



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Summary of Synod Council Meeting – April 8, 2017

Written by Gwen Arneson, Synod Vice President

Your Synod Council met in Redwood Falls at the Synod Office building on Saturday, April 8th. It was a full day and we are grateful for those dedicated council members who gave the gift of their day to learn, discern, and act on important matters in the life of this synod.

It was a pleasure to meet new seminarians assigned to SWMN synod, and to hear how they may be beginning ministry in our midst. Seminarians Megan Preston, Steven Hilding, and Lisa Meschke joined in our council development conversations, and heard each council member share something that he or she appreciated about our synod. Together we watched a VISTA video that helped us see more deeply into the many faces of diversity, particularly as it pertains to poverty.

Reports were presented by all the synod officers – Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. We also heard reports from our synod boards – Engaging Leaders, Equipping Congregations, and Serving in God's World. A resolution was approved to designate the Laotian Ministry of St. Cloud as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community.

The council took action to set council goals for our work in the coming year. We also heard an update on the Lilly Project work from Pr. Andrew Hermodson-Olsen and gave the green light to explore potential new initiatives to enhance our shared ministry inside of God's mission. Pr. Larry Strenge provided an update on the Embrace God's Mission + Equip God's People Funding Initiative. Fifteen "Coffee with the Bishop" events have occurred with more than 120 people participating. Next, "Burgers with the Bishop" events are being planned to continue to share the vision of the funding initiative. We aim to reach a goal of \$1,000,000 in gifts and pledges toward the initiative by our June 2017 Synod Assembly.

There was ongoing conversation about the conference re-alignment and the goal is to complete this task force work by June of 2018, to be voted upon at the 2018 Synod Assembly.

The council voted to recommend the 2019 budget as prepared by the Management and Mission Standing Committee to the 2017 Synod Assembly.

A resolution received by the Resolutions Committee that proposed language to allow a congregation to elect a retired or on leave from call Minister of Word and Sacrament to serve in a lay voting member slot from a congregation was acted upon by the Synod Council. It was ruled out of order. A congregation is able to elect lay members to the assembly. A person who is on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament is not eligible for election as a layperson. A synod cannot change the status of a rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament to that of a layperson.

We approved a continuing resolution that would permit seasonal memberships in congregations as conditionally allowed by the 2016 ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations, specifically as detailed in constitutional provision C8.02.e.

The council heard updates on Campus Ministry transitions, and reports from those who were able to be at a recent meeting at Ridgewater College with the campus ministers from around our synod. Highlights included work to “brand” the campus ministries with an immediately recognizable name and logo, such as LuMin; also, hearing about the participation of students at various campus ministry sites.

Finally, we offered our thanks to those council members who have come to the conclusion of their elected term. We are blessed by the wisdom and insight, care and work they have provided over their terms.

Our next meeting will be on June 13th when we will elect our Executive Committee and review the Synod Assembly. Council members newly-elected at Synod Assembly will be welcomed in a ZOOM meeting in July.