

MINUTES
of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

February 13-14, 2022

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. M. Meyer

Rev. Meyer led the Board in the opening devotion (see attached). They began with singing ““How Shall They Hear ‘,’” Who Have Not Heard” (LSB 831). Rev. Meyer, talked about ‘kairos’ time, understood as the appointed time, the right time, an opportune time, a time when God acts. He spoke about pastors leaving the ministry because the times are so bad, also referring to Rod Dreher’s book, “The Benedict Option” Rev. Meyer spoke of this being the time to rise up and for Godly men to step forward. This is God’s time, a ‘kairos’ moment. This is not a time to pass up as Christian leaders. This is a dangerous time, but also a time of opportunity. Kairos is a time to be discerned by faith and it is here now.

He concluded the devotion with 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 Euren, Hansen, Moldenhauer, and Rydberg; Advisory members Rev. J. Lee and Rev. M. Meyer.
- ii. **Members Absent:** Lay members Browning and Kading

b. MINUTES – Board of Directors Meeting – December 5-6, 2021 (attached)

- i. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the minutes of the meeting as presented.
- ii. **ACTION:** Motion carried.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. M. Uran

- a. Mr. Uran presented and reviewed the Receipts from Congregations for the Work of District and Synod dated 1/15/2022 (attached), noting that receipts were 107% of commitments for the year from congregations.
- b. He also reviewed the District Investment Report (attached), dated 1-15-2022.
- c. Regarding the Financial Statement dated 1/15/2022 (attached), Mr. Uran noted that things are stable. He noted that although the 2021 budget was passed with an \$88,384 deficit, the District ended the year with a \$8,342 surplus due to increased giving from congregations and cost saving measures by the District. The 2020 deficit shown was due to depreciation costs on property that was sold by the District in 2020.
- d. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Accept Treasurer's report as presented.
ACTION: Motion carried.
- e. Regarding the restricted funds for American Indian Outreach that were discussed at our previous meeting, we have confirmed that the original donors are deceased. Also, the District's Planned Giving Consultant, David Priebe, indicated that it would be highly irregular to contact family members about changing the designation. Pastor Lee is working with several District Pastors on possible uses for these funds.
- f. It was announced by Rev. Fondow and Mr. Uran that a new staff person, Albert Boldt, has been hired who will fill Angie Ringstrom's position upon her retirement. Albert Boldt was introduced to the Board on Monday.

4. ESTABLISH 2022 DISTRICT BUDGET

Mr. M. Uran

- a. Mr. Uran reviewed the proposed 2022 Budget Program (attached). Discussion followed. The Budget was balanced with \$65,644 of Designated Funds.
- b. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Accept the 2022 Budget Work Program, covering the proposed deficit with temporary restricted funds.
ACTION: Motion carried.
- c. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Adjust the District's mileage reimbursement rate from \$.40/mile to \$.45/mile beginning March 1st, 2022.
ACTION: Motion carried.

5. LCEF

Rev. J. Lee

- a. Rev. Lee distributed the Investment Interest Rates for February 2022 and Current LCEF Cost of Funds index rate (attached).
- b. He distributed a memo regarding the 2021 Minnesota North District, LCEF - Enhanced Operating Results Request (attached).
- c. LCEF will again be providing bags for the District Convention.

6. DIVISION OF PARISH LIFE and Nurture [PLaN]

Rev. M. Meyer

- a. Rev. Meyer noted that there are plans for a tech conference this year focusing on online ministries that lead to in person worship.
- b. Campus Ministry Update - Josh Reber continues working on the SCSU's campus. Rev. Meyer is also working with UM - Moorhead. Moving forward, campus ministry will be funded via grants.
- c. Rev. Meyer spoke regarding the new *Bring It Home* series, "What does this mean?" which focuses on Martin Luther's Small Catechism. He is unsure at this time when it will be released. He is also looking for ways to assist congregations with smaller confirmation and Sunday School programs.
- d. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Baxter) is looking at the possibility of a school. St. Paul's, Perham, is looking to expand the school to 7th and 8th grade.
- e. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Contingent upon District Staff approval of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School's, Perham detailed plan regarding the addition of 7th/8th grades, the District Board of Directors would make available to the church and school up to \$10,000, drawn from the Special Interest Fund Peters, to pay for Chromebooks, teacher's laptop and curriculum.
ACTION: Motion carried.
- f. Rev. Meyer shared that regarding youth ministry, grants are available for youth leadership conferences.
- g. He shared that there are also scholarships for teachers to colloquize.
- h. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Close and redirect the funds in the Minn Kota Temporarily Restricted Funds account to the CROSS Appeal Temporarily Restricted Funds account.
ACTION: Motion carried.

BREAK – The Board sang “Feed Thy Children, God Most Holy” (LSB 774) for a dinner prayer.

7. LUTHERAN ISLAND CAMP REPORT

Rev. K. Lee

- a. Rev. Kirk Lee distributed the Camp's summer brochure (attached). He noted that registration is now all online.
- b. He went through the report (attached), noting greater optimism by the staff.
- c. Stacy continues to focus on the Three C's - Communication, Clarity, and Cleanup.
- d. The Camp's mortgage is at \$70,000, down from \$250,000.
- e. The goal for the camp is to have 1,000 campers between May and September.

8. **RECESS:**

Referencing Jesus' words in John 16:33, "I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Rev. Fondow spoke about how the most democratic thing in the world is trouble. Everyone experiences trouble which leads to worry. Yet, worrying about tomorrow only takes from today and ultimately leads to despair. God shows that good can come out of trouble. He comes with the trouble that comes into our lives, encouraging us to take courage because we face all the trouble with Him. Jesus is always with us. Through His death and resurrection, we have the assurance that no matter what trouble we are facing today, He is with us and that one day, for all who believe, trouble will cease.

The Board closed the evening singing "Come, My Soul, with Every Care" (LSB 779).

Monday, February 14, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

9. **RECONVENE:**

Rev. Fondow led the Board and guests in the morning devotion (attached). The Board and guests began with singing "The Lord, My God, Be Praised" (LSB 794), verses 1-3. The Board read Psalm 46, responsively. Reflecting on Luke 5:1-11, Rev. Fondow shared that Jesus made sure that there was no doubt that He was responsible for the large catch of fish. Everything they knew about fishing told them not to listen to Jesus. But, they knew Jesus and so followed His instructions. They followed Jesus, because He is Almighty God. Peter, once calling Jesus "Master" now calls Him "Lord." Peter wasn't ready to meet his Maker, but his Maker was ready to meet him. He had chosen Peter and these men to be His followers, His apostles. Jesus spoke words of grace and the men left everything and followed Him. Jesus showed that the most miraculous catch was not the fish. We each have routines to our day. We often may wonder what we have accomplished or if anything we do matters. Peter, James, and John had other times where they had caught nothing. Do you feel stuck? Maybe you want to get angry quickly. It can feel the same way with church. Sometimes the church struggles with how to make disciples. Why are we catching nothing with all this fishing that we are doing? Although the world will say otherwise, people work hard, do their best to do the right thing and still end up empty handed. Jesus tells us to go out again. We go, though, as those caught by Christ in our Baptism. We go in Christ and with faith. Our life truly matters in and to Christ. All that we do matters to Christ. We fall at His feet. He speaks to us and forgives us. Now we invite others to let down the nets. Jesus will command the fish to swim into the nets in His time.

Rev. Fondow led the Board in prayer.

The Board concluded the devotion by singing verse 4 of “The Lord, My God, Be Praised” (LSB 794).

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

- a. Rev. Jeff Lee referenced the report for the District Convention (attached) that shows what the committee has been doing since the last convention.
- b. Regarding Deaf Ministry, Rev. Knaack continues to serve this ministry and has recently begun serving two hearing congregations. The District provides some compensation to Rev. Knaack.
- c. Regarding Native American Ministry options, Rev. Lee hosted a meeting with pastors serving churches near casinos. They plan to meet again on March 18. Some are doing ministry to that population already. He let them know that there are resources from the District and LIC.
- d. Rev. Lee is asking each Circuit visitor to recommend pastors in their circuits to work with the District in missions/outreach and stewardship to improve communications and increase mission starts.
- e. Applications for scholarships have been decreasing. \$42,000 is the budget for this each year. The requests help to determine the amount of the scholarships. Discussion followed on how best to determine the amount of the scholarships from year to year with a varying number of applications each year.
- f. He reminded the Board about the free demographic study available to congregations.
- g. Rev. Lee reported that Alive! Lutheran Church in Monticello, has recently found another location. Rev. Peter Gueldner is working with the congregation. Rev. Jeff Lee will be working with the congregation, utilizing the Synod’s Re:Vitality program.
- h. Upcoming meetings:
 - i. North American Mission Endeavors in Orlando
 - ii. FORO in Puerto Rico.
- i. There was discussion regarding congregation pledges to the District and the timing these pledges are needed by the District.
- j. Rev. Lee updated the Board on the Breezy Point ministry.
- k. He spoke regarding discussions at the recent Circuit Visitors Conference that one of the best opportunities for missions right now seems to be within education ministries(schools). There is hope that the State will soon allow for an Education Savings Account allowing for parent choice.

11. Ministerial Health Commission **Rev. D. Fondow**

- a. The Commission has not met since the last Board of Directors Meeting.
- b. The Commission has submitted a report for the District Convention.

12. President’s Report **Rev. D. Fondow**

- a. Rev. Fondow began by sharing with the Board recent studies and statistics showing poorer, angry behavior amongst people and also an increasing number of

Pastors in mainline denominations considering leaving the ministry. Fortunately, that is not being seen as happening amongst Pastors in the MN North District. Also, this is a reminder of the importance of pastors attending Circuit Winkels.

- b. Rev. Fondow showed the District map, discussing the situation where the Wheaton, Park Rapids and Bemidji Circuits are not currently meeting the requirements for an Electoral Circuit as determined by Synod.
- c. Rev. Fondow shared updated District and Synod statistics and activities.
- d. He announced that the new Lutheran Witness Supplement Editor is Rev. Travis Lauterbach (Backus).
- e. Rev. John Beck will begin serving in May as the Chairman of the Committee on Congregational Constitutions and District Membership.
- f. Rev. Mark Maunula (Trinity, Isle) has agreed to serve as the District Archivist.
- g. He shared the following important upcoming dates.
 - i. April 2 - District Convention Floor Committee Meetings at District Office
 - ii. May 8 - Board of Directors Meeting at Maddens
 - iii. May 9-11 - District Convention at Maddens
 - iv. August 10-11 - New Worker Orientation
 - v. August 11 - Retired Worker Luncheon
 - vi. August 29-30 Circuit Visitors Conference
- h. Rev. Fondow shared information regarding the Synod's new Life Initiative.
- i. He also shared that the Synod is in its best financial situation in the last 25 years.
- j. Rev. Fondow shared that the CTCR is working on a new, Annotated Large Catechism. It recently released the document, "Marriage Between Church and State."
- k. This year is the 175th anniversary of Synod.

13. Constitution to be Acted Upon - None

Rev. M. Mably

14. Convention Matters

Rev. D. Fondow

- a. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve reports with minor changes as submitted.
ACTION: Motion carried.
- b. There was discussion regarding covering all costs of attendance for retired Pastors, with the number of retired Pastors dramatically increasing.
- c. Rev. Fondow presented and reviewed the Convention Agenda with the Board. A few minor changes were noted.
- d. **MOVED and SECONDED:** Approve the Convention Agenda with minor changes.
ACTION: Motion carried.

Rev. Fondow, in honor of it being Valentine's Day, shared that John Wooden kissed only one woman in his life, besides his mother. That was his wife. He wrote a love letter to her every month after her death. When asked why, he said that he loved her and was keeping his promise to her. A greater love is what we see in the Bible and hanging on the cross. Rather than spilling ink in a letter, he spilled his blood so that we will be loved for eternity in heaven. Rev. Fondow

shared that one of his favorite approaches to a funeral sermon is talking about the “dash” between a person’s birth date and date of death. In a funeral of a sudden, unexpected death, he noted that God is always one step ahead. So, we keep moving forward.

He led the Board in prayer. The Board sang verses 1 and 5 of “On What Has Now Been Sown” LSB 920.

15. ADJOURNMENT

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

16. ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

- a. **DATE:** May 8, 2022
- b. **TIME:** 4:00 pm
- c. **LOCATION:** Madden’s
- d. **DEVOTION/BIBLE STUDY LEADER:** Rev. D. Fondow

Respectfully submitted,

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