

**MONTANA SYNOD COUNCIL
MINUTES
February 22-23, 2008**

The Montana Synod Council convened at the Ursuline Centre in Great Falls, Montana, on Friday, February 22, 2008. The opening worship with Holy Communion was led by Pastor Greg Holler-Dinsmore, who served as Chaplain for the meeting. Bishop Crist led the installation of the following Synod Council members: Golden Triangle cluster representative Cheryl Muncy, and Great Divide Cluster representative John Munding.

Present: Bishop Jessica Crist, Vice President Jake Block, Secretary Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger, Treasurer Harold Spilde, Associate to the Bishop Dave Peters, Allan Rousch, Cheryl Muncy, Mike Young, Pastor Kim Wilker, Ashley Glover, Clarice Beery, John Munding, Pastor Joel Brosten, Pastor George Karres, Tamara Crowder, Scott Southwick, Steve Bahnmler, Pastor Bill Duffey, Pastor Gary Cockrell.

Guests: Pastor Darius Larson, Pastor Shelley Wickstrom, Pastor David Ophus, Pastor Tim Spring, Susan Hedahl, Pastor Mark Grorud, Pastor Sherman Hicks, Pastor Greg Holler-Dinsmore, Cindy Larsen.

Absent: Barb White

Plenary Session I

Vice President Jake Block called the Montana Synod Council meeting to order at 9:48 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 22, 2008.

Motion made and seconded to approve agenda.

SC08.02.01

VOTED: APPROVE AGENDA

Officers, Council members, and visitors introduced themselves.

Vice President Jake Block presented the seconded motion from the Executive Committee to ratify the Bishop's appointment of John Munding from the Great Divide Cluster to serve on the Synod Council.

SC08.02.02

VOTED: RATIFY APPOINTMENT OF JOHN MUNDINGER FROM GREAT DIVIDE CLUSTER

Secretary's Report:

The Minutes of the September 21, 2007 meeting were approved with correction on p. 4: Designate \$23,800 (\$5,775 balance of housing allowance for 2007 fiscal year.)

Motion made and seconded to approve with the above correction.

SC08.02.03

VOTED: APPROVE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2007 MEETING WITH

CORRECTION

Financial Report:

Treasurer Harold Spilde referred the Council to the revised Treasurer's Report from 2/21/08. It was a tremendous year in the Synod. All partners were paid 100% of intentions. Motion made and seconded to receive Treasurer's report.

SC08.02.04

VOTED: RECEIVE THE TREASURER'S REPORT

Bishop's Report:

Bishop Jessica Crist referred the Council to her written report. In the last several months as Bishop, she has placed an emphasis on visiting congregations that she had not visited over the years, inviting herself to be present as a "good will ambassador".

Emphasis and issues that the Bishop has been and will continue to address:

a. Communication: The Synod Newsletter is now available as an e-mail attachment; she has been sending out letters and emails with thoughts from the Bishop, in order to provide timely communicate with pastors, congregations, and members of the Synod. Each month she has written a newsletter article about priorities for the year. These have been included in the some congregation's newsletters, too.

b. Synod Audit: Bishop Crist described what she sees as the benefits of a Synod Audit gathering information on the state of the Synod with the assistance of personnel from Churchwide.

c. Executive Committee: will be working to update personnel policies.

d. Synod Directory: it is more complete this year than others and Susan will be talking to the Planning and Organization committee about how it is being received.

e. We will look at the statement of purpose about the church from the Synod Constitution this evening

f. Growing in God's Field II: Have a committee in place and have invited Kathryn Love as the speaker. It is scheduled to be held in Helena on October 10-11, 2008.

UPDATE BY PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

Shelley Wickstrom: Region One Coordinator for Ministry Leadership

Thanks for Partnership. As the Region we are sharing in changes with trust that God is at work even when it is doing new things. She was recently involved in the assignment process: Region One continues to export candidates. There is a new job description for the Regional coordinator: Shelley hopes to be a resource to the Synod and with new job description she can be. Region One is in transition in regard to the multicultural staffing and is looking into ways to address the issues.

Tim Spring: Lutheran Campus Ministry

Thanks for prayers and congregational support for the Endowment fund.

Methodists have indicated that they will be withdrawing their support from the Christus Collegium building at MSU and would want their 70% of the equity out of the building. The Lutherans own 22% of the building. The Methodist staff person has resigned. The Bishop asked: in regard to the building, what do you want from us? Tim responded by requesting guidance, partnership and dialogue regarding the future.

Darius Larsen: Mission and Stewardship Director

Thank you for what you do on behalf of the church: The increase in giving in the MT Synod is phenomenal! EOCM -- funding for current grants will be at 100%. In the Synod, there are ways in which congregations are engaging in ministry in new ways: Transformational Ministry: is about looking outward, to engage the community environment. Natural Church Development: looks at 8 quality characteristics and congregations then work on the lowest of the 8 qualities. 16 congregations in the process in the Synod will have 8 coaches. New starts: Big Sky has become a Synodically Authorized worshipping community, and a prison ministry is being looked into at the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge.

Report of the Executive Committee

Jake Block reported on the actions of the Executive Committee at their meeting on Thursday, February 21, 2008

Between meetings of the Synod Council, the Committee has met via Conference Calls to address financial issues and the budget for the fiscal year.

Endowment Funds:

The Executive Committee discussed the current endowment funds and ways to more effectively interpret the Endowment Funds of the Synod.

There has been initial conversation with the Hetzel Foundation about the possibility of the Hetzel Board managing the Synod's Other Endowment funds. That conversation will continue.

The Executive Committee presents a seconded motion to combine the Synod's Endowment Funds, titled the Omland Fund and the Daehlin Fund and rename the one fund the "Omland-Daehlin Fund".

SC08.02.05

VOTED: TO COMBINE INTO ONE FUND AND RENAME THE ENDOWMENT FUNDS: THE OMLAND FUND AND THE DAEHLIN FUND THE "OMLAND-DAEHLIN FUND".

Lutheran Ministries of the MT Synod:

Pr. David Ophus has resigned from his position as Director of LMMS, as of March 31. The ELCA Foundation, which has been contributing \$40,000 to LMMS, will not be continuing to fund in the same way. The Foundation leaders are rethinking their funding patterns.

Building Task Force:

The Task Force regarding the Synod Office Building was made up of Dave Peters, Harold Spilde, and George Karres.

The Executive Committee presents a seconded motion to the Synod Council:

The Montana Synod Office remain on its current property. The possibility of constructing a new building be explored and evaluated.

SC08.02.06

VOTED: THE MONTANA SYNOD OFFICE REMAIN ON ITS CURRENT PROPERTY AND EXPLORE AND EVALUATE THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW BUILDING.

The Executive Committee is charged to contact Phil Roe and Bill Bentzinger, Mission Investment Fund Church Building Consultants for a presentation to the 9/08 Synod Council Meeting.

Spirit of Hope Award:

SC08.02.07

VOTED: AWARD THE 2008 SPIRIT OF HOPE AWARD TO ROLPH TUNBY, FROM AMERICAN LUTHERAN IN BAKER

Resolutions Committee:

Motion comes moved and seconded to appoint Pastor Tim Tripple, Pastor Deb Koch, and Mike Young to the 2008 Resolutions Committee.

SC08.02.08

VOTED: APPOINT TIM TRIPPEL, DEB KOCH AND MIKE YOUNG TO THE 2008 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

Elections Committee:

This committee will be appointed at the June Synod Council Meeting. Dave Peters will bring suggestions.

Synod Council Calls to Specialized Ministries:

Motion comes moved and seconded that Sue Thompson's non-stipendiary call be renewed for another year.

SC08.02.09

VOTED: RENEW ONE YEAR CALL TO SUE THOMPSON, IN AREA OF CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Motion comes moved and seconded to issue Synod Calls to Specialized Ministry to the following:

Pr. Troy Ley -- St. John's Lutheran Ministry Chaplain

Pr. Maryann Morgenstern -- St. John's Lutheran Ministry Chaplain

Pr. Jeff Olsgaard -- Big Sky Hospice

Brooke Ells, AIM -- Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

SC08.02.10

VOTED: CALLS ISSUED TO SERVE IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES TO TROY LEY, MARYANN MORGENSTERN, JEFF OLSGAARD, BROOKE ELLS

Hetzel Board:

Motion comes moved and seconded to elect Pastor Maryann Morgenstern, Phil Koterba to the Hetzel Board.

SC08.02.11

VOTED: ELECT PASTOR MARYANN MORGENSTERN AND PHIL KOTERBA TO THE HETZEL BOARD

New Executive Committee member:

In keeping within the Bylaws, nomination made to elect Tamara Crowder to the Executive Committee.

SC08.02.12

VOTED: ELECT TAMARA CROWDER TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Synod Audit:

Motion made to request a Synod Ministry Review Audit from ELCA Churchwide.

SC08.02.13

VOTED: REQUEST A SYNOD MINISTRY REVIEW AUDIT

Sexual Misconduct Policy: The council was directed to the new brochure. The policy will be examined.

The Plenary Session I was closed and all prayed the table prayer before eating lunch.

Following lunch, the Committees of the Montana Synod Council met.

Plenary Session II

Plenary Session II was called to order at 2:50 p.m. by Vice President Jake Block. Pastor Sherman Hicks (ELCA-Churchwide) joined the gathering.

Mission Interpreters Presentation:

Cindy Larsen presented a video and information about the ELCA Churchwide gathering to help interpret the Mission of the ELCA to congregations and members in churches.

Administration and Finance Committee

The recommendation was approved by the Administration and Finance Committee to continue the staff travel reimbursement method which was implemented in November, 2007, for the rest of 2008 and do a cost and convenience comparison at the February 2009 meeting. (In the past, the Synod used an IRS mileage reimbursement system for staff travel. Until 2003, the Synod also had a car allowance to cover oil, tires, etc. In November, 2007, another system was tried to compare convenience and affordability for the staff and the Synod. This system includes the gas paid for by the Synod, \$400 monthly car allowance and additional tire/oil money of up to \$1000 per year.)

Energy Conservation Loan:

A seconded motion was brought to the Synod Council: Approve loan request for \$2,500 for an energy conservation loan to Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Missoula.

SC08.02.14

VOTED: APPROVE ENERGY CONSERVATION LOAN TO IMMANUEL EVAN. LUTHERAN, MISSOULA

2008 Budget Revisions:

A seconded motion was brought to the Synod Council: Accept the 2008 Budget Revision as presented on 2/21/08.

SC08.02.15

VOTED: ACCEPT THE 2008 BUDGET REVISION AS PRESENTED ON 2/21/08

2009 Proposed Salary Guidelines:

A seconded motion was brought to the Synod Council: Accept the proposed 2009 Salary Guidelines for Rostered Clergy, Associates in Ministry and Diaconal Ministers.

SC08.02.16

VOTED: ACCEPT THE PROPOSED 2009 SALARY GUIDELINES

2009 Proposed Budget of \$1,195680.38

A seconded motion was brought to the Synod Council: Adopt the 2009 proposed budget as presented 2/21/08

SC08.02.17

VOTED: ADOPT THE 2009 PROPOSED BUDGET AS PRESENTED 2/21/08

Education and Society

PLTS Board Appointment:

Moved and seconded by the Education and Society Committee that Pastor John Lund be appointed to the PLTS Board.

SC08.02.18

VOTED: APPOINT PASTOR JOHN LUND TO THE PLTS BOARD

Additional Item from the Executive Committee:

Motion made and seconded by Executive Committee: In gratitude for the generosity of the congregations and individuals of the Montana Synod the Synod Council will send an additional \$18,766 (38.5% of the surplus received) to churchwide for further sharing of mission and ministry, with the balance of the surplus designated towards cash reserves.

SC08.02.19

VOTED: MT SYNOD COUNCIL WILL SEND ADDITIONAL \$18,766 (38.5% OF THE SURPLUS RECEIVED) TO CHURCHWIDE FOR FURTHER SHARING OF MISSION AND MINISTRY, WITH THE BALANCE OF THE SURPLUS DESIGNATED TOWARDS CASH RESERVES

Planning and Organization

Synod Assembly Offering

The Planning and Organization committee brought a seconded motion that the Synod Assembly offering be equally divided between our companion synods: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bolivia and the Cape Orange Diocese of South Africa.

SC08.02.20

VOTED: 2008 SYNOD ASSEMBLY OFFERING DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN BOLIVIA AND THE CAPE ORANGE DIOCESE OF SOUTH AFRICA.

2009 Synod Assembly Theme:

The Planning and Outreach Committee brought a seconded motion that the 2009 Synod Assembly theme be “Health and Wellness”, reflecting the Wellspring Pilot Project in conjunction with the ELCA Board of Pensions.

SC08.02.21

VOTED: 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY THEME: “HEALTH AND WELLNESS”

Mission and Outreach

Prison Ministry:

The Mission and Outreach Committee brought a seconded motion: “The Montana Synod Council is open to the model of ministry that Prison Congregations of America presents. The Synod Council supports forming a steering committee to meet with congregations, individually and by clusters, to educate, motivate, and assess interest which will include identifying participants and building a financial support base of a minimum of 50 congregations. The Synod Council will contribute up to \$2,500 to support the necessary expenses of the steering committee. Additional financial support will be sought from the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Ministry Unit.

SC08.02.22

VOTED: THE MONTANA SYNOD COUNCIL IS OPEN TO THE MODEL OF MINISTRY THAT PRISON CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICAN PRESENTS. THE SYNOD COUNCIL SUPPORTS FORMING A STEERING COMMITTEE TO MEET WITH CONGREGATIONS, INDIVIDUALLY AND BY CLUSTERS, TO EDUCATE, MOTIVATE, AND ASSESS INTEREST WHICH WILL INCLUDE IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS AND BUILDING A FINANCIAL SUPPORT BASE OF A MINIMUM OF 50 CONGREGATIONS. THE SYNOD COUNCIL WILL CONTRIBUTE UP TO \$2,500 TO SUPPORT THE NECESSARY EXPENSES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE. ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE EVANGELICAL OUTREACH AND CONGREGATIONAL UNIT.

Plenary Session II was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

In the evening, the Synod Council members gathered to discuss the statement of purpose from Chapter 6 of the Montana Synod Constitution and discussed “cultural competency” with Pastor Greg Holler-Dinsmore

Plenary III: Saturday, February 23, 2008

Pastor Greg Holler-Dinsmore led the Council in Morning Prayer

Margie Fiedler, Mission Investment Fund, was welcomed to the Meeting.

Vice-President Jake Block called the Plenary Session III to order.

Mission Investment Fund: Margie Fiedler presented a dvd and information about the Mission Investment Fund.

Additional Business from the Planning and Organization Committee:

Joel Brosten brought a seconded motion from the committee: Nominating Committee: Rev. Bob Nagy, Lisa Moellenkamp, Rev. Scott Hedegaard, Steve Holte, Rev. Phil Wold, Rev. Molly Sasser-Goehner, Scott Southwick, Judy Cundy, Gary Gollehon, Rev. Loren Gustafson, Colleen Walker Nelson, Norm Unterseher.

SC08.02.23

VOTED: APPOINT NOMINATING COMMITTEE OF REV. BOB NAGY, LISA MOELLENKAMP, REV. SCOTT HEDEGAARD, STEVE HOLTE, REV. PHIL WOLD, REV. MOLLY SASSER-GOEHNER, SCOTT SOUTHWICK, JUDY CUNDY, GARY GOLLEHON, REV. LOREN GUSTAFSON, COLLEEN WALKER NELSON, NORM UNTERSEHER.

Synod Consultation with Pastor Mark Grorud and Pastor Sherman Hicks

Pastors Sherman Hicks and Mark Grorud, were present to speak and listen, in order to deepen and enhance the synod's relationship with Churchwide. Their first word was "Thank you for your ministry and for ministry with the ELCA." There were several points made and questions asked in regard to mutual relationship with Churchwide.

The Council viewed the Blue Ribbon Committee Video and discussed the Blue Ribbon Committee's work.

Pastor Hicks and Pastor Grorud presented facts and figures regarding the income for the churchwide organization and the opportunities and challenges before the whole church.

Old Business:

None

New Business

Synod Council members were asked to note the dates of upcoming meetings:

- June 6, 2008 Holiday Inn Grand, Billings
- September 18-20, 2008, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls
- February 27-28, 2009, Ursuline, Centre, Great Falls
- June 5, 2009, Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls
- September 18-19, 2009, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls
- February 25-27, 2010, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls (proposed)
- June 4-6, 2010, Assembly and Theological Conference, Billings

The Synod Council was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. and closing prayer was led by Pastor Greg Holler-Dinsmore.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger
Montana Synod Secretary