

Minutes from the
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING

April 18, 2024

Via Zoom

Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Rev. Janice Hawley, Tullia Hamilton, Chelsea Deines, Julie Barstow, Logan Simon, Terrance Freeman

Absent: Rev. David Frerichs, Rev. Zac Sturm, Mindy Tillberg, Brianna Dehn, Dallas Rakestraw

This was a properly called special meeting of the Central States Synod Council and there was a quorum present. At our March meeting, there were a few things that still needed a little work, including the Budget and some unresolved issues related to Bethany Lutheran Church in Webster Groves, MO. This meeting was called to address these issues.

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

BETHANY LUTHERAN, WEBSTER GROVES

We are trying to resolve the lawsuit regarding the strip of land that was in dispute. We need the title company to be clear about our ownership of the property and that all the legal and constitutional procedures were properly followed.

- **SC 24.04.18.A29** **It was MSC to approve the following resolution:**

**Resolution of the Central States Synod Council of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Re: Bethany Lutheran Church, Webster Groves, MO**

WHEREAS, the Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wester Groves, Missouri ("Bethany") was a member of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the "Synod").

WHEREAS, among other things, Bethany owned certain real estate located at 407 Fairview Avenue, Webster Groves, Missouri, as more particularly described as (the "Property"):

LOTS NUMBERED 44, 45 AND 46 IN BLOCK 5 OF TUXEDO PARK, IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI, FRONTING 163 FEET 6 3/4 INCHES ON THE NORTH LINE OF PROVIDENCE AVENUE, BY A DEPTH NORTH ON THE EAST LINE OF 170 FEET AND ON THE WEST LINE OF 180 FEET 8 3/4 INCHES MORE OR LESS, TO THE SOUTH LINE OF LOT 46 BLOCK 5 AND BEING BOUNDED WEST BY RAILROAD AVENUE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 2, PAGE 95, OF THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI, RECORDS.

WHEREAS, no worship services or activities have taken place at Bethany since March of 2020;

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2022, at a properly noticed meeting of Synod Council of the Synod (the "Council"), the Council invoked S13.24 of the Synod's constitution, which provides:

The Synod Council may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if ... [d.] The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.

The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.

WHEREAS, the Bethany Congregation did not exercise the foregoing right to appeal.

WHEREAS, Bethany closed effective October 1, 2022.

WHEREAS, Section C7.01 of Bethany's Constitution provides:

If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

WHEREAS, the Synod, as the owner of the Property, desires to transfer a portion of the Property to Gary R. Fleischer, Trustee of the Fleischer Living Trust and Barbara V. Fleischer, Trustee of the Fleischer Living Trust for \$6,700 and other consideration (the "Fleischer Conveyance") in accordance with the Settlement Agreement and Release of all Claims (the "Agreement"), a copy of which has been reviewed by the Synod.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Synod (in its own name, and/or in the name of Bethany) be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed to take any and all actions and to deliver any and all documents necessary or desirable in connection with consummating the Fleischer Conveyance in accordance with the Agreement; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that, REV. SUSAN CANDEA, Bishop (the "Authorized Party"), is authorized, empowered and directed to consummate the Agreement on behalf of the Synod and/or Bethany and to take any and all actions and to execute and deliver any and all such contracts, instruments, documents, agreements, writings or communications as she in her discretion deems necessary or desirable to carry out the intent of the foregoing preambles and resolutions or necessary or desirable in connection with consummating the Agreement, including without limitation, a boundary adjustment plat and a quit claim deed, it being the intent hereof that the Authorized Party may sign any written instruments and may do acts on each Synod's and/or Bethany's behalf without the joinder of any other person; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that any actions of the Authorized Party which would have been authorized by these preambles and resolutions except that such acts were taken prior to the adoption of such preambles and resolutions, including, without limitation, the negotiation,

documentation, and execution of the Agreement, are hereby ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted as the actions of the Synod; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, the foregoing preambles and authorizations are to be broadly construed in granting the Authorized Party those rights and powers as it, in the exercise of its sole discretion, deems necessary or desirable to consummate and carry out their intent.

FYE 1/31/25 REVISED BUDGET

Scott presented the FYE 1/31/25 Revised Budget. Proposed changes from the Approved Budget include:

- Under *Support and Revenue*, we adjusted the congregation support from \$1,450,000 to \$1,250,000, a significant decrease to reflect the current situation. Our Reimbursement/Other Income was also adjusted from \$50,000 to \$40,250 to reflect how reimbursement for Aimee Appell's position is being paid for by Churchwide. We also adjusted the Temporarily Restricted Funds Released from \$40,000 to \$55,000 so that we could make the budget balance.
- To offset the significant decrease in congregation support, we made the following adjustments:
 - *ELCA Churchwide Ministry* from \$725,000 to \$625,000. (This is based on a formula of how much we receive.)
 - *Tomah Shinga* from \$10,000 to \$5,000.
 - *Missouri Voices of Faith* from \$2,500 to \$0.
 - *Candidacy* from \$5,000 to \$3,000.
 - *Parish Ministry Associates* from \$500 to \$0.
 - *Teams & TF Expenses* from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
 - *Synod Salaries & Benefits – Synod* from \$487,264 to \$488,838.
 - This reflected a change recommended by the Synod Guidelines. We were not quite able to reach the 8% increase recommended by the Guidelines. It reflects a 5% increase and added an extra week of vacation to the positions effected.
 - *Campus Ministry Salaries & Benefits* from \$138,000 to \$118,000.
 - KU has a vacancy that we are not anticipating to be filled soon. This does maintain support for K-State and St. Louis at the same amounts.
 - *Bishop's Fall Theological Conference* from \$4,000 to \$0.
 - We are hoping to cover the full cost through registration costs.
 - *Travel (Synod Staff)* from \$38,000 to \$35,000.
 - *Bethany College* from \$10,000 to \$0.
 - *Seminaries* from \$20,000 to \$0.
 - *Planned Giving Partnership* from \$22,625 to \$0.
 - This reflects the elimination of this partnership & position.
 - *Rent & Occupancy* from \$24,000 to \$26,400.
 - *Depreciation* from \$4,000 to \$2,000.
 - *Operations* from \$46,000 to \$43,300.
 - *Dean's Meetings* from \$986 to \$750.
 - *Bishop's Transition Set Aside* from \$7,000 to \$6,000
- This gives us a balanced budget at \$1,364,088 for income & expenditures.

- **SC 24.04.18.A30** **It was MSC (Scott, Chad) to approve the FYE 1/31/25 Revised Budget.**

FYE 1/31/26 PROPOSED BUDGET

Scott presented the FYE 1/31/26 Proposed Budget. Changes from the previous year’s budget include:

- Support and Revenue
 - *Congregations* – We decreased our expected income from congregations by \$50,000 (from \$1,250,000 to \$1,200,000) to acknowledge that our income will likely continue to decrease.
 - *Temp. Restricted Funds Released* – We decreased this to \$53,000 from \$55,000, which is still more than we would like to release, but we don’t feel like we have a choice. (A majority of these temporarily restricted funds are from the surplus we received during the pandemic.)
 - *Reimbursement/Other Income* – We decreased this expected income from \$40,250 to \$20,000. This is because we know we will not be receiving a \$20,000 for Campus Ministry because the ELCA is restructuring how they support campus ministry. ELCA Churchwide will now be requiring individual campus ministries to apply each year to receive these grants (so these funds will no longer be funneled through the synod).
- Expenditures
 - *ELCA Churchwide Ministry* – decreased to \$600,000 from \$625,000 to reflect our decrease in expected income, of which this is a percentage.
 - *Candidacy* – decreased to \$2,000 from \$3,000 because we are expecting home congregations to help carry some more of the costs of each candidate.
 - *Teams & TF Expenses* – decreased to \$530 from \$1,500.
 - *Synod Salaries & Benefits-Synod* – decreased to \$486,913 from \$488,838. The Bishop & Bishop’s Associate will not receive raises. The Candidacy Manager’s position has been eliminated. The other positions are receiving a 3% raise.
 - *Campus Ministry Salaries & Benefits* – decreased to \$75,000 from \$118,000. This acknowledges that we will not receive that \$20,000 grant from ELCA Churchwide, and that they will need to apply for that individually. We are also uncertain if KU will have a called pastor in the near future.
 - *Meetings (Synod Council)* – decreased to \$650 from \$1,300.
 - This leaves us with a balanced budget for the FYE 1/31/26 Proposed Budget at \$1,291,575 for income & expenses.
- **SC 24.04.18.A31** **It was MSC (Scott, Tullia) to recommend the FYE 1/31/26 Proposed Budget to the 2024 Synod Assembly for approval.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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| • Exec Committee | May 2, Thursday | 6:00pm | via Zoom |
| • Synod Council | June 6, Thursday | 3:00pm | in Kansas City |
| • Synod Assembly | June 6-8 | | in Kansas City |

We adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary