

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Synod Council Meeting Minutes

September 28-29, 2012

Present: Bp. Mark Holmerud, Doug Miller, Dennis Jones, Linda Lownes, Pr. Carl Wilfrid, Larry Struve, Kristina Garabedian, Steve Herzfeldt, Perry Gray-Reneberg, Elaine Whitney, Joseph Husary, Sheela Boddu, Pr. Jeff Johnson, Pr. Adisa Armand Miller, Mark Nelson, Rosie Ellis-Falik, Sue Hertless, Pr. Susan Birkelo.

Staff: Bishop's Associate Nancy Feniuk-Nelson; Assistant to the Bishop Pastors Jim Goldsmith, Katy Grinberg, and Jose Luis la Torre Cuadros; Karen Idler, AIM, Executive Assistant; Administrative Assistant Laurie Gaumer; Director of Evangelical Mission Terrance Jacob.

Absent: James Anderberg, Gisela Daetz, Pr. Newton Kerney, Pr. Sarah Meckler, Kay Valler.

Guests: Pr. Barbara Foltin, Pr. Cindy Beck, Pr. Bill Ruth, Kent Madsen, Jim White.

The meeting **was called to order** at 2:00 PM by Vice President Doug Miller. Pr. Barbara Foltin offered the opening devotion.

SC12.09.51MSC (Herzfeldt/Lownes) to adopt the agenda with the addition of two items:

-an addition to the consent agenda to approve the extension of the special call of Mary Stein-Webber as LMFT at "A Safe Place to Heal" counseling center.

-an addition to new business to allow Nancy Nielsen to make a short presentation and a budget request on behalf of Lutheran Social Services.

SC12.09.52MSC (Armand-Miller/Garabedian) to approve draft minutes of the June 22-23, 2012 Synod Council Meeting after correcting several name misspellings.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Mark described events on his calendar in coming months including visits with other bishops to companion synods in El Salvador and Taiwan.

He has asked the ELCA to conduct a non-financial audit of our synod. The results of this audit will inform his decision of whether to submit his name for a second term. He is especially interested in a perceived disconnect between our synod and some of its congregations and the value/success of the deployed staff model. The audit will likely take place the end of January.

He also discussed the new combined staff report that was distributed with the agenda. It is intended to provide more concise information to the Synod Council on staff activities. He requested feedback on the new form.

Bishop's Associate Feniuk-Nelson's Report

Pr. Nancy reported on executive staff review of staff activities, what information they have been reporting and the need for better communication to both the Synod Council and congregations on synod staff activities-especially those in support of congregations. There was a discussion among Council members about providing more support for the synod and its staff. Executive staff are working with discipling team chairs to assist them in sharing more comprehensive information through their reports.

Stewardship Discipling Team

Pr. Barbara Foltin

Pr. Foltin discussed the written stewardship report and requested feedback. Some of her committee members attended the Rethinking Stewardship conference in Minnesota. Four congregations are using the Ventures in Growing Stewardship's year round program. The team has two pastors trained in stewardship coaching and they will assist congregations. The Team submitted a budget request of \$2,500 for FY 2014.

Justice and Advocacy Discipling Team

Pr. Bill Ruth

Pr. Ruth suggested that it was easier to dream about justice and advocacy than to be put in charge of doing something about it. His team has met face to face twice and twice in conference calls. They have affiliated with community and faith based organizations to develop information and material about how to do justice. They are developing a website.

Treasurer's Report

Linda Lownes

Linda discussed the bulleted summary on the first page of the budget report. Under the prior Director of Synod Properties, we inappropriately distributed \$36, 000 to 46 agencies and institutions. We are changing the remittance process so that we are not receiving and remitting things where the synod is just a pass through. We are recouping the overpayments by reducing those amounts from subsequent distributions to the agencies and institutions.

We have implemented procedures to address all of the 2011 Audit findings-including the distribution process described above

Six month statements were sent to all congregations for the period 2/12-7/12 with discussion of whether they will increase giving/not designate all giving.

Congregations that gave mission support averaged about \$7,000. If those congregations not giving would have given the average amount, the Synod would have received an additional \$300,000.

We have been discussing ways to engage the Synod Council in increasing congregational giving. One idea discussed was each synod council member encouraging their congregation to increase their mission support.

OLD BUSINESS

Filling vacant positions

Doug Miller

Doug indicating that we are looking for nominees for a number of committee vacancies: one in Stewardship, one in the Racial/Ethnic Mission Strategies, one in the Witness Discipling Team from Synod Council and two on the Congregational Life Discipling Team. He asked for suggestions.

Nominating Committee

Pr. Katy Grinberg

Last winter the nominating committee developed their web site and distributed a newsletter. They received a total of ten names submitted using this process. People were not clear what the Discipling Teams were.

Pr. Katy indicated that the committee is open to all suggestions and flashes of brilliance.

Macedonia Project Update

Pr. Feniuk-Nelson/Pr. Barbara Foltin

We recently received a "Macedonia grant" with which we will use to talk to congregations about building and rebuilding relationships. We will call this effort "100 dresses". Irv and Linda Lownes and Karen Johnson will be in Chicago for 3 days in November to learn more about the Macedonia process at the synod meeting. This program is not a fund raiser but focuses on developing stronger synod/congregation relationships.

Congregations have been selected for visitation based on program criteria. All congregations will receive a packet of materials. Please let Pastor Nancy know if you are aware of individuals who might be interested in participating in the program as visitors.

Life Lutheran

Bishop Mark

Bishop Mark reported that Life Lutheran agreed to turn over their church property to the Synod. They left the property in immaculate condition. Pastor Doris Ng and the Grace Lau congregation have moved into the church.

Mt. Cross Update

Pr. Nancy/Pr. Katy

Mark Price came to meeting to give an update on what is going on at Mt. Cross. There are still ongoing discussions between the Missouri Synod and the ELCA about continuing to operate the camp jointly. It is possible that the camp could become an ELCA only camp. The interim director will be engaging an attorney to help flesh out the alternatives.

Visioning Team Report

Bp. Mark and Pr. Nancy

Bishop Mark reported that we do not have a mission statement for our synod other than a 25 year old ELCA mission statement. We have launched a comprehensive and collaborative process to develop new mission and vision statements. The process began with input from church leaders including members of all the discipling teams. Next, a working group was formed-again with broad membership. They have had two long meetings and three of their members, Rosie Ellis-Falk, Pr. Jon Yurk and Pr. Manda Truchinski are working on polishing what the committee drafted for review at a third meeting of the group.

Their work will be brought to the Synod Council at the January meeting. This will help us to reach consensus on who are we, what God is calling us to do, and what the values and resources are that we bring to that conversation.

Power of Language

Bp. Mark/Pr. Nancy

We have discussed cultural competency in multiple forums but we have not talked about the power of language. At the last Synod Council meeting there were several sexist comments and multiple instances of speakers referring to God in an exclusively male perspective. The Conference of Bishops' meetings have often included similar poor use of language. We have been discussing having a speaker to talk with us about this issue. Developing and using inclusive language doesn't happen overnight. If you have ideas about speakers, please talk to one of us.

Synod Outreach to Congregations

Steve Herzfeldt

Steve asked the liaisons to each area (see list below) to make contact with the pastor and congregational council president in each of their congregations with a dual email, followed up in 2-7 days with a phone call to set up a time to talk with one or both of them-as they wish. He suggested that the liaisons introduce themselves and offer themselves as a resource. Ask them if they receive the weekly synod newsletter and suggest that they post it on their website. Ask them if they have issues or concerns that the liaison or someone else might help them with. Steve asked that each liaison report back to him with what they have done by November 19. He will combine all of the reports and report them back to the Synod Council at the December 8th budget meeting. Larry Struve suggested sharing the burden of making all of the contacts with members of the discipling teams.

Liaison to Conferences

Redwood-Perry Gray-Reneberg

Vineyard-Newt Kerney

Gateway-Newt Kerney

Delta/Diablo-Sue Hertless

Northern Mountain Valley-Doug Miller

Sierra Nevada-Carl Wilfrid
Foothill-Kay Valler
Sacramento-James Anderberg
San Francisco-Elaine Whitney
East Bay-Rose Ellis-Falik
Southern Alameda-Joseph Husary
Peninsula-Joseph Husary
Santa Clara-Gisela Daetz
Monterey Bay-Mark Nelson
Central San Joaquin- Sarah Meckler
Central Valley-Steve Herzfeldt
Central San Joaquin-Kristina Garabedian

NEW BUSINESS

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Budget Request

Nancy Nielsen

Ms. Nielsen indicated that LSS serves 3,000 people a day in four counties; Sacramento, San Francisco, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin. They work serving young people aging out of foster care, families that are homeless both with and without mental health issues. They help clients with money management.

Ms. Nielsen requested our financial support in funding a position or part of a position.

Her request was given to the treasurer for consideration in developing the FY 2014 budget.

Global Mission Advocacy Team (GMAT)

Kent Madsen and Joe Haletky

The GMAT is requesting donations to the endowment that funds the Lutheran pastors in El Salvador. If everyone in our Synod gave \$1, it would raise the endowment to \$2 million which would allow it to generate enough income to pay for the pastors in El Salvador permanently. These pastors serve the poor and congregations that are not able to support the pastors financially. The El Salvador church has already established the endowment and the Milwaukee synod has already committed more than twenty thousand dollars.

SC12.09.53MSC (Struve/Lownes) moved that we recommend to the Synod Assembly Planning Committee using some of the special offering money collected at 2013 Synod Assembly for Campaign to support Salvadoran Lutheran Pastors' Endowment Fund.

Racial and Ethnic Mission Strategies Discipling Team Update

Pr. Bill Ruth

Pr. Ruth filled in for the chair Pr. Barndt who is Reno attending anti-racism training. The team is requesting \$5,000 in the FY 2014 budget. The team has three working groups. They have trainings scheduled on October 19 and 21st as well as a November 17 meeting in which they invited congregations of color to assist by sharing their struggles and tools they use for relationship building.

Leadership Discipling Team

Jim White

Jim made a FY 2014 budget request on behalf of the team for \$42,000. They encourage rostered leaders to attend their training events. By 2017 100% of the congregations in the synod will have been invited to mutual ministry or sabbatical workshops. The team will be able to provide some scholarships and grants to attend some of the smaller leadership groups.

Witness Discipling Team

Kent Madsen

Kent requested that their existing \$3,000 budget continue in FY 2014.

Worship for Baptismal Living Discipling Team

Sue Hertless

Sue requested that the team budget be \$3,000 in FY 2014. They are planning a conference for the first part of the year. They will be offering seven seminars called "Journey Through Lent" at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Lafayette. Information will be out soon.

Congregational Life Discipling Team

Steve Herzfeldt

Steve requested that the FY 2014 discipling team budget be \$4,240. They plan to put on a webinar for training Sunday School teachers, host one large event and four training events during the year.

SC12.09.54MSC (Johnson/Birkelo) moved to approve the proposal S 15.21 Constitution Section #.

Preliminary discussion of 2014/15 budget

Linda Lownes

We have increases in requests from last year and we will be starting with a budget that is not supported by projected revenues. We need to do a better job describing our struggle with achieving our mission with a significantly reduced budget. We may want to look at developing a plan over the next 3-5 years that will give us a balanced budget at the end of that time. We project to be out of balance this year and next year.

Linda provided information on the trends and past giving. She indicated that congregations want to understand our plans, our goals, and what we are trying to accomplish. It was suggested that we ask congregational leaders to come in December and talk with them. The perception of some is that we don't want to talk.

SC12.09.55MSC (Johnson/Whitney) moved that the Synod Council Executive Committee appoint a representative group of the Synod Council members to move forward with a conversation with a wide group of partners in our synod on the issue of spending, giving and budget strategy between now and the December 8 budget meeting.

Update-ELCA advocacy in Nevada Legislature

Larry Struve

Larry provided a written and verbal update on the LAMN . Sierra Pacific Synod partners with the Grand Canyon Synod in supporting this program. Their budget has been reduced from \$22K to \$14K. Larry will be leaving the position in January. Mike Patterson, an Episcopal Priest, is interested in the position. He is willing to take over this job based on currently available funding.

They have created the “385 club” to pick up some of the fund raising previously done by staff. Their goal is to try and raise \$2,000 to fund the position so Mike Patterson will be able to move into it. They want to establish a three part team; Lutherans, Catholics, and Episcopalians.

The meeting was adjourned by Vice President Doug Miller at noon with Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Jones

Synod Secretary

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Professional Leaders Conference	October 9-11, 2012
Budget Meeting	December 8, 2012
January Synod Council Meeting	January 25-26, 2013
May Synod Council Meeting	May 1, 2013 FRESNO
2013 Synod Assembly	May 2-4, 2013 FRESNO
June Synod Council Meeting	June 21-22, 2013
September Synod Council	September 20-21, 2013

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Jones

Synod Secretary

