



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

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 9, 2022**

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council met on April 9, 2022, via Zoom.

**Members present:**

Rev. Collette Broady-Grund, Rev. Jenna Couch, Rev. Shelley Cunningham, Rev. Kris Ferkin, Rev. David Knox, Anya Liedtke-Quick, Rev. Benjamin Loven, Karen Myers, Deacon Amanda Sabelko, Mona Skare, Burton Svendsen, Rev. Dr. Kristen Venne, Dr. Mary Veiseth, Rev. John Weisenburger, Treasurer Jeff Chestnut, Secretary Rev. Josh Enderson, Vice President Lisa Dierks, and Bishop Regina Hassanally.

**Absent:**

Adam Anderson, Marshall Laidlaw, Gary Schindler, Carolyn Solberg, and Jonah Udstuen.

**Guests:** Rev. Jay Dahlvang.

- Vice President Lisa Dierks welcomed the council and led the group in devotions.

**CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- Vice President Dierks called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.
- She then presented the agenda. The following items were added in the agenda:
  - Approval of Congregation Constitutions added to consent agenda
- Burton Svendsen made a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

**SC22.05.20 Motion to approve the agenda as amended.**

**Motion approved.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Minutes of the February 5, 2022 Synod Council Meeting
- Reports of Staff, Committees & Tables
- Addiction & Substance Abuse Guidelines
- Congregation Constitutions
- Cannon River, Cannon Falls
  - Council Action:

- to thank Cannon River Lutheran Church in Cannon Falls, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;
- to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and
- to accept the constitution approved by the congregation on January 30, 2022 as consistent with the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

• **Cross of Christ, Welch**

- Council Action:
- to thank Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Welch, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;
- to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and
- to accept the constitution approved by the congregation on February 13, 2022 as consistent with the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

• **St. John's, Kasson**

- Council Action:
- to thank St. John's Lutheran Church in Kasson, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;
- to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and
- to accept the constitution approved by the congregation on February 6, 2022 as

consistent with the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

- St. John's, Elkton
  - Council Action:
  - to thank St. John's Lutheran Church in Elkton, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;
  - to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and
  - to accept the constitution approved by the congregation on February 13, 2022 as consistent with the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.
- Trinity, Owatonna
  - Council Action:
  - to thank Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna, for the work done on the constitution and bylaws;
  - to express appreciation for the way the congregation bylaws have been codified in the document as a model for other congregations in the synod; and
  - to accept the constitution approved by the congregation on February 6, 2022 as consistent with the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.
- Burton Svendsen made a motion to approve the consent agenda.

**SC22.05.21      Motion to approve the consent agenda.**

**Motion approved.**

#### **VICE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

- Vice President Dierks then presented comments to the council.
- She continues to meet monthly with all the Synod vice presidents.
- Nominations are also taking up a lot of her time in preparation for Synod Assembly.
  - She noted that a few positions are still open. All positions have nominations, but not to fill the slate at this point.
    - Youth and Young Adult members for synod council are still needed.

#### **BISHOP'S COMMENTS**

- Bishop Regina Hassanally updated the council on her work and the work of the Office of the Bishop.
- The staff recently hosted a First Call Theological Retreat. It was a good time and had a decent turnout. She noted that many of the First Call participants speak well of the work of Continuous Growth Pathways, which receives funds from our synod.
- She recently attended the Conference of Bishops in March, which was the first in person Conference of Bishops meeting held in a while. The emphasis was on anti-racism training.
- The synod hosted Councils As Leaders on March 20. Just under 150 people registered. This event was held as a hybrid option.
- She mentioned that, on April 3, she ordained Rev. Hannah Olson, who serves as a chaplain in the synod, and noted that there will likely be another 3-5 ordinations over the summer.
- She continues to take courses at Duke University in non-profit management for continuing education.
- 2022 Churchwide Assembly registration will be opening within the next week or so.

#### **2022 SYNOD ASSEMBLY UPDATE**

- Bishop Hassanally then gave an update on the upcoming Synod Assembly.
- It will be a one-day assembly in Mankato.
- She noted that the cost of renting the Civic Center in Mankato is about a third of the cost of holding the assembly in Rochester.
- The theme is "Imagine".

- At this point, registration is a bit lower than usual, which is a trend also being seen in other synods.
- Overall, planning is going well.
- She reminded the council that all synod council members are voting members, either for their council or congregation. She also reminded them of the covid requirements that are in place: proof of vaccination or negative covid test.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

- Treasurer Jeff Chestnut then updated the council on the synod's finances.
- Treasurer Chestnut noted a positive balance of \$46,000 at this point, also noting that this is just the first month of the fiscal year.
- There are a few large expense items that are not reflected in the books at this time, such as rent. We are currently being charged a reduced rate for rent, as we cannot use the space as usual due to COVID protocols at Assisi Heights. He noted that, at some point, this will change within the budget.
- Dr. Mary Veiseth made a motion to receive the financial report.

### SC22.05.22 Motion to receive the financial report.

Motion approved.

## MINIMUM COMPENSATION & BENEFITS GUIDELINES

- Rev. Jay Dahlvang from the Minimum Compensation & Benefits Task Force presented the 2023 Minimum Compensation & Benefits Guidelines Document, which had been presented at the previous council meeting. Rev. Dahlvang walked through the process that went into this year's Guidelines document, as well as a brief history of the preparation of this document in the past.
- This year's document showed a \$1,125 increase, which includes a \$500 increase plus the step increase.
- Rev. Dave Knox recommended that language be added in that notes that the current increase does not meet the Cost of Living increase.
- Following discussion on the guidelines, Burton Svendsen made a motion to receive the document, and to forward Resolution 2022-01: "2023 Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines", to the Committee on

Reference and Counsel recommending its adoption by the 2022 SEMN Synod Assembly. The text of Resolution 2022-1 is as follows:

- **Whereas**, St. Paul writes, "and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together," (1 Corinthians 3); and
- **Whereas**, **†S6.03.01.a** in the Constitution for Synods states that the responsibilities of the synod include "providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod"; and
- **Whereas**, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council has reviewed the *2023 Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines*; therefore be it
- **Resolved**, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA adopt the document *2023 Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines* for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ministers of Word and Service, and non-rostered lay professionals serving in congregations in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

### SC22.05.23 Motion to receive the document "2023 Minimum Compensation & Benefits Guidelines" from the Minimum Compensation & Benefits Guidelines Task Force and to forward a resolution (Resolution 2022-01) to the SEMN Committee on Reference and Counsel recommending the Guidelines be adopted at the 2022 SEMN Synod Assembly.

Motion approved.

## 2024 SPENDING PLAN FOR MISSION & MINISTRY REVIEW

- Treasurer Chestnut and Bishop Hassanally then reviewed the 2024 Spending Plan for Mission and Ministry.
- The 2024 Spending Plan was presented, with proposals discussed around the amount in Mission Support to the Churchwide organization and what alterations to this amount opens up for mission in the synod.
  - Currently, the SEMN Synod gives 48% of mission support received to the Churchwide organization. If the 2024 budget maintains this 48%

level, the 2024 Spending Plan shows a negative \$46,000 balance.

- Two other Spending Plan proposals were given, each lowering mission support: one to 40% and another to 43%. In the Spending Plan proposal with Mission Support set at 40%, a line item is set aside for Ministry Initiatives within the synod.
- During this discussion, the council also discussed how to present any change to the level of Mission Support to the Synod Assembly.
- Other Spending Plan changes, such as rent and the location of the synod office were discussed, to increase the margin in the Spending Plan. It was felt that this could be looked at in the future but would not affect this Spending Plan. Rev. Jenna Couch motioned to create a task force to explore office space usage for the Office of the Bishop and explore alternatives.

**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.**

- Rev. Collette Broady-Grund then made a motion to recommend the 2024 Spending Plan for Mission & Ministry, with Mission Support set at 43% and \$20,000 added to the line item of Ministry Initiatives within the synod, for approval by the 2022 SEMN Synod Assembly.

**SC22.05.25      Motion to recommend the 2024 Spending Plan for Mission & Ministry, with Mission Support set at 43% and \$20,000 added to the line item of Ministry Initiatives within the Synod, for approval by the 2022 SEMN Synod Assembly.**

**Motion approved.**

## **2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBERS**

- Several people who were elected to attend the 2022 Churchwide assembly are unable to attend. The Synod Council needed to appoint alternates to replace them. These alternates had also been elected at the last Synod Assembly.
- Kim Wencel and Burton Svendsen are no longer able to attend. Nadine Omans and Thomas Peterson were the alternates appointed to attend the 2022 Churchwide Assembly in their place.
- Bishop Hassanally made a motion to appoint Nadine Omans and Thomas Peterson as voting members to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

**SC22.05.26      Motion to appoint Nadine Omans and Thomas Peterson as voting members to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.**

**Motion approved.**

## **FUTURE DATES FOR SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

- Future dates for synod assembly were then presented and discussed with the council. The Bishop noted that the synod has placed a hold on the Mankato location for next year (May 5-6, 2023). The plan is to hold two days, in case two days are needed.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- The council then moved into Executive session to discuss changes to the roster.
- Rev. Kris Ferkin made a motion to enter executive session.

**SC22.05.27      Motion to enter executive session.**

**Motion approved.**

- Action taken during this session:
- Call to Interim Ministry Through Synod Council (needs approval)
  - Rev. Mike Zaske, Interim at Faith, Dodge Center to Interim, at First English of Cannon Falls. Effective: 03/14/2022. Approved at Synod Council meeting on 04/09/2022.
  - Rev. Kary Jonas, La Crosse Area Synod to Interim Pastor at First of Lake City. Effective: 04/04/2022. Approved at Synod Council meeting on 04/09/2022.

- Bishop Hassanally made a motion to approve call to Interim ministry through synod council roster changes.

**SC(ES22.05.28) Motion to approve Call to Interim Ministry Through Synod Council roster changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- Retirement Status (needs approval)
  - Rev. Nancy Edwardson. Effective: 05/01/2022. Approved at Synod Council meeting on 04/09/2022.
  - Rev. Luther Mathsen. Effective: 06/01/2022. Approved at Synod Council meeting on 04/09/2022.
  - Rev. Steven Schwartz. Effective: 06/01/2022. Approved at Synod Council meeting on 04/09/2022.
- Bishop Hassanally made a motion to approve retirement status roster changes.

**SC(ES22.05.29) Motion to approve Retirement Status roster changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- Death (acknowledge only)
  - Rev. Albert Girtz. 02/11/2022.
  - Deacon Janet Tantow. 02/16/2022.
  - Rev. Russell Wangen. 02/20/2022.
- On Leave From Call (Yearly Renewal-needs approval)
  - Rev. Charlie Leonard. 2<sup>nd</sup> Request. Approved at Synod Council meeting on 04/09/2022.
- Bishop Hassanally made a motion to approve on leave from call (yearly renewal) roster changes.

**SC(ES22.05.30) Motion to approve On Leave From Call (Yearly Renewal) roster changes.**

**Motion approved.**

- Secretary Rev. Josh Enderson made a motion to leave Executive Session.

**SC(ES22.05.31) Motion to leave Executive Session.**

**Motion approved.**

**WORDS OF APPRECIATION FOR OUTGOING MEMBERS**

- Vice President Dierks then thanked the members of synod council whose terms were ending. These members were:
  - Rev. Kris Ferkin, Rev. David Knox, Rev. Ben Loven, Burton Svendsen, Anya Liedtke-Quick.
- Vice President Dierks declared the meeting adjourned at 11:02am.

The next meeting will be the Council Orientation in July 2022.

Submitted,  
Rev. Josh Enderson  
Synod Council Secretary

APPROVED 9/24/2022 JE