



Grand Canyon Synod

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Synod Council Meeting Minutes

Via Zoom Video Conference

Saturday, August 14, 2021

9:00 am

Attendance

Synod Council members present: Rev. Deborah Hutterer, synod bishop; Mr. Paul Gryniewicz, vice-president; Rev. David Brandfass, secretary; Mr. Erik Rehms, treasurer; Mr. Glenn Austad; Mr. Roger Bailey; Ms. Twila Burdick; Ms. Barbara Carl, Ms. Sue Jensen; Ms. Hannah Manzanares; Rev. Tina Mills; Ms. Laura Musfeldt; Ms. Lisa Parrish; Ms. Janis Richert; Rev. Daniel Valasakos.

Synod Council members absent: Ms. Nancy Davis.

Synod Staff present: Mr. Brian Flatgard, director of communications; Rev Miguel Gomez-Acosta, director for evangelical mission and bishop's associate for congregational vitality; Rev. Jacqueline Pagel, Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy and Faith Formation; Ms. Theresa Thornburgh, director for administration and events.

Visitors: Synod Council members whose terms begin September 1, 2021: Ms. Heather Burgett; Rev. Mary Louise Frenchman; Rev. Christopher Heller; Mr. Mark Myers; Ms. Janet Santiago; Rev. William Timm; Ms. Taylor Welch. Other visitors: Ms. Myrna Wells-Ulland, president, Grand Canyon Synod Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Getting Acquainted / Community Building

Prior to the meeting, there was a time to get to know one another and team building. Discussion was held in breakout rooms. Bishop Deborah Hutterer offered an opening prayer.

Call to Order

With a quorum present, Mr. Paul Gryniewicz called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M.

Adoption of Minutes

Rev. David Brandfass moved

MSP SC21.08.01 to adopt the May 15, 2021, minutes of the Grand Canyon Synod Council.

Ms. Hannah Manzanares moved

MSP SC21.08.02 to adopt the 2021 minutes of the Grand Canyon Synod Assembly.

Consent Agenda Items

Mr. Glenn Austad moved

MSP SC21.08.03 to accept the Consent Agenda Items: Bishop Report; Director of Evangelical Mission / Bishop's Associate for Congregational Vitality Report; Bishop's Associate for Candidacy and Faith Formation Report; Director of Administration and Events Report; Director of Communication Report; Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA) Report; Grand Canyon Synod Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA) Report, and the ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planners Report as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Erik Rehms led a review of the current financial statements. On the income statement, more contributions were received from congregations and from other sources. Expenses were well controlled. Significant cost savings were in programming and travel. We were able to send more mission support to the churchwide organization. Fund balances were also reviewed.

Mr. Roger Bailey moved

MSP SC21.08.04 to accept the Treasurer's Report dated June 30, 2021, with an increase in total assets of \$283,218.

The Treasurer's Report is attached to these minutes as **Exhibit A**.

Congregations in Transition

Bishop Deborah Hutterer noted that we have nineteen congregations in transition. We are now sharing a position with the Rocky Mountain Synod in congregation transition. Two congregation coaches help with the transition process in the GCS. Rev. Doris Nolan is stepping down as a congregation coach and Deacon Janice Zimbelman will be under contract to fill that role.

Strategic Discussion

Executive Committee

Ms. Barbara Carl gave an overview of the work of the executive committee. Currently the executive committee is meeting once a month. Since Ms. Barbara Carl, executive committee at-large, will be assuming the vice-president role on September 1, 2021, the executive committee requests Ms. Laura Musfeldt be appointed to fill Ms. Barbara Carl's at-large position.

Ms. Janis Richert moved

MSP SC21.08.05 to appoint Ms. Laura Musfeldt to the executive committee.

The executive committee is the personnel committee for the synod. Mr. Erik Rehms reported that Mr. Clint Wasser, CPA, will be stepping down from his position on synod staff at the end of the year. The synod will be seeking someone to fill that position, and Mr. Wasser will assist in the transition.

Growing Generosity Update

Ms. Myrna Wells-Ulland has a new cell phone number, (218) 340-6735. Please make a note of it so that you don't think it is spam when she calls you.

A financial update and report on the Growing Generosity appeal was presented by Ms. Myrna Wells-Ulland. \$351,619 has been committed from seventy-three donors through actual giving and pledges.

Synod council members were encouraged to approach individuals they know for gifts in the \$1,000 to \$3,000 range, or more, if an individual has that capacity.

Bishop Deborah Hutterer shared that our past bishops have been very supportive of the appeal. In addition, Rally in the Valley, a ministry focused

on people in their third chapter of life, provided support from for the Growing Generosity appeal.

The Ministerial Excellence Fund can be used to help rostered leaders with education or medical debt. In the process, a rostered leader will also receive help from an advocate. The Vital Right Shaped Ministries Fund is all about congregational vitality. Moving examples of how the Ministerial Excellence Fund and the Vital Right Shaped Ministries Fund have been a benefit were shared with the synod council.

Update on the House of Prayer, Rock Point, AZ

While most congregations interview and elect their own pastoral leadership, House of Prayer Lutheran Church at the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission (NELM) in Rock Point, AZ has typically had leadership imposed from the outside. Deacon Kate Adelman, Bishop Deborah Hutterer, and Rev. Jacqueline Pagel are working with the Navajo Community at NELM to raise up local Navajo leaders to take over the spiritual ministry at House of Prayer Lutheran Church. Guidelines are being developed to provide ministry integrity and theological training with local Navajo input for this unique ministry.

The Forge, East Mesa, AZ

After a period of leadership inactivity and thoughts of closing at The Forge, East Mesa, AZ, the Rio Salado Conference decided the best way forward was to return to its original focus on ministry to young adults rather than being a congregation. Rev. Charles Newman will give leadership to this ministry as it moves forward.

Break

Mr. Paul Gryniewicz declared the meeting to be in recess at 11:01 a.m.
Mr. Paul Gryniewicz called the meeting back to order at 11:10 a.m.

Synod Assembly

The synod council went into breakout rooms to discuss what went well with the 2021 online assembly, what needed to be improved, and to consider the timing for future online assemblies. The need for online assemblies will also

be dictated by public health emergencies as we act in our neighbor's best interests.

Grants

Overview of the GCS Grant Process

Ms. Sue Jensen reported that we are approaching the season for awarding synod grants. The grant committee is closely following the GCS strategic plan to guide the process.

Adapting, Connecting, Transforming and Sustaining (ACTS) Grants

GCS ACTS grants are typically focused on lifting up Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWCs) or other strategic ministries with a maximum GCS grant level of \$20,000 for this year.

Project Support Grants (PSGs)

GCS PSGs typically support new and continuing programming for congregations with a recent emphasis on helping congregations and affiliated ministries (ex: Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest) with pandemic imposed needs, such as support for an online presence.

There will be an online webinar to educate the GCS on both ACTS and PSGs. Awardees are required to report back on the impact of the project grants. The grant committee is hoping for improvement in the reporting back aspect.

Open Doors Grants

ELCA open doors grants were received by several GCS congregations to assist them in becoming focal points of gathering and to reach out to new people in their communities.

Hunger Grants

Grace Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ has applied for an ELCA domestic hunger grant to support their pancake breakfast and respite program. It is hoped they will receive this grant.

Information

The GCS currently has a pastor who was vaccinated who is now ill with COVID-19. This follows a GCS pastor who died from a COVID-19 infection in January 2021. Bishop Deborah Hutterer is trusting our synod leaders to make informed and prudent decisions about gatherings and general ministry.

The ELCA conference of bishops has decided to hold their upcoming meeting online. Some synods have issued travel restrictions to their synod staff.

Celebration Lutheran Church, Peoria, AZ is in an emergency situation due to significant debt and the inability to meet financial obligations.

The Lakes Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV is struggling at the present time. Pastor Ron Poe has taken a call in the state of Illinois.

Congregation Votes

Synod council members may be called upon to be present at significant moments in a congregation's life to be an available, affirming, and authentic witness of our being church together. Mr. Paul Gryniewicz suggested such times may include congregation votes. At such votes, the synod representative role is to report back that all was done in good order, and that there are not more votes cast than registered voting members.

Gloria Dei / Palo Christi Resolution

Whereas, bylaw 9.53.06. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (ELCA) specifies: "A congregation considering relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located...before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected"; and

Whereas, ELCA constitutional provision 9.81. provides the following: "A synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may authorize a particular congregation...related to the synod to form a federated congregation...with a congregation...with which a relationship of full communion has been established...;" and

Whereas, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and Palo Christi Presbyterian Church, both of Paradise Valley, Arizona, have agreed to merge into a new congregation to be known as Gloria Christi Federated Church;

Ms. Barbara Carl moved that

MSP SC21.08.06 be it resolved that the Synod Council of the Grand Canyon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America approves the “Plan of Agreement” of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (#04993) with Palo Christi Presbyterian Church, both of Paradise Valley, Arizona, to merge into a new corporation to be known as Gloria Christi Federated Church, Paradise Valley, Arizona, as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (USA) (aka: PCUSA); and be it further resolved,

that the filing of Articles of Incorporation for Gloria Christi Federated Church is endorsed by the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA with the assurance that endorsement also will be forthcoming from the Presbytery of the Grand Canyon of the PCUSA.

Roster Changes

Ms. Glenn Austad moved

MSP SC21.08.07 to issue synod calls to Rev. Melinda S. Gapen for specialized ministry as chaplain with Avian Hospice, Globe, AZ, effective May 10, 2021; to Rev. Patsy Perkins Koeneke to serve as interim pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, Kingman, AZ, effective August 1, 2021; to Rev. Doris M. Nolan to serve as interim pastor at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Mesa and Gold Canyon, AZ, effective September 1, 2021.

Godspeed and Farewell

A litany of Godspeed and Farewell was held for Mr. Paul Gryniwicz for whom this was his last meeting. Thank you, Paul, for your time and dedication to the Grand Canyon Synod.

Feed Back & Evaluation

It was requested to give feedback on the quality of this meeting. You will receive an email to which you are encouraged to respond.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Bishop Deborah Hutterer led a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

Saturday, October 9, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. with a social time on
Friday, October 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. David Brandfass, secretary