

**Minutes: Board of Directors RETREAT – Approved by the Board** (on 12.3.2019)  
**Monday, September 9, 2019, 10:00am – 6:30pm**  
Minnesota South (MNS) District, Burnsville

**Mission Statement**

***Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.***

Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. Harold Storm; 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. Benjamin Hagemann; Mr. Leland Huebner; Mr. Joel Landskroener

Staff: Rev. Stefan Wismar; Rev. Dr. William Utech; Dr. Phil Johnson; Mr. Sean Martens; Mr. Kai Larson

Absent: Mr. Neal Breitbarth; Rev. Fred Hinz; Mr. Matt Steiner

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford.

**1. DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY**

President Woodford used “Morning Devotion” from LSB. We sang Hymn 507 “Holy, Holy, Holy.” The meditation was based on the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” from Luke 10:25ff. This is far more than going and being like the Good Samaritan. If we want salvation left in our hands, it requires perfection. Jesus alone is the Good Samaritan who mercifully rescues and heals us by what He did at Calvary’s cross. He compassionately washes and cleanses us through baptism and the Lord’s Supper. His love now empowers us to love our neighbors. Finally, we sang Hymn 861 “Christ Be My Leader.”

**2. INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY AND RETREAT THEME**

Dr. Phil Johnson, Assistant to the President for Mission and Ministry Cultivation, introduced today’s topic by showing a chart revealing congregations in the District that are worshipping 50 or less (25% of congregations); 50-125 (37% of congregations); 126-300 (24% of congregations). 60% of our District congregations are at or below the average number of worshippers needed to sustain a full-time pastor and supporting ministry. About 1.4% (31) of our congregations are in a position to be part of a new church start. Perhaps there is an opportunity for District congregations to work cooperatively alongside each other.

**3. “FROM BOGEYMAN TO BIG BROTHER” PRESENTATION**

Rev. Dennis Heiden, Lead Pastor of Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato, introduced several guests from St. Peter Lutheran Church in Vernon Center, the Lutheran Church of Our Savior in Winnebago and Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato. They shared their partnership story of Hosanna Lutheran Church going from being perceived as the “bogeyman” to becoming a “big brother.” When Hosanna was considering planting a new church, St. Peter Lutheran Church in Vernon Center approached them. St. Peter celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010 and were in survival mode. They eventually met with Hosanna’s leadership team several times and signed a mentoring relationship in 2012. They initiated several outreach and community events to be a blessing to others. Eventually during a pastoral vacancy, the leadership of St. Peter approached Hosanna about serving their vacancy. Hosanna agreed to do this in 2017. In 2018, Pastor Adam Finney accepted the call to serve at St. Peter. He continues to meet with the leaders at Hosanna for mentorship and wisdom.

Rev. Michael Omtvedt, Associate Pastor of Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato, then introduced the partnership process with the Lutheran Church of Our Savior in Winnebago. Our Savior’s began in 1933. Average attendance had dwindled to 25 per week. The church sent out letters to area congregations requesting potential partnerships in 2017. Having heard about the successful partnership at Vernon Center, the leaders of Our Savior’s approached Hosanna. In September 2018 the congregation voted to move forward with a Hosanna partnership. The congregation has embraced the guidance and support of Hosanna’s leadership. They have adopted their mission and outreach spirit. They have seen exponential growth in worship attendance and Christian education.

We took a break for lunch at 12:04pm.

We reconvened at 12:40pm.

Some of the blessings for the Our Savior’s congregation partnering with Hosanna have been assistance with Christian education, governance, relationship building, new approaches to outreach and technology upgrades. They have been able to keep their individual identity while being sharpened and encouraged in multiple ways.

#### **4. “CULTIVATING MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS” PRESENTATION**

Rev. Michael Omtvedt, Associate Pastor, of Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato, talked about some of the bumps and barriers Hosanna encountered in this partnership process. First of all, the Hosanna congregation had to discuss and learn what it means to be mission focused. Secondly, Hosanna members would sometimes ask, “Where are our pastors and what difference are these partnerships making?” This is a step of faith for every congregation because it is unknown how these partnerships will affect budgets, personnel, worship styles and the missions of each congregation. In addition, humility is vital through this. No congregation has all the answers. So regular and open communication is essential. Be sure to learn who the “informal” congregational leaders are and work with them. One of their core values is: “Never

changing message, ever changing methods.” Finally, the church will die if the congregation doesn’t fully embrace Christ’s love, truth, joy and unity. Their presentation ended with Q and A.

We took a break at 2:04pm.

We reconvened at 2:16pm.

**5. ROLE OF THE DISTRICT IN COOPERATIVE MINISTRY**

Dr. Phil Johnson, Assistant to the President for Mission and Ministry Cultivation, provided a discussion guide on considering cooperative ministries throughout the District. The Board members shared their responses on the strengths, challenges and next steps of cooperative ministry in the Minnesota South District.

**6. CLOSING PRAYER OFFICE**

Rev. Stefan Wismar, Executive Assistant to the President for Pastoral Care, led our closing devotion. He used LSB “Early Evening.” We sang Hymn 585 “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.” His meditation was based on John chapter 10. Finally, we read the Second Petition and Third Petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 pm.

**Minutes: Board of Directors MEETING – Approved by the Board** (on 12.3.2019)  
**Tuesday, September 10, 2019, 8:30am – 4:00pm**  
Minnesota South (MNS) District, Burnsville

**Mission Statement**

***Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.***

**1. OPENING DEVOTION**

Rev. Christopher Horton, Region 1 Pastoral Representative, used “Morning Devotion” from LSB. We sang Hymn 718 “Jesus, Lead Thou On.” His message was based on Philippians 2:12-18. We sang Hymn 548 “Thanks to Thee, O Christ, Victorious.”

**2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS**

a) Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 8:58am 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. 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. Benjamin Hagemann; Mr. Neal Breitbarth; Mr. Leland Huebner; Mr. Joel Landskroener

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

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 May 7, 2019. The motion was carried.

e) Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

**3. GUEST PRESENTATION**

Mr. Doyle Benson, the new President of MN South District’s Lutheran Layman’s League, recommended that Rev. James King from Immanuel Lutheran Church in

Gaylord be selected as the Pastoral Representative for the MN South District's Lutheran Layman's League. This was approved. Then Doyle shared information about Lutheran Hour Ministries programs internationally and locally. Orphan Grain Train is looking for workers and volunteers to continue this faithful ministry in our District.

#### **4. VISIONING / STUDY ITEMS / PRESENTATIONS**

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, District President, led a presentation titled: "Pastoral Care, Church Leadership and Administration: Resource Study." We spent time studying these two books:

1. *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastors Heart* by Harold Senkbeil
2. *Church Leadership and Strategy: For the Care of Souls* by Harold Senkbeil and Lucas Woodford

#### **5. POLICY FORMATION & REVIEW**

Rev. Christopher Horton, Region 1 Pastoral Representative, led us through a review of Bylaws 4.4.11 "Vice-Presidents" through 4.5.12 "Minutes." He especially noted Bylaw 4.5.6 "Vacancies" – *"In case of any vacancy on the board of directors, unless otherwise provided for in these bylaws, the remaining directors by majority vote shall elect a successor to hold office for the unexpired portion of the term."*

We also spent time reviewing The LCMS Handbook 2016 Bylaws 1.10.10 through 1.10.10.4 concerning "District Reconcilers."

The board discussed potential changes to the BOD Policy Manual. The District Policy Committee will assess and consider these changes.

Because Rev. Brent Parrish was recently elected at the Synod Convention to serve on the Board of Regents at Concordia University St. Paul (and accepted this position), he is no longer eligible to serve as the Region 2 Vice President of the District. Rev. Steve Wheeler, who has been serving in the Region 2 Board of Directors Ordained position, now will serve as Vice President of Region 2 and as the 4<sup>th</sup> Vice President of District according to District bylaws.

It was moved and seconded that Heather Hardecopf be appointed to serve on the Ministerial Health Committee. The motion carried.

#### **6. WELCOME**

The Board of Directors welcomed Rev. Steve Wheeler to the MN South Presidium as the new Vice President of Region 2. We also welcomed Rev. Stefan Wismar as the new Executive Assistant to the President. They both will be publicly installed at the All Church Worker Conference on October 17, 2019.

#### **7. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

It was moved and seconded to elect a candidate today to fill the vacant Region 2 Board of Directors Ordained position. The motion carried. The following two candidates were nominated to fill this position: Rev. LeRoy LaPlant, Rev. Isaac

Williams. Rev. Isaac Williams was elected to this position. He will be installed at the All Church Worker Conference in October.

A ballot was distributed to elect a new MNS South District Reconciler (ordained). The Board of Directors elected Rev. Mark Loder for this position.

## 8. REPORTS

### a) President's Report Highlights, Q & A

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford distributed his June through August report to the Board. He shared there are many exciting ministries and challenges throughout the District that need fervent prayer. In addition, continue to pray for President Woodford's family as they mourn the tragic death of his brother-in-law David Swanson and the healing process of his sister-in-law Ronda. At his recent Staff Retreat President Woodford received valuable feedback from the Staff on how to grow and improve his ministry and leadership. The Staff is studying position expansions, revisions and cultivations.

We took a break for lunch at 12:35pm.

We reconvened at 1:10pm.

### b) Financial Report

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided financial results as of June 30, 2019. We have received \$55,000 more in assets at this point compared to a year ago. Much of this is due to market investments. At this point the financial outlook is positive.

### c) LCEF Report and Delinquent Loan Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF Vice President, reported that there are no delinquent LCEF loans in the District. There are 42 more LCEF investors in the District than a year ago. This is the third best year ever for the LCEF. Consequently, the LCEF is giving the District a \$60,000 gift.

### d) Special Reports (None were reported)

### e) Initiatives Relaunch: Summary and Emphasis

- a. *In the Word* – Our goal is to have 20% of communicant members in District congregations in a Bible study.
- b. *Ministry Partnerships* – The District hopes to further develop networking, sharing resources and collaboration between congregations. We reviewed some of the bumps and barriers of congregational partnerships. In addition, this question was asked: "How does our Lutheran conviction and identity shape our worship?"
- c. *Worker Wellness*

### f) Other Committee Minutes; schools & commissioned; ministerial health; mission formation; missions, etc.

Questions were asked of the Endowment Committee and Missions Committee.

## 9. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS

- a) Constitution Committee: Rev. Harold Storm  
No Constitution & Bylaws were approved at the August 23, 2019, meeting.
- b) Congregational Mission Formation Fund  
Dr. Phil Johnson on behalf of the Mission Formation Committee shared the Committee's proposal to establish a Legacy Fund for congregations, which are choosing to close their doors, enabling them to invest their remaining undesignated assets to support local outreach efforts. This fund would be administered by the Congregational Mission Formation Committee with approval of the District Board of Directors. The Board of Directors passed this motion.
- c) Finance Committee  
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, presented and explained the first draft of the 2020 preliminary budget. The Finance Committee is forecasting that 75% of next year's revenue will come from congregational support. The forecasted revenue from congregations is expected to stay the same. 40% of budget expenses are for salary and benefits; 17% are for mission programs; 28% are for Synod; and 6% are for LCEF. We will continue to work on balancing this budget before approval later this year.

## 10. ROUND TABLE

Celebrations and prayer requests were shared.

## 11. CLOSING PRAYER

Rev. Christopher Horton, Region 1 Pastoral Representative, led our closing prayer.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 3:40pm.

### UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS:

- Tuesday December 3, 2019, 10am-4pm  
Weather alternative: December 5
- Saturday, February 8, 2020, 10am - 4pm  
Weather alternative: February 15
- Tuesday, May 5, 2020, 10am-4pm
- Monday & Tuesday, September 21-22, 2020
- Tuesday, December 1, 2020, 10am-4pm  
Weather alternative, December 3