

**Northwest Washington Synod
Synod Council Meeting Minutes 15 May 2025
Trinity Lutheran Church, Everett**

- Present:** Andrew Arnold, Shelley Bryan Wee, Salvador Cossio, Kay Edgerton, Paul Eldred, Netsie Griffith, David Kinner, Shane Lambing, Sam Martinez, Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell, Cindy Shultz, Dan Squires, and Sam Sseba
- Staff:** Susan Berg, Judy Brennan, Tabettha Myatt, and Andy Yee
- Present via Zoom:** Luke Allgeyer, Edward Moncivaiz, and Elly Stitt
- Guests:** Nick Kiger, ELCA Director for Mission Support; Andrea Arey, Portico Representative; Courtney Stepp, Synod Assembly Planning Committee Chair; Wendell Hendershott, Synod Secretary spouse; Jan and Jim Leistikow, dinner hosts
- Absent:** Bart Brosten and Hector Garfias-Toledo,

Call to Order and Land Acknowledgment

Vice President Kay called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and shared the following land acknowledgment:

- We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this area, the Coast Salish people. Since time immemorial, they have hunted, fished, gathered, and taken care of these lands. We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination, and honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. We will strive to be honest about our past mistakes and bring about a future that includes their people, stories, and voices to form a more just and equitable society.

Opening Prayer

Bishop Shelley opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda

Moved, Seconded and Carried (MSC)

SC2025.05.15.01 to approve the agenda as presented.

The report of the Treasurer was taken off the Consent Agenda. Kay did draw attention to the current Financial report from the Region 1 Financial Services Office (FSO). Though not on the Consent Agenda, it is posted on Teams.

MC

SC2025.05.15.02 to approve the consent agenda consisting of:

- Approval of the minutes of the March 15, 2025 Synod Council Meeting
- Receipt the following written staff reports as presented, including any addendums:
 - Report of the Assistant to the Bishop – Andy Yee
 - Report of the Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEMs) – Judy Brennan and Edward Moncivaiz
 - Report of the Synod Personnel Committee – Fred Row
- Approval of the following roster actions:
 - On Leave from Call (renewal)
 - Paul Kacynski – 5/2/2025
 - Retired
 - Erik Wilson Weiberg – 5/11/2025
- Receipt of the following notifications of roster changes:
 - Called
 - Anne Lohrmann – 5/4/2025, Advent Lutheran

- Death
 - Jack Hustad – 2/15/2025
- Transfer In:
 - Barbara Bender – 3/24/2025, Michigan Synod
 - Tim Bender – 3/24/2025, Michigan Synod
 - Richard Lehmann – 3/24/2025, Southeast Iowa
- Transfer Out
 - Robert “Todd” Wright – 4/15/2025, Indiana-Kentucky
- Grant Approval
 - Gloria Dei Sabbatical Grant to Pr. David Hahn \$2500

REPORTS

Verbal Report from the Bishop

Bp. Shelley noted that she did not provide a written report for this meeting but referenced her lengthy written report provided with the Synod Assembly reports.

- She has been to a series of board meetings. Two that were noted were Pacific Lutheran University and Luther Seminary. Both schools are struggling because of fewer resources.
- Three pastors are considering going on temporary leave because of physical/emotional issues; she lifted this up because, in our current world situation, there are more things that cause people to not be as resilient, and certain people surrounding these pastors are not inclined to be kind and caring; this is a concern for the bishop.
- Don Maier, former bishop and the second bishop to serve our synod, has now been put on hospice care.

Request from Assistant to the Bishop, Andy

There is a need for a Synod Council representative on June 8th for a call meeting at Prince of Peace Lutheran, Shoreline. **Cindy and Dan** will check their schedules and confer about fulfilling this role.

UPDATES SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Work with the Organizing for Mission Network (OFMN)

The Equity Team, established as part of this process, has begun one-on-one conversations; they have either completed or scheduled 50. On the team from Synod Council are: Kay, Cindy, Sam, Shane and the bishop, and Judy represents synod staff on the team. One goal is to build a larger listening team.

NEW BUSINESS

Roster Action: Synod Call to Stephen Weisser

MSC

SC2025.05.15.03 **to issue a Synod Call to Rev. Stephen Weisser as Senior Manager of Spiritual Care at Swedish Hospital, Seattle.**

FOR DISCUSSION

Synod Assembly Preparation

The following topics were discussed:

- **Role of Council Members**
 - Synod Council members were encouraged to arrive at 10 am to check in and then to greet voting members as they arrived at the convention center.
- **Bishop Election**
 - Nick spoke to his role as ELCA churchwide representative overseeing the election of the bishop.
- **Review of Resolutions/Memorials**
 - It was noted that an additional memorial might possibly be brought to the floor.
 - Susan was called upon to explain the difference between a memorial and a resolution.

- Some questions were raised pertaining to the resolution in support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in European Russia (ELCER). The bishop responded clarifying the history of how our relationship with this church body emerged and became part of ELCA's Companion Synod Program. It was also noted that the Lutheran Church in Ukraine left the ELCER, and we have never, historically, been related to the churches in Ukraine.
- The bishop was part of a three-synod ELCA delegation that recently went to Serbia to meet with three synods of the ELCER as an effort to strengthen the relationship between us. It is hoped that a meeting bringing together youth from all these synods might be able to be convened in the country of Georgia in the near future.
- **Budget**
 - The large gap between Mission Support and the projected cost of the fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget (balanced by using reserve funds) was acknowledged. It is a visionary budget which is anticipating future giving, and is not intended to be a sustainable, repeated model for the future.
 - Among the reasons for the budget increase were bringing synod staff up to guideline salaries (as mandated by last year's Assembly) and adding a line item to the budget for Emerging and Strategic Ministries.
 - Since Synod Council (SC) forwarded the budget to the Assembly, SC members were encouraged to speak to it and be willing to be engaged in budget discussions.
- **Worship**
 - Worship will be woven throughout the Assembly which is a different approach than has been taken in past assemblies.
- **Bishop's Report**
 - The bishop's report will also take a different approach than in the past. Each rostered minister on staff is sharing a Staff Weavings based on scripture and their specific ministry areas. There will be two on Friday and two on Saturday.

Considerations for Discerning Sale of Congregational Property

Beginning steps have been taken for creating a working document to be a guide for congregations in the synod thinking of selling some or all their property yet continuing to exist as a congregation.

Synod Organizational Chart and Acronym/Specialized Vocabulary List

The Evangelical Outreach (EO) Team has made a request to Synod Council to consider creating an organizational chart for the synod along with a glossary of specialized synod vocabulary and acronyms. Judy made a start on this with the glossary of acronyms she posted on Teams. Andy Arnold found another synod who had done a glossary, and there are other examples from other synods. Kay is interested in working on this but help from others would be welcome.

Update on Glendale Property

Our Director of Properties has reported that we are close to having a final financing document with the church buying the Glendale property. Synod Council will need to act quickly to approve or reject this agreement.

MSC

SC2025.05.15.04 **to authorize the Executive Committee to act upon the recommendation of the Property Director on the financing of the sale of the Glendale Lutheran Church property by making a unanimous decision or to call a special meeting of the Synod Council for this purpose, unless a regularly scheduled meeting is imminent.**

FUTURE MEETING DATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting Dates

- Executive Committee meeting via Zoom, June 12
- Synod Council Dinner, July 19, at the home of Rick Steves; further details to come later
- September Council Retreat/Meeting at Camp Lutherwood, Bellingham, September 19-20

RETURN TO PREVIOUSLY TABLED NEW BUSINESS**Candidacy Committee Charter**

After discussing the motion on the floor, it was decided that it would be helpful to hear more from the Candidacy Committee to understand the scope of their work and what it means for the synod. We would like to invite them to come and speak to the charter, possibly at our September meeting, or a subsequent meeting.

Moved, Seconded and Failed

SC2025.05.15.05 **to approve the first page of the Candidacy Committee's Charter.**

The meeting was declared to be adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Netsie Griffith,
Synod Council Secretary