

**Northwest Washington Synod
Synod Council Meeting Minutes 17 May 2024
Dumas Bay Centre, Federal Way**

- Present:** Luke Allgeyer, Bart Brosten, Shelley Bryan Wee, Salvador Cossio, Kay Edgerton, Curt Eidem, Netsie Griffith, Ivar Hillesland, Shane Lambing, Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell, Kelly Peterson, Cindy Shultz, Sam Sseba, and Elly Stitt
- Present by Zoom:** Judy Brennan and Hector Garfias-Toledo
- Staff:** Susan Berg, David Hahn, Tabetha Myatt, and Andy Yee
- Guests:** Courtney Stepp, Cheryl Stitt, and Deanna Wildermuth
- Absent:** Rebecca Langholz

Call to Order, Land Acknowledgment and Opening Devotion

Vice President Kay called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and shared the following land acknowledgment:

- We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this area, the Coast Salish people (specifically in this area, the Duwamish). Since time immemorial, they have hunted, fished, gathered, and taken care of these lands. We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination, and honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. We will strive to be honest about our past mistakes and bring about a future that includes their people, stories, and voices to form a more just and equitable society.

Bp. Shelley read Psalm 121* twice. She invited people to listen for a word/phrase which spoke something to them. She then invited people to share with the group. Following this, she opened the meeting with prayer.

It was moved, seconded, and carried (hereafter abbreviated as MSC)

SC2024.05.17.01 to approve the agenda as presented.

The following items were requested to be removed from the Consent Agenda:

- Approval of Synod Calls for Rev. Marc Hander and Rev. Kari Lipke
- The Bishop's Report
- The Synod Website Policy recommended to be rescinded

Removed items were then considered as follows:

Bishop's Report

- Clarification was requested in the staffing portion of the bishop's report regarding the positions and funding for the Director for Evangelical Mission. Why was a person not being sought to fill the .5-time position resulting from the resignation of Herb Shao from his .75-time position and Judy Brennan's being moved from a .75-time position to a full-time position?
- The bishop responded by explaining that 1) because 2025 is the year of the bishop election, and were Bp. Shelley not to be re-elected as Bishop, the other staff positions are co-terminus; thus, bringing someone into a position that could be terminated does not seem wise, and 2) churchwide is re-evaluating how to fund DEM positions. Churchwide, however, will provide a grant for the amount of the .5-time position to be used for DEM work.

The Bishop's report was received without objections by acclamation.

**the scriptural basis of this year's Synod Assembly theme, "We Lift Our Eyes"*

Recension of Website Policy

- A question was raised about the rationale for rescinding the 2002 Website policy.
- It was explained that the Policy Review Committee, upon consultation with our Communications and Events Coordinator staff person, Susan Berg, is making this recommendation based on the intention of replacing this policy with a new policy covering the website and all synod publications.

MSC

SC2024.05.17.02 to rescind the website policy approved by Synod Council September 21, 2002.

Synod Calls

- Synod calls for Marc Hander and Kari Lipke were pulled from the Consent Agenda because of the late posting of the background information validating these calls. Thus, Bp. Shelley summarized this documentation for the council and entertained questions. With such information provided the council was then asked to make an informed decision regarding these calls.
- It was clarified that synod calls are for one year and then to be renewed.

MSC

SC2024.05.17.03 to extend synod calls to Rev. Marc Hander to serve as Community Engagement Manager for Lutheran Community Services NW in Bellingham; Transition Facilitator for Bethlehem Lutheran, Sedro Wooley; and Legacy Facilitator, Central Lutheran, Bellingham and to Rev. Kari Lipke to serve as an Adult Services Clinician at Sound Mental Health on Capitol Hill, Seattle.

It was moved and carried (hereafter abbreviated as MC)

SC2024.05.17.04 to approve the remaining items on the Consent Agenda consisting of:

- Approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2024 Synod Council Meeting
- Reception of the following written staff reports as presented, including any addendums:
 - Report of the Assistant to the Bishop – Andy Yee
 - Report of the Treasurer – Bart Broston
 - Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) – Judy Brennan
 - Report of the Director of Formation and Learning – David Hahn
 - Report of the Director of Properties – Jay Edgerton
- Reception of the following written committee report as presented:
 - Policy Review
- Recension of the following outdated communications policies with the intention of replacing them with new, more accurate ones (per Policy Review Committee recommendation)
 - Synod Addresses
 - Synod Publications
- Approval of the following roster actions:
 - On Leave from Call (OLFC):
 - Rev. Jenna Bergeson (3/17/2024)
 - Rev. Anja Helmon (4/5/2024)
 - Retired:
 - Rev. Verlon Brown (3/1/2024)
 - Rev. David Parks (6/23/2024)
 - Synod Call:
 - Rev. Pam Karas, Faith Lutheran, Everett (4/7/2024) - renewal
- Reception of the following roster notifications:
 - Called:
 - Sr. Jessica Zimmerle, St. John United (2/1/2024)
 - Rev. Mark Fisher, Bethlehem (4/28/2024)
 - Death:
 - Rev. Chris Berry

- Transfer in:
 - Rev. Thomas Voelp (3/4/2024) from SWCA
- Transfer out:
 - Dcn. Clara Griffin (3/18/2024) to SWCA
 - Rev. Roger Claxton (5/6/2024/) to SE Iowa
- Resigned from the roster:
 - Matt Zeile

REPORT

Report for the May 18, 2024 Synod Assembly - (Courtney Stepp and Susan Berg)

- Courtney and Susan went over multiple things helpful for us to know prior to tomorrow's Assembly.
- Grace Lutheran is excited to be hosting us, and Susan encouraged us to extend our thanks to as many of the Grace volunteers as possible.
- We were reminded that all Synod Council members are voting members and are encouraged to participate fully.
- A sincere thanks was expressed to Courtney in her debut role as Synod Assembly Committee Chair.

UPDATES SINCE LAST MEETING

Coaches Northwest

- At their April 10th meeting the Executive Committee approved the final draft of the NWWA Synod Coaches Discipline Policy as passed on to them from the Policy Review Committee.

MC

SC2024.05.17.05 **to approve the following as NWWA Active Coaches, so that they might be provided liability insurance through the Synod's Insurance Policy with Church Mutual Insurance: Kevin Bates, Kay Edgerton, Misi French, Sara Funkhouser, Hector Garfias-Toledo, Marc Hander, Callie Moothart, Cindy Myatt, Jim Myers, Harriet Platts, Jane Prestbye, Gary Rothenberg, Erik Samuelson, Kasey Shultz, Deb Squires, Cara Tanis, and Jade Yi.**

Call Change for Roots of the Table

- Judy, in her role as DEM, asked the Executive Committee (EC) to act on rescinding the synod call to Pr. Paul Kacynski as Mission Developer to Roots of the Table/Luther's Table ending May 2, 2024. This action was taken by the EC at their April 10th meeting.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Follow-Up

- Shelley, David and Kay did an evaluation of the March 23rd training session and have consulted with crossroads staff since then; it was concluded there was a lack of clarity about what was expected; they would like to re-launch after new council members are elected; people going off council are still welcome to participate.
- The Strategic Team for Authentic Diversity (STAD) would like to participate; it would be good to have STAD members participate on the coordination/planning team.
- The new launch will take place in August or September.
- Look in the Synod Assembly Guidebook for the document: *Crossroads/Northwest Washington Synod Animating Antiracism Partnership* for more information.

OLD BUSINESS

Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Profile Survey Recommendation (Ivar)

- After some discussion based on information Ivar discovered after looking at the survey, he volunteered to fill out the survey on behalf of the synod and submit it to Reconciling Works, so they will update our RIC status in their records.
- Based on the updates we made at our March meeting, this appears to be the last step we need to take.

MSC

SC2024.05.17.06 to authorize Ivar Hillesland to complete the Reconciling in Christ survey on behalf of the synod.

NEW BUSINESS**Approve Hope, Lake Stevens as a new Congregation****MC**

SC2024.05.17.07 to recognize and receive Hope Church, Lake Stevens, as a new congregation of the NWWA Synod and the ELCA.

Congregational Vitality Grant Request**MC**

SC2024.05.17.08 to approve \$5000 from the NWWA Synod's Renewing Congregations Fund for the Youth Energizing Snohomish (YES) Outreach Program for 2024.**

[**\$5,000 is also requested from the ELCA Churchwide offices.]

LOOKING AHEAD**Future Agenda Items**

- A question was raised about the highlighted items in Judy's report and if we needed to make a response.
- Kay responded that these would be included in a list of multiple things that need to be on future council agendas including 1) follow-up from the Personnel Committee, 2) items in the Director of Properties' reports, 3) greater knowledge of the synod's many funds in addition to the general operating funds covered by the budget, and 4) looking at additional funding resources.
- She also noted that the Policy Review Committee is working to create a gift policy for how both financial and material gifts are received.

Upcoming council representation related to events around pastoral calls requested by Andy

- Andy made us aware of the need for a synod council representative at the **June 2nd call meeting of Christ Lutheran, Ferndale**. **Netsie** volunteered to check her schedule to see if she could commit to this.
- Sherianne had volunteered to be the synod representative at the **installation of Pr. Thomas Voelpe at Our Redeemer's Lutheran in Ballard on Friday, June 7th at 6 pm**; since doing so, she has developed a conflict and needs someone to fill in for her. **Shane** volunteered to take her place and be the synod representative.

Note of Personal Privilege

- Kay spoke to the tragedy impacting her school community and the challenge that has been along with balancing work pertaining to her retirement at the end of June. Because of the personal toll this has taken, Kay is going to take the first two weeks in July as an important time of sabbath rest and will not be doing her regular volunteer work during that time.

FUTURE MEETING DATES**Summer Meeting**

- The summer date for Synod Council to meet, **July 20** this year, usually is tentative based on pending business and people's vacation schedules; people going off council are still on; the terms of newly elected council members do not begin until September.
- The bishop would like to use the July date as a celebration to thank the people leaving church council and welcome the newly elected members. So, unless there is very urgent business, the next council meeting in July will be a party tentatively scheduled to be held in Edmonds. **Cindy** volunteered to help with party planning.

The next Executive Committee meetings via Zoom will be:

- June 12, 2024
- August 14, 2024

MSC

SC2024.05.17.09 to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Netsie Griffith,
Synod Council Secretary