

Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting – Approved by the Board 2.20.2021
Minnesota South (MNS) District
Tuesday, December 1, 2020, 9:00am to 3:00pm
Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Mission Statement

Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

1. OPENING DEVOTION

Rev. Keith Grimm, Senior Pastor of Family of Christ Lutheran Church in Ham Lake and District Secretary, led the opening devotion based on Philippians 3:13-14. The coming of Christ and his gift of forgiveness free us from all regrets.

2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS

- a) The meeting was called to order at 9:14am by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford.
- b) Roll Call
Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. Steven Wheeler; Rev. Keith Grimm; Mr. Rick Marko; Rev. Christopher Horton; Ms. Alfrieda Baldwin; Ms. Rosa Summers; Mr. John Branstad; Rev. Loel Wessel; Mr. Dave Kenow; Rev. Dennis Heiden; Mr. Benjamin Hagemann; Mr. Neal Breitbarth; Mr. Leland Huebner; Mr. Joel Landskroener

Staff: Rev. Stefan Wismar; Rev. Dr. William Utech; Mr. Sean Martens; Mr. Kai Larson; Dr. Phil Johnson; Rev. Fred Hinz

Excused: Sara Sorenson, Daniel Thao, Rev. Isaac Williams
- c) Approval of Agenda
A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion carried.
- d) Approval of Minutes of Past Meeting (*prepared by Keith Grimm, Secretary*)
A motion was made and seconded to approve BOD minutes from September 22, 2020. The motion carried.
- e) Correspondence

A letter from Rev. Harold Storm, Region IV Vice President, was presented. He stepped down from his office as Vice President of Region IV due to medical reasons on October 31, 2020. Rev. Dennis Heiden, who is the ordained delegate to the BOD for Region IV, will be replacing him.

3. GUEST PRESENTATION

Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, President of Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota, reported the CSP theme for academic year 2020-21 is “Lord, to whom shall we go?” Because of the closing of Concordia University Portland, their nursing program has been assimilated by CSP. President Friedrich thanked God for guiding the CSP leaders in their positive handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a record enrollment at CSP for the ninth consecutive year. Finally, President Friedrich shared the new CSP vision statement. One primary goal of this is accenting the University’s Lutheran identity. Subsequently, tuition for church work students has been reset at \$6,000 annually starting in Fall 2021. The objective is also to increase overall LCMS enrollment by 10%.

4. VISIONING/STUDY ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford shared a document he has written titled: **“What Does This Mean? Responding to Social Justice & Critical Race Theory.”** This study ventures to answer this question: “What ethic do confessional Lutherans have to offer a conversation and culture wrapped up in endless dialogues and demands for social justice?” It is an exploration of our Lutheran doctrine in light of our contemporary American context and the current varying calls for social justice. It seeks to address the issue of racism and those affected by the sin of racism in any given form, as well as erroneous generalizations about American institutions, the church, and the white community in general. A variety of experts were consulted, representing all views on the spectrum, and then evaluated in the light of the God’s Word and our Lutheran ethos. Pastors were also given guidance for the care of souls struggling against the sin of racism in its many forms.

5. POLICY FORMATION & REVIEW

The MN South District Handbook Committee consisting of Rev. Christopher Horton, Dr. Phil Johnson and Rev. Keith Grimm, shared proposed revisions to the 2018 District Handbook necessitated by 2019 Synod Convention amendments to the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws. These handbook revisions will be sent to Synod Secretary Rev. Dr. John Sias for the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters to review. We will receive their input before making final recommended changes to the handbook at our next BOD meeting on February 20, 2021. These changes will then be presented at the District Convention for voter consideration.

6. REPORTS

a) President's Report Highlights, Q & A

- Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford shared details about his September through November activity report to the Board.
- President Woodford also shared elements about his "Report to the Fall Pastors Conference." He highlighted significant challenges that church workers throughout the District are facing because of the pandemic. The District Staff is providing care, guidance and mentoring for our workers, congregations and schools. In addition, President Woodford mentioned he is providing guidance to workers dealing with political vitriol and protests. Finally, President Woodford is offering wisdom to church workers and congregations struggling with financial challenges.

b) Financial Report

Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, provided financial results as of September 30, 2020. The District's overall financial position was positive to budget in the third quarter. Congregational support for the nine months ended September 30 was \$156,250 under budget. Through September there were 180 congregations (74% of total District congregations) making gifts ranging from \$30 to \$96,000. District investment gains were excellent this quarter. In addition, the PPP loan has been forgiven. The District continues to pay its bills in a timely manner.

c) LCEF Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF Vice President, reported on investments in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. He mentioned that 10 congregations are currently under the Temporary Interest Program (All currently back to scheduled payments). The LCEF is preparing for a possible second wave of COVID-19 relief options. He is working with four District congregations about loan options.

d) Other committee minutes: Missions, Finance; Constitution and Membership; Schools & Commissioned Ministers; Ministerial Health; Mission Formation (along with Cooperative Ministry Proposal); Public Policy, etc.

- No additional comments or questions were given concerning these reports.

Mr. Sean Martens, Assistant to the President, Education & Commissioned Ministers, provided three resolutions, which were affirmed and moved by the Schools & Commissioned Ministers Committee, to the District Board of Directors for consideration at the February BOD meeting:

- Overture A: To Strengthen the Advisory Participation of Commissioned Workers at (District) Conventions

- Overture B: To Initiate a National Lutheran Teacher Student Debt Forgiveness Program
- Overture C: To Recognize and Thank the LCMS for the Strengthened and Expanded “Soldiers of the Cross” COVID-19 Response Initiative

7. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS

- a) Convention preparation updates
Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford reported that President Matt Harrison and the Council of Presidents are considering postponing all District Conventions for a year in light of the pandemic. All synod congregations would be asked to vote on delaying Synod and District conventions. This is not politically motivated whatsoever. It is merely a response to COVID-19. Correspondence will be coming from the Synod to keep congregations informed.
- b) Resignation of Rev. Harold Storm, Region IV Vice President
The BOD approved Rev. Dennis Heiden, Lead Pastor of Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato, as the new Vice President of Region IV.
- c) Notice of election of new Region IV Pastoral Representative on the BOD
The BOD voted to approve gathering nominations of eligible pastors from Region IV to fill the vacant Region IV pastoral representative position on the board at the next BOD meeting in February 20, 2020. Please submit nominations via email to lucas.woodford@mnsdistrict.org and Cc: debraconnolly@mnsdistrict.org
- d) Ratification of changes to the MNS District Handbook
The BOD voted to approve the proposed revisions to the 2018 District Handbook as presented earlier by the District Handbook Committee.
- e) Constitution Committee
The BOD voted to approve the Constitution and Bylaws of First Lutheran Church in Waldorf, Minnesota.
- f) Finance Committee / 2021 Budget (Draft #2)
Mr. Rick Marko, District Treasurer, presented changes to the draft of the 2021 Budget. Congregational support was lowered by \$100,000. The BOD encouraged President Woodford to encourage District churches to rise up to the mission challenge at such a time as this. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed 2021 budget. The motion carried.

8. ROUND TABLE

Celebrations and prayer requests were shared.

9. CLOSING PRAYER

Rev. Keith Grimm, Secretary to the MN South District, led our closing prayer.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by President Woodford at 12:31pm.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Saturday, February 20, 2021

Tuesday, May 2, 2021

Monday and Tuesday, September 20-21, 2021

Tuesday, December 7, 2021