

Southwestern Minnesota Synod ELCA
 Synod Assembly Minutes
 Gustavus Adolphus College, St Peter, MN
 June 7-8, 2024

- I. Worship / Call to order**
 Call to order at 10:04 am by Bishop Dee Pederson

II. Plenary Session I

- A. Welcome** by Bishop Dee Pederson
B. Adoption of Agenda and Rules of Procedure

VOTE:

SA24.06.01 Rules of Procedure adopted

VOTE:

SA24.06.02 Agenda adopted

- C. Report of the Nominating Committee**, Pr Tim Routh, chair
 No nominations received from the floor.

VOTE:

SA24.06.03 Nominating Committee Report accepted

- D. Presentation of Proposed Budget** by Treasurer Bob Haines
E. Presentation of 2025 Compensation Guidelines by Pr Janel Kuester, chair
1. Changes from 2024
 - a. 3% COLA increase
 - b. Earned safe and sick time law in Minnesota, for rostered leaders and lay staff, began January 2, 2024.
 - c. Parental leave policy to be considered in the future.
- F. Credentials Report** by Pr Kathy Ulland-Klinkner, chair
 Lay Leaders: 211
 Retired Rostered Leaders: 11
 Quorum has been achieved
- G. Keynote: Rev Dr Aaron Suomala Folkerds**
- H. Resolutions and Other Business**, Pr Stephen Cook, Resolutions Committee Chair
1. Resolution 24.01 – **CLARIFYING QUESTION REGARDING HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS**
 - a. Forwarded to the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee by the Shetek Conference Assembly.
 - b. Author Rev Adam Roberts withdrew this resolution; therefore it is no longer under consideration.

2. Resolution 24.03 – **REGARDING BYLAW CHANGES TO THE SYNOD CONSTITUTION**

Recommendation from the Synod Council of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod to remove the Engaging Leaders Board, the Equipping Congregations Board, and the Serving God's Word Board from the Bylaws of the SWMN Synod.

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Resolved, to remove S11.30., S11.40., S11.50. and S11.30.01, S11.40.01. and S11.50.01 from the Constitution and Bylaws of the SWMN Synod.

S11.30. Engaging Leaders Board

S11.30.01. There shall be a twelve-member board for oversight, evaluating, and planning the synod's work of engaging leaders. It will focus on identifying, developing, and supporting lay and clergy leaders and their gifts.

S11.40. Equipping Congregations Board

S11.40.01. There shall be a twelve-member board for oversight, evaluating, and planning the synod's work of equipping congregations for their ministry and mission in Christ's name.

S11.50. Serving in God's World Board

S11.50.01. There shall be a twelve-member board for oversight, evaluating, and planning the synod's work of serving Christ's mission.

Recommendation from Synod Council of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod to establish the Management and Mission Support Committee, the Policies and Procedures Committee, and the Servant Leadership Committee as standing committees in the Bylaws of the SWMN Synod.

Resolved, to recommend to the 2024 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly to add to the Bylaws of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Constitution S11.20., S11.21.01., S1.22.01., and S1123.01. as outlined below:

S11.20. OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE SYNOD

S11.21.01. There shall be a Management and Mission Support Committee consisting of at least 5 persons, who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council for a term of three years, with the opportunity to serve consecutive terms with re-appointment. This committee shall include members of the synod and elected members of the Synod Council. The Synod Treasurer shall serve as an *ex officio* member.

S22.22.01. There shall be a Policies and Procedures Committee consisting of at least 9 persons, who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council for a term of three years, with the opportunity to serve consecutive terms with re-appointment. This committee shall include members of the synod and elected members of the Synod Council. The Synod Secretary shall serve as an *ex officio* member.

S22.23.01. There shall be a Servant Leadership committee consisting of at least 5 persons, who shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council for a term of three years, with the opportunity to serve consecutive terms with re-appointment. This committee shall include members of the synod and elected members of the Synod Council.

Recommendation from the Synod Council of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the following approach to provide for Synod Council Members to be eligible for election to a second term, and to change the formation of the Synod Council.

Chapter 10. SYNOD COUNCIL.

†S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

- a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
- b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be three years.

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- S10.01.01. The Synod Council shall include the officers of the synod, one lay member from each conference, one rostered minister from each conference, one youth member of the synod, one young adult member of the synod, and four members elected at-large.
- S10.01.02. Each conference shall nominate their lay and rostered members to the Synod Council at their Conference Assembly, striving to meet the requirements of *S6.04. and *S6.04.01. Each conference is encouraged to recommend to the Nominating Committee names for the youth member, the young adult member, and at-large members to stand for election at the Synod Assembly during election years for those positions.
- S10.01.03. Unless otherwise stated in this Constitution and Bylaws, Synod Council Members shall be elected to a 3-year term and shall be eligible for election to a second term when nominated by their Conference Assemblies and elected by the Synod Assembly as the incumbent.
- S10.01.04. Should a member of the Synod Council die, resign, be unable to serve, or a seat declared vacant due to a lack of nominations or elected candidates at the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next Synod Assembly. The appointed replacement does not need to meet the requirements as outlined in S10.01.01., but shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The appointed replacement shall serve on Synod Council until the next Synod Assembly at which time a person shall be elected to complete the unexpired portion of the term. The appointed replacement may be nominated by the Synod Council to fill an open position for which they qualify. Individuals nominated to stand for open member-at-large, youth, and young adult positions within the last three years shall be considered when choosing an appointment to a vacant seat on the Synod Council.
- S10.01.05. The term of each member of the Synod Council begins immediately after the adjournment of the Synod Assembly in the year of election, or on June 30 in years when there shall be no Synod Assembly.
- S10.01.06. Advisory members to the Synod Council shall be seated with voice, but not vote. Those members shall include:
- a. Presidents of the synod's Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, and Lutheran Youth Organization;
 - b. Representatives of the Conference Deans and Conference Chairpersons;
 - c. Synod ministers and other synod staff;
 - d. Persons who reside in this synod and who are serving on the ELCA Church Council or ELCA churchwide boards of divisions, commissions, departments and offices;
 - e. Others whom the Synod Council may invite, such as representatives of LSS of Minnesota and shared ministries funded through the budget.
- S10.01.07. The Synod Council shall meet at least three times annually. Special meetings may be called by any three voting members of the Synod Council, or by the bishop of the synod. In the case of a bishop's death, incapacity to serve, or removal, a special meeting may be called by the vice president. A majority of the voting members of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum.
- †S10.02. The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly It may make decision that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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VOTE:
SA24.06.04 **Resolution 24.03 is adopted**

III. Plenary Session II

- A. Bishop's Report**, Bishop Dee Pederson
B. Report of Credentials Committee, Pr Kathy Ulland-Klinkner, chair
 Rostered Leaders: 134
 Lay Leaders: 211
 Retired Rostered Leaders: 11
 Quorum remains
C. Election of Synod Positions, Pr Tim Wittwer, Election Committee

VOTE:
SA24.06.05 **Motion to cast unanimous ballot to elect those
 running unopposed passed**

1. Election of CWA rostered female completed.
 2. Election of CWA rostered male completed.
- D. Approval of Proposed 2026 FY Budget**

VOTE:
SA24.06.06 **FY26 Budget approved**

E. Approval of 2025 Compensation Guidelines

VOTE:
SA24.06.07 **2025 Compensation Guidelines approved**

F. We Remember – Rostered leaders from the synod who have died in the last year

1. Rev Alvin Gerhard Lewis Jr
2. Rev Norman Fonss
3. Rev Loyd Torrey Tobiassen
4. Rev Robert Kemppainen
5. Rev Naomi Mahler

G. Celebrating Ordination Anniversaries

1. 10 years of ordination – Rev Amy Karlson, Rev Ann Zastrow, Rev David Tonn, Rev Erika Buller, Rev Michael Buller, Rev Katherine Rohloff, Rev Kayla Monson, Rev Kristine Isder, Rev Lowell Krogstad, Rev Russell Britton
2. 25 years of ordination – Rev Eileen Mehl, Rev Grady St Dennis, Rev Rebecca Krogstad
3. 50 years of ordination – Rev Douglas Dobson, Rev Rodney Anderson, Rev Paul Bierlein
4. 55 years of ordination – Rev Donald Berheim
5. 60 years of ordination – Rev Daniel Buendorf, Rev Lloyd Berger, Rev Paul Berge, Rev Robert Amundson
6. 61-69 years of ordination – Rev J David Nelson, Rev Paul Idstrom, Rev Charles Anderson, Rev Alan Schmidt, Rev Arlan Stensland, Rev Eugene Anderson, Rev Marlan Johnson, Rev Robert Mortiz
7. 70+ years of ordination – Rev Paul Dumke, Rev Earl Peterson

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8. Retired – Rev Janet Warnes, Rev Robert Stover, Rev Denise Fossen, Rev James Rothschiller, Rev Paul Johnson

H. Celebrating Congregational Milestone Anniversaries

1. 75 years – Trinity Lutheran, Truman
2. 125 years – Augustana Lutheran, Gibbon; St John Lutheran, Marietta; Our Savior’s Lutheran, Milroy; Bethany Lutheran, Morgan; Waverly Lutheran, Welcome
3. 150 years – Trinity Lutheran, Benson; Swedlanda Lutheran, Hector; Bethesda Lutheran, Murdock; St Paul Lutheran, Lowery; Sundown Lutheran, Springfield; Chippewa Falls Lutheran, Glenwood; Trinity Lutheran, Welcome

I. ELCA Churchwide Report – Rev Dr Phil Hirsch, Executive Director of Christian Community and Leadership

J. Video Report from Presiding Bishop Eaton

K. Results of Synod Elections, Pr Tim Wittwer, Elections Committee; Bishop Dee Pederson

1. Synod Council At-Large, rostered female – Rev Katherine Rohloff
2. Synod Council At-Large, rostered male – Rev Russel Britton
3. Synod Council At-Large, youth or young adult – no nominee
4. Synod Council Glacial Ridge Conference, lay female – no nominee
5. Synod Council Lakeland Conference, rostered female – Deacon Brenda Handel-Johnson
6. Synod Council Minnesota Valley Conference, lay male – Mr Paul Engel
7. Synod Council Prairie Conference, lay person – no nominee
8. Synod Council Scenic Valley Conference, rostered male – Rev Lowell Krogstad
9. Synod Council, Watonwan River Conference, lay male – no nominee

L. Results of Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Elections

1. CWA Voting Member At-Large, rostered female
 - a. Rev Janine Olson, voting member
 - b. Rev Kathleen Ulland-Klinkner, first alternate
2. CWA Voting Member At-Large, lay female, person of color or primary language other than English
 - a. Ms Susan Ukaonu
3. CWA Voting Member At-Large, lay male
 - a. Mr Quentin Markfort
4. CWA Voting Member At-Large, rostered male, person of color or primary language other than English
 - a. Rev Chimezie Ukaonu
5. CWA Voting Member At-Large, rostered male
 - a. Rev Bryant Kaden, voting member
 - b. Rev Bryan Taffe, first alternate
6. CWA Voting Members, Crow River Conference, rostered male
 - a. Rev Thomas Evanson, voting member
 - b. Rev Paul Bravinder, first alternate
 - c. Rev Mark Astrup, second alternate
7. CWA Voting Member, Crow River Conference, lay male
 - a. Mr Keith Evenson, voting member
 - b. Mr David Nelson, first alternate
 - c. Mr Leon Radke, second alternate
8. CWA Voting Members, Glacial Ridge Conference, lay female
 - a. No nominee, voting member
 - b. No nominee, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
9. CWA Voting Members, Great River Conference, rostered female

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- a. Rev Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt, voting member
- b. Rev Allison Peterson, first alternate
- c. Rev Stephanie Christoffels, second alternate
10. CWA Voting Members, Great River Conference, lay male
 - a. Mr Steve Nelson Roenfeldt, voting member
 - b. Mr Bruce Peterson, first alternate
 - c. Mr Bill Martin Chaffee, second alternate
11. CWA Voting Members, Lac Qui Parle Conference, lay male
 - a. Mr Shawnn Martin, voting member
 - b. Mr Mark Sannerud, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
12. CWA Voting Members, Lakeland Conference, rostered female
 - a. Rev Jennifer Thul, voting member
 - b. Rev Seyward Ask, first alternate
 - c. Rev Lisa Meshke, second alternate
13. CWA Voting Members, Great River Conference, lay male
 - a. Mr Bryan Vega, voting member
 - b. Mr Tim Ostby, first alternate
 - c. Mr Brad Hanson, second alternate
14. CWA Voting Members, Minnesota Valley Conference, lay female
 - a. Ms Jodi Johnson, voting member
 - b. No nominee, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
15. CWA Voting Members, Prairie Conference, rostered male
 - a. Rev Austin Krohnke, voting member
 - b. Rev Levi Bollerud, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
16. CWA Voting Members, Prairie Conference, lay male
 - a. No nominee, voting member
 - b. No nominee, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
17. CWA Voting Members, Scenic Valley Conference, lay male
 - a. Mr Jan Nelson, voting member
 - b. No nominee, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
18. CWA Voting Members, Shetek Conference, rostered male
 - a. Rev Adam Roberts, voting member
 - b. Rev Chad Duffy, first alternate
 - c. Rev Jeremy Hallquist, second alternate
19. CWA Voting Members – Shetek Conference, lay male
 - a. Mr Andrew Musman, voting member
 - b. Mr Austin Lucas Peters-Smith, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate
20. CWA Voting Members, Watonwan River Conference, lay female
 - a. No nominee, voting member
 - b. No nominee, first alternate
 - c. No nominee, second alternate

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M. Keynote: Rev Dr Aaron Suomala Folkerds

N. Breadbasket Award, presented by Pr Jeanette McCormick, Hunger Team, to Borglund Lutheran Church, Madison, MN

O. World Hunger Offering

P. Resolutions and Other Business, Pr Stephen Cook, Resolutions Committee Chair

1. Resolution 24.02 – **REGARDING REVISIONS TO HUMAN SEXUALITY: GIFT AND TRUST**

Resolved, that the Shetek Conference Memorialize the 2024 Synod Assembly of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, to officially oppose and urge the rejection of any changes to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust which diminish its “profound respect for the conscience-bound belief,”¹ of those who hold traditional Christian positions on same-gender sexual behavior, and be it further

Resolved, that the Shetek Conference urges the 2024 Synod Assembly of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, to recommit itself to mutual respect for the conscience-bound beliefs of all congregations, clergy, and laypersons in all of its public expressions, and be it further

Resolved, that the 2024 Synod Assembly of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, direct this resolution be forwarded to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Council, to forward this resolution to the Church Council with a request that it be transmitted to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the task force working on revisions to HS:GT.

¹ HS:GT, p 21.

VOTE:

SA24.06.08

Motion to call the question

189 yes, 91 no, 66% needed (184.8) to pass.

Motion to call the question passed.

VOTE:

SA24.06.09

Vote on Resolution 24.02

98 yes, 174 no, 50% needed (136) to pass.

Resolution 24.02 is defeated.

IV. Closing Song and Prayer, led by Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, Rev Nkosi Nathi Myaka, and Diocesan Council Chair, Mr Falithenjwa Mkhize.

V. Adjourn

Adjourned at 4:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
 Rev Ann Zastrow, secretary
 Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA