

Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting –Approved by the Board 5.4.2021
Minnesota South (MNS) District
February 20, 2021 9:00am to 12:40pm
Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Mission Statement

**Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged
in the mission of God.**

1. OPENING DEVOTION

President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, led the opening devotion based on Matthew 4:1-11. Then he read LSB Hymn 424 “O Christ, You Walked the Road,” which is based on the temptation of Christ. The life we run is always filled with temptation. Thankfully Jesus perfectly walked the road of temptation ahead of us and constantly empowers us to endure by His grace.

2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS

- a) The meeting was called to order by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford at 9:05am.
- b) Roll Call
Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. Dennis Heiden; Rev. Steven Wheeler; Rev. Keith Grimm; Mr. Rick Marko; Rev. Christopher Horton; Mr. Daniel Thao, Ms. Alfrieda Baldwin; Ms. Rosa Summers; Mr. John Branstad; Rev. Loel Wessel; Ms. Sara Sorenson; Mr. Dave Kenow; Mr. Benjamin Hagemann; Mr. Leland Huebner; Mr. Joel Landskroener

Staff: Rev. Stefan Wismar; Rev. Dr. William Utech; Mr. Sean Martens; Mr. Kai Larson; Dr. Phillip Johnson; Rev. Fred Hinz

Excused: Mr. Neal Breitbarth, Rev. Isaac Williams
- c) Approval of Agenda
A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion carried.
- d) Approval of Minutes of Past Meeting (*prepared by Keith Grimm, Secretary*)
A motion was made and seconded to approve BOD minutes from December 1, 2020, and January 14, 2021. The motion carried.

- e) Correspondence
There was no correspondence.

3. GUEST PRESENTATION

Mr. Bob LaCroix, Executive Director of Camp Omega, updated the status of the camp during the pandemic. It was challenging and difficult to cancel so many activities last year. Financially summer camp revenue was down 90%. The PPP grant helped immensely. This loan was forgiven in December. Annual revenue ended up being down approximately 40%. Summer plans and registrations are pressing forward. There will be some modifications for the summer for social distancing purposes. He is optimistic about this summer's program. Donations are still coming in for the campaign to build an Adult & Family Retreat Center. They have already received \$1.3 million dollars. A new septic system has been put in place for this project. Construction for the new center will take place in phases. Finally, the deed for the land was successfully transferred from the Minnesota South District to the camp in November 2020.

4. VISIONING/STUDY ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Phillip Johnson, Assistant to the President - Mission Formation, shared information from John Mayer's "City View Report." This lists data, trends and challenges happening in our community. The data shows there is a dramatic rise in urbanization and in urbanism. For the first time in world history, 50% of the world's population is living in cities. 91% of U.S. population lives in 376 Metro areas with populations of 100K or more. 48% of the Twin Cities metro area is unchurched or nominally connected to a church. Minnesota will see a significant growth in immigrant population through relocation and in ethnic non-white population through procreation. By 2043 it is projected that there will be no majority ethnic group in America. Currently 1st and 2nd generation immigrants make up 29% of the metro area. 90% of these new residents don't know Jesus as their Savior. 97% of LCMS members were born in the United States. 11% of the LCMS was age 18-29 in 2014. 54% of Minnesota LCMS members are age 60 or older. New paradigms will define how we move forward. Some examples are multi-site churches; increased collaborative ministry between congregations; and a minimized denominational mindset.

Next we discussed a case study titled *Ringside Park Lutheran Church*. Based on the demographic information we learned, how will the ministry at *Ringside Park Lutheran Church* look in ten years if the changing community is viewed as either a threat or an opportunity? What attitudinal shifts and strategies need to take place in local churches in order to effectively reach and serve their fast changing demographics? Finally, we discussed how the District might foster, support and

encourage congregations in their future mission and ministry efforts and connections.

5. POLICY FORMATION & REVIEW

The MN South District Handbook Committee consisting of Rev. Christopher Horton, Dr. Phillip Johnson and Rev. Keith Grimm recommended we table our discussion of proposed revisions to the 2018 District Handbook until the May 2021 BOD meeting. We will look at recommendations proposed by the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM).

6. REPORTS

- a) President's Report Highlights, Q & A
 - Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford shared his report of activities from December 2020 through February 2021. He mentioned the challenges of conflicts he often has to address. He is far more encouraged by the excellent gospel preaching and teaching throughout District congregations and schools. In addition, he mentioned the political issues and challenges that are coming our way.
- b) Ministry Updates: MN South staff members
 - Sarabeth Marcello, Communications Director, mentioned she recently got engaged. She also mentioned several District communication projects that are underway.
 - Sean Martens, Assistant to the President for Schools, mentioned how he is helping District Lutheran schools deal with COVID issues. Most of our Lutheran schools have stayed open throughout the pandemic and been greatly blessed by this decision. Each of our Lutheran schools will receive financial assistance because of a federal grant. He is also encouraging commissioned workers about their mental and physical wellness during this challenging time. Finally, he mentioned that registrations are vastly increasing in most of our District's Lutheran schools.
 - Rev. Fred Hinz, Public Policy Advocate, mentioned several major local and national political issues that the church is now facing and handling.
 - Dr. Phillip Johnson, Assistant to the President - Mission Formation, mentioned "death by a thousand cuts" being experienced by church workers in the field. He shared that Missional Learning Communities have been a huge blessing assisting several church workers process through challenging issues during this pandemic. Phil is also consulting congregations to become more missional. Finally, he is also working with congregations working through conflict and reconciliation.
 - Dr. William Utech, Assistant to the President for Missions, has been meeting with all subsidized missionaries to encourage and help them remain

accountable. He is also meeting with congregations and pastors to encourage cooperative ministry. He has led multi-ethnic conversations with several strategic leaders throughout the District to gather beneficial mission information. We need to be thinking “multi-ethnic” now because of the quickly changing demographics throughout the state. In addition, he shared about a new Liberian church planter, Matthew Cephas, who has recently become part of the District. Finally, he encourages congregations to ask these three diagnostic questions: “Where is your Nazareth? What is your pain? What is in your hand?” God is opening doors. Minneapolis is our District’s Nazareth.

- Rev. Stefan Wismar, Executive Assistant to the President, shared information about the value of our eight District mentors. Stefan is also working with the Constitution Committee since the resignation of Rev. Harold Storm.

c) Financial Report

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided financial results for the fourth quarter of the budget (as of December 31, 2020). The District’s overall financial position was positive to budget in the fourth quarter. Congregational support was \$642,316 for the three months ended December 31, as compared to the budget of \$525,000 (or \$117,316 over budget). Congregational support for the twelve months ended December 31 was \$2,061,066 as compared to the budget of \$2,100,000 (or \$38,934 under budget). Through December there were 196 congregations (81% of total District congregations) making gifts ranging from \$30 to \$124,000. 20% of District congregations provide 67% of support. District investment gains were excellent this quarter. In addition, the PPP loan was forgiven. The District continues to pay its bills in a timely manner.

d) Endowment Report

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, reported that the Endowment Committee is not recommending any significant changes in the investment philosophy of campus ministry funds held by LCMS Foundation and American Pershing in place as of December 31, 2020. Similarly, the Committee is not recommending any significant changes in the investment philosophy of endowment funds invested at Lutheran Church Extension Fund in place as of December 31, 2020, which include: Quazi, Student Aid, Center City, Deaf Work, and Ministerial Health. Finally, the Committee reaffirms the recommendation made on January 16, 2018, that 80% of earnings from the previous year of the Quazi Endowment Fund (Board Designated) be designated for a special mission in the following year’s budget as recommended by District staff and approved by the Board of Directors.

e) LCEF Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF District Vice President, reported on investments in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. The number of LCEF investors declined this year. He mentioned that 10 congregations were in the Temporary Interest Program (All currently back to scheduled payments). Three congregations have been helped with COVID-19 lines of credit. No new congregations have needed COVID assistance since last spring. The LCEF is preparing for a possible second wave of COVID-19 relief options. He is working with three District congregations about loan refinance options. The LCEF nationally is on pace to meet all of their goals this year.

- f) Other committee minutes: Finance, Missions, Finance, Pre-Seminary Interview, Endowment, Public Policy.
- No additional comments or questions were given concerning these reports.

7. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS

- a) LCMS Synod Convention Update / MNS District Convention decision
Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford reported that synod congregations voted to postpone the 2022 National Synod Convention until 2023. It was moved and seconded to reschedule the Minnesota South District Convention to June 9-11, 2022. The motion carried.
- b) Election of new pastoral representative from Region IV to the BOD (replacing Rev. Dennis Heiden, who has become the new Region IV Vice President in place of Rev. Harold Storm)
Biographical Sketch & Consent Form was received from:
- Rev. Grant Bode
 - Rev. Dale Hedstrom
 - Rev. Mark Loder

The BOD elected Rev. Mark Loder, Pastor of St. James Lutheran Church in Howard Lake, as the Region IV pastoral representative.

- c) Constitution Committee: Ms. Rosa Summers and Rev. Stefan Wismar
The following Constitutions and Bylaws were approved by the Committee:
- Glencoe, First Evangelical Lutheran Church
 - Spring Lake Park, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
 - Waseca, St. Paul Lutheran Church

The Board seconded the motion that these three constitutions be approved.
The motion carried.

- d) Endowment Committee

The Committee made a motion that the Minnesota South District communicate ministry funds are available from the quazi, deaf and campus ministry endowments. This motion was seconded. The motion carried.

8. ROUND TABLE

Celebrations and prayer requests were shared.

9. CLOSING PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, President, led the closing prayer.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 12:40 p.m.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 10am to 4pm
Monday and Tuesday, September 20-21, 2021
Tuesday, December 7, 2021, 10am to 4pm