

**Southern Ohio Synod – ELCA  
Synod Council Electronic Meeting  
April 23, 2022**

Call to Order:

Vice President Ellis called the Synod Council meeting to order at 9:05 am. Secretary Fischer took a roll call vote and confirmed a quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members present: Rev. Mark Combs, Mr. Rick Davila, Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahun, Mr. David Drumm, Ms. Marjorie Ellis, Ms. Holly Fischer, Rev. Bonnie Gerber, Ms. Jeni Gray, Mr. Roy Hart, Mr. Matthew Hazzard, Rev. Stephen Kimm, Mr. Imanuel Lyatuu, Ms. Abbie McCandlish, Mr. David Miser, Ms. Laura Schmidt, Ms. Cindy Schrader, Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler, Ms. Kathie Skamfer, Ms. Marcia Ward, Mr. Doug Ware, Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Witt.

Members excused: Rev. Matt Byrd, Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler, Mr. Kevin Pyle, Ms. Michelle Riesbeck, Mr. Ethan Roberts, Ms. Susan Wyckoff.

Members absent: None.

Also present for some or all of the electronic meeting were staff members including Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Rev. Robert Abrams, Rev. Lynn Nakamura, Rev. Larry Donner and Ms. Kim Uemura. Guests Becky Witt and Chris Clothier, Finance Team, Ms. Joy Hacker, and Mr. Chris Benko were also present for some or all of the meeting.

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

Review and Approval of Agenda of the 4/23/2022 Meeting:

The Agenda for the day was reviewed.

**VOTED:**

**SC.22.04.01 To approve the 4/23/2022 Agenda. ( Kimm /Schmidt ) APPROVED.**

Rick Davila opened with devotions.

Review and Approval of Minutes of the January 29, 2022 Meeting:

The Minutes of the above Council meeting were reviewed. Ms. Fischer reported that Mr. Lyatuu requested a correction of the minutes as he was present at the January meeting but arrived late.

**VOTED:**

**SC.22.04.02 To approve the Minutes of the 01/29/2022 meeting as revised. (Gerber /Ware) APPROVED .**

Reports of the Officers and Executive Committee:

Vice President Vice President Ellis provided a verbal report and provided registration information concerning the Multicultural Youth Justice Experience planned for July 21 – 23, 2022. The event can be done online or in small, local in-person gatherings.

Secretary Secretary Fischer referred for consideration the proposed “SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD OF THE ELCA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AGAINST ROSTERED MINISTERS”, which was reviewed by Synod Council at its January 2022 meeting, as revised.

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.03** **To approve the “THE SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD OF THE ELCA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AGAINST ROSTERED MINISTERS” as submitted. (Fischer/Schmidt) APPROVED.**

Secretary Fischer asked Rev. Lynn Nakamura to provide background information concerning the proposed 2023 Compensation Guidelines. Rev. Nakamura the proposed phased-in approach to implementing an 8.5% cost of living index increase, explained how the document tables were moved to appendices for ease of reference, and thanked Ms. Joy Hacker for her work in reviewing and editing the documents.

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.04** **To approve the 2023 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors), with Parsonage Provided, as submitted. (Fischer/Hart) APPROVED.**

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.05** **To approve the 2023 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors), with Housing Allowance, as submitted. (Fischer/Schmidt) APPROVED.**

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.06** **To approve the 2023 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons), as submitted. (Fischer/Kimm) APPROVED.**

Treasurer Ms. Becky Witt provided a financial report in place of Treasurer Pyle, who is recovering from a medical event. Ms. Witt shared good news that contributions are holding steady in comparison to 2021, and no revisions to

the Mission and Ministry Plan are recommended at this time. The Finance Team has recommended action be taken by Council on two restricted funds. The funds, Handicapped Children and Care for the Elderly, were inherited when the ELCA came into existence, and both carry endowment stipulations that were imposed by Synod Council specifying that only the interest on the funds may be expended. Synod Council may lift the previously imposed stipulations to allow for disbursement of principal consistent with the purposes for which the funds were established. Discussion ensued. Ms. Schmidt asked how the funds would be disbursed. Ms. Witt explained that disbursement requests are reviewed by the Finance Team to ensure the request is consistent with the specified purpose of the funds. Mr. Hazzard asked for information concerning the fund balances. Ms. Witt indicated that the balances are set forth in the Audit Report, page 24, and are approximately \$36,000 and \$37,000.

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.07**

**To approve the recommendation of the Finance Team to remove the endowment stipulation from the Handicapped Children Council restricted fund to allow for disbursements of principal in the discretion of Synod Council. (Hazzard) APPROVED.**

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.08**

**To approve the recommendation of the Finance Team to remove the endowment stipulation from the Care for the Elderly Council restricted fund to allow for disbursements of principal in the discretion of Synod Council. (Kimm) APPROVED.**

Secretary Fischer reported that the Executive Committee met on April 18, 2022 and reviewed the need for improved video conferencing equipment to allow for hybrid meetings where participants are both live and remote. The current camera used for conferencing has very limited performance abilities. The Executive Committee is recommending the purchase of the Owl Labs Pro 360 Video Conferencing Camera, Mic, and Speaker” set up which allows for collaborative hybrid teams meeting. The purchase price is approximately \$1,000 and funds are available. Bishop Dillahunt noted that the current equipment is not functional for purposes of hybrid meetings. Ms. Schmidt asked if the current equipment was purchased when the Synod moved to the new office space; Bishop Dillahunt responded that it was not.

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.09**

**To approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee to purchase O.W.L. equipment for the use of the Southern Ohio Synod. (Lyatuu) APPROVED.**

Mr. Chris Clothier reviewed the 2021-2022 Audit Report and letter from Apple Growth Partners, the external auditor. He indicated that the Southern Ohio Synod received an unqualified report – a “clean bill of health” regarding the state of its financials. Mr. Chris Benko, Apple Growth Partners, echoed that the financial portrait is excellent. Mr. Benko discussed the Audit Report in additional detail. He noted that unrestricted mission support is up approximately \$68,000 for the year, liabilities experienced little change from the previous year and expenses are lower. He noted at page 18 of the Audit Report liquid assets are at approximately \$1.9 million, however, these are not necessarily funds that can be expended due to various restrictions, thus, approximately \$168,315 is the amount that is available for general operation expenditures. Mr. Benko complimented Ms. Joy Hacker’s work indicating everything has been handled properly from an accounting standpoint.

Mr. Clothier thanked Mr. Benko and Apple Growth Partners for their work, and also thanked Ms. Hacker for her hard work in keeping the financials in excellent order. He explained the need for continued giving (as discussed in the Audit Report) due to the restricted nature of most of the Synod’s assets.

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.10**

**To approve the recommendation made by the Synod Finance Team to accept the Audit Report for 2021-2022. (Witt) APPROVED.**

Bishop Dillahunt explained, regarding the use of Apple Growth Partners as an auditor, that Apple Growth’s practice is to pair staff members who are experienced in reviewing the Synod’s financials with staff who have never reviewed the Synod’s financials to ensure a fresh set of eyes.

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.11**

**To approve the recommendation by the Synod Finance Team to engage Apple Growth partners to conduct the Southern Ohio Synod audit for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. (Ellis) APPROVED.**

Chris Clothier provided an update on the Outside the Box during this portion of the meeting as he needed to leave due to another commitment. He discussed two areas of focus: Pastor Kerrigan is leading an effort to better connect with Synod parishes; and we are working to initiate a number of new church starts within the Synod ranging from small, in-home groups to larger congregations.

Vice President Ellis called a recess at 10:17 am.

Vice President Ellis reconvened the meeting at 10:27 am.

Bishop

The Bishop opened her report with the Prayer of St. Francis. Bishop Dillahunt noted that her written report was distributed to the members of the Synod Council. 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 thanked all Council members whose terms are slated to end in June 2022 for their work and explained that since there will be no Synod Assembly to vote upon new member terms, we are proposing to extend the terms by one year by Council action. The Bishop also thanked the Audit Team, including but not limited to Pastor Gerber for their work.
2. The Bishop thanked all congregations for their generous mission support, which exceeded expectations by approximately \$68,000. Bishop Dillahunt shared that the new Stewardship theme for this year is "Let Your Light Shine."
3. The Bishop reviewed some upcoming Synod events (May 1, 2022 – Synod wide event at Advent Lutheran Church; June 2 – Synod Council evening meeting; July 9 – Churchwide Assembly Voting Members meeting). Bishop Dillahunt indicated that due to the cancellation of the National Youth Gathering, the Synod is hosting a Youth Gathering at Wittenberg University on July 26, 2022.
4. The Bishop discussed the Churchwide Assembly, which will be hosted in Columbus at the Columbus Convention Center August 8-12, 2022. An online volunteer registration form is posted in the Synod website and to date we have about 60 volunteers. Mr. Hazzard noted that the Assembly event is on the Columbus COTA bus line and is easily accessible.
5. The Bishop noted that the Synod received a letter asking how individuals who are home-bound might better participate in the life of congregations and support Synod activities. The Bishop requested that Council members submit ideas/suggestions to Mr. Gary Pecuch.
6. The Bishop asked Pastor Larry Donner to provide an update on the Thrive! campaign. Mr. Donner shared that the January 1, 2020 campaign was launched with a base goal of \$1.2 million and a challenge goal of \$2.0 million. As of March 31, 2022, we have received approximately \$801,000 in commitments, which is outstanding. The generosity demonstrated has allowed the Synod to

engage in training over 1,000 individuals throughout the Synod in multiple supportive roles and activities including but not limited to: Cultivate Initiative; Leadership Academy, Sandbox (website resources), Stewardship for All Season, Storytelling Workshops, and Planned Giving Workshops. The Bishop expressed appreciation for Pastor Donner's work.

7. The Bishop asked Pastor Kerrigan to provide an update on the Cultivate Initiative. Pastor Kerrigan reviewed that this program was launched at the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly in 2021. We have since supported two new worshipping communities, both of which are flourishing. We have identified three potential mission developers and have launched a "Fresh Start" initiative in Troy, Ohio (a joint Lutheran-Episcopal venture). These have been low-risk, low-cost projects. Pastor Kerrigan discussed a new opportunity on the horizon with anticipated exponential growth in the northeast counties of Central Ohio (likely to be impacted by the Intel corporate development in Licking county). She shared information on how the demographic in the geographic area, which is to varying degrees unchurched and/or have had negative past church experiences, might be targeted for Synod ministries involving digital events, in-person events, in-home and brick and mortar options. A mission developer is currently preparing a proposal for this work we are calling "Momentis" (helping people identify God and God's moments in our lives).

Conversation ensued. Mr. Lyatuu noted this is a very exciting opportunity and can serve as an expression of the living word of God. Mr. Davila commented that the Sandbox (Synod website resource) has several areas that highlight digital ministry and Pastor Kerrigan indicated this work will be included. Members asked about information concerning the work of other denominations in reaching out to this geographic area and Pastor Kerrigan shared information. Mr. Drumm indicated "pub theology" might be part of this work and Pastor Kerrigan agreed that could be a good Cultivate event.

### Report of Auxiliaries

The Synod Council received a written report from the Lutheran Men in Mission.

The Council received a written report from the Women of the ELCA.

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

**VOTED:**  
**SC.22.04.12**

**To approve 1-year extension of terms for Synod Council positions, until the 2023 Southern Ohio Assembly, for the following Synod Council members: Mr. David Drumm (LMM), Mrs. Marjorie Ellis (2022B-VP), Ms. Jeni Gray (2022A-DA), Pr. Steve Kimm (2022A-DA), Ms. Cindy Schrader (2022B-CI), and Ms. Susan Wyckoff (WELCA). (Gerber/ Siegenthaler) APPROVED, with Ellis abstaining.**

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

**EN BLOC**  
**VOTED:**

**SC.22.04.13 To approve the En Bloc Recommendations. (Hazzard/Skamfer )**  
**APPROVED**

**Rostered Ministers Status**

On Leave from Call

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

- Rev. Sally Padgett – Family Leave (6/12/2022)
- Rev. Monte Stevens (6/6/2022)

Retired Status

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Rev. Steve Brown (5/1/2022)
- Rev. Heidi Johns (6/1/2022)

Disability Status

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

Extension of Call

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- To extend a Synod Council Call to Rev. Carmen Colon Brown to serve as Pastor Developer, at Vida Eterna Iglesia Luterana, in West Chester OH, beginning May 22, 2022.
- To extend a Synod Council Call to Rev. Jennell Rue to serve as Chaplain, at Ohio Living – Mt. Pleasant, in Monroe Ohio, effective May 2, 2022.

Affirmation and Renewal of Appointment of Synod Authorized Ministers

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

Affirmation and Renewal of Synod Council Calls

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

Removal/ Resignation from the ELCA Roster

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

**Legal and Governance**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- To affirm the closure of Grace Lutheran Church, Centerburg - 2<sup>nd</sup> vote February 5, 2022.
- To approve congregation constitutions for:
  - Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New Lexington OH (2/2/2022)
  - Reformation Lutheran Church, Columbus OH (1/30/2022)

**Other Business:**

Mr. Hazzard noted that Apple Maps shows the Synod office downtown has “closed” but does not provide the new address. The Bishop thanked Mr. Hazzard for noting this and we will work to correct this.

Mr. David Drumm offered a closing prayer.

**SC.22.04.14                      To adjourn the meeting ( Kimm/Gerber)   APPROVED.**

The meeting was then adjourned at 11:43 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Holly R. Fischer  
Synod Council Secretary