

**Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting –Approved by the Board 9.22.2020**  
Minnesota South (MNS) District  
**Tuesday, May 5, 2020, 9:00am – 12:30pm**  
Zoom Meeting

Mission Statement

Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

**1. OPENING DEVOTION**

Rev. David Mumme, Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Waterville and Vice President of Region III, led the opening devotion based on First Peter 2:11-17. Because Frederick the Wise is commemorated on May 5<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Mumme shared information about him. He is known for founding the University of Wittenberg, which Martin Luther put on the map. Frederick the Wise showed great humility and took great risks for the Gospel even when it cost him dearly.

**2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS**

a) Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 9:25am by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

b) Roll Call

Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. Steven Wheeler; Rev. Keith Grimm; Mr. Rick Marko; Rev. Christopher Horton; Mr. Daniel Thao; Dr. Gary Elsesser; Rev. Isaac Williams; Ms. Rosa Summers; Mr. John Branstad; Rev. Loel Wessel; Ms. Sara Sorenson; Mr. Dave Kenow; Rev. Dennis Heiden; Mr. Benjamin Hagemann; Mr. Neal Breitbarth; Mr. Leland Huebner; Mr. Joel Landskroener

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

Absent: Matt Steiner

Excused: Rev. Harold Storm

c) Approval of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion was carried.

- d) Approval of the Minutes of Past Meeting – *(prepared by Keith Grimm, Secretary)*  
A motion was made and seconded to approve the BOD minutes from February 8, 2020. The motion was carried.

- e) Correspondence

It was reported that the LCMS Board for International Mission is seeking nominations to fill one vacancy due to the resignation of Mr. Robert Van Gundy, a layperson elected by the 2016 convention of the Synod. All nominees must reside within the boundaries of the Great Plains Region. This position will serve through the end of the current term (August 31, 2022) and will then be eligible for election to two additional six-year terms. The deadline for receiving nominations was May 1, 2020.

### 3. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

- a) MN South District LWML President, Deb Vinkemeier, shared information about the 2019 LWML National Convention in Mobile, Alabama. The District LWML Convention scheduled to take place in Wilmar, Minnesota, June 19-20 has been cancelled. Subsequently, elections will be done electronically. The three pastors nominated for MN South District LWML Pastoral Counselor are Rev. Adam Hengst, Rev. Rob Jarvis and Rev. Tyge Zucker. The District LWML is rejoicing that they made their 2018-2019 mission goal of \$265,000. Finally, there will be a LWML mission celebration with the theme “Tell Everyone What He Has Done” on October 10, 2020.
- b) Camp Omega Director, Bob LaCroix, shared a report on the difference this ministry is making. Twelve of the vicars recently assigned have past connections to Camp Omega. The road was recently completed leading to the eventual retreat and convention center. All of the labor and material for this were donated. They are diligently fundraising for their building project. In addition, COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the camp. Sixteen retreat events have been cancelled since March 16<sup>th</sup>. Decisions on summer camps and staffing are still being debated. There will be a \$400,000 revenue loss if the camp closes this summer. Finally, Camp Omega applied for and received finances from the Payment Protection Program (PPP), which will be extremely helpful.

### 4. VISIONING / STUDY ITEMS / PRESENTATIONS

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford gave a presentation on “Leading in Crisis.” He has been providing guidance to pastors and lay leaders throughout the District on how to think strategically in this midst of this pandemic. He is using a tool called VUCA to

help leaders in congregations, parochial schools, and early childhood centers seek ways to address the current coronavirus environment and its aftermath. VUCA stands for...

1. **Volatility** has to do with the nature and dynamics of change and the speed with which things change.
2. **Uncertainty** has to do with the lack of predictability, the increasing prospects of surprise, and the sense of awareness and understanding of issues and events (or lack thereof).
3. **Complexity** has to do with the multiplex of forces, the confounding of issues and general confusion.
4. **Ambiguity** has to do with the haziness of reality, the potential for misreads, and the mixed meanings of conditions.

Here are some ways local ministry leaders and teams can start implementing a VUCA mentality:

- *Consider having church boards / councils form smaller task forces* and authorize them to make quicker decisions instead of waiting for a whole board or committee to act on a time-sensitive issue. Consider if this also means giving church leaders, pastors, teachers, and other church workers the ability to make quicker decisions.
- *Transparency is your friend.* Instead of protecting information, share it with your members. Empower lay leaders, pastors, and church workers to make decisions, then make communication frictionless and open.
- *Speed up interactions. Help leaders and congregations use simple rules to make quick decisions,* rather than perfect analyses.

President Woodford also shared the following information:

- “Soldiers of the Cross” was established to assist church workers with financial needs. There were 84 applicants, most of whom were furloughed childcare workers. Approximately \$100,000 was distributed.
- The District applied for and received Payment Protection Plan (PPP) financing.
- There have been religious liberty concerns regarding our right to assemble for worship considering COVID-19 cases have fallen far short of the original predictions. A coalition is being formed so that congregations can begin gathering at the end of this current “shelter in place” mandate.
- President Woodford informed the BOD about his webinar discouraging the practice of online Holy Communion.
- The Minnesota State Pastors Conference scheduled for May 11-13 at Madden’s Resort was cancelled. Several books on the topic of “soul care” will need to be distributed.
- Contingency plans have been put together in case of a budget shortfall.
- Two vicars and three pastors were recently assigned to the Minnesota South District on Call Days at the seminaries.

- Recently retired Rick Marko's job responsibilities as Business Manager have been reassigned between current District Staff.
- Gary Elsesser, who serves as a lay person representing the East Metro South, asked for his peaceful release from the BOD as he will soon be moving to South Dakota. The BOD thanked him for his faithful service and will be electing his replacement soon.

## 5. REPORTS

- a) President's Report Highlights, Q & A  
Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford distributed his activity report (February through April) to the Board.
- b) Financial Report  
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided financial results as of March 31, 2020. Congregational support was \$23,000 under budget. District investment losses were significant due to market volatility. District expenses were below budget around \$50,000. Funds are being closely monitored and tracked. Finally, we went through the PPP application with Bremer Bank. We were approved for \$261,000.
- c) Finance Committee Meeting Minutes / LCEF Report  
Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF Vice President, reported on loans approved within the District. Congregations with LCEF loans were contacted about paying interest only on loans during this pandemic. Roughly twenty million was gained in MN South LCEF investments during the past year. Finally, there are no delinquent loans in the District.
- d) Other Committee Minutes: schools and commissioned; ministerial health; mission formation; missions, pre-seminary interviews, endowment, etc.  
No reports were shared.

## 6. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS

- a) Camp Omega Proposed Building Project – Finance Committee  
Mr. John Branstad on behalf of the Finance Committee made this recommendation to the BOD:  
The Minnesota South District Finance Committee recognizes that Camp Omega, Inc. is currently operating as an independent ministry between Minnesota South District and Camp Omega, Inc. As Camp Omega, Inc. endeavors to build a retreat center to enhance their camp and offer more services to Minnesota South District churches and others, the Finance Committee recommends to the Minnesota South District Board of Directors that the camp property and buildings be gifted to Camp Omega, Inc. or sold for the lowest legal amount. Camp Omega, Inc. will be responsible for all of their operating costs from the time that of the gift transfer. The Minnesota South

District will subsidize the camp with an annual gift of \$30,000/year for up to five years. Camp Omega Inc. will have an irrevocable clause in its constitution that its Board of Directors consist of members in good standing of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In addition, one of the directors for the Camp Omega, Inc. will be appointed by the Minnesota South District President and approved by the Minnesota South District Board of Directors. In addition, Camp Omega, Inc. will continue to remain a camp of the Minnesota South District. Further, the Minnesota South District Board of Directors, based upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee strongly feels that the cost of the construction is drastically too high for the size of the building and number of rooms. We would encourage the camp to speak with experts and other contractors to ensure that the retreat center is utilizing funds to maximize the capacity and quality of the new retreat center. The Finance Committee encourages Camp Omega, Inc. to work with the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) for any financing needs.

A motion was made and seconded to approve this recommendation. After extensive dialog, a motion was made and seconded to “call the question” ending discussion. The motion carried. Then the BOD voted on the original motion. The motion was approved.

- b) Approval of the 2019 Audit Report  
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, had the BOD look at the favorable “Internal Auditor’s Report” given by Joann Spotanski, CPA and Executive Director of LCMS Internal Audit, of the District’s financial statements as of December 31, 2019 and 2018. It was moved and seconded that this auditor’s report be approved for record. The motion carried.
- c) Board Approval for alternate depository account for the funds of the District.  
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, reported that according to *District Handbook, Bylaw 4.5.11: Duties and Functions of the Board of Directors 4.5.11 c)* the BOD has to approve whenever the District selects a different bank to deposit district funds. It was moved and seconded to move from US Bank to Bremer Bank. The motion carried.
- d) Board Approval for the SBA Payment Protection Program (PPP) loan.  
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, asked the BOD to approve the District’s decision to apply for and receive PPP funds. A motion was made and seconded to approve this recommendation. The motion carried.
- e) District Salary Compensation Review and Recommendation  
Mr. Sean Martens, Assistant to the President overseeing Education & Commissioned Ministers, asked the BOD to approve the continued use of the *Compensation Decision Support Tool* by Concordia Plan Services. A motion was made and seconded to approve this recommendation. The motion carried.

f) Constitution Committee:

The April meeting of this committee was cancelled due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home policy. The next committee meeting will take place at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Edina on August 22, 2020, where they will be reviewing these four constitutions:

1. Edina, St. Peter Lutheran Church
2. Northfield, Trinity Lutheran Church
3. Osseo, St. Paul's Lutheran Church
4. Waseca (Wilton), Trinity Lutheran Church

**7. ROUND TABLE**

Celebrations and prayer requests were shared.

**8. CLOSING PRAYER**

Rev. David Mumme, Vice President of Region III, led our closing prayer.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 12:30pm.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**PLEASE ENTER THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!**

Monday & Tuesday, September 21-22, 2020

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 10a-4p

*Weather alternative date, December 3, 2020*

Saturday, February 6, 2021

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Monday & Tuesday, September 20-21, 2021

Tuesday, December 7, 2021