

LCMS North Dakota District Board of Directors

Second Quarter Meeting Minutes 14 April 2023

Messiah Lutheran Church, Mandan, 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. Scott Pfennig; Mr. Eric Poppinga; Mr. Marty Visto; Rev. Lester Wolfgram; and Mrs. Tami Ulland, Business Manager.

Also in attendance was Rev. Max Phillips, Lutheran Family Services, via Zoom; and Rev. Dennis Voss, Stewardship Chair.

1.0 Life Together

Chairman Schulz called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. CDT.

President Bertsch opened with Morning Daily Prayer (LSB 295); LSB 469, “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”; a reading from Hebrews 12:1-24; and a meditation from Treasury of Daily Prayer for the day.

No items were added to the agenda.

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 February 3, 2023

2.1.2 Message in the Pew

2.1.3 2023 – 2025 Tentative Meeting Schedule

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|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| • 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 | 2:00 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*)

Rev. Suelzle included in his report that he is attending the Campus Ministry Leadership Conference at University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, MN May 31 to June 1, 2023. He has requested district assistance with travel expenses.

Motion by Treasurer Kreklau: To pay travel expenses for Rev. Daniel Suelzle to attend the Campus Ministry Leadership Conference at University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, MN May 31 to June 1, 2023.

Motion was seconded and adopted.

2.2 Action items

2.2.1 Board Standing Committee appointments.

2.2.2.1 Witness

Rev. Daniel Suelzle has agreed to serve as the Lutheran Education standing committee chair.

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

2.2.2.1 Part-time District President

The task force continues its work and intends to have a full presentation at the first quarter meeting in 2024.

2.2.2.2 Rural Ministry

President Bertsch is working to gather a list of names willing to serve on the task force.

2.2.3 District Committees

2.2.3.1 Constitutions and Bylaws

Nothing to report.

2.2.3.2 Stewardship

Rev. Dennis Voss in February attended the District Stewardship Chair's conference in Tempe, AZ. Presentation was given by Rev. Rick Wolfram, Assistant to the President - Stewardship Ministries, Michigan District, and Rev. Wayne Knolhoff, emeritus, on a stewardship process entitled "Stewards by God's Design." Rev. Voss intends to visit each circuit winkel to discuss the process with the pastors of the district, with a goal of involving two more pastor to assist with this process at the district level and one or two pastors in each circuit to assist at that level.

2.2.4 Appointment of New Members of BOD

None at this time.

2.2.5 Board Policy Manual 2.8.2.1.1

At the last meeting, this line was discussed as to the intended meaning. Secretary Voth contacted Dr. Teb Kober of Ambassadors of Reconciliation who helped draft the policy manual for clarity. Dr. Kober suggested either removing the line all together or proposed changing the language from "Recommend to members any action requiring their approval" to "Recommend to board members any action requiring approval by the executive committee."

Motion by Mr. Paradis: To amend the Board Policy Manual, line 2.8.2.1.1 from “Recommend to members any action requiring their approval” to “Recommend to board members any action requiring approval by the executive committee” as suggested by Dr. Kober.

Motion was seconded and adopted.

2.2.6 Meeting Schedule to Include Wittenberg Chapel

Chairman Schulz had spoken to Rev. Suelzle about the possibility of having a board meeting at Wittenberg Chapel in August or October. Rev. Suelzle responded that October would work better.

Motion by Secretary Voth: To amend the meeting schedule for 2023 to include Wittenberg Chapel, Grand Forks, for the fourth quarter meeting and that the rotation for upcoming board meetings to be: first quarter in Fargo; second quarter in Bismarck/Mandan; third quarter in Minot; and fourth quarter at Wittenberg Chapel, Grand Forks.

Motion was seconded and adopted.

Updated tentative meeting schedule for 2023-2025:

- TBD, Minot August 25, 2023 10:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.
- Wittenberg Chapel, Grand Forks October 27, 2023 10:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.
- Beautiful Savior, Fargo Planning Council February 1-2, 2024 2:00 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.
- TBD, Minot August 23, 2024 10:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.
- Wittenberg Chapel, Grand Forks October 25, 2024 10:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.
- District Convention, Minot January 19-22, 2025

2.2.7 Wittenberg Chapel Organ

Rev. Suelzle has informed the board that the organ at Wittenberg Chapel is in need of approximately \$50,000 of repair, in addition to the ongoing maintenance of the pipes. With the cost being as great as it is, plus the overall age of the organ, he contacted Allan Organ Company to see what the cost would be for a new digital organ that would not need maintenance. He was given a quote of \$69,000 for the GX-235 GeniSys Apex Tone Generation organ with 41 stops / two-manuals, pedals with 369 stops and 263 additional sound.

As there are several needs of the chapel, it was discussed to have Rev. Suelzle write an appeal letter that the business manager can email, mail, etc. to the congregations within the NDD to solicit funds for the organ. Mrs. Kreklau has been working with Rev. Suelzle to build a list of past Wittenberg attendees for the purpose of financial support and awareness of the upcoming 60th Anniversary of the chapel. It was also suggested that Rev. Suelzle contact the Minnesota North District to do likewise, as many current students and alumni reside in northern Minnesota, to encourage support for the chapel.

Motion by Mr. Paradis: To recommend replacement of the current organ at Wittenberg Chapel with the digital organ recommend by Rev. Suelzle when funding has been secured.

Motion was seconded and adopted.

2.2.8 Wittenberg Chapel Parking Lot

The current parking lot at the chapel is a crushed material which becomes very muddy in the spring and after rains. Secretary Voth contacted three companies in Grand Forks who install hard surface parking lots, either asphalt or cement, to bid the project. Only one company provided a bid, Heyd Construction. The bid for cement parking lot with a curb to keep vehicles from pulling forward onto the yard and the addition of a sidewalk from the parking lot to the east entrance into the fellowship area was \$37,000. Heyd Construction is owned and operated by a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Grand Forks.

Motion by Mr. Paradis: To recommend accept the bid from Heyd Construction to replace the current Wittenberg Chapel parking lot with a concrete lot and the addition of the sidewalk.

Motion was seconded and adopted.

Mr. Visto requested that Heyd Construction also explore adding 2” pink foam insulation under the concrete to avoid heaving and cracking issues as he has had success with this method of concrete installation.

2.2.9 District Reconcilers, Lay

The district is currently in need of two lay district reconcilers, who would be trained by the Synod following the convention this summer. President Bertsch has requested the circuit visitors to solicit names from their congregations to be given to him. He will contact these individuals and report back to the board.

2.2.10 Travel Policy

The finance committee presented a travel policy for the district. Two line items were discussed.

Motion by Mr. Paradis: To recommend adoption of the Travel Policy with the clarification of one “checked” bag in line 11 under “Travel related expenses ordinarily considered non-reimbursable:”.

Motion was seconded and adopted.

2.3 Board Unfinished Business

2.3.1 Lutheran Family Service Partnership Proposal

President Bertsch, along with the two vice-presidents, indicated that there had been good conversation among the circuit visitors the day before regarding moving along in partnership with Lutheran Family Service (LFS). From their meeting, the circuit visitors will encourage the pastors and congregations in their respective circuits to include bulletin announcements informing their members about the services provided by LFS available to all members. This announcement from the visitors is forthcoming.

The board reviewed the proposed LFS-NDD Agreement of March 1, 2023. Questions which were brought to Rev. Phillips via Zoom included:

- Is this agreement for one calendar year, or until the end of 2023? Rev. Phillips responded that the agreement was to the end of 2023, to be renewed at that time if desired.

- Should this fee for services be a one-time payment or monthly installments for the partnership? Related to this was the question of should the partnership be terminated, would there be a pro-rate refund, should payment in full be made? Rev. Phillips responded that the fee was a start up cost to be paid once the agreement was signed. As a result, the second question was not asked, as this is start up fees, not monthly service fee.
- Questions related to travel expenses were also asked. Essentially, if someone from LFS travels to ND, who covers the cost, LFS or the ND District? Rev. Phillips again responded that it depends to some degree on the nature of the visit. For example, if a congregation were to invite someone from LFS to come make a presentation, he would expect the congregation to cover travel expenses. If LFS was coming to interview a potential provider or office employee, that would be charged to the district.

From the discussions, it was noted that this is not a service contract, but an agreement to expand what LFS is doing in North Dakota, opening the possibility for more ministries to be available to the members of the North Dakota District, especially having in-person counseling sessions instead of tele-health conferences. It was noted that this should be seen as a ministry to and within the district that we support financially, just as with other ministries. The ministry agreement cost would be \$30,000 for the remainder of 2023, of which there is in restricted funds for LFS currently \$23,488.07, leaving less than \$7,000 to come from congregational giving.

Discussion related to the terms of the agreement focused on the dissolution language, should it be retained or removed. Speaking to retain focused on the opportunity for both parties to end the agreement should the other violate the Scriptures and Confessions of the church. Speaking to remove was focused on showing the level of commitment from the district to LFS, along with the acknowledgment that if there was disagreement, having gone through a resolution process unsuccessfully, the agreement would most likely have already expired, as the agreement expires on December 31, 2023.

Motion by Mr. Visto: To sign the LFS-NDD 2023 Agreement with line 2 of Agreement Dissolution removed and the addition of a second signature from the NDD.

Motion was seconded. A voice vote was too close to determine, thus a show of hands was requested by the chair. There were eleven (11) votes casts with six (6) needed for a majority. Seven (7) votes in favor of the motion; four (4) votes in opposition to the motion. The motion was adopted.

President Bertsch was requested to offer prayer to this new partnership, which he gladly did.

2.3.2 Communication within district planning goal

There was much discussion on ways to improve communication within the district between the BOD, task forces, standing committees, and congregations. The administrative assistant in Fargo is greatly familiar with the WordPress web hosting we use, using it for her own personal business, and is able to help maintain our website. Further collaboration on the website was discussed.

President Bertsch was asked if it is possible to receive a list from Rosters and Statistics of congregation leaders in addition to the pastor of our congregations so that information which is emailed to the pastors to be shared with the congregation also goes to the congregation leadership. This is especially important when congregations are vacant, as they often do not see district communications.

Finally, via the pastors' conference and circuit visitor, the board would like to know if there is anyone in our congregations with graphic design and/or social media expertise to include on the board for input.

2.3.3 Evangelism Convocation

There continues to be a great interest on the part of the board and members of the district to have the evangelism convocation which was cancelled last February. Discussion was again had on time, location, and focus (broad or narrow). The suggestion was made to look at a Sunday-Monday date when there is a federal holiday when most schools and many adults would have time off. A date of February 18-19, 2024 was suggested to meet that end. Vice-president Peters is unable to take lead at this time, but was encouraged to offer his time to a different group of individuals to plan a convocation as he had already done much of the preparation work.

3.0 Board Education

3.1 Review Board Policy Manual section 3 - Board and Executive Relationships Policies

Policy 3.5.2.3 states "the business manager and the finance committee shall...". Question has been raised if this is the Financial Review Standing Committee of the Board as referred to in policies 2.5.4.3 and 2.9.1, or some other committee. The board agreed it is the same committee.

Motion by Treasurer Kreklau: To accept amend board policy 3.5.2.3 from "finance committee" to "financial review standing committee".

Motion seconded and adopted.

4.0 Board Monitoring Items

4.1.1 District President's Report

Nothing to report.

4.1.2 Business Manager Report

Tami is very busy with Synodical Convention related items. She is working with two locations in Minot for the 2025 District Convention. More information will be available at the third quarter meeting.

4.1.3 Financial Reports

District finances show about \$2,000 short in March, mainly due to timing issues with when things are paid out. March reports are to come. Extra mission giving as approved in February have all been distributed. Personnel manual is being developed and will be presented soon.

4.1.3 Standing Committee Reports

No additional reports given.

5.0 Board Visioning - Collaboration and Engagement

5.1 Planning Council Goals

The evangelism convocation in relationship to goal 5.1.2 was discussed. Questions remain about who will lead, dates, board versus narrow focus, one-day versus multi-day event, hotel versus church host, outside district presenters versus using district pastors/laity to present. Clearly a committee is needed to focus on the event, being sure to include LFS as part of the event.

6.0 Adjournment

Chairman Schulz adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m. CDT.

Pastor Wolfgram closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel C. Voth".

Rev. Daniel C. Voth
Secretary
LCMS North Dakota District