

# LCMS North Dakota District Board of Directors

## Second Quarter Meeting Minutes 28 October 2022

### Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND

Present at the meeting were Rev. Arie Bertsch, district president; Rev. Steve Schulz, first vice-president, chair; Rev. Kirk Peters, second vice-president; Mr. Tom Langer, vice-chair; Rev. Daniel Voth, secretary; Mrs. Kay Kreklau, treasurer; Rev. Dr. Adam Filipek; Mrs. Tana McKenna; Mr. Jason Paradis; Mr. Scott Pfennig; Mr. Eric Poppinga; Mr. Marty Visto; Rev. Lester Wolfram; and Mrs. Tami Ulland, Business Manager.

Also present: Mrs. Susan Jahnke, Principal, Grace Luther School, Fargo, ND.

## **1.0 Life Together**

Chairman Schulz called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. CDT.

President Bertsch opened with Morning Daily Prayer (LSB 295), the hymn “Preach You the Word” (LSB 586), and a meditation based on Saint Luke 16:19-31.

District Reconciler discussion was added to the agenda as 2.2.8.

## **2.0 Board Action Items**

### **2.1 Consent Agenda**

Chairman Schulz called the board’s attention to the proposed consent agenda in order to expedite addressing some of the regular business of a board meeting. Opportunity was provided for board members to request the removal of specific items from the consent agenda to be discussed during the meeting. It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the consent agenda which included the following items:

- 2.1.1 Minutes from August 26, 2022 (*Dropbox*)
- 2.1.2 Message in the Pew (*Dropbox*)
- 2.1.3 Meeting schedule 2022 – 2025
 

• Beautiful Savior, Fargo		October 28, 2022	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Bismarck/Mandan	Planning Council	February 2-3, 2023	2:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
• Bismarck/Mandan		February 3, 2023	1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Beautiful Savior, Fargo		April 14, 2023	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Minot		August 25, 2023	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Beautiful Savior, Fargo		October 27, 2023	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Beautiful Savior, Fargo	Planning Council	February 1-2, 2024	1:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
• Beautiful Savior, Fargo		February 2, 2024	1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Bismarck/Mandan		April 12, 2024	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Beautiful Savior, Fargo		August 23, 2024	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• Minot		October 25, 2024	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
• District Convention, Minot		January 19-22, 2025	
- 2.1.4 Wittenberg report (*Dropbox*)

Discussion was held regarding Wittenberg's upcoming 60th anniversary in 2024. Suggestion was made to update the bathrooms at the chapel as they are not in good shape. Renovations have been considered in the recent past, but due to high cost of bringing the bathrooms into ADA compliance, which will require moving walls, was not acted upon. The search has begun for UND alumni in all our ND congregations to invite them to the anniversary.

## **2.2 Action Items**

### **2.2.1 Board Standing Committee appointments.**

#### **2.2.2.1 Witness**

Rev. Heath Trampe has once again agreed to lead the rural ministry task force.

#### **2.2.2.2 Mercy**

No appointments to report.

#### **2.2.2.3 Life Together**

No appointments to report.

### **2.2.2 Board Task Forces**

#### **2.2.2.2 Part-time District President**

Committee continues its work and discussions with other districts with part-time presidents. Most part-time presidents are so on paper and name only, hence confusion on how many part-time district presidents are currently in Synod. Phase one of their work, information gathering, continues. Phase two, sketching what it might look like to have a part-time district president, to begin in 2023.

### **2.2.3 District Committees**

#### **2.2.3.1 Constitutions and Bylaws**

Nothing to report.

#### **2.2.3.2 Stewardship (*Dropbox*)**

Philippians Workshop at Messiah, Mandan, by Rev. Heath Curtis, Stewardship Coordination for Synod, had approximately 40 participants.

### **2.2.4 Appointment of New Members of BOD**

None at this time.

### **2.2.5 Synodical Convention Representation by BOD**

Synod Bylaw 3.1.4.5 requires the board of directors to be represented at the Synodical convention by two individuals: one member from the executive staff and one member of the BOD. As we only have one executive staff, Mrs. Tami Ulland, Business Manager, will be attending. Mr. Jason Paradis was nominated and elected to attend the 2023 Synodical Convention as the BOD representative.

### **2.2.6 Website updates and BOD minutes**

Chairman Schulz and Secretary Voth have been working with Marie Johnson on updates to the district website.

In addition, there have been requests for the BOD minutes to be placed on the website to enhance communication between the BOD and district pastors and congregations. As there is nothing confidential in those minutes, the board unanimously agreed to have the minutes on the website. Secretary Voth will work with Marie to ensure minutes are up from the past triennium and the current triennium. Discussion was also had about placing the agenda on the website for each upcoming meeting. Once executive staff have set the agenda for upcoming board meetings (approximately 4 weeks before meeting), the agenda will also be posted on the district website should anyone want to forward comments to Chairman Schulz.

An updated picture of the board was also submitted to Marie for inclusion on the website.

### **2.2.7 2023 Budget Update**

The finance committee has begun working on a preliminary budget for the next fiscal year. With the possible inclusion of \$30,000 to continue pursuing a relationship with Lutheran Family Service of Iowa as directed by the Convention last year in addition to an estimated \$59,700 Synodical Convention fee the final operating budget stands at a short-fall of \$15,349. Final budget will be brought to the February 2023 meeting.

Other discussion included:

Congregational giving has not increased over the last 20 to 30 years, with the last five years being completely flat. It was also noted that while giving has not increased, overall membership and the number of congregations in the district has declined.

Synod does ask each district for their yearly pledge, like many congregations, to help prepare their budget. About three-quarters of the districts ask their congregations for pledges in preparing their budget. The North Dakota District does not do this, so our budget is prepared based on past giving trends and known expenses.

### **2.2.8 District Reconcilers**

Synodical bylaws require each district to maintain a minimum of four district reconcilers, of which only two can be ordained. We currently have only one lay reconciler. Members should seek additional names to be considered at the February 2023 meeting.

## **2.3 Board Unfinished Business**

### **2.3.1 Family Convocation follow up**

The Love Abounds family convocation was held in Bismarck, October 21-22, 2022 with 70 people in attendance, including presenters. Rev. Mark Wood on rural ministry was well received. Rev. Max Philips and Mrs. Toni Larson's presentations provided valuable information on the services provided by Lutheran Family Service. Rev. Philips presentation at Bethel Lutheran Church's Sunday morning Bible class was excellent and can be viewed on the church Facebook page. With the cancelation of the Middle School Youth Gathering the youth track had too diverse of an age spread. Future convocations should consider how to break out the youth in more appropriate age groups.

*Note - comments made following this discussion worth noting: there is a lamentable lack of attendance at district-wide events such as LWML, LYF, and Love Abounds; district leadership needs to make a greater effort to attend such events, just as local congregation leaders need to be present for local, circuit, and district events; a better job needs to be done by all to get word out regarding upcoming events by district, pastors, and congregational leadership; numbers and the use of resources*

*are important markers, but not the end all measure of the success of an event - faithfulness to the Scriptures is best measure; live streaming and video archive of events needs to be utilized more along with publicity that such resources are available.*

### **2.3.2 LFS Partnership**

Work continues to pursue a partnership with Lutheran Family Service, as directed by convention. Rev. Max Philips, Rev. Dr. James Lamb, and Mrs. Toni Lahad excellent presentations at the fall pastors' conference. District liaisons are currently seeking information on what services could be provided by LFS to the district at various financial commitment levels. We are on track to begin to a limited partnership with LFS in the summer or fall of 2023, as directed by the convention resolution.

Additional discussion was held regarding what these financial resources are used to support. Fees provide licensing for counselors to work in North Dakota, to help off-set financial costs to individuals, and establish contracts with local counselors.

### **2.3.3 Evangelism Convocation**

Rev. Peters presented on the planning for the "Tell the Good News about Jesus" evangelism convocation to be held in Bismarck February 10-11, 2023 at the Ramada Inn. Registration was set at \$50 per person or \$75 for 2 or more from one family to attend. Several speakers, from inside and outside the district, have been secured on a variety of topics related to the planning council goals identified at the second quarter meeting.

## **3.0 Board Education**

### **3.1 Review Board Policy Manual section 4 - Executive Limitations Policies**

Discussions were had regarding policy 4.5 language. Policy 4.6 was also discussed regarding capital versus operations expenses, as pertains to the depreciation of the business manager vehicle, Wittenberg properties, and other equipment owned/leased by the district. Policy 4.10.7 was noted that the employee manual does exist, but needs to be update as it is very old. The manual will be reviewed by the Salary Review Committee and suggest updates to the board.

**Motion:** To expand the language of policy 4.5.5 to read, "The business manager shall not fail to maintain ~~LCEF deposit~~ LCMS affiliated low risk accounts equal to the balance of restricted and temporarily restricted funds."

Motion seconded and adopted.

### **3.1 Discussion of the meaning of "revitalization" in board policy 1.3.4.1**

Having been left from the previous board for the current board to establish, the board discussed several definitions of "revitalization" that had been proposed at the last board meeting.

**Motion:** To define "revitalization" in board policy 1.3.4.1 as "To be revitalized means that a majority of the congregation, the body of Christ, are regularly living their life together in Christ by gathering around Him in Word and Sacrament which are administered in the Divine Service and then using their God-given gifts to proclaim Him to all who they encounter in their daily vocations in service to neighbor and community."

Motion seconded and adopted.

## **4.0 Board Monitoring Items**

### **4.1 District President's report**

In addition to the report in Dropbox, President Bertsch handed out an updated schedule for this triennium with dates and places for circuit visitor, board of directors, planning council, and pastors' conferences. The fall 2023 pastors' conference will be one week later than normal to bring in Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing to present on the Exodus.

Any board resolutions to be submitted to Synod need to be brought to the next BOD meeting for discussion.

### **4.2 Business Manager report**

In addition to the report in Dropbox, Tami introduced our new Fargo office manager, Ms. Carolyn Fiechtner, who is replacing Ms. Vicki Peihl, who is retiring. Carolyn is a member of St. Andrew Lutheran Church in West Fargo and comes well trained, if not over qualified, for the position.

A Zoom meeting was held with the Lutheran Church in Chile. At convention, the delegates voted to reduce our contributions to their church body by \$5,000. They had planned on those funds and had already spent them, placing a strain on their budget. Quarterly Zoom meetings are now planned to keep information flowing.

### **4.3 Financial reports**

Reports are found in Dropbox.

**Motion:** To designate fifty percent (50%) of the district president's salary as housing allowance for 2023 for IRS purposes

Motion seconded and adopted.

In preparation for the next budget, the allowances for Rev. Daniel Suelzle's home equity and auto were discussed. Currently the district pays a home equity allowance of \$3,000 per year and auto of \$3,400 per year.

**Motion:** To adjust the housing equity allowance for Rev. Daniel Suelzle to 5.5% of salary in place of a set amount.

Motion seconded and adopted.

### **4.4 Standing Committee reports**

Reports from Planting and Revitalizing Congregations (Trampe); Local Mercy (Wolfgram); and Youth and Young Adults (Sebastian) were in Dropbox for review. Rev. Wolfgram noted that Mr. Kirk Rosin is organizing a trip for district members to provide disaster response in Florida in January 2023. He is also looking for an individual in every congregation to become a disaster response liaison. Information on both the trip and liaison have been emailed to every congregation for publication.

## **5.0 Board Visioning**

### **5.1 Planning council goals**

#### **5.1.1 Family catechesis**

In addition to the presentation(s) at the “Tell the Good News about Jesus” convocation in February 2023, more thought needs to be given on implementation.

#### **5.1.2 Out reach**

No action at this time.

#### **5.1.3 Rural/Small Town task force**

No action at this time. President Bertsch has provide information for Rev. Trampe to enable this goal to progress.

#### **5.1.2 In reach**

This will be an emphasis of the “Tell the Good News about Jesus” convocation in February, 2023.

## **5.2 Grace Lutheran School**

Mrs. Susan Jahnke, principal of the school, was present to educate the board on the school. In 2019 enrollment was 55 students but has grown to 95 students this year. Forty-six percent of the current enrollment is from five of the six association church with the majority of students coming in from the community. There are currently ten full-time teachers on staff, nine of whom are LCMS members, four are synodical trained, three of those are currently rostered, and one more is going through colloquy. After years of financial struggles, the school is currently debt-free and has begun discussions of adding high school grades to the school.

## **6.0 Adjournment**

Chairman Schulz adjourned the meeting at 3:28 p.m. CDT.

Vice-president Peter closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Daniel C. Voth  
Secretary  
LCMS North Dakota District