**MINUTES**

**of the**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Minnesota North District**

**The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod**

**Brainerd, Minnesota**

**February 16-17, 2020**

**MISSION STATEMENT: *“The Minnesota North District exists to further the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and to assist congregations as Great Commission Churches*.”**

**Sunday, February 16, 4:00 p.m.**

1. **DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY** **Mr. R. Moldenhauer**

Mr. Moldenhauer led the Board in the Opening Devotion. The Board began with singing LSB 575, “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less.” Mr. Moldenhauer directed the Board to Matthew 7:15-29 and talked about the two options presented in the hymn and the reading, rock or sand. He reminded the Board that Martin Luther wrote a great deal after he posted the 95 theses in 1517. He recommended to the Board, reading Luther’s *The Freedom of a Christian*. He talked about many of the more popular writings of Luther in Luther’s day. Mr. Moldenhauer suggested that Luther wrote all of these because he was seeking to get back to the ‘rock’ of Christ and to justification, rather than the ‘sinking sand’ of the teaching of the Catholic Church of his day. He read for the Board Luther’s account of his experience of coming to understand justification by faith, through his study of Romans. Mr. Moldenhauer also read from selected Luther’s sermons. Highlighting, again, *The Freedom of the Christian*, he spoke of how we, being justified freely by faith are freed to serve our neighbor.

The Board concluded by singing LSB 729, “I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus.”

1. **ROLL CALL/MINUTES Rev. M. Mably**

* 1. **ROLL CALL**
     1. **Members Present**: President Fondow; Vice Presidents Finnern, Lee and Weber; Secretary Mably; Treasurer Uran; Lay Members Gilbertson, Moldenhauer and Rydberg; Advisory members Rev. J. Lee, Rev. M. Meyer. Lay member Kading joined the meeting late.
     2. **Members Absent**: Lay member Browning and Meyer and advisory member Miller.
  2. **MINUTES – Board of Directors Meeting – Sunday, December 8 - Monday, December 9, 2019 (attached)**
     1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the Minutes of the December 8-9, 2019, Board of Directors meeting amended with minor changes.
     2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.

1. **YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT/TREASURER’S REPORT Mr. M. Uran**

* 1. Mr. Uran shared the “Receipts from Congregations” report, dated 01/15/2020 (attached). He noted the final receipts were 101.93% of commitments for the year. He also reminded the Board that, according to previous practice and discretion given to the Board of Directors by past District Conventions, the overage was divided equally, 50% being sent to the Synod and 50% remaining with the District.
  2. Mr. Uran presented the “Investment Report,” dated 01/15/2020 (attached). He commented that the District earned a little over $30,000 in interest for the year through various investments. He also noted that as the investments come due, he will work with Angie R. to ‘ladder’ the investments so that they will no longer come due so close together.
  3. Mr. Uran presented and went through the “Financial Statement,” dated 01/15/2021 (attached) with the Board.
  4. Mr. Uran and Angie R. researched and received three bids for the services of a new auditor. It was determined to sign a three-year contract with Bruce Johnson and Associates. There is an increase over the past auditor’s cost.
  5. Mr. Uran reported that he is speaking with a commercial realtor in St. Cloud regarding selling the remaining District property formerly connected with Our Savior, St. Cloud.
  6. **MOVED and SECONDED** Approve Treasurer’s Report as presented.

**ACTION:** Motion carried.

1. **ESTABLISH 2020 DISTRICT BUDGET Mr. M. Uran**

Mr. Uran presented and reviewed the proposed 2020 District Budget (attached). As proposed, the 2020 budget shows a projected deficit of $191,186. The shortfall would be balanced using six different Temporary Restricted Funds as noted on the 2019-2020 Temporary Restricted Funds Ending 1.15.20 handout (attached). Discussion followed regarding the unsustainability of balancing potentially increasing budget deficits in future years and potential solutions.

**MOVED and SECONDED** Approve 2020 District Budget, including the proposal for covering the projected deficit from Temporary Restricted Funds as proposed.

**ACTION:** Motion carried.

It was decided to devote time at the May Board of Directors meeting to ideas and plans to increase revenue to the District.

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**BREAK – Fondow called for a recess and led a prayer for a meal prepared by Angie R. and Diana R.**

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1. **LCEF Rev. Fondow on behalf of Mr. G. Miller**

Rev. Fondow shared the 7.1.19 to 1.31.20 LCEF Financial Report (attached).

1. **DIVISION OF PARISH LIFE and Nurture [PLaN] Rev. M. Meyer**

Rev. Meyer shared the Parish Life & Nurture (PLaN) notes (attached).

He spoke regarding plans to recognize Barb Hertling’s retirement at the State Pastors Conference.

Regarding campus ministry, the District is working with Redeemer, St. Cloud, to Call a Candidate from the seminary.

Rev. Meyer also reviewed his efforts regarding campus ministry accountability. He also spoke with the Board regarding funding campus missionaries.

Rev. Meyer talked about the 3rd year of Bring It Home, “Bring it Home - The Life of Christ,” and he is working with Concordia Publishing House and their Arch Books series. There was discussion regarding the most effective strategies for reaching today’s families.

The “Someone You Know” program was reviewed.

Regarding schools, Rev. Meyer is working with Stacy Lung, producing shareable science curriculums to be used by the days schools in our District.

He also spoke regarding a program for transitions for new pastors and congregations as well as a regional church model to assist smaller congregations to strengthen their mission and ministry.

1. The Board moved into executive session at approximately 7:54 pm.
   1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Move into executive session.
   2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
2. At approximately 8:48 pm, the Board exited the executive session.
   1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Exit executive session.
   2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.

**RECESS:**

Rev. Fondow read the proposed theme scripture passage (John 16:33) for the 2021 District Convention. He shared that the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Finland is facing legal action for teaching that marriage outside of one man and one woman is a sin. Rev. Fondow shared how Satan is working to destroy the church and in many ways the mind is the battlefield. In Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer, Jesus prays that we be one with Him. As GK Chesterson once responded that what’s wrong with the world is ‘me,’ we are all encouraged to honestly repent and consider our standing before God. It is God who equips us and is with us. We have His Word which we need to hear again and again to put on the full armor of God and have His peace. Satan has already been defeated by that Word. In Christ we have everything.

Rev. Fondow led the board in prayer.

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**Monday, February 17, 8:30 a.m.**

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**RECONVENE:**

President Fondow led those in attendance in a devotional service (attached). In his homily, based on Philemon, Rev. Fondow talked about getting along with others, inside and outside of the faith. It is sad and messy when fellow believers commune with one another but will not talk with each other. Talking of Paul, Onesimus, and Philemon, we have a pattern to follow when one Christian sins against another. That pattern is to confess, forgive, and repay one another. Rev. Fondow reminded everyone that, like Onesimus, we were born slaves to sin, but Jesus has purchased us out of slavery to sin. He owns us. Yet, like Onesimus, we want to run off. By grace, Jesus calls us back to Him and reminds us that we are free. His love leads us to trust Him. It is time to go to the Father, confess our sins, but with a letter from Christ. We are former slaves receiving an inheritance. We, as His children, are to play out the role of Paul, Onesimus, or Philemon in our lives.

Rev. Fondow led the Board in the remainder of the devotional service.

1. **LUTHERAN ISLAND CAMP REPORT Rev. K. Lee**

Rev. K. Lee distributed flyers for upcoming events, this summer’s brochure, and also a printed report (attached).

He spoke of the ongoing financial struggles with increased staff and revenues not meeting those costs.

As he went through the report, Rev. K. Lee highlighted a gift from the Mike and Jan Rygh family and the date of the Winter Bash (Saturday, March 1). Registrations for the Summer are on pace with past years. The search for a head cook continues. The Building New Bridges campaign has raised $6.8 million of the $11 million goal.

Questions were raised by the Board regarding the current operations of camp, including finances and staffing. Discussion followed.

1. **MINISTERIAL HEALTH COMMISSION REPORT Rev. D. Fondow**

The Commission meets a week from tomorrow. The commission had discussed the State Pastor’s Conference and the Health Screening offered there. The title of the State Pastors Conference is, “The Care of Souls: Yours and Theirs.”

The Circuit Visitors will be taking Dr. Senkbeil’s book, The Care of Souls, and using it for study at Circuit meetings.

1. **Division of Mission and Congregational Outreach [MaCO] Report Rev. J. Lee**

Rev. J. Lee shared the minutes from the last meeting (attached). He noted the decrease in the 2020 budget due to decreased subsidies to a couple of ministries in the District. He shared that the committee is looking at options for Deaf Ministry in the future. He shared some thoughts regarding the challenges of teaching stewardship in the future. He updated the Board on work in Puerto Rico.

Rev. Lee shared current options for church plants in the District: West Duluth and the Isanti area.

He reported that Trinity, Sauk Rapids is exploring options with the Anyuak ministry.

Rev. Lee spoke to the Seven Mission Priorities of the Synod and how many impact MaCO.

Disaster Response Training will occur on February 29 at Trinity, Sauk Rapids. Thirty are currently registered.

Finally, Rev. Lee spoke about congregational and pastoral revitalization discussions that are occuring in the District and among District staff.

1. **PRESIDENT’S REPORT Rev. D. Fondow**

Rev. Fondow began by reminding the Board that Jesus states that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is present. However, wherever two or three are gathered, He stated, there are two or three sinners. This was to share news of Lutheran churches and church bodies throughout the world that also struggle with dysfunction. He also spoke of other news from the Lutheran Church in Madagascar and West Central Africa. He encouraged the Board to be praying regarding the Coronavirus and its impact on the ministries in that area of the world.

Rev. Fondow shared other international news.

Looking at the District map, Rev. Fondow shared that there will need to be discussion regarding meeting requirements by the Synod for an electoral Circuit.

He shared other statistics and information for the District and Synod.

The Cross Appeal has raised over $87,000 to date.

Rev. Fondow updated the Board on other continuing ministries in the District.

The current balance in the Sower’s Fund is $26,112.

He updated the Board on current international mission partnerships.

He also highlighted several upcoming events related to the District.

1. **INFORMATION ON THE 2021 DISTRICT CONVENTION Rev. D. Fondow**

Rev. Fondow presented to the Board the proposed theme for the 2021 District Convention.

**MOVED and SECONDED:** Hold the 2021 District Convention at Madden’s on Gull Lake in Brainerd, April 12-14 with the theme, “Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go...Making Disciples for Life” based on John 16:33.

**ACTION:** Motion carried.

Rev. Fondow noted for the Board that Concordia University - Portland is closing after the Spring 2020 semester.

He also asked that the Board keep former Synod First Vice President Herb Mueller in their prayers as his condition continues to deteriorate.

In closing, Rev. Fondow shared Acts 4:31 and Winston Churchill’s words of encouragement to his country, in the midst of the Nazi’s eminent attack on Great Britain. In the battle that we, as Christians and the Church, find ourselves in against the powers and authorities of “this present darkness,” Rev. Fondow posed the question, “Could this be our finest hour?” He reminded everyone that our ability to resist and stand strong lies with God who gives us His unchanging promises in His Word. In the end, our Lord’s Church will prevail because it will be His final hour.

Rev. Fondow led the Board in a closing prayer. The Board closed singing 920 “Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go.”

1. **ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:**
   1. **DATE:** May 3-4, 2020
   2. **TIME:** 4:00 pm & 8:30 am
   3. **DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY LEADER: Mr. R. Rydberg**

1. **ADJOURNMENT**
   1. **MOVED & SECONDED:** Adjournment
   2. **ACTION: CARRIED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Marty Mably, M.A., M.Div., Secretary

Minnesota North District

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