

**Sierra Pacific Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Synod Council Minutes  
May 3, 2017  
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church  
Fresno, California**

**Present:** Bishop Mark Holmerud, Vice President Elaine Whitney, Treasurer Linda Lownes, Secretary Jeff Pennington, Pr. Patricia Vargas, Sue Michaelson, Stephanie Leong, Andrew Stevens, Paula Barton, Larell Fineren, Pr. Susan Birkelo, Gail Kiyomura, Ed Nelson, Pr. Tita Valeriano, Randy Presuhn, Sherrill Heinz, Pastor Tuhina Rasche

**Absent:** Theresa Landi, Jordan Haley, Tony Burns, Pr. Gregory Brown

**Staff:** Pr. Katy Grindberg, Pr. Kathryn Gulbranson, Debbie Cook

**Visitors:** Parliamentarian Joyce Opjorden, Pr. Dawn Roginski, Irv Lownes

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Elaine Whitney at 2:10 PM. Introduction to Our Saviour's by Pastor Bill Knezovich. Sherrill Heinz led an opening devotion.

**Adoption of the Agenda**

**SC17.05.18. MSC** (Leong/Michaelson) moved to adopt agenda as presented.

**Approval of Minutes of January 27-28, 2017 Synod Council Meeting**

**SC17.05.19 MSC** (Heinz/Leong) moved approval of minutes.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

**SC17.05.20 MSC** (Lownes/Barton) moved approval of Consent Agenda.

- Approval of \$1000/month housing allowance for Interim DEM Ron Zoesch

**Bishop's Report**

Introduced Joyce Opjorden of Trinity, Ventura, who is serving as parliamentarian for the council meeting and for the Synod Assembly.

Thanked the synod staff and planning committee in getting everything ready for the Assembly.

Dates already set for the 2018 Synod Assembly, which will be held the first weekend of June in Sacramento. Rozella White will be the keynote speaker.

Thanked the local volunteers for all of their support.

Shared the names of those being appointed to the Discipline Committee, and Randy Presuhn has agreed to serve as chair of the Discipline Committee.

Thanked Kathye Hamm and Pastor Katy Grindberg in putting together the Assembly Handbook and pushing everything to "Guidebook."

Acknowledged that the Chrism Masses and the "chili with the bishop" events were successful throughout the synod, but is thinking about splitting the Chrism Masses and the chili feeds, maybe having the chili feeds on a weekend or at a time/place which is easier for people to get to.

Attended the ELCA advocacy days in Washington, DC in early March and met with a number of members of Congress to discuss areas of concern.

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

Attended part of the REMS Discipling Team strategy meeting and is encouraged that we are making progress that feels spiritually right.

Excited about synod assembly.

Step out on faith and do your own truth-telling!  
If you have the floor, use it well.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Made transition to reconfigured accounting system.

Sent out the audit report to council. In response to auditor recommendations, treasurer will no longer open mail which comes into the synod office. This will strengthen the checks-and-balances in the office.

Reviewed the operating expenses to-date.

Need two volunteers for the Investment Committee, and one for the Finance Committee.

Synod-held properties were reappraised.

In response to a question regarding status of funds held in Thrivent accounts, announced that April meeting of Executive Committee, it was decided to divest of Thrivent.

**Executive Committee recommendation for amending line 61 of the proposed FY18 “Council Recommended Budget” column**

Some ideas of looking at lower-cost options:

- Going into a congregation
  - To develop a “wish list” regarding the desired space which is needed, to see if there is a congregation willing to offer space that matches the need
- “Mobile” office
- Co-op office space
- Possibly cooperating with ecumenical partners

**SC17.05.21 MSC** (Leong/Valeriano) moved changing line 61 of the proposed FY18 “Council Recommended Budget” to \$110,000.

**Property Report**

Recommendation on Hilmar property is to sell it. Synod attorney has reached out to the Nova Esperança Portuguese congregation, but they have not gotten back to him. There have also been some concerns with the tenants of the house on the property.

Wait for DEM to see where to go with Hilmar property, and if Nova Esperança is not an option, then DEM may consider the proposal made by the Nuestro Redentor/Our Redeemer in Livingston.

Waiting on report from new DEM regarding Richmond property.

**2017 Synod Assembly**

**SC17.05.22 MSC** (Leong/Rasche) to approve Synod Assembly agenda.

**SC17.05.23 MSC** (Michaelsen/Fineren) to appoint committee chairs: Randy Presuhn, Credentials; Rev. Steve Sabin, Resolutions; Sue Hertless, Elections.

**Moderators for Hearings on Resolutions and Budget:**

Thursday, 4:15 p.m.

- Compensation: Paula Barton
- Department of Peacemaking: Sue Michaelsen
- Sanctuary: Larell Fineren
- Budget: Gail Kiyomura

### **Update on Racial and Ethnic Ministries Strategies (REMS) Discipling Team**

- Had an event in March at which approximately 40 people attended, to discuss how to reboot the movement
- There needs to be an overarching anti-racism synod strategy
- Will have a table and workshop at Synod Assembly for those who have questions and who weren't able to attend the March workshop.
- Had people sign a sheet indicating their interest in one of the 3 working groups, and each group had assigned a leader to convene a meeting.
- Organize another convocation to bring back the three working groups to meet and discuss as a whole
- Working groups will put forward recommendations for people to populate the Discipling Team

Pastor Tita Valeriano, Pastor Patricia Vargas, and Pastor Susan Birkelo will make a brief presentation at 2:40 p.m. at start of Resolutions Hearing; other council members who were present at the March event will also be present during the presentation.

### **Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community: Salinas Valley**

Iglesia Luterana El Buen Pastor in Salinas extended a term call to Eduardo Trejo, supported by a grant from Domestic Mission Unit, and will then foray into the Gonzales/Soledad area

**SC17.05.24 MSC** (Leong/Presuhn) to authorize a new worshipping community in the Gonzales/Soledad area.

### **Announcements**

Ed Nelson announced that the building in Fresno which is currently housing the Synod Resource Center is being sold. Therefore, will need to find an appropriation for the Center.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.