zehr

Staff: DEM Pastor Nancy Nyland and Bishop's Assistants Pastors Heather Apel and Dan Fugate, Storyteller Susie Swenson

Synod Attorney: Josh Tatum

Auxiliary Representative: Tina Smith (WELCA)

Racial Justice Taskforce (Friday evening only): Pastor Andy Rutrough, Matthew DeLoeria, Pastor Joy Heine.

Absent: Morgan Bodie, Pastor Jack Dixon, Joshua Ferrier, Shawn Hall, Noah Smith

**WELCOME AND PRAYER**

Meeting again electronically by ZOOM in view of COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings, Vice-President Ted Miller called the meeting to order at 7PM on Friday evening. Pastor Teri Ditslear provided devotions and an opening prayer.

**I'm Still Here Book Discussion**

Racial Justice Taskforce led small group discussions of Chapters three and four of the *I'm Still Here* book via breakout sessions. The large group then processed thoughts from the small group discussions. The small group discussions will continue as planned for December.

**REPORTS AND ACTIONS**

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

Vice President, Ted Miller presented for consideration the draft minutes of the September 11 and 12, 2020 Synod Council meeting as circulated in Dropbox. Linda Wray prepared the draft September 11 and 12, 2020 minutes. It was moved, seconded and as edited

**VOTED: SC/2020/36: that the minutes of the September 11 and 12, 2020 Synod Council meeting, pages 2576 - 2582, be approved with the corrections made.**

### **Vice President's Report and Executive Committee Report**

Vice-President Miller referred Synod Council to his report circulated in Dropbox. VP Miller included the Executive Committee Report in his November Vice President's report. The Executive Committee is now meeting monthly on the months that Synod Council does not meet. Discussions during these meetings have included whether to hold the IK Synod Assembly 2021 in person and the use of the recently awarded \$1 million Lilly Grant. During the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Executive Committee voted to:

**VOTED: EC/2020/10: that Pastor Karen Husby be called to interim ministry at Trinity United Church of Christ, Mt. Vernon, Indiana, effective October 12, 2020.**

Synod Council voted to ratify the actions taken at the Executive Committee meetings.

Vice-President Miller reported that the Vice President's group continues to meet on a monthly basis and have discussed the ELCA Future Church Proposal. Along with the three-person Future Church team, the Vice-President's group has established a 7-person Future Vision Team to consider the work of the Vice-Presidents in the different contexts of the synods of the ELCA. Bishop Gafkjen discussed possible implications of the Future Church Proposal and will continue to update the Synod Council on any information releases about this proposal.

Vice-President Miller discussed the composition of the Consultation Committee membership. He recommended a membership of 10 members: The Synod Council voted that:

**VOTED: SC/2020/37: The Synod Consultation Committee membership will be 10 members.**

Vice-President Miller thanked Bishop's Assistant Pr. Dan Fugate and Mike Anderson for their help on his report on Synod Assembly Elections and referred Synod Council members to that report in Dropbox. The number of voting members for the Churchwide Assembly held August 20 – 22, 2022 and voted on at the 2021 IK Synod Assembly was reviewed. The IK Synod has been given 14 voting members with 5 of these members being rostered persons and including the officers of the Synod Council. The suggested grid for these members was reviewed but the final grid depends on whether the new Synod Secretary is a rostered or lay person.

Vice-President Miller also reviewed the Synod Council members terms.

### **Report of the Treasurer and Finance Committee**

On Friday evening and beginning again on Saturday morning, Treasurer Chris Walda referred Synod Council to the financial reports in Dropbox, including Mission Support Trend update table, Balance sheet, and the Analysis of Revenues and Expenses. He reported that the hotel deposit funds were refunded from the 2020 IK Synod Assembly that was cancelled. These funds will appear in the November financials. In addition, Treasurer Walda briefly introduced the draft of the 2021 -2022 Budget which included a budget deficit of \$10,120. The final approval of this budget will occur at the Synod Assembly 2021. The Synod Assembly will also consider and approve a budget for 2022-2023. The proposed budget will be discussed in more detail in Saturday's Synod Council meeting.

### **Friday Ending Devotions**

Pr. Teri Ditslear provided a closing/sending prayer to end the Friday evening meeting.

### **Saturday Morning Devotions**

Vicki Carron led morning devotions based on Matthew and a blessing/prayer. She shared a video of a choir singing the hymn *Lay Up Your Treasures in Heaven*.

### **Report of the Bishop and Staff**

Using Scripture from Ezra 3, Bishop Gafkjen shared a state of the Synod report. He discussed that the congregations of the Synod were making a new beginning in the Church using present foundations and new foundations. Many in the Synod are rejoicing about the Church in this new life. Even though many are rejoicing, other members are having difficulties with changes that are being made related to this new life. Bishop Gafkjen reported a rise in conflict and he has sent Constitutional Provisions for Discipline of Member and Termination of a Call for Pastors to three congregations. Deaconess Valerie Webdell has now completed the Systems Academy and will begin working on using Healthy Congregations. Bishop Gafkjen will have conversations with Deaconess Webdell concerning these conflict situations.

Bishop Gafkjen reported that the Synod received \$5000 gift from the closing of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Bellevue, Kentucky. This gift has been designated for use by struggling congregations participating in the Healthy Congregations program.

Bishop Gafkjen discussed a recent Lilly Grant for approximately \$998,000 awarded to the Synod. These funds will be used to support and deepen the CONNECT Ministry in the Synod. Nancy Nyland will coordinate this effort which will involve joining with other ecumenical partners in approximately 400 congregations. Carol Webb will also work as an Administrative Assistant with this new program which should be running by Spring 2021. Part of the Lilly grant will help fund Susie Swenson's work with developing media for the Synod. Because Carol Webb will no longer be working with Bishop Assistant Dan Fugate, he will have a Virtual Administrative Assistant contracted monthly through the Virtual Assist USA program.

Bishop Gafkjen reported on the status of the COVID 19 funds that were made available in the Synod. Nancy Nyland has coordinated a grant team and these funds are being dispersed. A list of possible funding targets has been developed in order to spend any excess congregational donations.

Bishop Gafkjen reported he has appointed Pastor Dana Newhouse as Interim Dean of the Lafayette Conference until the elections at the Spring Assembly.

Because of the closing of the Region 6 offices which were housed in the IK Synod office, Bishops from the other Synods in Region 6 elected to give the remaining \$36,000 to the IK Synod. Bishop Gafkjen reported that \$25,000 is being used for a Rostered Ministers Well-Being Fund. This fund will assist stressed rostered persons in areas such as EAP continuation, vacations with families, spiritual support, etc. Applications will be made for amounts up to \$500.

Turning to roster concerns, on the Bishop's recommendations and after discussion in each case the Synod Council voted:

**VOTED: SC/2020/38: Reissue a call to Rev. Dr. Brian Johnson as Co-director of Liturgical Institute at Valparaiso University and Executive Director of the Grünewald Guild beginning January 2021.**

AND

**VOTED: SC/2020/39: that retirement status be granted to Pastor Barbara Dahl and to Deacon Lorraine Brugh effective December 31, 2020.**

AND

**VOTED: SC/2020/40: that Pastor Laura Altman be granted On Leave from Call status beginning 10/31/2020.**

AND

**VOTED: SC/2020/41: that Pastor John Hickey be granted On Leave from Call status beginning December 31, 2020.**

AND

**VOTED: SC/2020/42: that Deacon Julie Peralta's On Leave from Call status be affirmed for a third year.**

AND

**VOTED: SC/2020/43: approved the relocation of New Hope Lutheran Church to Monticello, Indiana.**

Bishop Gafkjen discussed the application of the Mara Evangelical Church in Indianapolis [MECI] to be a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community Exploration (See document in Dropbox). This group separated from the Mara Evangelical Church which is a part of the Lutheran World Federation and would like to become part of the IK Synod. This application for exploration would be for a three-month period and could be renewed. The original MEC church and the new MECI church have maintained friendly relationships. After discussion, the Synod Council:

**VOTED: SC/2020/44: approved the Mara Evangelical Church in Indianapolis as a SAWC Exploration for 3 months.**

Bishop Gafkjen explained the proposed Synod Administration and Fiscal Agency during Holy Closure document. This document was developed to outline the guiding procedure to be used for congregations during Holy Closure. After discussion, the Synod Council

**VOTED: SC/2020/45: to approve the Synod Administration and Fiscal Agency during Holy Closure document.**

The Bishop invited Synod Staff to report. Pr. Apel referred to her report posted in Dropbox and reported on changes to the ELCA assignment process for new rostered candidates.

Assistant to the Bishop Dan Fugate referred members to his report in Dropbox and reminded Synod Council members of the Bishop's Day for Youth to be held by Zoom on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

DEM Pr. Nancy Nyland referred to her report in Dropbox. She reviewed the different ELCA COVID-19 19 grants that have been awarded in the Synod. The group was reminded of the Stewardship for All Seasons grants of \$2,000 for the four participating congregations. The Inspire, Ignite, Invite participants have written Advent devotions and these will be shared throughout the Synod. Because of the closing of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Louisville, the house owned by the church has been broken into. Shawn Hall led a group of people in boarding up the house and cleaning the yard.

Synod Storyteller Susie Swenson referred to her report in Dropbox. She reported that the Inspire, Ignite, Invite Advent devotions will be posted on the IK Synod website. The Family Joshua Tree will also be available on the IK Synod website. She reminded the group that any information for the online Newsletter needs to be submitted to her by Wednesday each week.

Bishop Gafkjen concluded his report by acknowledging the work of the Synod staff members and thanking them for their continued service during this COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2021 Budget Discussion**

Treasurer Chris Walda continued the discussion of the 2021-2022 Budget. This 2021–2022 Interim Budget will have final approval at the 2021 Synod Assembly. After review of this proposed budget, the Synod Council

**VOTED: SC/2020/46: approved amending the proposed Budget to reflect a balanced budget by increasing the Mission Support to \$1,865,000.**

**VOTED: SC/2020/47: recommended the Interim Budget for 2021–2022 for Consideration of 2021 Synod Assembly**

### **Synod Assembly 2021**

Bishop's Assistant Dan Fugate discussed possibilities and thoughts related to conducting a virtual Synod Assembly. The Executive Committee approved having the Synod Assembly for 2021 virtually. The Synod Council

**VOTED: SC/2020/48: approved the Synod Assembly 2021 to be held virtually.**

### **Synod Secretary Concerns**

The Synod Secretary Taskforce will begin the process of nominating someone to fill the remaining two years of Judy Bush's term in January. The Synod Council

**VOTED: SC/2020/49: The Synod Secretary Taskforce is Pr. Ryan Bailey, Becky Daum, and Don MacMillan.**

### **GSB Update**

Bishop Gafkjen reported that the work with GSB continues and work with the Planned Giving program formulating and running will be a greater focus in the future. The position of Gift Planner has been posted and the Bishop would entertain possible candidates from the IK Synod.

### **Racial Justice Task Force**

Bishop Gafkjen will be notifying Pr. Andy Rutrough for possible resources for Black History Month in February. Pr. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar reported that the Taskforce has begun collecting resources from other Synods.

### **WELCA Report**

Tina Smith reported on activities in WELCA. The group will be hosting a Virtual Gathering related to Children's Mental Health on November 15<sup>th</sup> from 3P until 5P.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women**

Pr. Jane Rothman reported that the group is considering a possible breakout session for the Synod Assembly. The celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary needs to be held at an in-person event.

### **Constitution Taskforce Report**

Synod Lawyer Josh Tatum discussed the work that has been done related to the changes needed in the IK Synod Constitution. He provided an update for Synod Council members on the ELCA Conformity document and the proposed changes to the Committee section in the IK Synod Constitution. He referred Synod Council members to the document: *Explanation of Proposed Amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Indiana–Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Presentation to the 2021 Synod Assembly* in Dropbox. This document provides additional information related to the changes made. Josh reviewed the document entitled: *PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE INDIANA–KENTUCKY SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA RELATED TO CHANGES TO THE ELCA CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS ADOPTED AT THE 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY* and highlighted the changes throughout the document. If approved, this document will be presented at the 2021 Synod Assembly for final approval. After this description, the Synod Council

**VOTED: SC/2020/50: as recommended by the Constitution Task Force, recommended the *PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE INDIANA–KENTUCKY SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA RELATED TO CHANGES TO THE ELCA CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS ADOPTED AT THE 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY* for final approval by the Synod Assembly.**

Synod Lawyer Josh Tatum reviewed the document entitled: *PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE INDIANA–KENTUCKY SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA RELATED TO COMMITTEES* and highlighted the changes throughout the document. After this review, the Synod Council

**VOTED: SC/2020/51: as recommended by the Constitution Task Force, recommended the *PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE INDIANA–KENTUCKY SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA RELATED TO COMMITTEES* for final approval by the Synod Assembly.**

The visioning work using *Making the Path While We Walk It* will be deferred until the January Synod Council meeting. Bishop Gafkjen reminded the Synod Council of the Synod's stated mission and the four priorities of Synod Ministry. No updates are available as yet regarding the Future Church work being done.

**Mission Review**

Pr. Ladona Webb reviewed the meeting as the Mission Monitor for this meeting. She enjoyed the worship opportunities and the discussions surrounding racial justice using the book *I'm Still Here*. In addition, she asked for continued prayers for the Future Church work that continues and thanked Chris Walda for his leadership with the budget discussion. Chaplain for the January 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Synod Council meeting will be Pastor Vicki Garber. The Mission Monitor for the January meeting will be Pastor Joshua Burkholder.

**Closing Prayer and Adjournment**

Vicki Carron ended the meeting with a sending prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15PM.

Respectfully submitted in His Service,

Linda Wray