

Minutes from the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
of the Central States Synod
August 16, 2024
via Zoom

Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Tullia Hamilton & Julie Barstow

Absent: Rev. Zac Sturm

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

- Bishop Candea led us in a devotion on wisdom, and then she led us in prayer.
- Nancy offered some opening remarks about the role of the Holy Spirit in everything we do, and we did a breathing exercise.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on June 6, 2024.

- SEC 24.08.16.A41 It was MSC to approve the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on June 6, 2024. (Motion notation explained at the end of these minutes)

He also presented the minutes from the 2024 Synod Assembly.

- SEC 24.08.16.A42 It was MSC to approve the minutes from the 2024 Synod Assembly.

TREASURER'S REPORT – NEED TO UPDATE ALL OF THIS

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

Financial Status as of 7/31/2024, after 6 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2025. Income from congregations

- \$621,405 received
- The amount received is \$3,595 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -0.6% variance
- The amount received is \$7,903 less than received last year, a -1.3% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$310,702 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$1,798 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -0.6% variance
- The amount contributed is \$3,952 less than last year, a -1.3% variance

Synod Expenditures

- \$335,106 spent
- The amount spent is \$34,438 less than budgeted, an -10.3% variance
- This is also \$49,737 less than spent last year, a -14.8% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$666,351 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$15,693 less than anticipated but \$5,678 more than last year
- \$645,808 in Total Expenditures, \$36,236 less than anticipated, and \$53,689 less than last year

- Net surplus of \$20,544 as compared to a \$38,824 deficit last year

Analysis of Financial Status

- Through the month of June giving from the congregations was running ahead of last year. Then July happened. The giving in July was far enough below the average needed that we fell behind last year's pace by about \$8,000. This is no reason to be alarmed, but it is a concern given that we had reduced our anticipated contributions by a whopping \$200,000 from last year's budget. A contributing factor to the lower amount for July could be that we closed the books on July a few days earlier to facilitate the bookkeeper transition. If so, this will lead to a larger contribution amount in August. We'll see.
- Synod expenditures are less than budgeted overall. This is due to lower Campus Ministry expenses due to the pastoral vacancy at the KU site, lower operating expenses, and a lower amount spent for Mission Support. Travel is now slightly below budget after reclassifying some expenses incorrectly applied to Travel.
- Our total income is less than budgeted, but more than last year at this time. There are two drivers for this situation. We have received all the grant amounts from Churchwide that we should have. Last year we had not received the DEM grants yet. In addition, we have not released any of the temporarily restricted funds as called for in the budget. We typically wait until the end of the year to release these funds once we have identified how much actually needs to be used. If we released these funds on a quarterly basis, it would have added \$27,500 to our total income.

Bookkeeper Transition

- Our new bookkeeper, Michelle Goodwin, has started and nearly completed the transition process. The process has gone smoothly and should be completed within the next couple weeks. Rich Gates, our new Synod Administrator, has also been involved in this process and his help has been invaluable. Bishop Candeia reiterated that we are already reaping the benefits of having the bookkeeping inhouse.

Authorized Signatures

- SEC 24.08.16.A43 It was MSC to authorize as signatories on all of the financial accounts of the Central States Synod the following people: Bishop Susan Candeia, Treasurer Scott Schulte & Bookkeeper Michelle Goodwin. It was further approved to remove Barbara Beadle as an authorized signatory.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candeia offered a written report. Verbal highlights included:

- She recently held a staff retreat that went really well. Some things that came out of the retreat include:
 - They mapped out the upcoming year, including how they will approach the potential divisiveness of the upcoming Presidential election.
 - They are looking to expand the Ministry Lab offerings. One of the first Labs they would like to offer is a financial workshop for churches & leaders to better understand church finances.
 - For professional development, they have been operating on a 3 year cycle on racial justice, gender justice, and professional ethics & boundaries. This past year we address professional ethics & boundaries. So the next one will be about racial justice.

- They've started thinking through next year's Synod Assembly. We need to start the Assembly earlier on Thursday so that we can start the Bishop's Election process and have time for everything.
- The situation at Bethany Lutheran in Webster Groves is now completely resolved. The sale has been finalized and the property has been closed.
- She attended the National Youth Gathering, and her role including doing some service projects with one of the congregations and preaching at the Region 4 worship service.
- The Synod has now purchased a new car, a 2025 Toyota Camry Hybrid.

THE GATHERING TABLE

Bishop Candeia gave an update on The Gathering Table. Discussion included:

- The Gathering Table is a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community. This means that they are their own entity and have their own EIN, but their ministry is supported by other individuals & ministries, and the leadership serves under a call from the Synod Council.
- Church Mutual dropped the property insurance on the building in July. The Synod owns the building and has been allowing Gathering Table to use the building at no rent. They pay their portion of the insurance as well as utilities and maintenance. Having no insurance on the property, the synod staff was advised by both the insurance company and the legal offices at churchwide to suspend any further ministry in the building.
- Rev. Donna Simon is meeting with stakeholders to reimagine & re-envision this ministry. They intend to bring a new ministry plan to the October Synod Council meeting, for the annual review and re-authorization of SAWCs, including the synod council calls of the mission developers who serve one year term calls. Bishop Candeia has indicated her intention not to recommend Rev. Rundquist's, the pastor and mission developer of the Gathering Table, synod council call be renewed at the end of the year.
- One of the Gathering Table's parishioners has requested to make a presentation on Rev. Rundquist's behalf at the Synod Council meeting. After discussion among the Executive Committee, we are recommending that any interested parties submit written statements ahead of time. Our Synod Council meetings are not closed meetings, but nor does just anyone have voice. Nancy is considering having a time of public comment and will decide how best to handle this procedurally.
- Because the building where the Gathering Table meets is owned by the synod and we no longer have insurance on it, we need to move as quickly as possible to sell it. We are working with a realtor in the area and we are listing it for \$250,000 who already has some potential buyers.
 - SEC 24.08.16.A44 It was MSC to authorize Bishop Candeia the authority to work with Northeast Realty Company to sell the building of the Gathering Table, beginning with the asking price of \$250,000. Bishop Candeia has the authority to negotiate down to \$150,000 if the building is sold to a non-profit.

2025 BISHOP ELECTION

Nancy has been working with the Discernment Team to prepare for the 2025 Bishop Election. There have been several Zoom sessions to gather feedback to help in the process of developing a Ministry Site Profile. Nancy will be working with chair, Cathy Hohl, to consolidate all the information and develop that profile. They are also working on biographical questions for potential candidates. They will soon start talking about the actual process of the election at the Synod Assembly.

FOLLOW-UP TO 2024 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Bishop Canda went through some of the actions we need to take based on the Synod Assembly resolutions.

- Reconciling in Christ – We are tasked with making a “meaningful” financial contribution to Reconciling in Christ. This money is not currently in the budget.
 - SEC 24.08.16.A45 It was MSC to contribute \$2,000 to Reconciling in Christ for 2024 to be taken from the Council Discretionary Fund.
- Eastern Missouri Conference – We need to appoint a male clergy to attend the 2025 Churchwide Conference.
 - SEC 24.08.16.A46 It was MSC to appoint Rev. Matt Helfrich to be a 2025 Churchwide Voting Member representing the Eastern Missouri Conference.

BETHANY LUTHERAN

We have sold the building (finally!). We still have to pay some final attorneys fees, but other than that, it is finished. Scott is putting together a team to look at the best use of these funds.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Canda presented a written roster report.

- On Leave From Call
 - Rev. Bethany Ann Rutten Kempes has not yet filled out her request for On Leave From Call status. Her 3rd year of OLFC status expired on September 10, 2023, but she was approved for 2 more years by the Conference of Bishops. Her 4th year of OLFC expires on September 10, 2024 and we hope to receive her request form back so we can approve it at the October Synod Council meeting.
 - SEC 24.08.16.A47 It was MSC to grant Rev. Alfi Wyatt another year of On Leave From Call status, effective May 14, 2024. This will be their 3rd year of OLFC.
 - SEC 24.08.16.A48 It was MSC to grant Rev. Dean Apel On Leave From Call status, effective August 25, 2024. He has resigned his call serving Assaria Lutheran, Assaria, KS, and this will be his 1st year of OLFC.
- Synod Council Call
 - SEC 24.08.16.A49 It was MSC to grant Rev. Ethan Feistner a Synod Council call to serve in specialized ministry as the chaplain of Bethany Home, beginning September 3, 2024. Rev. Feistner had been serving under Synod Council call as the Executive Director of Camp Tomah Shinga, but he resigned that call, effective August 30, 2024.

PEACE LUTHERAN, NEW CAMBRIA, KS

Peace Lutheran in New Cambria, KS took their 2nd and final vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA on August 4, 2024. The vote was unanimous. Because they are a former LCA congregation and they do not plan to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, they need Synod Council approval to finalize this process.

- SEC 24.08.16.A50 It was MSC to approve the disaffiliation of Peace Lutheran, New Cambria, KS from the ELCA.

ADJOURNMENT

Nancy closed us in prayer. We adjourned at 4:55pm.

UPCOMING DATES

- Synod Council October 25 - 26 Fri evening – Sat noon in person in Kansas City
- Executive Committee January 17 Friday, 1:00pm Zoom
- Synod Council March 7 – 8 Fri evening – Sat noon Zoom
- Executive Committee May 16 Friday, 1:00pm Zoom
- Synod Council June 5 Thursday, TBD at Synod Assembly

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary

Explanation of Motion Notation:

- SEC 24.08.16.A41 It was MSC to approve the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on June 6, 2024.

The motions are in bold so they are easier to spot in the minutes.

- SEC stands for “Synod Executive Committee”
- 24 the year: 2024
- 08 the month: August
- 16 the day: 16
- A stands for “Action”
- 41 means that this is the 41st action of the year by the organization
- MSC stands for “moved, seconded, and carried” which means that the motion passed