

MINUTES
of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

September 26-27, 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

Rev. Jeff Lee

Rev. Lee led the Board in the opening devotion (see attached), using LSB’s Early Evening Daily Prayer Liturgy. He read Mark 9:38-50. The Board sang “O Worship the King” (LSB 804), verses 1-3. Rev. Lee spoke regarding Aaron Ralston, a hiker who had to cut off his own arm when it became trapped by a boulder. Mr. Ralston said that it was a matter of life and death. Jesus says the same thing about our sin. God takes sin that seriously. Jesus loved us enough to be ‘cut off,’ paying the price for our sin, dying on the cross. Juxtaposed with Jesus’ words regarding children, Jesus is reminding us not only of the seriousness of our sin, but the effects of our sins on others, including children. Then, as God keeps us salty, by Christ, in true faith, we remain faithful and share that faith with others. The Board concluded with singing verses 4-6 of “O Worship the King” (LSB 804).

2. INSTALLATION OF 2 BOARD MEMBER

Rev. D. Fondow

The Board introduced themselves to the new Board members. Rev. Fondow installed Mr. Bill Hansen to serve the remainder of the term for Lay Board Member position vacated by Mr. Rick Gilbertson and Mr. Gary Euren to serve the remainder of the term for the Lay Board Member position vacated by Mr. Delano Meyer.

3. ROLL CALL/MINUTES

Rev. M. Mably

a. ROLL CALL

- i. **Members Present:** President Fondow; Vice Presidents Finnern and Weber; Secretary Mably; Treasurer Uran; Lay Members Browning, Euren, Hansen, Kading, and Moldenhauer; Advisory members Rev. J. Lee and Rev. M. Meyer. Vice President K. Lee joined the meeting late.
- ii. **Members Absent:** Mr. Rydberg

b. MINUTES – Board of Directors Meeting – May 2-3, 2021 (attached)

- i. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the minutes of the meeting with two minor changes and including Mr. Kading as present under Roll Call/Minutes, 2.1.i..
- ii. **ACTION:** Motion carried.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. M. Uran

- a. Mr. Uran presented and went through the Receipts from Congregations for the Work of District and Synod, noting that the District continues to be ahead in receipts compared to the same time in past years.
- b. Regarding the Financial Statement dated 09/15/2021 (attached), Mr. Uran noted the sale of the property in St. Cloud and that the District continues to work to limit the amount of cash at Bremer Bank, to stay close to or below FDIC limits.
 - i. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Accept Treasurer's report as presented.
 - ii. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
- c. Mr. Uran reviewed the results of the completed audit (attached). One concern that the auditor expressed is that the District is not having a board member monthly review receipts. Due to time constraints, having a Board member present at the right time is difficult. The District has Rev. Jeff Lee review the numbers monthly and the auditor was comfortable with this arrangement.
 - i. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Accept the audit as presented.
 - ii. **ACTION:** Motion carried.
- d. Regarding the campus property in St. Cloud, the closing was completed. Mr. Uran thanked his wife, Mr. Hansen and his family, Rev. Meyer and more for help in cleaning the house out and preparing to sell the property. The property was sold for \$155,000 and the net proceeds to the District for the sale is \$144,216.79. The use of net proceeds is to be designated by the Board.
- e. Regarding the compensation tool, Mr. Uran updated the form for the District website, adding a cover document in years where significant changes are required.
- f. Mr. Uran announced that Mrs. Ringstrom is planning to retire by June, 2022. It is important to begin immediately looking for a replacement to allow time for transition before she retires. He invited any suggestions and recommendations from the Board.
- g. There was discussion regarding the other two properties that the District owns, in Baxter and in Two Harbors and efforts, including possibilities to use or sell either.

5. LUTHERAN ISLAND CAMP REPORT

Mrs. Stacy Lung

- a. Mrs. Lung introduced herself to the Board as the new, part-time Executive Director of LIC.
- b. She described her emphasis for the coming year, using 3 C's to help focus efforts at LIC, Communication (to all constituents), Clarity (focusing on the registration process and finances), and Clean-up (throughout the Island).

- c. She answered questions from the Board, including current staffing, which includes a new properties manager, program director and kitchen staff.
- d. She addressed current challenges that LIC faces, including finances and staffing.

BREAK – Rev. Fondow called for a recess and Rev. Weber offered a prayer for Mrs. Lung, Lutheran Island Camp and for the dinner.

6. LCEF

Rev. J. Lee

- a. Rev. J. Lee distributed an LCEF information brochure (attached). He shared highlights from the brochure.
- b. He shared figures regarding LCEF year-end distributions, including to the District, which will be \$57,920, with the potential for another \$57,920.

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

- a. Rev. Lee shared that the Student Financial Aid Committee met this summer. Currently four seminary, and six (church work) undergraduates are being supported. The committee has reserved some money to serve as a cushion.
- b. He is working to restart the Engaging Your Community program which serves to reenergize congregations. He is looking to conduct regional workshops throughout the District.
- c. Regarding Breezy Point Chapel, the average attendance was approximately 50 people per Sunday, operating from Memorial to Labor Day. New carpet was installed. The facility also needs new chairs, which will hopefully happen next year, as well as painting the building.
- d. He continues to offer evangelism training to congregations, finding that it works better to hold the training on one day (9am - 2pm). He uses the Everyone His Witness materials.
- e. Stewardship programs are available online. Two were added this past year and one to two more will hopefully be added this coming year. Also available is LCEF's Consecrated Stewards.
- f. Puerto Rico FORO will occur via Zoom again this year, this coming Saturday.
- g. Rev. Knack continues to serve the deaf ministry in the District and is now also serving as a pastor in two District congregations.
- h. Rev. Lee shared his recent conversation with the new director of Lutheran Indian Ministries that there are no plans for the organization to reapply as an RSO of Synod.
- i. He shared that Re:Vitality is now completely online.

8. Ministerial Health Commission

Rev. Fondow

- a. Rev. Fondow reported that the commission met in June.

- b. He shared that every pastor in the District has received the book, *The Care of Souls* and many circuits are going through it in their monthly meetings, utilizing the study guide that was provided with it.
- c. Doxology has held 30 “Take Heart” respite retreats for pastors and two for commissioned workers with more to come.
- d. LCEF provided grants to assist workers who need assistance due to COVID.
- e. The Commission is going through the book, *Built on the Rock* by Ted Kober. Rev. Fondow commended it to the Board as an excellent resource.

RECESS: Rev. Fondow used LSB’s Daily Prayer Close of the Day liturgy for the evening’s closing devotion. He spoke of how people exert themselves in countless ways to reach God. We don’t need to because God reached out to us. Jesus is now God with us and for us. It is human nature to search for God, but our nature is now corrupted by sin, blind in the dark, trying to solely use our mind, will, heart and deeds to find God. It is all futile because of sin. We are at odds with our maker in our sin. Still, out of His goodness, God came to us, beginning in ancient Israel. As seen in Sunday’s reading from the lectionary, the harvest is ripe but the workers grumble. Things haven’t changed today. In the fullness of time, God answered His people’s prayer and became Immanuel, God with us. He became one with us, without sin, paying the price for our sin and rising again, for us. Now, by faith, we have communion with Him, without end. The Board concluded by singing LSB 358, “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”, verses 1, 3, and 4.

Monday, September 27, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

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 100. He spoke to the story of love and mercy found in Jonah, not the ‘fish’ story. Jonah was reluctant to share God’s love and mercy. It was easier to run away, he thought. We, too, are called to share the same love and mercy to everyone, even when we do not agree with them. Jonah was angry with God for his mercy. Yet, God was faithful. In the end, God sends a worm to bring Jonah to repentance, but we are not told how Jonah responded. It is the same with Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son. In Jesus, we have the sign of Jonah, where Jesus becomes the unforgiving one, taking our punishment, and showing us God’s unfailing love, grace and forgiveness. God didn’t give up on Jonah or Nineveh and He does not give up on us. His love, mercy and forgiveness never end. The Board continued with Responsive Prayer 2, concluding with singing “God Loves Me Dearly” (LSB 392).

9. DIVISION OF PARISH LIFE and Nurture [PLaN]

Rev. M. Meyer

- a. Rev. Meyer updated and highlighted for the Board the efforts at the District's parochial schools.
- b. He reported that the committee is working on developing scholarships for teachers who want to colloquize into the LCMS.
- c. Regarding Campus Ministry, Pastor Josh Reber is working with campus ministry on the Saint Cloud State University campus, going to campus once per week. The District is offering grants to any church who wishes to conduct campus ministry, with the one requirement to be on campus one time per week.
- d. He has convened a group to discuss Sunday School and Confirmation in a small church setting. The emphasis, 15 For Faith, will be to focus on parents and equipping them to teach the faith at home, "parent led, congregation supported."
- e. Rev. Meyer shared with the Board his work at Gloria Dei, Pequot Lakes.

10. **MOVED and SECONDED:** "The Board of Directors (BOD) of the Minnesota North District of the LCMS desires to assist the Board of Directors of Lutheran Island Camp (LIC) in eliminating its current debt of \$250,000.00. In addition, the District BOD supports the LIC BOD in making every effort to unite the whole District to assure the financial stability of LIC for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel to future generations. As a result of the sale of the St. Cloud State campus property and as a vote of confidence, the District BOD has approved a gift of \$145,000 to be applied directly to the operational debt of LIC."

ACTION: Motion carried.

11. Constitution to be Acted Upon

- a. One set of Constitutions and Bylaws were recommended for approval to the Board by the Committee on Congregational Constitutions and District Membership (Rev. Carnicom, chairman): St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Perham, MN.
- b. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the Constitution and Bylaws for St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Perham, MN as presented.

ACTION: Motion carried.

12. President's Report

Rev. D. Fondow

- a. Rev. Fondow shared some encouraging words regarding the Church's need to focus on our victorious Christ rather than the struggles of this sinful world and the temptation to defeatism, quoting an article by Walter A. Maier from 1931.
- b. He shared some statistics showing the decline of Christianity and all religions.
- c. Looking at the District map, Rev. Fondow discussed the three Circuits that fall below the requirements to be an Electoral Circuit according to Synod.

- d. Rev. Fondow shared updated District and Synod statistics and activities.
- e. He shared that Grace, Sebeka; Nimrod, Nimrod and Zion, North Germany entered into a Triple Parish Agreement, effective 2/7/2021. Also, Immanuel, Shible Township closed on 6/27/2021.
- f. Rev. Fondow reviewed with the Board the Synod's seven mission priorities.
- g. Rev. Fondow reviewed for the Board, the District's ministries and mission partnerships.
- h. Upcoming events include:
 - i. December 5-6 Board of Directors at the District office
 - ii. Febr 13-14 Board of Directors at the District office
 - iii. May 8 - Board of Directors at Madden's in Brainerd.
 - iv. May 9-11 - District Convention at Madden's in Brainerd.
- i. Rev. Fondow shared with the Board books published by pastors in the District.
- j. He also shared information and a video regarding Alliance Defending Freedom's Church Alliance program. The District can be a member at a cost of \$1,500 per year. Churches and Schools can also join and, if the District is a member, can receive a 20% discount.
 - i. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Join as a member of the Alliance Defending Freedom's Church Alliance program and encourage churches in the District to join as they are able.
 - ACTION:** Motion carried.

In closing, Rev. Fondow shared how the culture around us is changing, especially attacking Biblical views and those who still hold to those truths. We will be attacked by all the forces of Satan. Our defense is to stand on the truth of God's Word and be a faithful witness to it's truth, especially the saving love and forgiveness of Christ. The Board concluded with singing verses 1 and 3 of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" LSB 656. Rev. Fondow concluded with prayer.

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

14. ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

- a. **DATE:** December 5-6, 2021
- b. **TIME:** 4:00 pm
- c. **DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY LEADER:** Rev. Marty Mably

Respectfully submitted,

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