

Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting – Approved by the Board (9.10.2019)
Minnesota South (MNS) District
Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 10:00am – 4:00pm
MNS District Office, Burnsville, MN

Mission Statement

Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

1. OPENING DEVOTION

Rev. Dennis Heiden, Lead Pastor of Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato, led the opening devotion based on Luke 24:13-32 and Acts 4:1-13. He highlighted “game changers” – especially the resurrection of Jesus and how others recognized the boldness in common, ordinary people because they had been with Jesus. We sang LSB Hymns 461 and 589.

2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS

a) Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 10:24 a.m. by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

b) Roll Call

Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. Harold Storm; Rev. Dr. Brent Parrish; Rev. Keith Grimm; Mr. Rick Marko; Rev. Christopher Horton; Mr. Daniel Thao; Dr. Gary Elsesser; Rev. Steven Wheeler; Ms. Rosa Summers; Mr. John Branstad; Rev. Loel Wessel; Ms. Sara Sorenson Mr. Dave Kenow; Rev. Dennis Heiden; Mr. Neal Breitbarth; Mr. Leland Huebner; Mr. Joel Landskroener.

Staff: Rev. Robert Schulze; Rev. Dr. William Utech; Mr. Sean Martens; Mr. Kai Larson; Dr. Phil Johnson; Rev. Fred Hinz; Mr. Matt Steiner.

Excused: Mr. Benjamin Hagemann

c) Approval of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion was carried.

d) Approval of the Minutes of Past Meeting – *(prepared by Keith Grimm, Secretary)*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the BOD minutes from February 2, 2019. The motion was carried.

e) Correspondence

- The election for the LCMS Synod President will take place by electronic ballot from June 22-25, 2019. Each congregation has the opportunity to designate a lay and *(if not vacant)* pastoral voter. The results of this ballot will be known almost immediately. The three candidates who received the highest

number of votes for the office of President and have given their consent to serve if elected are: Matthew Harrison, David Meier and Tim Klinkenberg.

- The following Minnesota South delegates will be serving on floor committees for the Synod Convention in Tampa, Florida, July 20-25, 2019:
 - Rev Steven Briel – Floor Committee #1 – National Witness
 - Mr. Dennis Karius – Floor Committee #4 – Life Together
 - Dr. Joshua Miller – Floor Committee #5 – Theology and Church Relations
 - Mr. Justin Benson – Floor Committee #6 – Pastoral Ministry / Seminaries
 - Mr. Christian Preus – Floor Committee #7 – University Education

3. VISIONING / STUDY ITEMS / PRESENTATIONS

- a) Deb Vinkemeier, who serves as President of the Minnesota South District LWML, shared information and resources about the LWML. Because membership in the LWML is declining, they are seeking ways to recruit and engage women in missions and the LWML throughout the District. Over one million dollars has been given through mite boxes since the inception of the LWML. Their mission goal this year is \$265,000. This supports both local and international mission projects. The National LWML Convention will take place in Mobile, Alabama, June 20-23, 2019. Ninety-two women from our District will be attending this event. Deb represents the LWML at numerous events throughout the District each year.
- b) Rev. Dr. Samuel Deressa, who serves as a professor of theology at Concordia University, St. Paul, led a topic titled “Multicultural Congregation.” He shared how many languages were spoken in churches where he grew up in Ethiopia. How can we more effectively reach immigrants with the gospel throughout our District? Using the Book of Acts, Dr. Deressa highlighted that after Pentecost several groups of people were worshiping Jesus in different languages. The church in Antioch (Acts 13) was very multicultural. How can our congregations make this same shift and become more diverse? Instead of assimilating immigrants to “become like us,” how can churches be open to change, welcome and serve other cultures? The goal is to create a “hybrid of cultures” with a new way of worship and authentic integration (no sense of “us” and “them”). To move toward this, we need to intentionally train leaders to commit to learning about the new culture (*mind*); be passionate about being multicultural (*heart*); and utilize individuals who have a past history of living multi-culturally.

4. POLICY FORMATION & REVIEW

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford led a presentation to refresh our understanding of “Policy Based Governance.” First of all, we looked at the Board of Directors Policy Manual Section II on “Officers and Executive Staff” (sections 2.01 and 2.02). We then reviewed Article III from the District Handbook -- particularly sections 4.11.3.1 and 4.11.3.2.

Rev. Bob Schulze, Executive Assistant to the President, announced he will be retiring at the end of August 2019 after serving the District for three years. He commended the District Staff for their excellence and partnership in ministry. A motion was made and seconded to sing the Doxology in gratitude for Bob’s faithful service.

President Woodford set forth the name of a potential candidate to fill the position of “Executive Assistant to the President.” After lengthy discussion, a motion was made and seconded to ratify the appointment of Rev. Stefan Wismar as Executive Assistant to the President starting July 31, 2019. The motion carried.

5. REPORTS

a) Update: District Triennium Initiatives

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford gave an update about the *In the Word* Initiative Survey. This survey will be introduced at the District Pastors Conference to gather information about District-wide congregational Bible study involvement.

Dr. Phil Johnson mentioned that numerous conversations are taking place throughout the District to discuss ministry partnerships in both rural and urban areas.

Rev. Dr. William Utech reported he is leading several discussions about church planting and effectively reaching the next generation with the gospel. In addition, he is putting together a group of pastors and lay leaders to go on a Nicaraguan mission trip through CALMS (Central America Lutheran Mission Society) in October 2019.

Rev. Fred Hinz reported on the following legislative policies that are affecting the church: The Equality Act; Physician-Assisted Suicide; Death by Organ Donation; the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit; the Comprehensive Sex Education Curriculum; and the Conversion Therapy Ban Bill.

Rev. Bob Schulze, Executive Assistant to the President, reported that church worker wellness is being closely monitored. Circuit Visitors are being trained to identify church worker health and wellness. In addition, Bob reported that our District received two vicars and three pastoral placements on call day in April.

Mr. Sean Martens, Assistant to the President for Schools, reported he recently led a conference on excellence in teaching. In addition, four people recently enrolled in a program to receive extensive training in administration.

b) President’s Report

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford reported on his health status after his recent surgeries. He shared his ministry calendar with the BOD. He then explained the letter he recently sent to Secretary of Synod, Rev. Dr. John Sias, concerning changes to our background checks tied to Minnesota Statute 604.20. This statute confuses and slows down our pastoral call process in the District.

President Woodford and Dr. William Utech also introduced a working document titled “Toward a Faithful Theology and Practice of Church Planting.” This document is intended to spur theological and missional discussions throughout our District.

President Woodford then introduced the aspects of the new “Mission Thesis.”

- 1) The church is not the Mission.
- 2) The Church is God’s means for accomplishing God’s Mission.
- 3) The local church is the hope of the world.

Finally, President Woodford followed-up on the *Built on the Rock* survey from February's BOD meeting. This pointed out how at times there is perceived or real conflict and lack of trust issues within boards. So we went through corporate confession and absolution from LSB pages 254-255.

c) Treasurer's Report

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided the financial report for the first three months of the year. Congregational support is slightly under budget. In the first quarter, the market value of our investments grew significantly. The District is in a positive cash-flow position.

d) LCEF Report and Delinquent Loan Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF Vice President, shared that currently there are no delinquent LCEF loans in the District. There are 275 new LCEF investors this year. The District LCEF also chose recipients for one scholarship and three grants.

e) Questions Regarding Minutes of Standing Committee and Sub Committees.

A question was asked concerning the Byron mission grant. Trinity Lutheran Church in Rochester is in conversations with Mount Moriah Lutheran Church in Byron about working in a ministry partnership.

The Finance Committee updated the BOD about Camp Omega. Camp Omega, which is owned by the District, is considering selling adjacent land (less than an acre) to a local homeowner. The District Attorney will be offering legal counsel on this sale.

It was moved and seconded that the Finance Committee be authorized to continue its exploration and possible execution of the sale of this half-acre of property on the north side of Horseshoe Lake. This motion carried.

6. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS

a) Approval of the 2018 Audit Report

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, explained that the audit was completed by the LCMS internal audit group from St. Louis. Our financial statements for 2017-2018 received a clean report.

b) District Salary Compensation Review and Recommendation

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, shared information about the Concordia Plans salary compensation guideline for church workers. It was moved and seconded that the District utilize this new guideline instead of the current one. This motion carried.

c) Rev. Harold Storm and Ms. Rosa Summers reported the Congregational Constitutions and Bylaws Committee recommends the constitution of St. John Lutheran Church, Atwater, MN be approved. This motion carried.

d) There was no other Business

7. ROUND TABLE

Several prayer requests were shared by Board members.

8. CLOSING PRAYER

Rev. Dennis Heiden read Colossians 3:12-13 and then led us in a closing prayer.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 3:58pm. Rev. Christopher Horton will lead the opening devotion at the September BOD meeting.

2019 BOD MEETINGS (10:00A – 4:00P)

Monday-Tuesday, September 9-10, 2019 (Retreat and Meeting)
Tuesday, December 3, 2019 (December 5 is weather alternative date)
Saturday, February ?, 2020 - TBD
May 5, 2020