

**GRAND CANYON SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
Synod Council**

Regular Meeting (part of 2023 retreat) – Saturday, September 23, 2022

9:00 a.m.

Nature Conservancy Conference Room (1819 E. Morten Avenue, Phoenix)

Present:

Officers

Rev. Deborah Hutterer, synod bishop
Ms. Barbara Carl, synod vice president
Rev. Stephen Springer, synod secretary

Conference Representatives

Mr. Glenn Austad
Mr. Roger Bailey
Ms. Lynn Davis
Rev. Mary Louise Frenchman
Rev. Christopher Heller
Ms. Wendy Weiske

At Large Representatives

Rev. Tina Mills
Ms. Karen Olson
Ms. Hannah Roberts [youth representative]

Electronic (Zoom)

Ms. Heather Burgett, at large representative
Mr. Mark Myers, at large representative
Rev. William Timm, at large representative
Ms. Taylor Welch, at large representative

Absent

Ms. Hannah Manzanares [young adult representative]
Mr. Jeff Michaels, conference representative
Ms. Janis Richert, conference representative
Mr. Erik Rehms, synod treasurer

Staff (non-voting)

Ms. Myrna Wells-Ulland, at large representative
Ms. Theresa Thornburgh, Director of Administration

Retreat Workshop prior to the business meeting

On Friday, September 22, the members of the Synod Council convened in a forum. Members participated in person and online via Zoom. Some of the matters that were discussed:

- Introductions
- Review of key accomplishments of the Synod Council in the past year
- Preparations for the bishop election to take place at the annual assembly (June 2024)
- Review of the current financial documents with the treasurer (who would be absent from the Saturday business session)
- Summary of the Executive Committee election to be held on Saturday
- Review of the document “Part-Time Ministry Guidelines”
- Review of the document “Guidelines for Congregations Discerning Their Future: Closing, Selling, Blessing”
- Review of the status of the Encanto Street (Phoenix) property (formerly Alleluia Lutheran Church)
- Discussion of mission opportunities created by the legacy of Abounding Grace Lutheran Church (Tucson)

Opening Devotion

Rev. Tina Mills shared an interactive reflection based on Genesis 32.

Call to Order

Ms. Barbara Carl called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m. MST/PDT, and declared a quorum.

Adoption of the agenda

The Director of Administration, Ms. Theresa Thornburgh, distributed the proposed agenda to the Synod Council by email on September 15. Ms. Barbara Carl announced a few modifications to that agenda.

Mr. Glenn Austad moved:

MSP¹ SC23.09.01² to adopt the agenda, as updated.

Approval of the February 11 Synod Council minutes

Rev. Tina Mills moved:

MSP SC23.09.02 to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2023 meeting of the Synod Council.

Consent Agenda

On September 15, 2023, the Director of Administration, Ms. Theresa Thornburgh, distributed a selection of reports bundled as the consent agenda. The consent agenda was received.

¹ MSP=Moved, seconded, passed.

² SC=Synod Council; 23=2023; 09=the month of September; 01= The first sequential action passed by the synod council during the month of September, 2023.

Review of Synod Finances

On Friday, September 22, the synod treasurer Mr. Erik Rehms had given an overview of the finances for the first six months of the fiscal year. The documents were received by the council.

Discussion of Synod Council goals for the upcoming year

Bishop Deborah Hutterer led a discussion and break-out groups on strategic goals for the synod council in the upcoming year.

Congregation Updates: Encanto Street Property (formerly Alleluia)

In its Friday conversation, the synod council learned that a previously authorized deal for the sale of the property had fallen through. The synod continues to incur expenses. Overdue water bills are in collections; the property has been cited by the city of Phoenix for grounds maintenance.

There is a potential offer being discussed with a congregation called Faith Church (not affiliated with the ELCA).

Ms. Wendy Weiske moved:

MSP SC23.09.03 to authorize Bishop Deborah Hutterer or attorney Don Stevens to enter any and all agreements necessary to sell, as is, the property at 8444 W. Encanto Boulevard, Phoenix, AZ, for the amount of \$350,000 or more.

Rev. Christopher Heller moved:

MSP SC23.09.04 to authorize Bishop Deborah Hutterer to work with Ms. Wendy Weiske and Ms. Barbara Carl to list the property for sale, in the event that the deal with Faith falls through.

Congregation Updates: King of Glory (Tempe, AZ)

Rev. William Timm moved:

MSP SC23.09.05 to receive King of Glory Lutheran Church (Tempe, AZ) as a Synod-authorized Worshiping Community.

Rev. William Timm moved:

MSP SC23.09.06 to extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Charles Newman to King of Glory Lutheran Church, effective September 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Congregation Updates: Living Hope (Las Vegas, NV)

Mr. Roger Bailey addressed the synod council about developments in his home congregation, Living Hope Lutheran Church (Las Vegas). The congregation voted to close in April, 2023. The congregation is now making plans to secure the property against vandalism and vagrancy; and has contracted with a realtor to put the property on the market. October 29, 2023 will be the final worship service of holy closure with Bishop Hutterer presiding.

Ascension Lutheran Church (Paradise Valley, AZ)

Karen Olson addressed the synod council about her home congregation. Ascension will be celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. The congregation has voted to sell its property; the congregation has tenancy of the property through July, but its goal is to vacate and relocate by April 2024. It seeks to find a new worship location within a five mile radius of the original.

Manna Grants

A written report was included in the packet emailed on September 15.

Part-Time Ministry Guidelines

Ms. Barbara Carl had explained the preparation of the 20-page document “Part-Time Ministry Guidelines” on Friday. After the discussion, the document, which was first distributed on September 15, was formally received by the Synod Council.

Guidelines for Congregations Discerning Their Future

Ms. Barbara Carl had explained the preparation of the 12-page document “Guidelines for Congregations Discerning Their Future: Closing, Selling, Blessing” on Friday. After the discussion, the document, which was first distributed on September 15, was formally received by the Synod Council.

Abounding Grace Legacy

This matter was discussed in the Friday segment of the retreat. Abounding Grace (Tucson, AZ), when it closed, requested that a large share of its assets be dedicated to ministries in southern Arizona.

The synod council received a ministry proposal from Lutheran Campus Ministry. The Synod Council’s initial discussion was favorable. Questions were raised about the carbon footprint of the proposed construction, ownership of the building, the nature of the staffing, long-term funding and sustainability, and models and best practices for residential policies. Rev. Stephen Springer will invite Rev. Rebecca Boardman to the November 11 meeting of the Synod Council, which will take place on the Zoom platform.

Election to the Audit Committee

Mr. Glenn Austad moved:

MSP SC23.09.08 to elect Mr. Robert Uland (Living Water, Scottsdale, AZ) and Ms. Marissa Metevelis (Living Hope, Las Vegas, NV) to the Audit Committee of the Grand Canyon Synod.

Election to the Executive Committee

Ms. Wendy Weiske moved:

MSP SC23.09.09 to elect Ms. Janis Richert to the Executive Committee of the Grand Canyon Synod.

Policies for Congregations Electing Voting Members to the Synod Assembly

Ms. Barbara Carl (Vice President) and Rev. Stephen Springer (Secretary) explained new rules and policies for congregations electing and appointing voting members to the Synod Assembly. Allocations are based on baptized membership, with expanded capacity for youth, young adult, people of color, and people with a first language other than English. The new guidelines were presented as Continuing Resolutions, which require a 2/3 vote to pass.

Rev. Tina Mills moved:

MSP SC23.09.10 to adopt the following Continuing Resolutions:

S7.21.A23. Each congregation shall elect two lay voting members to the synod assembly. In addition:

- a. Congregations having baptized membership of 176 to 399 shall be allowed one additional lay voting member (a maximum of three).
- b. Congregations having baptized membership of 400 to 649 shall be allowed two additional lay voting members (a maximum of four).
- c. Congregations having baptized membership of 650 to 1,299 shall be allowed three additional lay voting members (a maximum of five).
- d. Congregations having baptized membership of 1,300 to 1,899 shall be allowed four additional lay voting members (a maximum of six).
- e. Congregations having baptized membership of 1,900 to 2,599 shall be allowed five additional lay voting members (a maximum of seven).
- f. Congregations having baptized membership of 2,600 to 3,249 shall be allowed six additional lay voting members (a maximum of eight).
- g. Congregations having baptized membership of 3,250 to 3,899 shall be allowed seven additional lay voting members (a maximum of nine).
- h. Congregations having baptized membership of 3,900 or more shall be allowed eight additional lay voting members (a maximum of ten).

In all cases, a congregation should strive to elect an equal number of male and female voting members, or as close as possible. (See †S7.21.b.) Congregations are encouraged to include persons of color, persons whose primary language is other than English, youth (confirmed to age 17), and young adults (age 18 to 30) among their lay voting members to the synod assembly. (See †S6.04. and †S6.04.01.)

S7.21.B23. In addition to the laity voting members elected in accordance with S7.21.A23:

- a. Congregations may elect one additional lay voting member who is a person of color or person whose primary language is other than English.
- b. Congregations may elect one additional lay voting member who is a youth (confirmed to age 17) or young adult (age 18 to 30, see †S6.04.01.).

In all cases, a congregation should strive to elect an equal number of male and female voting members, or as close as possible.

S7.26.C23. Synodically authorized worshiping communities may elect one lay voting member to the Synod Assembly.

S7.27.D23 Ministers of Word and Sacrament from church bodies with which the ELCA has established a full communion relationship, who are serving a congregation of the Grand Canyon Synod under a contract, Letter of Invitation to Extended Service, or other provision of the Synod Council, may be granted voice and vote in the Synod Assembly by vote of the Synod Council.

Synod appointments and calls

Mr. Roger Bailey moved:

MSP SC23.09.11 to appoint Rev. Ben Bergren to complete the term of Rev. Karn Carroll as the Grand Canyon Synod Representative to the Church Council of the ELCA, effective November 2023

Rev. Christopher Heller moved:

MSP SC23.09.12 to extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Matthew Metevelis to serve as a chaplain to the Nathan Adelman Hospice, Las Vegas, NV, effective September 23, 2023.

Rev. Tina Mills moved:

MSP SC23.09.13 to extend a Synod Council call, part-time, to Rev. Kaila Armbruster to Crossroads (San Tan Valley), a Synod-authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC), effective September 6, 2023.

[NB, earlier in the meeting, SC23.09.06, a Synod Council call to Rev. Charles Newman to King of Glory Lutheran Church.]

Bishop's Report on Multicultural Rostered Leaders

Bishop Hutterer summarized the first retreat of multicultural rostered leaders, which recently took place in Flagstaff, AZ. The group established a goal to have a synod-wide commemorative worship service for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The guest preacher will be Bishop Yehiel Curry of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. The event will take place in Phoenix or Tempe, with remote digital connections in Southern Arizona and Nevada.

Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Event

An event is scheduled for January 20, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at Faith Lutheran Church (Phoenix, AZ). Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will be present.

Closing Prayer

Rev. Mary Louise Frenchman led the closing prayer.

The Synod Council thanked and applauded Ms. Theresa Thornburgh for her dedicated hard work in planning and carrying out the two-day Synod Council retreat.

Ms. Barbara Carl adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.