**MINUTES**

**of the**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Minnesota North District**

**The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod**

**Brainerd, Minnesota**

**May 2-3, 2021**

**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. Kading**

The Board began by singing “O Word of God Incarnate” (LSB 523). Psalm 86 was read, verse by verse, by Board members. Mr. Kading read a portion of a devotion from “Shaped to Serve,” by Dr. Jane Fryar, regarding serving together in the context of truth and love which leads to a unity with God that makes growth in the Kingdom possible. Ultimately, it was Jesus who served and died for us in humility and now forgives us and equips us to serve. The Board discussed responses to questions regarding times that they have received encouragement, times they have given encouragement, when they have given criticism in love, and how people can mend relationships. Mr. Kading shared how Board Meetings can be a source of encouragement for himself, which served as a reminder for all the Board Members.

The Board confessed their faith, using the Apostles’ Creed and they prayed the Lord’s Prayer.

Mr. Kading concluded the devotion by leading the Board in prayer and the Board sang “Come, My Soul, with Every Care” (LSB 779).

1. **ROLL CALL/MINUTES Rev. M. Mably**
   1. **ROLL CALL**
      1. **Members Present**: President Fondow; Vice Presidents Finnern and Weber; Secretary Mably; Treasurer Uran; Lay Members Browning, Hansen (filling position vacated by Gilbertson), Kading, Meyer, Moldenhauer and Rydberg; Advisory members Rev. J. Lee and Rev. M. Meyer. Vice President K. Lee joined the meeting at 5:00 p.m.
      2. **Members Absent:** None
   2. **MINUTES – Board of Directors Meeting – February 14-15, 2021 (attached)**
      1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the minutes of the meeting as presented.
      2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
2. **REPLACEMENT OF BOARD MEMBER**
   1. **Replacement of Lay Board member Rick Gilbertson**
      1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Appoint Mr. Bill Hansen to serve the remainder of the Term for the Lay Board Member position vacated by Mr. Rick Gilbertson.
      2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
   2. **Replacement of Lay Board member Delano Meyer**
      1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Appoint Mr. Gary Euren to serve the remainder of the Term for the Lay Board Member position vacated by Mr. Delano Meyer.
      2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
3. **TREASURER’S REPORT Mr. M. Uran**
   1. Mr. Uran went through the Financial Statement dated 04/15/2021 (attached), noting that the District is doing well financially. The District continues to limit the amount of cash at Bremer Bank, to stay close to or below FDIC limits. To address this, Mr. Uran and Mrs. Ringstrom are looking into opening an account with the LCMS Foundation, making sure that this money would be accessible as needed. He noted that congregational support is ahead of pace for the year.
      1. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Accept Treasurer’s report as presented.
      2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
   2. The Board discussed the campus ministry property in St. Cloud.
      1. **MOVED and SECONDED** Authorize the spending of up to $15,000 to help prepare the St. Cloud campus ministry property for sale.
      2. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
   3. Mr. Uran shared a printout (attached) showing the results of congregations using the Synod’s Compensation Tool. The comparison shows that the tool addresses the cost of living in different parts of the District.
4. **LCEF Rev. J. Lee**
   1. Rev. Lee presented the LCEF report (attached)
   2. He reported that the Cost of Funds is at 1.875%.
   3. Rev. Lee requested ratification for a Church Improvement Loan to St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Braham, MN for $30,000.
      1. **MOVED and SECONDED** Ratify Church Improvement Loan to St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Braham, MN for $30,000.

**ACTION:** Motion carried.

* 1. He spoke about a new program for church workers, the Church Worker Steward account which will be rolled out this summer in phases, to entice more workers to invest in LCEF.
  2. Rev. Lee reported that there are continuing changes within LCEF for cost savings, including the elimination of regional offices.
  3. He reported that the District’s LCEF currently has $28 million dollars in investments and $14 million dollars in loans.

1. **Division of Mission and Congregational Outreach [MaCO] Report Rev. J. Lee**
   1. The Committee met via Zoom on April 28, 2021. Rev. Lee presented highlights from the meeting’s report (attached).
   2. As vaccines are becoming available and with no modifications to the Governor’s Executive order regarding restrictions, Rev. Lee reported that churches in the District continue to have differing policies regarding the wearing of masks, etc..
   3. Church planting continues to be on hold due to COVID.
   4. He updated the Board on the Student Aid Committee. The application deadline is May 15. Rev. Lee also spoke regarding an incentive program to help Church Workers reduce student debt.
   5. Rev. Lee reported that the District requested eight Candidates from the Seminaries and received six.
   6. He reported that the Breezy Point Chapel will restart Memorial Day weekend and continue through Labor Day weekend. They are looking at having the carpet and chairs replaced.
   7. Rev. Lee shared with the Board that Synod’s Re:Vitalization program is now more of a self-study model through the website. He still offers to serve as a facilitator for churches using the program.
   8. LCEF continues to offer products for congregations, including topics regarding physical property.
   9. Rev. Lee reported to the Board that he has been elected as Secretary for the Stewardship Leadership Conference.
   10. He spoke regarding the most recent Puerto Rico FORO via Zoom in April. Rev. Lee continues to be impressed with all that they have been doing, especially their use of online services. He is hopeful that the Fall FORO will be in person, but is not sure where it will be.
   11. The Parish Nursing program continues to be on hold due to COVID. One Parish Nurse has retired and one has joined the group.
   12. Rev. Lee reported that the MaCO Board is exploring options for reorganizing, possibly emphasizing its work more at a Circuit level.
   13. The next MaCO meeting will be August 18 at the District Office.

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

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1. **LUTHERAN ISLAND CAMP REPORT Rev. K. Lee**
   1. Rev. K. Lee went through the Lutheran Island Camp report for the Board (attached).
   2. The summer calendar is out (attached). It was decided to move away from an expensive printed brochure and move toward more online activity, especially with regards to registration.
   3. The Camp is working with the county health department officials to ensure that the Camp is following best practices, including conducting as many activities outside as possible, including meals, campers spending more time with their cabin group, and a drop off registration procedure.
   4. Rev. Lee reported that the Camp is almost fully staffed. A lifeguard is still needed.
   5. Julia O’Laughlin is the new program coordinator.
   6. Cheyenne Riedel is the new nutrition coordinator, which is a part-time position.
   7. He reported that the Camp is interviewing new property coordinators
   8. With Melody, the current Executive Director done as of September 1, the Camp’s Executive Committee is working on finding a new Executive Director.
   9. The Executive Committee is also working on a new budget.
   10. Rev. Lee reported that the Camp’s publicity is increasing.
   11. He shared with the Board regarding the upcoming Men’s Retreat (attached)
   12. Rev. Lee reported that a new Campaign Director for the Building New Bridges (BNB) is being sought. Currently, the Committee is trying to cover the work. They are almost done visiting all the Circuits and are fine tuning plans for construction.
   13. The Camp Board will address the Management Agreement with the District Board at its May meeting.
   14. Rev. Lee spoke with the Board regarding plans for a farewell for Ken and Marvin.
2. **Ministerial Health Commission Rev. Fondow**
   1. Rev. Fondow reported that the commission met on February 22nd.
   2. He reported that the District’s Circuits are going through *The Care of Souls* book.
   3. Doxology’s “Take Heart” respite retreats continue to be offered.
   4. Rev. Fondow shared that the Synod has funding for COVID related issues with workers.

**RECESS:** Rev. Fondow read 1 Peter 4:12. He reminded the Board that religious persecution in North America is not yet to the point of being put to death. In 1 Peter, it became deadly. No matter what the trial, those believers were not alone. Christians should not be surprised at persecution. Martyrdom could become reality for us. Persecution has and is, for sure. The differences between Christianity and the world are great. Priorities, pleasure and goals are not the same, as well as life-style and the sanctity of life. Pastors have been censored. At these times we may wonder if it’s worth it. Rev. Fondow encouraged the Board to listen to Peter’s words. Painful trials come with the territory of being a Christian. God will turn it all to blessing. Rev. Fondow concluded the evening with a prayer.

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**Monday, May 3, 2021, 8:30 a.m.**

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**RECONVENE:**

Rev. Fondow led the Board and guests in the morning devotion, using Responsive Prayer 2 in the Lutheran Service Book. The Board read responsively Psalm 8. Mr. Meyer read Philippian 1:3-11. Rev. Weber read from Luke, chapter 2. The Board sang “Earth and All Stars” (LSB 817), verses 1, 2, 6 and 7. For his message, Rev. Fondow read from Colossians 1:16-17. Using an account of an exhibition game between a Canadian and American Football teams, with differing rules and field dimensions, Rev. Fondow spoke about how modern science has excluded God, changing the ‘rules,’ that don’t allow them to see God in their world view. Speaking to Romans 11:33, he spoke about how people reduce their view of reality by excluding God. For modern people, it takes more than a limited view, but an act of human will to not see God. Still Christ, out of great love, came into our world to save us.

The Board continued with Responsive Prayer 2, concluding with singing “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee” (LSB 803).

1. **DIVISION OF PARISH LIFE and Nurture [PLaN] Rev. M. Meyer**
   1. Rev. Meyer spoke about an effort he is leading to explore what it means to be a regional church, utilizing some churches on the I-94 and Highway 10 corridor who are seizing some current opportunities for regional ministries.
   2. Rev. Meyer and Mrs. Roupp are working on communication in the District with a soft redesign of the District’s website, noting that more people receive their information via smartphone now than any other way. Also, he noted that the District can certainly do a better job communicating all that the District offers.
   3. Rev. Meyer will be reaching out to the new Pastors in the District to help them begin well in their new Calls.
   4. Campus ministry update:
      1. Rev. Meyer reported that Caleb Kunze has decided that he wants to return to working solely with Love of Christ Lutheran Church. Subsequently, Rev. Joshua Reber at Faith Lutheran in St. Cloud has expressed interest in the St. Cloud State campus ministry.
      2. Rev. Meyer is still talking with Our Redeemer Lutheran in Moorhead.
      3. Discussion followed, regarding the District using a grant model for funding for churches who want to do campus ministry.
   5. School ministry update:
      1. Rev. Meyer reported that Zion, Alexandria is in the process of Calling a new principal.
      2. St. John’s, Thief River Falls, is in the process of addressing staffing issues.
      3. Good Shepherd Lutheran High School, Elk River now has 10 students.
      4. The Park Rapids area is also exploring starting a High School with a sports emphasis.
      5. Prince of Peace in Baxter is looking at starting a school.
   6. Regarding the “Bring it Home” program, Rev. Meyer reported that CPH sold over 200 units of the Arch Books bundle package. He is now exploring the next “Bring it Home” program, “What does this mean?” focusing on the Small Catechism.
   7. Rev. Meyer updated the Board on his work at Gloria Dei, Pequot Lakes and the good results that the church is experiencing. The church could serve as a possible ‘example’ for churches in the District to see what the District can offer to other churches.
2. **Constitutions to be Acted Upon - None**

1. **President’s Report Rev. D. Fondow**
   1. Rev. Fondow reviewed with the Board the “Looking to the Future'' discussion from the previous meeting and asked if there were any more thoughts. Discussion followed.
   2. Looking at the District map, the Board spoke regarding possible mission starts in the District.
   3. Rev. Fondow shared updated Synod and District statistics and activities.
   4. Rev. Fondow shared information on the new St. Louis Seminary President.
   5. He shared that Rev. Walter Brill, former Minnesota North District Secretary, was called to glory recently.
   6. Rev. Fondow reviewed with the Board the Synod’s seven mission priorities.
   7. He shared with the Board the current Public Policy issues in our state.
   8. Rev. Fondow updated the Board on the District’s mission partnerships.
   9. Upcoming events include:
      1. August 11-12 - New Worker Orientation at the District Office
      2. August 30-31- Circuit Visitors Conference at the District Office
      3. September 19-20 - Board of Directors at the District Office
      4. September 26-28 - Fall Pastors Conference at Lutheran Island Camp
      5. December 5-6 Board of Directors at the District office
      6. May 9-11 - District Convention at Madden’s in Brainerd.

In closing, Rev. Fondow read Zephaniah 2:7 and spoke about thinking about the future. People often want to look to the past because they know what that was. We want to go back to the Biblical past or our past to prevent past sins because they plague us today. The past is no place to live. God invites us to look to the future. He takes care of our past. Our sins are removed. We are restored. So, we press on to the prize of eternal life in Chirst Jesus.

Rev. Fondow led the Board in a closing prayer and the Board concluded with singing verses 1, 2 and 4 of “God of Grace and God of Glory” LSB 850.

1. **ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:**
   1. **DATE:** September 19-20, 2021
   2. **TIME:** 4:00 pm
   3. **DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY LEADER: Rev. Jeff Lee**
2. **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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