

**Southern Ohio Synod – ELCA
Synod Council Hybrid/In Person and Electronic Meeting
January 28, 2023**

Call to Order:

Vice President Ellis called the Synod Council meeting to order at 9:34 am. Secretary Fischer took a roll call vote and confirmed a quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members present: Rev. Matt Byrd, Rev. Mark Combs, Mr. Rick Davila, Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahun, Mr. David Drumm, Ms. Marjorie Ellis, Ms. Holly Fischer, Rev. Bonnie Gerber, Mr. Roy Hart, Ms. Jeni Gray, Mr. Matthew Hazzard, Ms. Robin Kaelin, Rev. Stephen Kimm, Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler, Ms. Abbie McCandlish, Mr. David Miser, Mr. Kevin Pyle, Ms. Michelle Riesbeck, Mr. Ethan Roberts, Ms. Laura Schmidt, Ms. Cindy Schrader, Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler, Ms. Kathie Skamfer, Mr. Doug Ware, Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Witt.

Members excused: Ms. Marcia Ward.

Members absent: Mr. Imanuel Lyatuu.

Also present for some or all of the meeting were: Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Rev. Robert Abrams, Mr. Josh Brodbeck, Ms. Kim Uemura, Rev. Rebecca Grate, Ms. Rebecca Witt, Rev. Karl Biermann, and Mr. Chris Clothier.

Vice-President Ellis asked that participants identify themselves before speaking.

Ms. Michelle Riesbeck opened with devotions focusing on the Lenten season.

Review and Approval of Agenda of the 01/28/2023 Meeting:

The Agenda for the day was reviewed.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.01 To approve the 01/28/2023 Agenda. (Schrader/ Schmidt) APPROVED.

Review and Approval of Minutes of the December 3, 2022 Meeting:

The Minutes of the above Council meeting were reviewed.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.02

**To approve the Minutes of the 12/03/2022 meeting as submitted.
(Drumm /Kaelin) APPROVED.**

Reports of the Officers and Executive Committee:

Vice President

Vice President Ellis provided a verbal report. She shared information from the last ELCA Vice-Presidents meeting, including a discussion on the importance of synod leadership continuity plans. The Bishop shared that the SOS has a continuity plan in place.

Secretary

Ms. Fischer reported that the Region 6 Archivist position is still vacant and the position remains posted.

Treasurer

Treasurer Pyle asked Rebecca Witt, Finance Team Chair, to provide a report with Finance Team recommendations for revisions to the 2023-2024 Mission and Ministry Plan; and the proposal for the 2024-2025 Mission and Ministry Plan (which will be presented to Synod Assembly for approval). Ms. Witt shared that revisions to the 2023-2024 plan reflect a conservative and realistic approach. She highlighted modifications on the income side including but not limited to a decrease in mission support to a new total of \$1,700,000 (noting that it's possible support will be higher than this).

On the expenditure side, Ms. Witt noted a decrease in ELCA mission support (which is 40% of SOS mission support and is reduced commensurate to the projected decrease in SOS mission support); in the leadership category related to candidacy (new amount \$6,500); and a small decrease in ecumenical support. The Bishop shared that regarding candidacy, the new Assistant to the Bishop position, which may be filled with a clergy couple, would serve as a recruiting arm for candidacy. The Bishop shared that, related to ecumenical support, the Synod continues to be involved in outreach with partners (e.g., work on combatting the opioid epidemic), however the Ohio Council of Churches is less active and that is reflected in the funding decrease. Ms. Witt noted small increases in staff salary (a 3% increase for the Bishop and Assistant to the Bishop was approved by the Executive Committee effective February 1, 2023). Ms. Witt noted some slight income increases (e.g., interest income increase from \$12,000 to \$20,000).

In the 2024-2025 plan, a slight increase (\$20,000) in mission support is projected; the Oklahoma farmland is anticipated to be sold and income from this will be zeroed out in the plan. Ms. Schmidt asked if the amount allocated in legal will be sufficient to cover the cost of this real estate sale? The Bishop indicated it should be as the sale is expected to go smoothly.

Regarding staff expenses, Treasurer Pyle shared that the vehicle allocated to the Bishop has around 179,000 miles and will need to be replaced.

Mr. Davila asked about the \$15,000 line item for congregational re-development. Pastor Kerrigan explained that this item supports challenged congregations in struggling communities (currently three are supported with \$5,000 from the Synod and approximately \$15,000 -18,000 in matching funds from the ELCA). In addition, the Bishop noted that some ELCA Covid-19 funding has been made available to these congregations.

Pastor Kerrigan shared a video presentation of the Bishop regarding mission support for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2023.

Treasurer Pyle provided a written report on the 4th quarter financial statements. Treasurer Pyle and the Bishop expressed appreciation for the work of the Finance Team. The Bishop noted her appreciation for Treasurer Pyle's outstanding service, indicating that he has served two terms and will be acknowledged for his service at the Synod Assembly. At the April Council meeting, it is proposed that Ms. Rebecca Witt be considered for appointment to fulfill the Treasurer position.

SC.23.01.03 To approve revisions to the 2023-2024 Mission & Ministry Plan as submitted. (Siegenthaler/Roberts) APPROVED.

SC.23.01.04 To approve revisions to the 2024-2025 Mission & Ministry Plan and present those to Synod Assembly in June 2023. (Ware/Kaelin) APPROVED.

Ms. Ellis called for a recess at 10:25 am.
The meeting resumed at 10:33 am.

Bishop The Bishop's Report is attached to these minutes for review. In addition to her written report, the Bishop provided information, and invited staff members to provide verbal reports as discussed below.

1. The Bishop reminded members to provide leadership names to Josh Brodbeck to be raised up in prayer.
2. The Bishop expressed appreciation for Rev. Kimm's service on Council over the past four years. Pastor Kimm has also assumed the role of Coordinator of the Leadership Academy. Pastor Kimm shared that it has been his passion to "equip the saints for ministry."

3. The Bishop shared that the Synod will be offering an upcoming bootcamp for new congregational presidents and vice-presidents (February 6, 2023).
4. The Bishop reviewed the recommendation of the Executive Committee regarding designating the Synod Assembly offering to MomenToUs, which will be voted upon by Council today.
5. The Bishop provided a Thrive! update. The campaign is at approximately \$960,000, with a goal of 1.2 million. Pastor Donner will conclude his role as the campaign manager at the end of June 2023.
6. The Bishop, Bishop Beaudoin, and others attended the 2023 All Ohio Rostered Ministers Gathering at Lake Erie last week. Online training was provided related to micro-aggression with 108 participants. The Bishop thanked Josh Brodbeck for his work related to this event. Pastor Abrams shared that attendees were very engaged and appreciated the collegiate tone of the event.
7. Pastor Rebecca Grate provided an update on the MomenToUs ministry. She noted a recent meeting with 6-7 congregations, and that at least two congregations have officially signed on. Pastor Kerrigan noted that funding from the ELCA, the SOS Thrive! campaign, congregations and individual donors is critical to this ministry.
8. The Bishop asked Chris Clothier to provide an update on Outside the Box. Mr. Clothier noted that OTB is working on an updated strategy for the next 2-3 years, centering on valuing connections with one another and communities, and the development of leaders and talent.
9. The Bishop invited Rev. Karl Biermann, Regional Gift Planner, to provide a presentation. Rev. Biermann detailed his work with partners including Wittenburg University, his work with congregations and individual donors. He noted a recent federal law change that allows tax-free giving from IRA required minimum distributions, which are mandated starting age 70 ½.
10. The Bishop asked Rev. Robert Abrams to provide an update on pastoral supply/calls and the Congregational Resource Team. Pastor Abrams shared that currently the Synod has ten vacancies. We are in need of interim pastors, as the supply diminished with retirees deciding in the aftermath of the pandemic not to fulfill interim pastor roles. The Congregational Resource Team, which started about five

years ago, meets monthly and has proven to be a very fruitful and beneficial resource. Ms. Ellis encouraged Council members to avail themselves of this resource.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.05 To approve a draft agenda for the June 2023 Synod Assembly as recommended by Executive Committee. (Ellis) APPROVED.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.06 To designate the Synod Assembly offering to MomenToUs as recommended by Executive Committee. (Ellis) APPROVED.

Report of Auxiliaries

Mr. Drumm provided a written report from the Lutheran Men in Mission. Mr. Drumm shared highlights from the report.

Ms. Kaelin provided a verbal report from WELCA. She noted that she is serving WELCA with a co-leader. The first WELCA meeting this year will be held in February; Ms. Kaelin shared that for the 2023 Triennial Convention in Phoenix this fall, WELCA is working on a Freedom Trail quilt project.

The Reports of the Officers, the Lutheran Men in Mission, and Women of the ELCA were then received by the Synod Council.

Ms. Ellis called for a lunch recess at 11:38 am.

Pastor Kerrigan offered a luncheon prayer.

The meeting resumed at 12:26 pm.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.07 To amend the agenda for today's Council meeting to remove an extension of a call to Rev. Rebecca Grate from En Bloc consideration. (Ellis/Pyle) APPROVED.

Pastor Grate left the meeting. The Bishop and Pastor Kerrigan provided information concerning Pastor Grate's experience, skills, and background, and how this will complement the work that would be proposed with the MomenToUs ministry. The Bishop addressed questions from Council members regarding the ministry and Rev. Grate's proposed role.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.08 To extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Rebecca Grate to serve as Pastor Mission Developer for MomentsToUs effective January 28, 2023. (Fischer /Pyle) APPROVED.

The Council congratulated Rev. Grate.

The Bishop provided information concerning the legal and governance agenda items.

VOTED:

SC.23.01.09 To go into Executive Session to consider an En Bloc voting matter. (Kimm /Gerber) APPROVED.

Guest(s) exited the meeting.

Council entered Executive Session at 12:53 pm.

The meeting resumed at 1:04 pm.

The Bishop provided additional information concerning the legal and governance agenda items.

The Bishop asked Pastor Abrams and Roy Hart to discuss the Model Constitution for Synods required revisions as implemented at the Churchwide Assembly in August 2022. Mr. Hart reviewed the required changes to the Synod's January 2023 Constitution. He noted that optional provisions would require a vote of the Synod Assembly for approval, and those will be presented to Council in the fall of 2023 for discussion and consideration.

EN BLOC

VOTED:

SC.23.01.10 To approve the En Bloc Recommendations. (Schmidt/Pyle) APPROVED

Rostered Ministers Status

On Leave from Call

RECOMMENDATION:

- Rev. Christina Scheuller, Family Leave, 7th yr. (7/16/17)

Retired Status

RECOMMENDATION:

- Rev. Gail Renee Ahern (1/15/2023)
- Rev. Dr. C. Lynn Nakamura (2/1/2023)

Disability Status

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

Extension of Call

RECOMMENDATION:

- To extend a synod council call to Rev. Kirstin Springmeyer as Chaplain, at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, in Cincinnati, OH effective January 28, 2023.

Affirmation and Renewal of Appointment of Synod Authorized Ministers

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

Affirmation and Renewal of Synod Council Calls

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

- To affirm synod council calls: Rev. Karen Asmus-Alsnauer, Deacon Nicholas Bates, Deacon Kristen Buss, Rev. Sally Cook, Deacon Tammy Eady, Rev. Leslie Fox Lott, Rev. Callon Holloway, Deacon Rachel Lammi, Rev. Mary Laymon, Rev. Dale Linder, Deacon Elaine Malzahn, Rev. Alvin McCay, Deacon Diane Montgomery, Rev. Tracy Paschke-Johannes, Rev. Gilbert Santiago, Deacon Linda Sprick-Kruse, Rev. Robert Swanson, Rev. Andrew Tucker, Rev. Patricia Vargas, Rev. Larry Welin, and Rev. Yarney Yarkpazuo.

Removal/ Resignation from the ELCA Roster

RECOMMENDATION:

- To accept the resignation from the ELCA roster of Deacon Julija Volfa, effective 12/7/2022.

Legal and Governance

RECOMMENDATION:

- To appoint Mr. Chris Clothier, Ms. Susan Fox, Rev. Richard Freudenberger, Rev. Bonnie Gerber, and Rev. Benjamin Prill to the Audit Team of the Southern Ohio Synod.
- To approve the required Southern Ohio Synod Constitution provisions as required by ELCA and send it on to synod assembly. (A8)
- Information: Amendments to the Constitution for the Synods as approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. (A9)
- To approve congregation constitutions for:
 - Fellowship Lutheran Church, Columbus OH

Information: N/A

Other Business

Vice-President Ellis shared that the Synod will host pre-Assembly online information sessions for participants.

Synod Council Roster 2022-23: An update roster was provided to Council members.

Mr. Roberts offered a closing prayer.

SC.23.01.11 To adjourn the meeting (Fischer /Drumm) APPROVED.

The meeting was then adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holly R. Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Holly R. Fischer
Synod Council Secretary