

Minutes from the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
of the Central States Synod
January 26, 2024
via Zoom

Present: Bishop Susan Candeia, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Terrence Freeman, Rev. Janice Hawley, Chelsea Deines

Absent: none

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 1:05pm.

- Nancy acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Osage, Kickapoo, and Kaskaskia Nations.
- Nancy led us in a devotion by Rev. Kimberly Knowle-Zeller about God's faithfulness in the past, present and future.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on October 21, 2023.

- **SEC 24.01.26.A1** **It was MSC to approve the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on October 21, 2023.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

Financial Status as of 12/31/2023, after 11 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2024.

Income from congregations

- \$1,212,561 received
- The amount received is \$116,606 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -9.6% variance
- The amount received is also \$138,534 less than received last year, a -11.4% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$610,918 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$53,665 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a -8.8% variance
- The amount contributed is \$64,630 less than last year, a -10.6% variance

Synod Expenditures

- \$736,210 spent
- The amount spent is \$21,594 less than budgeted, a -2.9% variance
- This is also \$75,782 less than spent last year, a -10.3% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$1,332,513 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$102,254 less than anticipated and \$135,010 less than last year
- \$1,347,128 in Total Expenditures, \$75,259 less than anticipated, and \$140,412 less than last year
- Net deficit of \$14,615 as compared to a \$20,017 deficit last year

Analysis of Financial Status

- We are still alarmingly behind what we had anticipated in our revised budget for congregational giving and in comparison to last year. This has moderated somewhat due to the giving that we received in September and December. Unfortunately, giving in November was amongst the lowest months in giving that we saw in 2023. Giving in January is off to a good start, but we have several weeks of deposits to go, so it's too early to tell how the month will end.
- Synod expenditures are lower than budgeted as compared to the revised budget we approved in June. We are realizing the cost savings resulting from the staff reduction and the termination of the Planned Giving Partnership grant in the second half of the year. Spending is also lower for Candidacy and we have seen a decrease in spending for Campus Ministry resulting from the vacancy at KU.
- Our Total Support & Revenue amount is significantly less than anticipated due primarily to the decrease in congregation support. We have compensated for much of that due to lower synod spending and the reduction of the amount shared with Churchwide. In fact, we have reduced our deficit by about \$49,000 from my last report in October to the current amount of \$14,615. This compares to a deficit of \$20,017 from last year. Keep in mind that we do have some year-end expenses to realize and we will release some funds from our reserves as we had planned, but we may now be able to balance out the budget by doing so.

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 \$90,250 to reflect how reimbursement for Aimee Appell's position is being paid for by Churchwide.
- 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.)
 - *Missouri Voices of Faith* from \$2,500 to \$0.
 - *Parish Ministry Associates* from \$500 to \$0.
 - *Teams & TF Expenses* from \$1,000 to \$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 \$8,000.
 - *Seminaries* from \$20,000 to \$16,000.
 - *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 \$10,000
- This gives us a balanced budget at \$1,398,088 for revenue/expenses.
- **SEC 24.01.26.A2 It was MSC 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 (revised) budget include:

- Support and Revenue
 - *Congregations* – We decreased our expected income from congregations from \$1,250,000 to \$1,200,000.
 - *Reimbursement/Other Income* – We decreased this from \$90,000 to \$69,370. This reflects a change in how Churchwide disperses Campus Ministry grants.
- Expenditures:
 - *ELCA Churchwide Ministry* was reduced from \$625,000 to \$600,000. (This is based on a formula of how much we receive.)
 - *Camp Tomah Shinga* was reduced from \$10,000 to \$5,000.
 - *Candidacy* was reduced from \$5,000 to \$4,000.
 - *Synod Salaries & Benefits* – *Synod* was increased from \$488,838 to \$493,245.
 - *Campus Ministry Salaries & Benefits* was reduced from \$118,000 to \$75,000
 - We are not sure if/when KU Campus Ministry will call a new pastor.
 - While this does represent a significant decrease, a large portion of that decrease is actually because Churchwide has changed how they disperse their grants. (This was also reflected on the income side under *Reimbursements/Other Income*.)
 - *Bethany College* was reduced from \$8,000 to \$6,000.
 - *Seminaries* was reduced from \$16,000 to \$12,000.
 - *Operations* was increased from \$43,300 to \$46,000.
 - We will likely need to pay some extra audit costs this year.
 - *Meetings* was reduced from \$1,300 to \$650.
 - This leaves us with a balanced budget for the FYE 1/31/26 Proposed Budget at \$1,324,545 for revenue/expenses.
- **SEC 24.01.26.A3 It was MSC to recommend the FYE 1/31/26 Proposed Budget to the Synod Council at the March 2024 meeting.**

BOOKKEEPING UPDATE

We have had some significant problems with our bookkeeping service this past year. Statements have not been updated or sent out, income has not been recorded in a timely manner, and messages have been ignored and not responded to. Scott is working on solving this problem and finding a new bookkeeping firm or person, but this will likely take 2-3 months.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candeia presented a written report. There was not much discussion.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY UPDATE

The theme will be "Spirit Breathed; Spirit Blown." It will be held from June 6-8, 2024 in Olathe, KS. The Executive Committee decided to open the Assembly with a meal. This sets the registration cost at \$225 for Voting Members.

- **SEC 24.01.26.A4** It was MSC to designate the offering from 2024 Synod Assembly to be given to Lutheran World Hunger because it is their 50th anniversary.

NOMINATION / ELECTION GRID

Chad presented an updated Election Grid for the 2024 Synod Assembly.

For the Synod Council, we will need to elect:

- A Western Kansas Conference representative (incumbent eligible)
- An Osage Conference representative (incumbent eligible)
- An Eastern Missouri Conference representative (incumbent eligible)
- An At Large Male POC (incumbent not eligible)
- An At Large Youth Male, Female or Non-Binary (has been vacant)
- An At Large Female (incumbent not eligible)

We also need to elect voting members for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Given our allocation, we will need to elect people who fit these categories:

- Eastern MO Conference Male/NB Clergy
 - Osage Conference Female/NB Lay
 - Border Conference Female/NB Lay
 - Central KS Conference Male/NB Lay
 - Western KS Conference Male/NB Clergy
 - At Large POC Female/NB Clergy
 - At Large Youth/Young Adult Male/NB Lay
 - At Large POC Male/NB Lay
 - At Large Y/YA Female/NB Lay
- **SEC 24.01.26.A5** It was MSC to adopt the election grid for the 2024 Synod Assembly as presented.

SYNOD COUNCIL UPDATES

Bishop Candeia recommended Logan Simon, from Trinity Lutheran in Hays, KS to serve on Synod Council to fill the vacant seat from the Western Kansas Conference. He currently lives in Garden City, KS. He will fulfill the remaining few months of the current term, and then be eligible to serve two full terms if elected at the 2024 Synod Assembly.

- **SEC 24.01.26.A6** It was MSC to approve Logan Simon to the position on Synod Council representing the Western Kansas Conference.

Joanie Saltzman has resigned her position on Synod Council as At Large Young Adult. No replacement has yet been found. There is just over one full year left in this term.

DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

Nancy and Bishop Candeia have put together a Discernment Committee to help with the 2025 Bishop's Election and they have had an initial meeting. This team includes: Bill Lang (Emmanuel, Hutchinson, KS), Rev. Lee Bennight (Disciples of the Plains, Stuttgart, KS), Andrea Keesee ((Disciples of the Plains, Stuttgart, KS), Cathy Hohl (Atonement, Florissant, MO), Rev. Kim Knowle-Zeller (St. Paul, Cole Camp,

MO), Debbie Schroeder-Saulnier (Living Lord, Lake St. Louis, MO), Rev. Merle Brockhoff (Our Savior's, Topeka, KS), Rev. David Frerichs (St. Andrew's, Columbia, MO), and Nancy Nagel (Synod Vice President).

- **SEC 24.01.26.A7** It was MSC to approve the appointments to this Discernment Team.

BETHANY LUTHERAN UPDATE

Bishop Candeia gave us an update on Bethany Lutheran in Webster Groves, MO.

- There is an ongoing lawsuit with the neighbor about a disputed strip of land. We are working to resolve this.
- The building has also been nominated to be a city-designated historical site. There are hearings in Webster Groves about this designation and it has yet to be resolved. Bishop Candeia has already attended one hearing about this and is presenting a case against this designation, especially considering they want to include the parsonage as part of the designation.
- The realtor says that there are a handful of interested parties in the property, but they are all trying to attain funding.

SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES RE-AUTHORIZATIONS

- **SEC 24.01.26.A8** It was MSC to reauthorize The Gathering Table (Kansas City, MO) and Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Garden City, KS) as Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities in 2024.
- **SEC 24.01.26.A9** It was MSC to provisionally reauthorize Mision San Juan de Dios - Partners Church (Wichita, KS), and the South Sudanese Worshipping Community (St. Joseph, MO) pending that they submit reports by February 15th.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Candeia presented a written roster report.

- Retirements
 - **SEC 24.01.26.A10** It was MSC to grant Rev. Katherine Hayes retirement status, effective February 1, 2024. She has been on leave from call.
 - **SEC 24.01.26.A11** It was MSC to grant Rev. Barb Jones retirement status, effective March 1, 2024. She has been on leave from call.
- Specialized Ministry – Mission Developers (7.44.A19.b.1.6)
 - **SEC 24.01.26.A12** It was MSC to grant Synod Council calls to specialized ministry to the following mission developers, effective January 1, 2024:
 - Rev. Ann Rundquist, the Gathering Table in Kansas City, MO
 - Rev. Odir Flores, Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus, Garden City, KS
 - Rev. Ivan Gonzalez, Mision San Juan de Dios - Partner's Church, Wichita, KS
 - Rev. Philip Deng, South Sudanese Worshipping Community, St. Joseph, MO

CONSTITUTIONS

Bishop Candeia presented six congregation constitutions that have recently been updated. Everything in these constitutions is in order and she recommended them for approval.

- **SEC 24.01.26.A13** It was MSC to approved the constitutions for the following congregations:
 - Holy Cross Lutheran, Overland Park, KS
 - Holy Cross Lutheran, Creve Coeur, MO
 - St. Mark's Lutheran, Cape Girardeau, MO
 - Overland Park Lutheran, Overland Park, KS

- Immanuel Lutheran, Salina, KS
- St. Mark's Lutheran, Great Bend, KS

CLOSING

Bishop Candea closed us in prayer.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 3:10, we moved into Executive Session to do the Bishop's Annual Review.

At 4:15, we moved out of Executive Session.

UPCOMING DATES

Please note that the next two meeting dates are new and have been changed from what they were previously. The new meeting times are:

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| • Synod Council | March 22 & 23 | | via Zoom |
| | | 6:30-8:30pm on Friday, 8:30am-noon on Saturday | |
| • Exec Committee | May 2, Thursday | 6:00pm | via Zoom |
| • Synod Council | June 6 | | in person |
| • Synod Assembly | June 6-8 | | in person |

ADJOURNMENT

We adjourned at 4:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary