



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

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 23 & 24, 2022**

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council met on September 23 & 24, 2022, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Owatonna, MN.

Members present: Rev. Collette Broady Grund, Rev. Jenna Couch, Rev. Shelley Cunningham, Matthew Huggenvik, Marshall Laidlaw, Karen Myers, Deacon Amanda Sabelko, Ramona Skare, Carolyn Solberg, Dr. Mary Veiseth, Rev. John Weisenburger, Secretary Rev. Josh Enderson, Vice President Lisa Dierks, and Bishop Regina Hassanally.

Absent: Rev. Kris Ferkin, Hannah Herfindahl-Quint, Gary Schindler, Rev. Dr. Kristen Venne, and Treasurer Jeff Chestnut.

Staff: Rev. Emily Carson, Rev. Barb Streed, Ashley Corbett, Rev. Matt Larson, Kathy Chatelaine.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2022**

**GATHERING**

- The synod council gathered on Friday, September 23 at 6:00pm, and joined in a meal to begin its time together.

**SHARING OF INFORMATION**

- Following dinner, council members who had attended the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, OH shared information and highlights from their experience.
- The Office of the Bishop Staff then shared information on their work within the synod.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2022**

**GENERATIVE WORK**

- The council gathered again on Saturday, September 24, 2022 at 9:00am and began with devotions, led by Vice President Lisa Dierks.
- Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality forms were reviewed and completed by all council members.

**ORIENTATION TO SYNOD COUNCIL**

- Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM) and Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Emily Carson then led the council in a time of orientation, going over the roles and responsibilities of synod staff, as well as the purpose of Synod Council and the Synod as a whole. Rev. Carson walked through the synod constitution as it relates to the work of the synod and the council's role within this work.
- Following this, the council moved into a time of reflecting on Generative Leadership, where Bishop Regina Hassanally led the discussion using lessons from her continuing education. She walked through the three main areas of the council's work as a governance board: fiduciary, strategic, and generative work.
  - Fiduciary: She reminded the council that they hold the primary financial responsibility for the synod's finances. Roster status is also a part of the council's fiduciary work and is all done in executive session. This work is highly confidential and only actions are reported out, not discussion.
  - Strategic: The council is called to think about how the actions it takes affects its current actions as well as people and actions that may happen in the future.
  - Generative: This work is related to strategic work but is also related to vision. What is the framework in which we operate?
  - She then walked through the responsibilities of a governance board, such as establishing an organizational identity, providing oversight, ensuring resources.

At 10:30 am, the council took a break before moving into the council agenda for the day.

**COUNCIL AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER & OVERVIEW OF AGENDA**

- At 10:46am, Vice President Dierks called the meeting to order.
- Vice President Dierks presented the agenda. The following items were added:
  - Executive Session to make Roster Changes
  - Portico Selection for Synod Staff
- Mary Veiseth motioned to approve the agenda as amended.

**SC22.09.32 Motion to approve the agenda as amended.**

**Motion approved.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Minutes
  - April 9, 2022 Synod Council Meeting
  - May 7, 2022 Synod Assembly
- Reports
  - Bishop & Staff
  - Tables & Committees
- Rev. Collete Broady Grund motioned to approve the consent agenda.

**SC22.09.33 Motion to approve the consent agenda.**

**Motion approved.**

**BISHOP'S COMMENTS**

- Bishop Regina Hassanally gave the following comments to the council:
  - The Bishop noted that it has been a busy fall season. She and the staff have been reinstituting things that had been done less frequently throughout the last three years due to the pandemic.
  - She lifted up that the Fall Theological Conference is coming up in November.
  - There will be a New to the Synod event held in October.
  - A retired rostered leaders gathering is also happening in October. Bishops Usgaard and Nycklemoe will be coming to speak at the event.
  - The Synod Staff recently held a staff development day, which included meeting with a representative from Lutheran Social Services, who is working to grow their presence in southeastern Minnesota.
  - Region 3 bishops and Assistants to the Bishops will be gathering in November.
  - The Office of the Bishop staff has worked to be in every congregation of the synod. Bishop Hassanally noted that they will have completed this task by the end of the calendar year.
  - The Bishop updated the council on her recent invitation and experience to the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland.

- She lifted up that the Conference of Bishops will be meeting soon.
- The Minnesota Council of Churches will be celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. A Celebration service will be held on October 25, and Bishop Hassanally will be “casting a vision” during the service.
- The Bishop will be attending the consecration of the new bishop in Tanzania.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- Bishop Hassanally and DEM Rev. Emily Carson then updated the council on the finances of the synod. The August financials were presented and discussed.
  - Rev. Carson began by sharing some information that helped orient the council members to financial documents.
  - She reminded the council of how spending plans are approved, that they are always approved a year before they are in effect (i.e., the current 2022-2023 Spending Plan was approved at the 2021 Synod Assembly).
  - She then walked through the five channels of generosity.
  - Bishop Hassanally then went into detail on the August financials.
    - She noted that mission support is a bit behind at this time, but that more tends to come in towards the end of the year.
    - She also noted that rent has returned to the pre-pandemic level of \$4,000/month.
- Rev. Jenna Couch motioned to receive the August financial report.

**SC22.09.34 Motion to receive the August financial report.**

**Motion approved.**

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT**

- Vice President Dierks presented the results of the financial audits that were completed for the fiscal year ending 01/31/2021 and fiscal year ending 01/31/2022.
- Items within the 01/31/2022 audit were discussed around some findings within the audit. The Bishop and Rev. Carson noted

some of the best practices that have been put into place over the past several years around the synod's finances.

- Rev. Collete Broady Grund motioned to approve the financial audits for the fiscal year ending 01/31/2021 and fiscal year ending 01/31/2022.

**SC22.09.35 Motion to approve the financial audits for the fiscal year ending 01/31/2021 and fiscal year ending 01/31/2022.**

**Motion approved.**

**ELECT AT LARGE MEMBERS TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (1 lay & 1 Rostered)**

- Each year, 1 lay and 1 rostered member from the synod council is elected to sit on the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. This is a one-year term.
- At Large (Rostered)
  - Rev. Collete Broady Grund's name was put forward for the At Large (Rostered) member position to Executive Committee. No other names were put forward.
- Deacon Amanda Sabelko motioned to cease nominations for the At Large (Rostered) member to Executive Committee.

**SC22.09.36 Motion to cease nominations for the At Large (Rostered) member to Executive Committee.**

**Motion approved.**

- At Large (Lay)
  - Mary Vieseth's name was put forward for the At Large (Lay) member position to Executive Committee. No other names were put forward.
- Matt Huggenvik motioned to cease nominations for the At Large (Lay) member to Executive Committee.

**SC22.09.37 Motion to cease nominations for the At Large (Lay) member to Executive Committee.**

**Motion approved.**

- As there were no contested positions, Vice President Dierks declared Rev. Collette Broady Grund elected to a one-year term as the At Large (Rostered) member to

Executive Committee and Mary Veiseth elected to a one-year term as the At Large (Lay) member to the Executive Committee.

**ROSTER CHANGES & PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE RETIREMENT ROSTER**

- The Council then moved into executive session to discuss changes to the roster, as well as to conduct a partial review of the retirement roster.
- Mary Veiseth motioned to enter executive session.

**SC22.09.38 Motion to enter executive session.**

**Motion approved.**

**ROSTER CHANGES**

- The following action items came from the executive session:
- Call to Interim Ministry/Bridge Ministry Through Synod Council (Needs Approval)
  - Rev. Alma Gast Bucu, La Crosse Area Synod to Bridge Interim at Elstad & Highland Prairie Lutheran Churches, Peterson. Effective: 07/01/2022. Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Timothy McDermott, Intentional Interim at St. Ansgar's, Cannon Falls to Intentional Interim at Spring Garden, Cannon Falls. Effective: 08/14/2022. Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve Call to Interim Ministry/Bridge Ministry Through Synod Council Roster Changes.

**SC(ES22.09.39) Motion to approve Call to Interim Ministry/Bridge Ministry Through Synod Council Roster Changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM) Through Synod Council (Need Approval-renewed yearly)
  - Mr. Larry Iverson, SAM, requesting an extension to the Covenant dated 09/08/2021 to 09/08/2022 to be extended from 09/08/2022 to 12/31/2022. Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve extension to the Covenant dated 09/08/2021

to 09/08/2022 to be extended from 09/08/2022 to 12/31/2022 for Mr. Larry Iverson, SAM.

**SC(ES22.09.40) Motion to approve extension to the Covenant dated 09/08/2021 to 09/08/2022 to be extended from 09/08/2022 to 12/31/2022 for Mr. Larry Iverson, SAM.**

**Motion approved.**

- Retirement Status (Needs Approval)
  - Rev. Nicholas Fisher-Broin. Effective: 07/01/2022. Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Heather Hammond. Effective: 07/01/2022. Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Dr. Craig Koester. Effective: 07/01/2022. Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve Retirement Status Roster Changes.

**SC(ES22.09.41) Motion to approve Retirement Status Roster Changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- Death (Acknowledge Only)
  - Rev. Robert Boda, 04/14/2022.
  - Rev. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl, 04/19/2022.
  - Rev. Curtis Fox, 04/26/2022.
  - Rev. John (Jack) Nordgaard, 06/07/2022.
  - Rev. Edward Nieman, 07/04/2022.
  - Rev. Otto Reitz, 09/13/2022.
- Resigned from the Roster (Acknowledge Only)
  - Nathan Luong, 06/02/2022.
- On Leave From Call (New-Needs Approval)
  - Rev. Dana Jackson, 1<sup>st</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Cindy Fisher-Broin, 1<sup>st</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Katherine Chatelaine-Samsen, 1<sup>st</sup> request, Approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Dean Aponte-Safe, 1<sup>st</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.

- Rev. Jenna Couch, 1<sup>st</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
- Rev. Peter Johnson, 1<sup>st</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.

- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve On Leave From Call-New Roster Changes.

**SC(ES22.09.42) Motion to approve On Leave From Call-New Roster Changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- On Leave From Call (Yearly Renewal-needs approval)
  - Rev. Peter Reuss, 2<sup>nd</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
  - Rev. Ronald Myers, 2<sup>nd</sup> request, approved at synod council meeting 09/24/2022.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve On Leave From Call-Yearly Renewal Roster Changes.

**SC(ES22.09.43) Motion to approve On Leave From Call-Yearly Renewal Roster Changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- On Leave From Call (2 Years-Extension-Needs Approval)
  - Rev. Rebekah Barnhart
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to request an extension of On Leave from Call Status for Rev. Rebekah Barnhart from the Conference of Bishops.

**SC(ES22.09.44) Motion to request an extension of On Leave from Call Status for Rev. Rebekah Barnhart from the Conference of Bishops.**

**Motion approved.**

**PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE RETIREMENT ROSTER**

- The synod council conducts a review of the retired roster each year, reviewing 1/3 of the roster at various meetings throughout the year.
- 1/3 of the names were presented for review.
- After reviewing the names, no action was needed to be taken on any presented.

## PORTICO SELECTION FOR OFFICE OF THE BISHOP STAFF

- Each year, the synod council approves the Portico health plan selection for the Office of the Bishop Staff who are eligible for Portico coverage. Staff members are then able to “buy up” to a higher level of coverage if they would like to.
- Bishop Hassanally brought forward the recommendation that the Office of the Bishop Staff selection be made at the Silver+ (A) level.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve PORTICO Benefits for synod staff at the Silver+ (A) level, with coverage to Gold+, in preparation for upcoming annual enrollment.

### **SC(ES22.09.45) Motion to approve PORTICO Benefits for synod staff at the Silver+ (A) level, with coverage to Gold+, in preparation for upcoming annual enrollment.**

#### **Motion approved.**

- Mary Veiseth motioned to leave executive session.

### **SC(ES22.09.46) Motion to leave executive session.**

#### **Motion approved.**

## ANNUAL RENEWAL OF SYNOD AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

- Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWC) are renewed annually. SAWCs to be renewed were presented. They are:
  - Connections Shelter Church, Mankato
  - Trinity Fellowship, Rushford

### **SC22.09.47 Motion to approve the renewal of Connections Shelter Church, Mankato, and Trinity Fellowship, Rushford, as Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities.**

#### **Motion approved.**

## 2022 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION DISCUSSION/ACTION

- Two items, one from the April 9, 2022 synod council meeting, and the other from 2022 Synod Assembly, were in need of action.

- The item from the 2022 SEMN Synod Assembly came from Resolution 2022-2: To be a United Church that Cares for Community. The action item is as follows:  
***“Resolved, that the Synod Council shall organize a three-year Housing Insecure Task Force for the purpose of guiding Synod participation to address this need, by 1) Encouraging its congregations to consider becoming member congregations of the JRLC, 2) Informing member congregations of the opportunities for pursuing advocacy for the housing insecure through the JRLC, and 3) Encouraging member congregations to consider being active in finding solutions for those who are housing insecure in their own community; be it further resolved, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA include in its 2025 annual report the activities of the said Task Force at the end of its three-year work, with appropriate celebration thereof”***
  - Bishop Hassanally has asked Rev. Glen Munson to chair the task force, as this resolution came out of his congregation. He has agreed to do this. There will also be a liaison from the Office of the Bishop staff that will be on this task force.
- The other item to be addressed came from the last synod council meeting on April 9, 2022. The motion in question is: “SC22.05.24 Motion to create a task force, under Bishop Hassanally, to explore the office space of the Office of the Bishop, to begin its work after the 2022 Synod Assembly and to bring an update to the 2023 Synod Assembly. Motion approved.”
  - As of this meeting, no one had been asked to be on this task force. More work on creating this group will happen within the near future. They will be tasked

with exploring all options  
and locations that might be  
feasible for the synod office,  
as well as exploring what  
our needs for space are at  
the current time and in the  
future.

#### ADJOURNMENT

- Vice President Dierks declared the meeting adjourned at 1:01pm.

The next meeting will be held on November 12, 2022. This meeting will be held in person, with the location TBD.

Submitted,  
Rev. Josh Enderson, Synod Council Secretary

APPROVED 11/12/2022 JE