

**Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Synod Council Minutes
September 21, 2019
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Merced, California**

- Present:** John Allured, Pastor Jason Bense, Carl Brodt, Pastor Clark Brown, Pastor Paul Clark, Sophia Hofmann, Bishop Mark Holmerud, Vice President Gail Kiyomura, Sue Michaelsen, Joseph Paxton, Secretary Jeff Pennington
- Absent:** Linda Babcock, Sheela Boddu, Nicholas Hayes, Pastor Tuhina Rasche
- Staff:** Pastor Katy Grindberg, Pastor Kathryn Gulbranson, Pastor Tita Valeriano, Diana Suruki
- Guests:** Regina Banks, Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy–CA

Saturday, September 21, 2019:

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Gail Kiyomura at 10:05 AM.

Morning devotions led by Bishop Mark Holmerud.

Introduction of guest Ms. Regina Banks, Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy – CA, who discussed the work of LOPP – CA.

Adoption of the Agenda

SC19.09.31 Agenda approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes

SC19.09.32 Minutes of June 21, 2019 Synod Council meeting approved by unanimous consent.

SC19.09.33 Minutes of 2019 Synod Assembly meeting approved by unanimous consent.

Adoption of Consent Agenda

SC19.09.34 Consent Agenda approved by unanimous consent.

- Extend Special Synod Council Call to The Rev. Ned O'Donnell to serve as Chaplain of the Lutheran Ministry to Nursing Homes of the East Bay Lutheran Parish, Oakland and Alameda, CA
- Approval to cover increased amount of COBRA premium for Bishop Mark Holmerud from \$958.92/month to \$1007.88/month
- Approval of revisions to congregation constitution of United in Grace Lutheran Church, Vallejo, CA

- Approval of revisions to congregation constitution of Peace Lutheran Church, Grass Valley, CA
- Approval of revisions to congregation constitution of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, El Dorado Hills, CA
- Approval of revisions to congregation constitution of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA
- Approval of revisions to congregation constitution of Advent Lutheran Church, Morgan Hill, CA

Bishop's Report

Will be attending fall Conference of Bishops meeting in Chicago, followed by California Lutheran University for Convocation and Board meeting, followed by the delegation trip to Rwanda to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda

Had an executive staff retreat in September

Working with VP Gail Kiyomura to engage a spiritual director for staff to be available during the run-up to the Bishop election and during the transition between bishops

Vice President's Report

Has been visiting (and playing at) congregations throughout the Synod

Discussed attendance at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly

Has drafted a "job description" for Synod Council members, and mentioned the fact that at the 2020 Synod Assembly there will be elections for Synod Council members

Discussed that the Synod is going forward with the bridge loan to Immanuel Lutheran Church, San Jose

Appointments and Elections:

Treasurer: Pastor Sharon Amundson appointed Treasurer for a four-year term.

Conference 8 – Sierra Central Valley lay male council vacancy: Luke Price, St. Paul's, Lodi, CA, appointed to fill the Conference 8 position, which expires in 2020

At-Large council vacancy: Jennifer Teer, Bethlehem, Oakland, CA, appointed to fill the At-Large council vacancy, which expires in 2022

Finance Committee: Janette Drew appointed to a 3-year term (January 2020 – December 2022) on the Finance Committee

SC19.09.35 MSC (Pennington/Michaelsen) moved that the newly appointed Treasurer's term begin on September 21, 2019.

Presentation by the Investment Committee

Members of the Investment Committee spoke about the need to diversify the investment options available under the Investment Policy and made certain recommendations regarding possible additional options. (see SC19.09.42 below)

Presentation by SPS Global Mission Advocacy Team

Joe Haletky spoke about the work of the GMAT and presented the team's request for a \$5000 budget line item in the 2021-22 Synod budget. Request will be forwarded to the Finance Committee as it prepares the proposed budget for 2021-22.

Property Report

Sanger: recommended that we can explore the possible of developing a synodically authorized worshipping community before we decide to sell; Synod will continue to maintain the property, but would establish a use agreement with the SAWC, outlining responsibilities regarding maintenance of the property, etc.

Hilmar: house has been cleaned and the property is ready to be put on the market

Grace Lao: will be meeting to review use agreement of the property

SC19.09.36 MSC (Michaelsen/Paul Clark) moved approval of a synod authorized worshipping community exploration in Sanger, CA called **Sanger Latinx Ministry**.

SC19.09.37 MSC Executive Committee moved approval of the proposed **Synod Council Covenant**.

SC19.09.38 MSC (Michaelsen/Bense) moved that the "non-required" general amendments to the Synod Constitution adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly be forwarded to the 2020 Synod Assembly for approval.

SC19.09.39 MSC Executive Committee moved approval of Synod Constitution Continuing Resolution S9.12.A19. regarding background checks.

Discussion of 2020 Synod Assembly and Bishop election

SC19.09.40 MSC (Bense/Allured) moved that the term of the new bishop start on August 1, 2020, with an option for the bishop-elect to start a month of paid overlap on July 1, 2020.

SC19.09.41 MSC (Michaelsen/Bense) moved approval of the following questions to appear on the 2020 Biographical Information Form for pre-nominees and candidates for the office of Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod:

1. Name:
2. Current Position:
3. Congregation Membership:
4. Date and Year of Birth:
5. Date and Year of Ordination:

6. Previous Positions:
7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):
8. List up to three (3) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
9. List up to three (3) current or past community activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
10. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)
11. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)
12. Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as bishop of this Synod. (1,000 characters maximum)
13. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)
14. What are your top 3 priorities for this Synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

SC19.09.42 MSC (Michaelsen/Bense) moved that Policy 11 – 003 Investment Policy be amended to:

- delete Thrivent Financial for Lutherans from the list of investments in ¶V. §1., and
- add to the list
 - 1) ELCA Credit Union,
 - 2) U.S. Treasury instruments, and
 - 3) high-quality investment-grade corporate bond funds with a bond rating by the Standard & Poor's and Moody's bond rating agencies of A or better.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Future council meetings:

- Saturday, December 14, 2019, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Mt. Cross Lutheran Camp, Ben Lomond, California; with Zoom virtual meeting (video) option

Respectfully submitted,



Jeffrey A Pennington, Secretary
Sierra Pacific Synod