

Synod Council Meeting

February 2, 2018

Present: Bishop Gonia, VP Earline Bohling, Jody Brammer-Hoelter, Amelia Decker, Rev. Sara Wirth, Deb Elstad, Rev. Larry Davis, Ray Ferry, Terry Cole, Rev. Julie Brooks, Todd Herreid, Dennis Reynolds, Diana Biggs, Susan Mitchell, Joan Jacobson, Rev. Dana Peterson

Absent: Maggie Nieberger, Hendrik Samosir, Jay Voth, Rev. Larry Davis, Betty Pepin

Guests: Rev. Sarah Moening, Tina Kvitek, Darren Walloch, Rev. Michael Tassler, Rev. Leslie Welton, Janice Ladd-Horkey, Rev. Kent Mueller, Rev. Judith Van Osdol, Deacon Erin Power, Peter Severson, Olivia Ekron-Moenig, Ruth Hoffman, Deniese Estrada

VP Bohling determined a quorum was present. The meeting opened at 9: 00 a.m. with introduction of guests Tina Kvitek, Regional Gift Planner, Darren Walloch, Director of Gift Planning for the ELCA; and Rev. Michael Tassler who is the new director for Educate, Equip, Enact.

Pr. Sarah Moening led us in devotions and made a presentation about Adaptive Change/Adaptive Leadership. She asked us each to think about the Strategic Plan, and which areas would benefit from an adaptive conversation, and then identify our 1st, 2nd and 3rd priorities for such conversation among the MRAs, goals & objectives. She will collate the response for later conversation.

SC18.02.01 Motion was made and seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed.

Presentation regarding Gift Planning

Darren Walloch & Tina Kvitek

Gift Planning is now part of the ELCA Foundation, separate from the ELCA. The Foundation is aligned with the churchwide Strategic Plan 2025, goal 5. He presented a Memorandum of Understanding that the Foundation uses in its work with Ministry Partners – camps, synods, etc. Part of the Foundation’s strategy is ‘stewarding’ known gifts, i.e. checking in with those donors annually.

In working with congregations, Tina will bring awareness of the wider impact of gifts from members to the congregation and ministry partners.

Bishop Gonia noted that our synod has committed to partnering with churchwide by providing \$10,000 each year for Tina’s salary.

Tina is tasked with 3 things: 1) Be in front of ELCA members, talk about and obtain action on their charitable intent. 2) Help congregations establish a gift policy, by assisting them in identifying their financial needs and wants of each congregation. She also helps congregations form and update endowments. 3) Develop partners to receive gifts from individuals.

Bishop Jim sees a natural connection with the congregations that have completed “Stewardship for All Seasons.” Other ideas for introducing the services of the gift planner are through Deans, conference gatherings, 3E board.

Strategic Planning Vision for 2018

Bishop Gonia

Bishop presented and discussed the Comprehensive Staff Vision for 2018, and the Comprehensive Leadership Development plan.

Budget

Dennis Reynolds

Mission support received is \$100,000 over budget. (Celebration ensued!)

SC 2018.2.2 Motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed revisions to the 2018 budget, with the following changes: salaries be increased by approximately \$8,000; increase line 69 to \$2000, and line 70 to \$2000. And to increase congregational missions to \$2,322,000. The motion passed.

Results of MRA discussion

Pr. Moening

1. MRA 1.2.b – this is already fully integrated into the 2018 plan for Claiming our Gifts
2. MRS 4.5A -- How do we identify the adaptive challenge, disclose the external threats, disorient current roles, expose conflict or let it emerge, challenge norms or let them be challenged

As an example: Different roles for clergy and lay leaders (esp. in relation to the sacraments)

- Key questions: How do we understand the role of pastors around sacramental ministry? How do our ecumenical partners understand this role? What is our theological understanding around sharing the gospel with fewer resources?
- “Explore” is the key element in this MRA
- What is the threat? Lack of unity and consistency of practice

Video of 2018 Synod Youth Gathering

Bishop’s Report

Bishop Gonia

Vice President’s Report

Earline Bohling

Secretary’s Report

Jody Brammer-Hoelter

Acknowledgement of New Director for Educate, Equip & Enact

Earline Bohling

SC 2018.02.03 Motion was made and seconded to approve Rev. Michael Tassler as director of the Lily Grant program, Educate, Equip & Enact. The motion passed.

Rev. Tassler spoke about the work of the grant team, and changes that will be made in the coming year regarding encouraging applications and funding grant requests for the Ministry Excellence Fund.

We watched two of the vimeos regarding Stewardship for All Seasons. The first cohort of 14 congregations has completed the program, with financial support from the Lily Grant. The target for the next 2 years is small and medium sized congregations; there will be more financial support from the grant.

Staff Reports

- Deacon Erin Power talked about current planning for Synod Assembly:
 - Council will meet Thursday morning at The Lutheran Center, and then move to the assembly hotel
 - Cynthia Moe-Lobeda will be the keynote speaker
 - Earline noted that the Bishop Election team still needs to meet and develop standing rules for the process
 - We don't have a firm policy about permitted exhibitors who are not related to ministries of the church or congregations.
- Pr. Kent reported that the parking lot needs to be repaved; he estimates the cost will be about \$55,000. Discussion about how to handle this cost. We don't have a contingency fund for property matters. Earline will bring this to the Executive Committee.
- Pr. Leslie talked about a resolution that will be brought forward at Assembly to form a Synod Youth Committee. She asks us to connect with the people who are the impetus behind forming this committee.
- Pr. Judith asks for Synod Council members who want to be connected with a mission or ethnic-specific congregation. She also asks for members who want to be part of a Mission Imagination team.
- Bishop Gonia shared news from Jim Bartlett at LSS about significant reductions in their staff due to budget constraints, primarily reductions around refugee resettlement.
- Bishop Gonia also shared news about several pieces of art that were donated by Pastor Hermanson.

Better Together Relationship Team

Bishop Gonia

The focus is tending to the relationship between congregations and the larger church.

The goal was to have 1 person on team who could relate to each conference. The implementation is that most members of the team had a conversation with one or two congregations in their conference.

Bishop is asking that conference-based Synod Council members look at information about mission support by conference, and then engage in the ministry of thanking the congregations in our conferences, solicit stories about their ministries and share a story about our life together. He distributed spreadsheet with 4-year giving trends to each conference-based council member.

April 29th will be Better Together Sunday. Each spreadsheets congregation will receive:

- Litany of commissioning for voting members at Assembly; part of the commission is to share a story each month about our life together
- Prayer petition for Prayer of the Church
- Resource

A Litany for Mission Support has been made available to congregations for use when the annual budget is adopted.

Messiah Mountain Update

Earline Bohling

The Synod, Messiah and our outdoor ministries are in conversation about whether the Synod can viably accept a gift of the Messiah Mountain property, provide necessary upgrades and run an adult retreat center. We have committed \$9000 toward engaging a consultant to lead this process.

Part-Time Ministry Document

Rev. Ted Orłowski

The Congregational Ministries Board has presented draft guidelines. Pr. Orłowski is on that board; he addressed the council by Zoom. Council provided feedback that two areas need further work: 1) sabbatical guidelines; 2) more inclusion of Deacons. Deb Elstad mentioned that there are places where the appendix and draft documents conflict. Pr. Ted explained that he attached the appendix because it is no longer available on-line for reference.

Earline encourage the Cong. Ministries Board to have rostered ministers in part-time calls review the document and provide feedback. Bishop suggested that a few people later this year. He asked to help with this following the conference for part-time rostered ministers to be held Ia. She also told Pr. Ted that Synod Council will discuss a sabbatical policy for those I part-time ministry.

Pr. Ted referred us to slides that he got from Pr. Kent and inserted in the document since it was distributed to us. These demonstrate the amount of time that a 2/3 time minister would be available to their congregation.

Introduction of Julie Nelson, Assoc. Director for Educate, Equip & Enact

Earline Bohling

Julie administers the Ministerial Excellence Fund grants. So far 16 grant applications have been received in 2018. She will be contacting part-time ministers with information about the program.

Small Secrets by Joan Jacobson was just published. The book is available on Amazon, in paperback and e-book format. She welcomes reviews.

Conversation regarding the Council trip to El Paso

Earline Bohling

Earline led an exercise in which we listed 3 thoughts or questions about our experience at the border. We then found a partner and shared our thoughts with each other. Finally, we had time to share with the entire group.

The meeting recessed until Saturday morning.

Synod Council Meeting

February 3, 2018

Present: Bishop Gonia, VP Earline Bohling, Jody Brammer-Hoelter, Amelia Decker, Rev. Sara Wirth, Deb Elstad, Rev. Larry Davis, Ray Ferry, Terry Cole, Rev. Julie Brooks, Todd Herreid, Diana Biggs, Susan Mitchell, Joan Jacobson, Rev. Dana Peterson, Hendrik Samosir, Dennis Reynolds

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The meeting opened at 9:00 a.m. with introductions of our guests, Shelley Griffith, CEO of Eben Ezer Care Center; Deacon Ro Fesser, Chaplain at Eben Ezer; and Rev. Ray Pickett, Rector of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Claiming our Gifts What gifts has the Spirit given to us as ELCA Lutherans Bishop Gonia

Theology: Paradox, Cross, Grace

Ecclesiology: Glocal, Ecumenical, Interdependent

Practice: Vocation, Faith Formation, Word and Service – Hands on, Word and Service – Public Church, Word and Sacrament

Legacy: Reformation, Immigrant, Mergers

3E Steering Team

Earline Bohling

Julie Nelson was on the steering team initially, but has stepped down now that she is associate director. **SC 2018.02.03 Motion was made and seconded to appoint Larry Patella to the 3E Steering Team. The motion passed.**

Eben Ezer Care Center

Shelly Griffith & Ro Fesser

Ro shared about the history of Eben Ezer. Formed 115 years ago in Brush, Colorado, as a Deaconess mother house and sanitarium. In 2018, they are celebrating the 105th anniversary of a congregation being formed, and the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the chapel.

Eben Ezer is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing care to elderly in a way that they (not the institution) choose, including assisted living and assisted living with memory support being added. 70% of the residents are receiving Medicaid benefits. They are in the process of campus redevelopment. New buildings will have nursing care with private rooms regardless of ability to pay. They have 110 residents and also provide in-home care to 350 people in 4 counties.

Shelly Griffith is asking congregations to consider Eben Ezer as a mission support partner. She also asks the Synod Council to endorse this request. She invited us to join them for Sunday worship, in events or for volunteer opportunities. Two of the members of their board must be Lutheran, per their bylaws.

Bishop noted that Eben Ezer is a social ministry partner of the synod. He invited Shelly to join a meeting of the conference deans.

Theological Education

Rev. Ray Pickett

Rev. Pickett shared information about PLTS, and theological education in the ELCA. 83% of the budget comes through support from synods, congregations, churchwide and individuals. Since PLTS merged with California Lutheran in 2013, it has been reinventing its delivery of theological education and reframing its narrative. As a result of the merger, PLTS sold its previous campus and is close to financial sustainability. Their new space is a good size and provides a community feel. Most of the faculty has been called since 2013. They have designed a curriculum that allows year-round study and completion in 3 years. There is more focus on spiritual practice formation and social transformation. They are looking at providing localized education for cohorts of students in other locations. They are looking at developing a curriculum of skill-based modules to fill the gaps in traditional seminary education, such as emotional intelligence, adaptive leadership, conflict resolution, community organizing, etc.

The seminary leaders gathered recently – all are new within the last five years. They are looking at how best to work collaboratively, based on the mission of the church. He is interested in hearing from us what we believe the church needs from theological education, and developing lines of communication with congregations. There was discussion about the TEEM program and the challenges participants in rural areas face. Rev. Pickett spoke about efforts to develop degree programs that serve Ministers of Word and Service.

Diana volunteered to lead devotions at the meeting prior to Assembly.

The meeting ended with prayer at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Brammer-Hoelter