

Synod Council Minutes

December 12, 2020

9am – 12pm

Present: Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, Melissa Peper Firestone, Becky Seibert, Rev. Mindy Elliott, Brent Gardner, Cindy Harris, Rev. Ann Marshall, Cindy Milbry, Deb Noll, Tom Ritter, Rev. Jarrod Schaaf, Michelle Schaffer, Rev. Ed Strietelmeier, Christina Wheeler

Synod Staff Present: Jacob Henry, Calla Gilson, Rev. Sarah Schaaf, Sherry Krieger

Guest: David Lenz-ELCA Churchwide

Absent/Excused: Casey Cox, Jacob Nekoranec, Rev. Steve Ramsey, Diana Schneider, Rev. Janine Shearer, Jari Knowlton Simard

- 1. Opening Devotions** – led by Pastor Ann Marshall- Daily video devotionals. Psalm 126-Confidence in the Lord’s power to restore. “2020 is liking stepping off the curb and being hit by a car but instead get hit by a bus. “We know that God has the power to restore. Rather let us focus on what good has come out of this challenge. 1. *What was restored to you during the pandemic?*” Responses: A number of old friendships restored to me. – My faith in people that have started to be more compassionate, still reach out and try to help others. – Enjoyed more meals together around the table. – Relationships 2. *What great things have you seen God doing?* Responses: Generator blew up and no one was hurt! God challenged us to do ministry in different ways, God still providing during these times to continue to support our ministry. Medical community sacrifices that have and are being made. Folks open to understand health issues more. Movement towards mission and redefining how to do church. Issues of racism coming forward or being highlighted by pandemic. 3. *What has cause you to shout for joy?* Responses: Our grandson Homer was born this morning. Grateful for the gift of miracle of life. Appreciated the collaboration of working with colleagues during this time. Oldest son was married last month and was a joy in the midst of all this going on at this time. Last two weeks had the honor and privilege to commit graveside services. God has been able to put on my heart to deliver a message that was comforting to the family of hope and promise and comfort. Drawn to water a place of peace and joy and restoration. Close with prayer.
- 2. Business Meeting Call to Order** – Led by Vice-President Melissa Peper Firestone
 - Roll call taken
 - Approval of Sept 12 Minutes Motion to approve - Ann, 2nd Tom Ritter approved**
Found on pages 3-7
 - Approval of Oct 13 Minutes- Motion to approve – Cindy Harris, 2nd Michelle Schaefer-approved**
Found on pages 8
 - Review of Nov 30 Executive Committee decisions**
Found on pages 9
 - **Limiting in-person travel to counties Level 3 or above. Excluding emergency situations (funerals) Curtailing staff travel during these times of Level 3 and above.

3. Bishop's Report and Teaching Time – Led by Bishop Daniel

Bishop Daniel began Teaching Time with Acts chapter 9 – Paul is on the road to Damascus and has a great zeal for the law. He feels that he is doing God's work. He has a purpose to persecute those who follow the way. The crucified and risen Jesus appears to him. Acts 9:15-16 God has a purpose for Paul to proclaim God's name and he is going to suffer greatly. Galatians 1: 18-20. Antioch becomes the place of sending with cultures that clash then and today. Galatians 2:11-16 Paul declared that this is how God works. Galatians 2:1-10 vs.10 -

Remember the poor. Paul has three calls: 1. Call of Jesus to make disciples (imitate me do as I do)
2. Begin house churches, new communities, 3. Fund Raising

How do we continue to care for the poor as a church? On a larger scale with food assistance programs, SS, HUD-...How do we do this as a church? -Food pantries, homeless shelters, micro grants to help, LWR, disaster response, LWH. Closer to home: How do you personally make a difference to those struggling with poverty? --Give food to church for backpack ministry-food for the weekend, supports community Christmas giving meals to families-senior citizens and families with children. Try not to lump everyone in the same category-try find each one's need. – Individual contact thru Facebook for needs, support individuals from Africa thru educational support. “When someone asks just say yes. “

Bishop Daniel reviewed his written report found on pages 14-17. 2020 was the Year of Mission. 2021 is the Year of Generosity. Memory verse: Matthew 6:21 *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” “On the way” funding is going well. How do you share the Jesus story to those who have no history or memory of the church.? Christianity is being rediscovered as we are moving more to video and virtual for installations, funerals, blessings. December 17 meeting will be to talk about how we can work together and share God's story Highlighted resources are available during Advent and Christmas. Review of Three Learnings on page 16. Sending out to pastors and deacons 'Daily Texts' in the mail.

Discussion continued about gatherings, church gatherings and the Synods thoughts about. –A Parish plan of return is encouraged for each parish to develop their each plan according to each area. Many parishes did that to have some clear parameters and policy. The color-coded system put out from Gov DeWine and state of Ohio has been very helpful. What we are finding recently with COVID-19 fatigue is that some of our parishes are choosing not to follow their own guidelines. This is causing a lot of concern and parishes asking for guidance and encouragement. As a people of God, you have made a decision and you need to try to stay with what was put together. Cindy Harris shared their health dept asked that they act as if they are already in the purple level. So, they have suspended communion offering for a few weeks. We just need to be so incredibly careful. We encourage all to operate as if the storm is already here and we will eventually move out of this time of Covid. We encourage all to continue to be careful and cautious.

Bishop Daniel introduced our special guest David Lenz who was elected to National Church Council for a 6-year term ending in 2025. He grew up in Mentor OH and spent 7 years at OSU law school. He is an attorney in the Cleveland are and serves as a conduit between Church Council and the three Ohio Synods. David was NE Ohio secretary (retired-6 yrs,3 mos) Worship assistant, runner, attorney and his wife is from Lima.

He appreciates this time to know how to be church together, spending time with scripture and to focus on joy and community between people. What was born out of-the last Church Council meeting is not a

response to the covid pandemic but a restructuring of Churchwide organization intended as an attempt at a culture shift. There is also some concern of budget /staff cutting measure. There is a reduction of about 15 position which is really intended as restructuring and redefining churchwide organization positions not in response to budget. We as the ELCA are in a chronic state of decline in terms of membership. Membership of 5.3 million reduced to 3.3 million in recent years. We need to look at how we are doing things by identifying core principles, goals and a common purpose statement. To activate each of us so that more people know Jesus, what can each of us do to help people to know the way of Jesus and find community and love? Our goals: Be a welcoming church, engaging new young thriving church, and a connected sustainable church. We are engaging new people and are more diverse. We want to inspire to reach out and bring more people to Jesus

Mission units' chart has been reorganized a bit: Christian community and leadership, Service and justice, and innovation. We are trying to bring more intentionality. The Innovation unit will have 12 staff members to really look at what are different practices going in our church – how can we engage work with those quickly, decentralize decision making and work together as the churchwide expression to work towards the common goal. How can we ELCA reach 20 million with the gospel message. Daily bread grant program-offered \$500 matching grants- Covid 19 appeal fund-1.7 million for covid relief (Bishop and Synod leadership applied for grants for particular ministries in our synod.) Four rounds of grants were received in NWOS—listed in Pastor Sarah's report.

How does this change how we operate day to day as a synod? Not much, the goal is not to tell synods how to operate. Culture shift in intended for more collaboration,

Questions: none-----Ann Marshall asked if this re-structural model of churchwide be one that could be adapted for congregational use? Response was it could be in the right context.

Jacob: recommends using at their discretion the model constitution and an annual review of how things are doing/working for them.

Action SC 20.23 On Leave from Call Request

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves on leave from call status for Deacon Jennifer Vasquez.”

Motion for approval made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Ed Strietelmeier-motion approved

Action SC 20.24 Retirement Request

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the retirement of:

Pastor Jody Rice,
Pastor Ralph Mineo
Pastor Larry Michaels
Pastor Janine Dress
Pastor Matthew Lash
Pastor Rita Bair
and Pastor Mark English.”

Motion for approval made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Brent Gardner, motion approved

Action SC 20.25 Family Leave Request

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the fifth year of Family Leave for Deacon Erin Bodenstab.”

Motion for approval made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Brent Gardner, motion approved

Action SC 20.26 SAM Renewals

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the following individuals to serve as Synodically Authorized Ministers at the referenced locations:

Deacon Jean Wise for the Williams County Parish,
Frank Raeske for Zion Luckey,
Vicar Carol Pretorius for St Peter Delphos,
Vicar Robin Small for St Mark’s Bowling Green,
Vicar David Frye for West Toledo Parish,
Vicar Dawn David for Sonfire Pemberville and Salem Grace
Luckey,
and Ryan Cordel for Zion Lafayette.”

Motion for approval made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Cindy Harris, motion approved

4. On the Way Update – led by Director for Congregational Care Sherry Krieger

On the Way update and related documents can be found on pages 21-27

Update 66% of our goal of funding. Would synod council like to put together your donations as a matching opportunity matching gift until the end of the year? How would this work?

Jacob: When an organization does a matching challenge, a certain amount pledged received within a certain time period. We would ask all to pledge a certain amount to be added together and be presented as a matching amount. Melissa asked if someone at synod be contact for giving amount. Contact is Calla Gilson. Email amount to Calla Gilson by Dec 18. calla.gilson@nwos-elca.org

Microgrant report included in packet for review.

On the Way movement and contract review. Model of how we are doing church in the last 50 years. This movement started in England. NWOS has been talking about this (Fresh Expressions) movement for the last couple of years. How to be church in the community differently. Michael Beck has been for the last 9 years implementing this method with the Methodist church in Florida. Dual transformation appreciates our traditional church but will also with the support/permission of council get out into the community and bring Jesus into the lives of folks who would never enter our doors. If we keep doing the same thing and doing it well who are we going to miss? This model allows each of us to ask the question of What is God saying to me to do but who am I going to miss if I don’t do something else. Dr. Beck has agreed to be our mentor for an 18-month time to teach us how to strengthen our parishes and making new communities. Mission and how-to bring Jesus to people who have never heard of him or have been hurt in the past by the church. He will be here on the grounds training staff and build skills and doing this work alongside. Innovator Academy.

Action SC 20.27 Consulting Agreement with Pastor Michael Beck

“Synod Council approves the 12-month agreement for consulting services with Michael Beck and the use of On the Way funds for payment of \$1,500/month plus reimbursable travel expenses.”

Motion to approve made by Brent Gardner, 2nd Deb Noll-motion approved year of 2021

See On the Way documents on pages 21-22 for additional information and pages 23-27 for the full consulting agreement

5. **Churchwide Greetings** – led by David Lenz, member of ELCA CW Council-see above

(10-minute break)

6. **Vice President's Report** – Led by Melissa Peper Firestone
Meetings for 2021-Jan 23, May 1, Sept 11, Dec 11-all Saturdays
June 11-12-Synod Assembly

7. **Secretary's Report** – Led by Becky Seibert
Nothing to report

8. **Treasurer's Report** – Led by Synod Administrator Jacob Henry
Congregational giving and mission support reports are included in this packet.
Update for Mission Support for month of Nov 2020
Review of financial packet sent earlier. Statement of Financial Position and Net assets
Donor restricted. Hopeful for the months of Dec and Jan to cover the deficit.

Action SC 20.28 2021/2022 Budget Revision – ***FIRST READING, VOTE IN JAN***

“Synod Council approves the revised budget for the 2021/2022 budget.”

We are presenting a draft budget for the fiscal year Feb 2021 – Jan 2022

The budget will be voted on at our January meeting

9. **Administrative Matters** – Led by Synod Administrator Jacob Henry

Action SC 20.29 Oesterlen Board Appointments

“At the recommendation of Oesterlen, Synod Council appoints Pastor Adam Sornchai of St John Cardington and Pam Kensler of St John Fremont as representatives of the Northwestern Ohio Synod to the board of directors of Oesterlen.”

Motion to approve made by Deb Noll, 2nd Brent Gardner, motion approved

Several agencies and non-profits require board members to be appointed or affirmed by affiliated judicatories, including Oesterlen.

Sherry: Cloverdale and Convoy to work with UMC. Bring NWOS resources together. They will do Mission with each other. There is ongoing conversation about East Toledo-4-5 ELCA congregations are within a 5-mile radius that at different times have talked about how to come together. Opportunity to begin to develop a relationship with St. Marks and Bethlehem has come. Two other congregations are available however they are not quite ready at this time. We are looking to begin pastoral team: One full-time pastor and two part-time positions for support is being considered. Leadership, visitation and then actually calling a pastor. This leadership would be similar to LIFT pastor. East Toledo is at a place that has the opportunity and personnel and are looking for synod support financially as well as a pastor called to a parish call, with Synod council being part of that. This is new and we have this commitment to strengthen parishes. St. Mark and Bethlehem and team of leaders are involved with Todd Bolsinger. How do we support our inherited church while being in the community?

Questions: none—we will revisit this in January 2021 for approval of support. Hopefully, we will have some of these leaders with us in January to share the excitement. Exciting news to carry us forward.

10. For the good of the order – Led by Vice-President Melissa Peper Firestone

Sharing: We miss being in the same room with each other.

Melissa ends with reading the Christmas story. 2021 will be a better year. Do not be afraid.

11. Sending Blessing and Prayer

Melissa closed with prayer.

Meeting Closed at 11:59.

Respectfully submitted

Becky Seibert, Synod Council Secretary

/bis

How to Access the Meeting:

Topic: Synod Council Meeting

Time: Dec 12, 2020 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84074932092?pwd=dldncEVQL1NBd0JNbXZ6NittL0kwUT09>

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