

**Sierra Pacific Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Synod Council Minutes  
June 23 – 24, 2017  
Office of the Bishop, Sacramento**

**Present:** Sue Michaelson, Gail Kiyomura, Pr. Clark Brown, Carl Brodt, Linda Babcock, Pr. Jason Bense, Pr. Tita Valeriano, Pr. Gregg Brown, Sheela Boddu, Pr. Paul Clark, Bishop Mark Holmerud, Vice President Elaine Whitney, Treasurer Linda Lownes, Secretary Jeff Pennington

**Absent:** Nicholas Hayes, Bill Turner, John Allured

**Staff:** Pr. Katy Grindberg, Pr. Kathryn Gulbranson, Pr. Ron Zoesch, Laurie Gaumer, Patty Monteiro

**Visitors:** Parliamentarian Cammie Chen, Irv Lownes

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Elaine Whitney at 2:10 PM. Everyone introduced themselves. Linda Lownes led an opening devotion.

**Adoption of the Agenda**

**SC17.06.25 MSC** (Michaelson/Kiyomura) moved to adopt agenda as updated.

**Approval of Minutes of May 3, 2017 Synod Council Meeting**

**SC17.06.26 MSC** (Holmerud/Kiyomura) moved approval of minutes of the May 3, 2017 meeting.

**Approval of Minutes of June 14, 2017 Synod Council Extraordinary Teleconference Meeting**

**SC17.06.27 MSC** (Lownes/Michaelson) moved approval of minutes of the June 14, 2017 teleconference.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

**SC17.06.28 MSC** (Michaelson/Brown) moved approval of Consent Agenda.

- Appoint Randy Presuhn as chair of the Committee on Discipline
- Approval of constitutional revisions submitted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Reno, Nevada
- Approval of renewal of non-stipendiary call for Pr. Sanna Reinholtzen, associate pastor, University Lutheran Chapel

### **Bishop's Report**

Met with California Governor Jerry Brown's staff to advocate for passage of California Assembly Bill 54 ("sanctuary state bill").

In conversation with Dr. Albert Starr, director of ELCA Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries, to discuss the position of Director for Evangelical Mission within the synod.

From early November to early December, will take remaining month of sabbatical, possibly to study immigration issues along the California and Arizona border with Mexico, and to continue Spanish-language study.

In mid-April 2017, 48 of 193 congregations within the synod were being served by non-called pastors, i.e., interim, bridge, those preparing through TEAM program and not yet ordained, or regular rotation of guest pastors; and the synod is expecting to see 21 retirements over the course of the year.

Given the increasing amount of work and with the idea of having someone with some experience in the position before a new bishop is elected in 2019, the Bishop would like to expand staff configuration to include a support-staff person for the bishop.

Synod staff introduced themselves and the work they do.

### **Vice-President's Report**

- Starting a year of discernment entering the 4<sup>th</sup> year of current term.
- Continues to get reactions to her address at the 2017 Synod Assembly.
- Synod vice-presidents are meeting with the Council of Bishops in Chicago in September.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Briefed council members on roles and duties of the Synod Treasurer:

- Fiscal year runs from February to January.
- Prepares a monthly report to churchwide.
- Sends quarterly reports to congregations in the synod about what has been received from them in mission support.
- Explained the 4 major synod funds:
  - Operating
  - Property management
  - Mission and Ministry Endowment (fund functioning as an endowment)
  - Warner Trust Fund (a true endowment)

Financial statement was unavailable at the time of the meeting. It will be sent via e-mail under separate cover to all Council members.

### **Synod Assembly Assessment**

- Many felt it was a particularly very spiritual and very moving assembly.
- Some people would like a dance to allow for a way to release pent up energy.
- Limited number of available hotel rooms at the Fresno venue was a problem.
- Many people appreciated the day of service prior to the assembly.
- For some, a sense that there wasn't enough time for discussion of the business in front of the assembly.
- Need to find a way to increase the number of laity attending the assembly.

Ideas for future assemblies:

- Find a way to establish a synod budget that includes the registration fee for congregations to attend assembly
- Synod Planning Committee is considering having a 1-day assembly in 2019, perhaps in Lodi, California

### **Discussion of Synod Resolutions**

#### **Resolution 2017-1:**

Leadership Discipling Team will look at the third "resolved" and work with Synod Council to prepare a review for 2018 Assembly.

#### **Resolution 2017-2:**

Synod Staff will look at their portfolios and get back to Council as to which staff member will work with the Synod Discipling Teams and Deans of Conferences regarding the 5<sup>th</sup> "resolved."

A steering committee has been convened to create a task force as outlined in the final "resolved."

**SC17.06.28 MSC** (Michaelsen/Brown) moved to refer the Resolution to the task force and get a status report at the September Synod Council meeting.

In addition, Pr. Jason and Pr. Gregg will bring back additional information and resources for the September meeting to share with Council.

Pr. Jason also recommended that the Lutheran Office of Public Policy and Lutheran Engagement and Advocacy in Nevada be included in the information chain with the Resolution Task Force so that relevant information and best-practices can be shared.

#### **Resolution 2017-3:**

**SC17.06.29 MSC** (Michaelsen/Lownes) moved 1) that Synod officers disseminate the substance of the Resolution electronically to their respective churchwide listservs; 2) that Synod Council inform the makers of the Resolution about the actions of the officers; and 3) that Synod Council designate the makers of the Resolution as Council's "designee" as outlined in the final "resolved" of the Resolution and that Synod Council will support the makers of the resolution in their action to further disseminate the substance of the Resolution.

**Young Adult synod council position:**

Discussed the need for a Young Adult (†S6.04.02. “The term ‘young adult’ means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.”) on Synod Council to be in compliance with Synod Constitution †S10.01.

Discussed the fact that it would be useful to have a description of the duties/expectations of a Synod Council member when sending out an announcement soliciting nominations for the position. We will solicit nominations by sending the announcement and nomination form electronically to congregations, pastors, and deans. We will seek diversity in nominations, and we will encourage nominations from underrepresented communities.

Nominations will be due by September 6, and a telephonic meeting will take place soon after to elect someone in time for the September Synod Council meeting.

**SC17.06.30 MSC** (Michaelsen/Kiyomura) moved to table discussion of background checks for Synodical Officers (as per Synod Constitution †S9.12.) until the September 2017 meeting.

**SC17.06.31 MSC** (Valeriano/Holmerud) moved to initiate a process to assess current policies, recruitment/invitation, and education regarding increased participation and representation of people of color, young adults, and other less represented groups (people with different abilities) on Synod Council and various Synodical Committees.

This charge will be carried out by a Task Force comprised of members from both from Synod Council and the Racial and Ethnic Mission Strategies Discipling Team and appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council.

This motion will be discussed in subsequent council meetings until final recommendation/s have been reached to be presented to Synod Council no later than the January 2018 meeting.

It is anticipated that this will result in increased participation and representation of people of color, young adults, and other less represented groups (people with different abilities) on Synod Council and various Synodical Committees, supported by possibly new or revised policy and institutional structures. This process should include the voices and input of the wider community, especially among congregations/leaders of color and voices from the Racial and Ethnic Mission Strategy Discipling Team and its working groups.

**Executive Committee:**

Sue Michaelsen was elected to the Executive Committee for 2017-18.

We still need two additional members to serve on the Executive Committee for 2017-18.

**Other Synodical Committees:**

Need to develop a description of each committee and the work it does, time requirement, venue, etc., that could be shared with deans that they could then share with congregations to seek volunteers.

**Discipling Teams:**

**SC17.06.32 MS (Valeriano/Holmerud)** moved to formally review and assess the efficiency of the current discipling team structure in order to support the goals of congregational vitality, leadership development, and inclusion. Motion tabled until September meeting.

**SC17.06.33 MSC (Michaelsen/Brodt)** moved to table until September meeting. (scheduled in September agenda 1-hour time) In the meantime, Council members will seek feedback from the Discipling Team(s) to which they are liaisons.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

**Dates of future meetings (Sacramento Office of the Bishop, unless otherwise indicated):**

Friday, September 22 – Saturday, September 23, 2017

Treats: Linda Babcock, Pastor Tita

Devotions: Pastor Jason

Friday, January 19 – Saturday, January 20, 2018

Treats:

Devotions: Pastor Gregg

March 10, 2018 (one-day budget meeting)

Treats:

Devotions: Pastor Paul

Thursday, May 31, 2018 (pre-assembly meeting)

Treats:

Devotions:

Friday, June 22 – Saturday, June 23, 2018

Treats: Sheela,

Devotions: