

**TEXAS-LOUISIANA GULF COAST SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**

Date of Meeting: November 13, 2021

Venue: Holy Trinity, Houston and Zoom (Electronic)

Attendees: Bishop Mike, Robert Rivera, Paul Antolik (Zoom), Tom Wildrick, Deirde Hayes (Zoom), Rev. Chris Michaelis, Rev. Ariel Otterstad, Caleb Parks (Zoom), Julie Peltier (Zoom), Adan Plata, Rev. Chon Pugh (Zoom), William Walker, Calea Wirtley; youth (Zoom)

Absent: Rev. Rodwell Thom, Shelli Williamson, Taylor Rivera

Staff: Rev. Tracey Breashears-Schultz, Rev. Chris Markert

Guests: Morgan Gates/Hou Min (Zoom), Sergio/Rice (Zoom), Sloan/Treehouse (Zoom), Jerry Wirtley/Treehouse (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 by Robert Rivera, opening prayer and devotions were led by Rev. Chon Pugh.

Actions Taken

1. Approved the Consent Agenda. [Motion: Bishop Mike; Second: Paul]
 - The consent agenda included the Nov. 13 agenda, Sept. 25, 2021 Council Minutes, on leave from call requests for Ele Clay, Travis Meier, and Candice O'Meara; retirement requests for Walter Little and Arthur Murphy.
 - Changes to the agenda included:
 - Added reports about campus ministry activities.
2. Deferred until the January Synod Council meeting consideration of the resolution on ELCA Advocacy support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. Caleb, Robert and Paul will meet with Lisa Brenskelle and a member who expressed opposition to the resolution, and then they will report back to Council in January for action on the proposed resolution.

Discussion

1. Campus Ministries
 - a. The campus ministers shared the activities on their respective campuses with Council. All noted that the past year has been difficult due to Covid.
 - b. The Synod can help by sending prayers, money, and share any outside resources that might be of use.
2. Bishop's Report:

- a. Bishop reviewed the layout of the new Synod offices at Holy Trinity. He noted that there are significant cost savings from the old offices near Greenspoint.
 - b. Learning from coping with Covid:
 - i. Most congregations worship attendance is at 50% from pre-pandemic levels.
 - ii. There is questioning the need for new pastor, and leaders need guidance on dealing with anxiety. The Synod is planning a respite retreat for leaders in January.
 - iii. Virtual worship is important to young people.
 - iv. We need to expand our definition of community.
 - c. Planning is underway for the Synod Assembly in May, 2022.
3. Vice President's Report - Robert
- a. Robert reviewed the efforts underway to help resettlement of Afghanistan refugees. Efforts are being coordinated with LIRS and Interfaith Ministries.
 - b. Guardian Angel training has been rescheduled for 2022 due to covid.
 - c. Care for Creation resolution – a Council subcommittee will be formed to look into alternative wording for the resolution. Caleb will solicit an alternative opinion about the resolution.
 - d. Churchwide Assembly delegates
 - i. Possible Lay Male and Lay Female delegates for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly were identified. Deidre and Tom will check.
 - e. Nominating Committee – No report.
4. Secretary's Report – No report submitted
5. Treasurer's Report - Tom
- a. Year-to-date shows \$930,000 received, including \$102,000 from a first round PPP loan. The synod did not qualify for a second round PPP loan. \$729,000 is from congregations, the rest of interest, special gifts, and the first round PPP loan. Expenses are \$916,000 year-to-date.
 - i. Without the PPP loan, the deficit is a little higher than usual for this time of year.
 - b. Work continues on the 2022-2023 budget. An increase in giving is expected in 2022 due to the targeted appeal sent out in 2021. A slight increase, less than 2%, is currently included in the working draft budget.
6. Bishop's Associate for Mission Report
- a. National office has revised the definition of what is a DEM. However, the new definition is not significantly different from what Rev. Chris has been doing.

- b. The disaster trailer was stolen, and insurance only covered the supplies in it. Covenant Lutheran has three buses to be given for hauling supplies to disaster sites.
7. Bishop's Associate for Leadership Report:
- a. Candidacy
 - i. A hybrid retreat for candidates will be held in December.
 - b. Calls
 - i. Currently there are 15 open calls. Nine congregations will begin self-study. Self-study is underway for two congregations.
8. Policy Discussion:
- a. Conflict of Interest Policy
 - i. No changes were needed. Bishop repeated the request that Council members need to sign and send to the Synod.
 - b. Sexual Misconduct Policy
 - i. Terminology: "rostered leader" will be changed to "rostered minister", and "he/her" will be changed to "their"
 - ii. Dates need to be changed to 2021, phone numbers will be checked to see if they need to be updated
9. Other Business
- a. Proposed Meeting schedule
 - i. January meeting will be at Living Word in Katy
 - ii. The March meeting will be March 18-19 in New Orleans
 - iii. Locations for the September 24 and November 19 meetings are still to be determined.
 - b. Meeting feedback was solicited.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Antolik
Secretary