

**Southern Ohio Synod – ELCA
Synod Council Electronic Meeting
September 9, 2023**

Call to Order:

Vice President Clothier called the Synod Council meeting to order at 9:32 am. Prior to the start of the business agenda, Ms. Uemura confirmed a quorum was present.

Members present: Mr. Chris Clothier, Rev. Mark Combs, Mr. Rick Davila, Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahun, Mr. David Drumm, Ms. Holly Fischer, Rev. Bonnie Gerber, Mr. Matthew Hazzard, Rev. Chad Huebner, Mr. Jonathan Keith, Rev. Stephen Kimm, Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler, Mr. Imanuel Lyatuu, Ms. Abbie McCandlish, Mr. David Miser, Ms. Laura Moore, Ms. Kathleen O'Hearn, Mr. Ethan Roberts, Ms. Laura Schmidt, Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler, Ms. Kathie Skamfer, Ms. Joan Slocum, Mr. Doug Ware, Ms. Becky Witt.

Members excused: Rev. Matt Byrd, Ms. Robin Kaelin, Ms. Marcia Ward.

Members absent:

Also present for some or all of the meeting were: Rev. Robert Abrams, Mr. Josh Brodbeck, Rev. Rebecca Grate, Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Rev. Constance Mentzer, Rev. Tim Mentzer, Mr. Gary Pecuch, Ms. Kim Uemura.

Bishop Dillahun opened the meeting with prayer.

Vice-President Clothier asked that participants identify themselves and share their favorite Bible stories.

Vice-President Clothier provided an overview of a new Council meeting agenda with a goal of increasing efficiency and conserving time resources. He asked members to pre-read materials and come prepared with questions, and to work with Ms. Uemura for report submission timeliness. He provided an overview of the meeting cadence and format for 2023-2024. He asked members to be proactive as representatives of the Synod in their interactions with home congregations.

Review and Approval of Agenda of the 09/09/2023 Meeting:

The Agenda for the day was reviewed.

VOTED:

SC.23.09.01 To approve the 09/09/2023 Agenda. (Gerber/Drumm) APPROVED

Review and Approval of Minutes of the April 29, 2023 meeting:

The Minutes of the above meeting were reviewed.

VOTED:

SC.23.09.02

**To approve the Minutes of the 04/29/2023 meeting as submitted.
(Leach-Schreffler/Hazzard) APPROVED**

All members newly elected at the June 2023 Assembly abstained.

Review and Approval of Minutes of the June 3, 2023 Synod Assembly:

The Minutes of the June 2023 Synod Assembly were reviewed. Pastor Grate asked for the correction of a surname spelling on page 8. Ms. Fischer noted the correction.

VOTED:

SC.23.09.03

**To approve the Minutes of the June 3, 2023 Synod Assembly meeting
as amended. (Skamfer/Ware) APPROVED**

All members newly elected at the June 2023 Assembly abstained.

Reports of the Officers and Executive Committee:

Treasurer

Treasurer Witt referred to written financial reports in the meeting materials. She noted that for the current fiscal year (February 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024), as compared to the prior year the Synod is running ahead in terms of income. Although a deficit is indicated this is typical for mid-year because the majority of the income is received in December – January. Ms. Witt shared that the Synod is shifting banking services from First Commonwealth to Huntington Bank, and this transition will be completed prior to the next Council meeting. The Bishop indicated that congregation treasurers should expect notices alerting them to the lockbox change and will receive new remittance forms.

Ms. Witt shared that the farm land owned by the Synod in Oklahoma has been sold. Mr. Brodbeck provided more information including that the Synod received the full asking price of \$265,000. The closing for this transaction will occur within the next 90 days.

Ms. Witt indicated that the Executive Committee voted this week to approve the establishment of a restricted fund for Fresh Expressions. Pastor Kerrigan shared that the Synod was awarded an ELCA grant for this, and the fund will serve as an additional resource for mission development and

staff training (Cultivate Team) in promoting new ways of doing church – “Fresh Expressions”.

Secretary

Ms. Fischer reported that in June, she prepared and submitted to the ELCA a report regarding action taken at the June 2023 Synod Assembly. She reported that the Region 6 Archivist position has been filled. This is good news, and the Synod will now be able to move historical documents to the Archive for safe keeping and long term storage. Ms. Fischer reported that at the June 2023 Assembly, members voted to approve the ELCA-required changes to the Synod Constitution; subsequently a typographical correction was approved by the Executive Committee, and Ms. Fischer submitted and the ELCA accepted the Synod’s June 2023 Constitution.

Vice President

No report.

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.

The Bishop welcomed and expressed appreciation for new and returning Council members. She advised that Synod staff will be working on a Sabbatical Policy primarily for rostered staff that will be shared at an upcoming Council meeting. She noted that Pr. Abrams will be taking a sabbatical to engage in post-graduate work in Bowen Family Systems. Pr. Abrams will participate in one day of class per month, and one month of study in July 2024. She shared that Pr. Constance Mentzer is planning to engage in a grant writing course of study, and this will enhance her ability to assist pastors and congregations with grant writing and applications.

The Bishop reminded members to put the November 18, 2023 thanksgiving and installation ceremony for Pastors Constance and Tim Mentzer on their calendars.

Bishop Dillahunty indicated that Synod Council Task Forces will be formed in upcoming months to work on governance structure and governing document (Constitution, Bylaw) revisions. The Outside the Box Team will also be working on 5-10 year strategic planning.

Bishop Dillahunty asked Pr. Steve Kimm to share information regarding the Leadership Academy. Pr. Kimm provided information and an update on the courses available for Lay Worship Leaders and Synod Authorized Ministers, and encouraged Council members to contact him should they know of potentially interested candidates.

Pastor Dillahunt asked Pr. Kerrigan and Pr. Abrams to share information concerning the SonRise Church (Federated United Methodist /ELCA congregation), whose Constitution is on the en bloc agenda for vote today. Pr. Kerrigan and Pr. Abrams indicated that this is a unique interdenominational congregation format approved by the ELCA.

The Bishop noted that the Thrive! campaign is still available to congregations until the end of 2023, and Pr. Tim Mentzer is the contact for information.

The Bishop shared that Bishop Gafkjen, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, will be retiring in September 2024.

Process Discussion

Vice-President Clothier opened the floor for members questions or feedback on Synod Council meeting structure and format. Ms. Skamfer expressed appreciation for the Zoom /virtual format and for new agenda and meeting changes that reflect good stewardship of our time resources.

EN BLOC

VOTED:

SC.23.09.04 To approve the En Bloc Recommendations. (Hazzard/Huebner)

APPROVED

Pr. Gerber abstained.

Rostered Ministers Status

On Leave from Call

RECOMMENDATION:

- Deacon Dan Jacob, 2nd yr. (7/1/2022)
- Deacon Mary Lasits, 6th yr. (7/12/2018)
- Rev. Christine Widrig, 9th yr. (10/11/2014)

Retired Status

RECOMMENDATION:

- Rev. Patricia Badkey (12/1/2023)
- Rev. Bonnie L. Gerber (8/1/2023)
- Deacon May Schwarz (9/1/2023)
- Rev. Henry E. Zorn (10/1/2023)
- Rev. Leslie Fox Lott (9/1/2023)

Disability Status

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

Extension of Call

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

Affirmation and Renewal of Appointment of Synod Authorized Ministers

RECOMMENDATION:

Affirmation and Renewal of Synod Council Calls

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

Removal/ Resignation from the ELCA Roster

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

Legal and Governance

RECOMMENDATION:

- To appoint Rev. Aaron Layne as a Southern Ohio Synod representative to HopeWood Outdoors (LOMO) for a second, 3 year term, beginning January 1, 2024.
- To approve congregation constitutions for:
 - SonRise Church, Ithaca OH (Federated United Methodist Church/ELCA congregation)

Information: N/A

Other Business: None.

SC.23.09.05 To adjourn the meeting (Fischer/Kimm) APPROVED

Pr. Tim Mentzer offered a closing prayer.

The meeting was then adjourned at 11:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holly R. Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "H" and "F".

Holly R. Fischer
Synod Council Secretary