

**Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting
Approved by the Board on 9/21/2021**

Minnesota South (MNS) District

May 4, 2021 9:00am to 4:00pm

Cross View Lutheran Church, Edina + Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Mission Statement

Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

1. OPENING DEVOTION

Rev. Loel Wessel, Pastor of First English Lutheran Church in Spring Valley and Region 3 Pastoral Representative, served as “Chaplain of for the Day.” He led us using Morning Prayer from LSB. We sang LSB hymn 483 “With High Delight Let Us Unite.” His devotion was based on Luke 12:13-34. Then we sang LSB hymn 940 “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name.”

2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS

- a) The meeting was called to order by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford at 9:25am.
- 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; Rev. Isaac Williams; Ms. Rosa Summers; Mr. John Branstad; Rev. Loel Wessel; Mr. Dave Kenow; Rev. Mark Loder; 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. Phillip Johnson; Rev. Fred Hinz

Excused: Mr. Daniel Thao, Ms. Sara Sorenson
- 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 February 20, 2021. The motion carried.
- e) Correspondence (*read by Keith Grimm Secretary*)
 1. LCMS is seeking nominations for vacancy on the Concordia University Chicago Board of Regents (ordained).
 2. LCMS is seeking nomination for a vacancy on the Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans and the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services.

3. GUEST PRESENTATION

Ms. Deb Vinkemeier, President of the Minnesota South District LWML, shared about challenges due to COVID-19 on the LWML. The District Convention was cancelled this year. New officers were elected online. The mission goal was met this year. The LWML is currently supporting fifteen mission projects with grants. The LWML National Convention will take place in Louisville, Kentucky, June 24-27, 2021. Deb also mentioned that LWML membership is declining. So LWML leaders are encouraging current LWML members to mentor younger women and not be afraid of changes. Finally, a LWML video was shown titled: "I Am the Heart of LWML!"

4. VISIONING/STUDY ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

Rev. Dr. William Utech, Assistant to the President – Missions, gave a presentation on the numerous routes to pastoral ordination. He stated that in this day and age it is important to pursue and cultivate multi-ethnic church plants and ministries. The church of Antioch described in Acts chapter 11 and also the church depicted in Revelation chapter 7 clearly picture this. Ordaining multi-ethnic candidates into the ministry through the current colloquy model and other seminary routes have become cumbersome. There are inconsistencies in the fees, standards and outcomes in the various pastoral formation programs. This begs us to ask, "Are we limiting future pastoral ministries due to inconsistent bylaws and procedures?" In addition, the seminary is now greatly increasing the tuition costs to Districts to educate ethnic students.

5. POLICY FORMATION & REVIEW

The MN South District Handbook Committee consisting of Rev. Christopher Horton, Dr. Phillip Johnson and Rev. Keith Grimm proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Minnesota South District that they had received from the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM). Dr. Phil Johnson led the presentation of the proposed revisions. A motion was made and seconded to approve these presented revisions (with the exception of 3.1.2.5). The motion carried.

6. REPORTS

- a) President's Report Highlights, Q & A
Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford shared his report of activities from March 2021 through April 2021. He mentioned some of the daily challenges and joys he faces in his oversight of congregations and professional church workers. He enjoys being pastoral to church workers and their families.
- b) Ministry Updates: MN South staff members
Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford mentioned the videos recently sent to congregations by the District. The Fall Pastors Conference will highlight a speaker from Lutheran Hour Ministries emphasizing spiritual vibrancy in the home.
- c) Financial Report
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided financial results for the first quarter of the budget (as of March 31, 2021). The District's overall financial position was positive to budget in the first quarter. Congregational support was \$564,410 for the

three months ended March 31, as compared to the budget of \$499,998 (or \$64,412 over budget). Congregational expenses for the first quarter were under budget by \$70,907. The District continues to pay its bills in a timely manner.

d) LCEF Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF District Vice President, reported on investments in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. While the number of LCEF investors declined this year, the amount of investment dollars increased. 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. 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.

e) “Alliance Defending Freedom” Partnership: Proposal and Feedback

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford mentioned that there is a \$1,500 fee for the District to become a member of the “Alliance Defending Freedom.” This organization provides great legal advice to pastors, congregations and schools facing religious liberty issues. This organization is helpful as we currently deal with potential repercussions from the “Equality Act.”

f) Other committee minutes: Finance Committee Minutes, Mission Committee Minutes, Schools & Commissioned Ministers Minutes.

One question was asked concerning the *Schools & Commissioned Ministers* minutes about donations from the “For All Generations” campaign. There were no other committee questions.

7. LCMS “VISITATION” ZOOM CONFERENCE: President Matthew Harrison

Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of the LCMS, stated his purpose is to check on how we are doing as a District. He led us in evaluating statistical trends in the total number of congregations, total baptized and confirmed members, and congregational giving. Our Synod is 95% Caucasian. One of the most important issues we are facing now is balancing COVID-19 viewpoints concerning masks and protocols. Several professional church workers are stressed and challenged by the pandemic. In addition, a church-worker recruitment initiative is underway at the Synod.

President Harrison said that Synod’s finances are complex. Individual donors have been extremely generous. Undesignated giving has increased. The Synod is in its best cash position in years.

President Harrison mentioned that more minority candidates need to be nominated to serve in Synod leadership positions. The Synod also has a task force on race determining how we can work and serve better.

President Harrison warned that the “Equality Act” as written will close all of our Synod universities. We are hoping the Supreme Court will align with our religious liberties.

President Harrison shared several wonderful things that are happening in global missions. Approximately 1,900 LCMS congregations support missionaries. Finally, he ended his presentation with Q and A.

Rev. Nabil Nour, Fourth Vice President of the LCMS, shared two Bible verses (Acts 20:28 and First Peter 3:15) to encourage us to communicate the hope we have in Jesus. When we apply the Scriptures to our unique culture with Jesus at the center, the kingdom will advance. Finally, he urged the church to stand firm even if persecution comes our way.

8. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS

- a) Constitution Committee: Ms. Rosa Summers and Rev. Stefan Wismar
No Constitutions and Bylaws were approved by the Committee at their last meeting. Rev. Matthew Moss has agreed to serve as Chairperson of this committee going forward.
- b) Salary Guidelines: Mr. Sean Martens
Mr. Sean Martens, Assistant to the President – Education & Commissioned Ministers, shared the District Bylaw that the Board of Directors sets the annual salary guidelines each year in May. Concordia Plan Services has provided a new tool that helps establish church worker salaries. We will be working on a supplemental document to assist congregations in this matter.
- c) Approval of 2020 Audit Report: Mr. Rick Marko
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, presented the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Internal Audit Department’s report. They did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that they consider to be material weaknesses. It was a clean audit of the District’s finances. A motion was made and seconded to accept the audit report. The motion carried.
- d) Finance Committee
Mr. John Branstad on behalf of the Finance Committee motioned that Mr. Rick Marko be retained as the District Treasurer through this extended triennium. The Finance Committee also advises holding off on hiring a full-time Business and Finance Manager as these duties have been assigned to District staff and the Treasurer. This motion was seconded. The motion carried.
- e) Other Information and Decision Items as needed.
There were no other decision items.

9. ROUND TABLE

Celebrations and prayer requests were shared.

10. CLOSING PRAYER

Chaplain of the Day, Rev. Loel Wessel, Region 3 Pastoral Representative, led the closing prayer.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 3:50pm.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Monday and Tuesday, September 20-21, 2021

Tuesday, December 7, 2021, 10am to 4pm

Saturday, February 19, 2022

Tuesday, May 3, 2022