

Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting – Approved by the Board
Minnesota South (MNS) District
February 25, 2023 – 10:00am to 4:00pm
District Office, Burnsville, MN

Mission Statement

Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

1. OPENING DEVOTION

Rev. David Kind, Campus Pastor of University Lutheran Chapel in Minneapolis and Third Vice President of the District, served as chaplain for the day. He led a devotion using LSB Morning Prayer and Psalm 46. His message was based on Mark 6. We sang LSB Hymn 418 “O Lord, throughout These Forty Days.”

2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS

a) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, at 10:21am.

b) Roll Call

Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. David Kind; Rev. Mark Loder; Rev. Keith Grimm; Mr. Rick Marko; Rev. Kurt Klaus; Mr. Daniel Thao; Ms. Alfrieda Baldwin; Rev. Matthew Johnson; Mr. Bill Summers; Rev. Jonathan Vollrath; Ms. Sara Sorenson; Mr. David Koosman; Mr. Daniel Uttech

Staff: Rev. Stefan Wismar; Mr. Sean Martens; Dr. Phillip Johnson; Rev. Vue Lee; Mr. Kai Larson; Rev. Fred Hinz; Nadine Meyer

Excused: Mr. Travis Barclay, Mr. Dave Kenow, Rev. Eric Nelson, Mr. Andy Frerich, Mr. Joel Landskroener

c) Approval of Agenda

The motion carried for the agenda of the day to be approved.

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

A motion was made and seconded to approve BOD minutes from December 6, 2022. The motion carried.

e) Correspondence

Rev. Keith Grimm, District Secretary, highlighted important dates and deadlines for 2023 Synod Convention. In addition, President Woodford introduced Rev. Vue Lee, our new Minnesota South District Mission Executive.

3. GUEST PRESENTER

Mr. Ted Kober walked us through several proposed changes to our Minnesota South District Bylaws and to our BOD Policy Manual. He explained that the governing board establishes policy in these four main areas: desired outcomes, board process, board/staff relationship, and board/executive limitations. Ted is recommending a modified governance model.

4. VISION / STUDY ITEMS / PRESENTATIONS:

The BOD had extensive discussion over Ted Kober's recommended changes to the bylaws and policy manual. Ted recommends that the BOD discuss conceptually if these changes to the bylaws and policy manual are what we want to do. If so, Ted recommends that we check with LCMS Secretary, Dr. John Sias, about the timeline of undergoing this process with the Committee on Constitutional Matters (CCM).

5. POLICY FORMATION

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford asked for a motion to proceed with a modified policy based governance model for the Minnesota South District. The motion was made. Positive discussion ensued. The motion to proceed with formulating a modified policy based governance model for the Minnesota South District was made, seconded, and carried. A Governance Task Force was built consisting of Dr. Phil Johnson, Glen Meints, Rev. Matthew Johnson, Rev. Mark Loder, and Rev. Keith Grimm (Rev. Jonathan Vollrath will help with proof reading). This task force will draft changes of the BOD Policy Manual and Bylaws for the BOD to review at their May meeting.

6. REPORTS:

a) President's Report Highlights, Q & A: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford presented his report of activities from December 2022 through February 2023. He shared concerns about some of his ecclesiastical supervision challenges. He is doing what he can to assist professional church workers in need. In addition, President Woodford mentioned preparations for the Spring Pastors Conference at Maddens are underway. Then President Woodford asked Rev. Fred Hinz, the District's Public Policy Advocate, to share information about current happenings and concerns in the Minnesota Legislature. Fred mentioned many radical bills are being rapidly passed by state legislators.

Our new Minnesota South Missions executive, Rev. Vue Lee, reported he is visiting all the mission congregations throughout the District to form relationships and offer encouragement.

Rev. Stefan Wismar, Assistant to the President, mentioned he is working on new salary guidelines for District workers.

Ms. Nadine Meyer, Communications Director for the District, mentioned she is continually updating the District's website and publicizing several District events, stories and scholarship opportunities.

Mr. Sean Martens, Assistant to the President, Education & Commissioned Ministers, mentioned he is promoting teacher recruitment and leadership development. He is also providing help and support for our school administrators in finding excellent teachers for our Lutheran schools. Finally, he mentioned eight schools in our district are going through the accreditation process; and our Lutheran school enrollment is up 4 percent this year.

Phil Johnson, Assistant to the President - Mission Formation, mentioned the District will be offering a spiritual workshop to create spiritually vibrant families in March. In addition, there were 160 people from the Minnesota South District at the Best Practices Conference in Phoenix in February.

b) Treasurer's Report: Mr. Rick Marko

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided a financial summary for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2022. The change in assets for the quarter was \$152,260 compared to a budget of \$(142,116), over budget by \$294,376. The change in assets for the twelve months ended December 31 was \$(556,110) compared to a budget of \$(414,472) under budget by \$141,638. Congregational support was \$631,035 for the three months ended December 31, as compared to a budget of \$512,512 or \$118,523 over budget. Congregational support for the twelve months ended December 31 was \$2,074,742 as compared to a budget of \$2,050,000 or \$24,742 over budget. Through December there were 191 congregations (82% of total District congregations) making gifts ranging from \$25 to \$131,000. District expenses for the fourth quarter were over budget by \$106,368. Expenses for the twelve months ended December 31 were under budget by \$173,234. The District continues to pay its bills in a timely manner.

c) Finance Committee Report

There was no report.

d) LCEF Report and Delinquent Loan Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF District Vice President, reported there are 3,858 investors who have invested \$92,317,477. This includes \$2,806,773 in new money; and \$2,564,641 in refinances of loans with LCEF. Kai has been having loan discussions with several congregations. He also mentioned Thomas Campbell is a national LCEF Real Estate leader who is working with several District congregations. Finally, he reported there are currently no impaired or troubled LCEF loans in the Minnesota South District.

e) Special Reports

There were no special reports.

f) Other committee minutes: Schools & Commissioned Ministers; Ministerial Health; Mission Formation; Missions; Pre-Seminary Committee

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford mentioned there will be circuit realignments in the future in the Minnesota District.

7. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS:

a) To Appoint a Task Force to Review and Recommend Revisions to Bylaw 2.17

A motion was made to submit the following overture by the Minnesota South District:

WHEREAS sexual misconduct by clergy is a serious and unique problem facing the church today, requiring investigation of charges, discipline of those who fail to live a life “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:2-3), as well as pastoral care for victims, abusers, their families and congregations; and

WHEREAS sexual misconduct by clergy is a betrayal of the trust expected from our Lord’s under-shepherds and an abuse of power (“But it shall not be so among you.” [Mark 10:41-45]), causing spiritual harm to victims; and

WHEREAS the lack of transparency in and mishandling of cases of clergy sexual misconduct by various church groups and institutions has compromised the church’s witness to the saving message of Jesus Christ in the world; and

WHEREAS some of the language and processes governing synod’s approach to such matters merit review and revision, such as,

- The current Bylaw governing sexual misconduct and criminal behavior of individual members of Synod (bylaw 2.17), mirrors closely bylaw 2.14 (Expulsion of Congregations or Individuals from Membership in Synod), when in practice these issues require radically different approaches; and
- The motive and state of mind of “the accuser” (often the victim) in cases governed by Bylaw 2.17 are vastly different from that of the “accuser” in cases governed by Bylaw 2.14; and
- Bylaw 2.17 provides no right of appeal to victims of sexual misconduct if formal proceedings are not initiated, when Bylaw 2.14 provides for the “accuser” to appeal to the President of Synod; and
- The Standard Operating Procedures Manual for Bylaw 2.17 (more than fifty pages) is more about processes and procedures than ensuring pastoral concern for victims, which can cause further trauma and spiritual harm to a victim when no advocate is designated to assist them in navigating the process or manual. For example, item 1.1 on the Flowchart for Bylaw 2.17 requires that the accuser simply be provided with a copy of the Standard Operating Procedure Manual at the initial consultation with the district president; and

WHEREAS periodic review and revision of the process for addressing sexual misconduct of clergy assures the victim, the perpetrator, the church, and the wider public, that our synod takes these matters seriously, even as we modify and improve our process amid difficult circumstances, and work to provide substantive care, support, and discipline to those involved, all as part of our faithful witness to Christ. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the President of Synod, in consultation with the Council of Presidents appoint a task force to review our current bylaws, manuals, CCM guidelines, and procedures for addressing sexual misconduct of clergy; and be it further

RESOLVED that the task force include a minimum of two women as members so that all potential victims will be represented throughout the review and revision process; and be it further

RESOLVED that the task force report its recommendations to the President, COP, and CCM; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the task force, if deemed appropriate, revise bylaw 2.17 in consultation with the secretary of Synod, Commission on Handbook, and CCM, in order to make the process more transparent for both the victim and the accused, and to emphasize the need for pastoral care of victims, their families, and congregations impacted by sexual misconduct.

The motion carried. This overture will be sent immediately to the Synod.

b) Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford asked for the board's input as the District considers options for hiring a business manager in light of our earlier discussion on governance changes. Dan Uttech and Bill Summers volunteered to be part of the future interview process as Board representatives.

7. ROUND TABLE

The Board members shared their celebrations and/or prayer requests.

8. CLOSING PRAYER

Chaplain of the Day, Rev. David Kind, led the closing prayer.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 4:25pm.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday, May 2, 2023, 10am – 4 pm

Chaplain: Rev. Mark Loder

Monday & Tuesday, September 25-26, 2023

Chaplain: Rev. Keith Grimm

Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 9am – 4pm

Chaplain: Rev. Kurt Klaus