

MINUTES
of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minnesota North District
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
Brainerd, Minnesota

September 27-28, 2020, 4:00 pm

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

1. DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY

Mr. M. Uran

Mr. Uran led the Board in the opening devotion. The Board began by singing stanzas one & two of “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want.” (LSB 710) He shared from Rev. Timothy Shoup’s devotional book, “Praise & Honor,” how our lack of knowledge of being a shepherd, does not prevent us from clinging to the message of Psalm 23. The author talks about who YHWH is and how he cares for us and shepherds us. The Lord IS our shepherd. After singing stanza three, Mr. Uran read from the book, where the author turns from talking about the Lord in the third person, to talking directly to the Lord, the shepherd who leads us and is with us in the most difficult times in life. We fear not, for He is with us. The Board then sang stanzas four and five of the hymn. The author describes the relief, peace and joy that comes from our great shepherd. The author juxtaposes the feast with sharing it with our enemies. David wrote Psalm 23 based off of his life lived in relationship with the Lord and all that the Lord has done for him. David knew Him by name, YHWH. We know Him by name too, Jesus, and we will dwell in His house forever, with our Good Shepherd. The Board read responsively Psalm 23. Mr. Uran led the group in a closing prayer.

2. ROLL CALL/MINUTES

Rev. M. Mably

a. ROLL CALL

- i. **Members Present:** President Fondow; Vice Presidents Finnern, Lee and Weber; Secretary Mably; Treasurer Uran; Lay Members Browning, Gilbertson, Kading, Meyer, Moldenhauer and Rydberg; Advisory members Rev. J. Lee, Rev. M. Meyer
- ii. **Members Absent:** None

b. MINUTES – Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, May 4, 2020 (attached)

- i. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the minutes of the May 4, 2020, as presented.
- ii. **ACTION:** Motion carried.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. M. Uran

- a. Mr. Uran shared that the process of transferring the property on Pine Cone Road in St. Cloud is completed as of August 18, thanks in part to the pro bono work of attorney Todd Kelm.
- b. The Two Harbors property is still being marketed.
- c. Mr. Uran shared the "Receipts from Congregations" report, dated 09/15/2020 (attached), showing the District approximately to be where it was last year, financially. Thankfully, congregations have remained faithful to their commitments to the District. Discussion followed that this reflects a \$100,000 overall decrease in the District budget from five years ago.
- d. Mr. Uran presented and went through the "Balance Sheet," dated 09/15/2020 (attached) with the Board. He noted how the sale of property is reflected in the financial statements.
- e. **MOVED and SECONDED** Set aside time for the December meeting to develop actions items for addressing future budget planning and promoting the work and support of the District.
ACTION: Motion carried.
- f. **MOVED and SECONDED** Approve Treasurer's Report as presented.
ACTION: Motion carried.
- g. Mr. Uran noted that due to employing a new auditor and delays due to COVID-19, the auditor's report that is usually presented at this meeting will be delayed until the December meeting.

4. LCEF

Rev. J. Lee

- a. **Status Report** - Rev. Lee talked about his work since taking over in June/July. He noted some updates from LCEF, based on attempts to reduce the cost of funds. LCEF is working on efforts towards regionalization. Regarding COVID-19, by October all congregations who are paying back loans will be back to making full payments. The Leadership Conference for the year was cancelled, and the annual business will be conducted by mail-in ballots.
- b. **Loan Application (if any)** - None

5. Division of Mission and Congregational Outreach [MaCO] Report

Rev. J. Lee

- a. The committee met on June 23.
- b. Rev. Lee noted that the Synodical ReVitality program is transitioning to being led by pastors rather than facilitators.
- c. He encourages congregations to conduct demographic studies, provided free by the District, on a somewhat regular basis.
- d. The Technology Conference was cancelled for October due to COVID-19. There is a conference being planned for November in North Dakota (in a location bordering Minnesota) specifically looking at streaming worship services.
- e. The District is planning to again offer stewardship materials online.

- f. Regarding congregational stewardship, Rev. Lee emphasized that pastors should be the leader for the congregation and that a congregation's offering should reflect first-fruits giving.
- g. October would normally be the Fall FORO. However, because of COVID-19, they will hold two of them virtually. Rev. Lee plans to send the information to District churches.
- h. The Parish Nurses cancelled their Summer Conference due to COVID-19.
- i. The Student Aid committee met in June and dispersed funds. Not all of the funds were disbursed as applications have come in irregularly this year due to COVID-19.
- j. Church planting efforts have slowed, in part, due to the pandemic.
- k. The initiative from the last District Convention for Hispanic outreach has been postponed due to current budget constraints.
- l. Rev. Lee talked about a particularly enlightening presentation on deaf ministry by Rev. Knaack at the recent Circuit Visitors Conference.
- m. The Seminary Interview Committee recently interviewed one gentleman who has decided to delay entering the seminary until 2021.
- n. There is one Colloquy Candidate who was recently interviewed.
- o. Breezy Point Chapel concluded worship services for the year in September. Attendance and giving were significantly down due to COVID-19.

BREAK – President Fondow called for a recess and led a prayer for the dinner.

6. LUTHERAN ISLAND CAMP REPORT

Rev. K. Lee

- a. Rev. Lee shared copies of a report from an initial phase of a strategic planning process that the Camp is undertaking. (attached)
- b. Rev. Lee also distributed the report on Camp. (attached)
- c. He noted that it includes the five recommendations that came from this summer's strategic planning efforts and talked more about the process.
- d. Rev. Lee updated the Board on the Building New Bridges Campaign.
- e. He noted that there were a number of families who came to the Camp this Summer, especially the two Family Camp weeks.
- f. He updated the Board on the online quilt auction.
- g. The Camp also hosted for the first time, a golf tournament.
- h. The 2019 audit is in progress.
- i. He noted the furlough plans for the Fall.
- j. There was discussion regarding the Camp's Foundation Board and its future work.

6. MINISTERIAL HEALTH COMMISSION REPORT

Rev. D. Fondow

- a. The commission met on June 18.
- b. The book, “The Care of Souls (Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart)” and an accompanying Study Guide has been distributed to the Circuit Visitors who are encouraged to lead their Circuits in using it at monthly Circuit Meetings.
- c. He shared what was covered at the Fall Pastors Conference, focusing on ministerial health, with Dr. Rick Marrs (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) and Jim Otremba (Licensed Counselor, St. Cloud)
- d. He shared a letter that he sent to all the congregations in the District highlighting the need for pastors to take time off.
- e. He and President Woodford (MN South District) made a presentation to the Fort Wayne Seminary Faculty on pastoral care during a pandemic.

RECESS:

Rev. Fondow noted how the work of the church has continued and thrived through the pandemic, through local congregations.

Lessons learned are that God keeps his promise, nothing will stop His Word and His Gospel from being proclaimed, and also, that God continues to send workers into His fields for harvest.

Rev. Fondow led the board in prayer.

Monday, September 28, 8:30 a.m.

RECONVENE:

President Fondow led those in attendance in a devotional service (attached) in observance of Saint Michael and All Angels. In his homily, based on the lessons, he talked about the ‘fighting’ words of the hymn, “Christ, the Lord of Hosts, Unshaken” and in the lessons, between Satan and God’s angels. He spoke how Satan will fight to the very end and we should be aware and prepared for the battle as members of the church militant. The battle is in us, sin, where Satan seems to trap us. God gives us weapons, through, the Word of God, and in the body and blood of the Lamb where Jesus fights for us. Satan tries to convince us that they don’t help, to not use them. So, it is good that we have one another, to warn, correct, forgive, love and support one another. We need not fear, for the victory is won in Christ.

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

7. **DIVISION OF PARISH LIFE and Nurture [PLaN]**

Rev. M. Meyer

- a. Rev. Meyer updated the Board regarding Campus Ministry efforts in the District, where the focus is now towards ministry on campus. The current campus ministries are in Moorhead, Duluth, Morris, Bemidji, Superior and St. Cloud, through local churches.
- b. Regarding schools and preschools, they are all doing well. Rev. Meyer continues to meet with principals, via Zoom, regularly.
- c. Rev. Meyer is working with a focus group on how congregations can minister to communities during civil unrest.
- d. The “Someone You Know” initiative continues. Rev. Meyer is committed to having every church in the District praying for ‘someone you know’ on the first Sunday of every month.
- e. Bring It Home 3.0 will hopefully be available in November, focusing on the life of Jesus.
- f. With a passion for working with congregations on outreach, Rev. Meyer spoke about an opportunity to work with a church in Pequot Lakes, serving during their vacancy helping them with their focus and vision.
- g. **MOVED and SECONDED**: To allow Rev. Meyer to work with Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Pequot Lakes, MN along with Vacancy Pastor, Mark Johnson, during their vacancy.
- h. **ACTION**: Motion carried.

8. **Constitutions to be Acted Upon**

- a. Two sets of Constitutions and Bylaws were recommended for approval to the Board by the Committee on Congregational Constitutions and District Membership (Rev. Carnicom, chairman): Zion Lutheran Church, Sebeka, MN and Trinity Lutheran Church, Sabin, MN.
 - i. Regarding Zion Lutheran Church, Sebeka, MN:
 1. **MOVED and SECONDED**: Approve the Constitution and Bylaws for Zion Lutheran Church, Sebeka, MN as presented.
 2. **ACTION**: Motion carried.
 - ii. Regarding Trinity Lutheran Church, Sabin, MN:
 1. On page 11, in the first paragraph, third line, it is noted that ‘then’ should be corrected to read “them.”
 2. **MOVED and SECONDED**: Approve the Constitution and Bylaws for Trinity Lutheran Church, Sabin, MN with the one minor correction.
 3. **ACTION**: Motion carried.

9. President's Report

Rev. D. Fondow

- a. Rev. Fondow reviewed the Here We Stand theme from the last District Convention, noting that especially in these times, everything else is “sinking sand.”
- b. He noted how encouraged he is by the new, younger pastors in the District.
- c. He spoke regarding the District's efforts, along with other Lutheran and Christian church bodies, to communicate and work with the Governor's office regarding current pandemic restrictions and acknowledging the church as essential.
- d. Rev Fondow spoke regarding previous District Convention themes and the necessity to be in God's word, to deal biblically with conflict and to focus on the mission of the church.
- e. He reviewed the District and Synodical numbers and statistics regarding church workers, District congregations in the Calling Process.
- f. Rev. Fondow also reviewed recent District events.
- g. He reviewed the seven-fold mission priorities of the Synod for the current triennium.
- h. Rev. Fondow also reviewed the District Ministries.
- i. He shared with the Board “A Lutheran Voters Information Guide - 2020” (attached) that will be shared with the congregations in the District.

In closing, Rev. Fondow referred to Job, that as Job lost everything, we have lost a great deal. Like Job, may we cling to the same God. In times like these, it is vital that we look to and trust in God, our Savior. For God promises to hold us, love us and care for us. He led the Board in prayer. The Board concluded the meeting singing “Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go” LSB 920.

10. ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

- a. **DATE:** December 6-7, 2020
- b. **TIME:** 4:00 pm
- c. **DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY LEADER:** Rev. K. Weber

11. ADJOURNMENT

- a. **MOVED & SECONDED:** Adjournment
- b. **ACTION: CARRIED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Marty Mably, M.A., M.Div., Secretary
Minnesota North District
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod