

EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2018

Christ Lutheran Memorial Church, Malvern, Pennsylvania

REGULAR MEETING

Directors Present: Cyndi Alviani; Vice Chair Claire Carlson; Mark Erbelding; Melissa Fultz; Secretary Karl W. Haeussler; Pastor Fred Hoover; Terry Miller; Pastor John Pingel; Pastor Carl Prostka; Pastor Daniel Strussenberg; Chair Gordon Tresch, ESQ; and, President Chris Wicher.

Directors Absent: Bradley Dreier; Jacqui Green; and, Maureen “Becky” Grunder.

Meeting Called to Order. After the Chair and the Secretary had determined that a quorum had been established, the meeting was Called to Order by the Chair at 1:09 p.m.

Opening Devotion. The Opening Devotion was given by Pastor Fred Hoover. His starting point was this question: Do you have a vision for your life and for your Church? He addressed why vision is important for our lives and our churches by focusing upon the parable of the talents from Matthew 25. Overall, a vision guided by the Spirit of our Lord enables us to be good stewards of what the Lord has given to us.

Approval of Minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the January 2018 Regular Meeting of the Board as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Agenda. A motion was made and seconded to approve the submitted agenda for this regular meeting of the Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Sharing. During his time of sharing, the Chair encouraged all members of the Board and their congregations to take advantage of the Best Practices Conference hosted by Christ Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Arizona each February.

President’s Report.

* Changes in our culture continue to impact our Synod, our District, and our congregations. For example, 20 years ago, the Synodical Office sent approximately 220,000 letter to youth promoting the National Youth Gathering. This year, they sent letters to only 80,000 youth. We are seeing a similar decline in the congregations of our District and the impact it makes is significant. Moreover, while our society grows increasingly unchurched and unChristian, Lutheran Churches in Africa, where the faith is increasing dramatically, are sending missionaries to our country!

* Concerning his written report, the Church Leaders' Conference at First Trinity, Tonawanda, New York, featuring Rusty Huseman is being held not on October 3, but November 3.

* The number one matter occupying the time and attention of the District Office is the upcoming District Convention. The President's two major themes at the Convention will be partnership and blessings. We partner together as we share resources and blessings. "We are called to get out of our silos and into the community." He also wants congregations to consider how they can take a "best practice" (something they do very well) and share this with other congregations. (The Chair reminded the members that they are expected to attend, and to do so they need to register. He will also introduce members of the Board at the Convention at 5:30 on Friday.)

* The President went over the hand out, Help Us Help You, a questionnaire that will be discussed at congregational, school, and Circuit meetings with the responses being used to help develop Desired Outcomes for the District.

* For the Fall - strategic plan - handout - questionnaire - (see handout) These questions will be posed to pastors this fall. Chris and Lyle will visit churches and schools and circuit meetings and talk through these questions. Will help toward Desired Outcomes for District.

* Planning for the Fall Pastors' Conference is going well and the planning is nearly done. "Forever God in a Changing Ministry" will spin off the theme of the District Convention. Topics will include the personal development of faith along with Pastoral confidentiality.

* Kathy Fretthold is planning several regional education conference for the Fall.

* The District Audit was completed. Barb Sigafos was going to share highlights of the audit, unfortunately she has been quite ill for a little over a month. The official audit report will be available for the District Convention.

* Given from congregation is 20% off and this has affected District spending. Usually, congregations behind in giving get caught up in the Fall. Hopefully, this will be the case again.

* Bob Wirth, our Lutheran Foundation representative has been visiting congregations as has Rick Porter, our Lutheran Church Extension Fund representative.

* Bob Foerster is considering shifting from our present salary calculator to the national calculator.

* Our District Disaster Relief Coordinator, Pastor Kris Bjornstadt will be leaving his congregation, Peace Lutheran Church, Scranton, Pennsylvania, in the near future. A replacement will be needed.

* Zion Lutheran Church, Owego, New York, is closing their school (K-5). Their PreSchool will remain open and will expand.

* Sarah Makosy of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center is serving as our National Youth Gathering District Coordinator.

* The President will be utilizing ZOOM as an online meeting platform for the following: New Worker Orientation; Circuit Visitor and Vice President Conference; and, Orientation for Delegates to the Synodical Convention.

Break.

Election of Eastern District Treasurer. The members were presented with resumes of both Dolores Grzyb and Barbara Williams. The President shared information about both of them as he knows both of them. Both Dolores and Barbara have served with the District in various capacities and are both lifelong Lutherans presently belonging to congregations in our Buffalo Region. He shared that both of them are very well qualified for the position. After the members asked various questions about each of them, the Chair called the question. Voting was done by secret ballots. The Secretary collected the ballots and announced that Barbara Williams is the new Treasurer of the Eastern District.

Conversation with Pastor Ron Bright, the President's Representative to the Pioneer Board of Directors. In preparation for the meeting, the President asked members for questions about Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center which he then passed on to Pastor Bright. In a conference call with Pastor Bright, the President asked for his response to many of these questions. Members were then invited to ask their own questions. Some of the highlights:

* While Pioneer is making more money from their resort and retreat functions, including weddings, these make more demands upon the facilities. There is a need for repairs, renovations, and possible expansion. Concerning major maintenance repairs, while there is nothing in the budget for this they are possibly looking toward a loan from LCEF for needed repairs or renovations.

* While the Pioneer Board of Directors have written a few policies, this emphasis has not been "high on the burner."

* At present, Pioneer does not have a plan for paying back money owed to the District. First and foremost, they are hoping to have a good year financially. Along these lines, LCEF has plans to convert their yearly line of credit into a loan.

* One of the responsibilities of the District Board of Directors is to elect the members of the Pioneer Board of Directors. This is one of the first tasks of the new District Board of Directors following the District Convention. The Pioneer Board of Directors can consist of 7 to 9 members. The President presented a list of names to consider and these names

were discussed. The President working with the Executive Committee will have a list of names ready by early July for the new Board to vote upon.

* The President and the Chair will send a letter to Director Knowles about some of the matters that arose during this conversation.

Electoral Circuits Exceptions Request. The Eastern District has 16 Visitation Circuits and only 7 of these meet the minimum requirements to be an Electoral Circuit. Concerning the other 9, we can either combine Visitation Circuits or ask for exceptions. The plan is to do exactly what we did for the prior Synodical Convention. The following motion was presented.

EASTERN DISTRICT, THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD ELECTORAL CIRCUITS CONFIGURATION.

The Board of Directors of the Eastern District at its May 2018 meeting made the following request of the Synod President's office in order to comply with Bylaw 3.1.2.

It was moved and seconded that

Visitation Circuits are Electoral Circuits without change for the following:

- * Lakeshore
- * Niagara East
- * Niagara West
- * Rochester East
- * Rochester West
- * Pittsburgh Northeast

Visitation Circuits coupled to form Electoral Circuits for the following:

- * Buffalo South & Cattaraugus
- * Central New York North & Central New York South
- * Pittsburgh Southeast & Pittsburgh Southwest

Exceptions are requested for Visitation Circuits to stand as Electoral Circuits as follows:

- * Pittsburgh Northwest
- * Philadelphia
- * Susquehanna

Motion passed unanimously.

Mission and Ministry Triennial Emphases for Convention. The Synodical Handbook instructs Districts to send suggestions for mission and ministry emphases that will be adopted for the forthcoming Synodical Convention. During the following discussion, it

was suggested that we could submit something along the lines of our District Convention emphases upon Partnership and Blessing. The following motion was made and seconded:

Pursuant to 4.2.1(d) of the Synodical handbook that the District BOD ask the District Convention Resolution Committee to submit a resolution to the District Convention concerning Mission and Ministry Triennial Emphases for the Synodical Convention involving partnership, blessing and outreach to our unchurched neighbors.

During the discussion it was suggested that either the President and/or the Convention Resolution Committee could write this resolution. The question was Called by the Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Deacon to Pastor Update.

* Deacons in transition: John Rushton, SMP Colloquy; Charles Madison, SMP Colloquy; Tim Klahn, SMP Colloquy; Jim Burch, SMP Colloquy; Bob Crane, SMP Colloquy; John Babbitts, SMP Colloquy; Antwan Diggs, exception; James Seybert, exception.

* Deacon Applications submitted: Jon Hoffmeister, General Pastor; Carl Emberger, General Pastor.

* Deacon Application accepted: Gene Keiter, exception.

Memorials to the District Convention.

At the regular January 2018 meeting of the Board, 8 memorials to be presented to the District Convention were passed. The following motion was made and seconded.

The following memorials from the Convention Workbook will be presented to the District Convention:

To Adopt Adding Articles VII and VIII to the Bylaws of the Eastern District, LCMS;

To Adopt Changes to the Regulations of the Eastern District, LCMS;

To Overrule Board of Directors' May 2017 Resolution 12-14, re Bylaw 7.1.2; and,

To Return 2016 Synod Convention Resolution 02-01-15A (To Overrule CCM Opinion 14-2724)

For Action By the 2019 Synod Convention.

And the following memorials from the Convention Workbook will not be submitted to the District Convention and will be returned to the District Board of Directors for future consideration:

To Amend the Synod Constitution to Grant a Lay Vote/Voice to Every Congregation;

To Ensure Timely and Transparent Financial Reporting in the Synod;
To Provide Regional Support for Our Concordia Universities and Colleges; and,

To Modify the Governance of the Colleges and Universities of the Concordia University System.

The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m. A closing prayer was given by Pastor Hoover.

EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2018

Holiday Inn Express, Exton, Pennsylvania

REGULAR MEETING

Directors Present: Cyndi Alviani; Vice Chair Claire Carlson; Mark Erbeling; Melissa Fultz; Secretary Karl W. Haeussler; Pastor Fred Hoover; Terry Miller; Pastor John Pingel; Pastor Carl Prostka; Pastor Daniel Strussenberg; Chair Gordon Tresch, ESQ; and, President Chris Wicher.

Directors Absent: Bradley Dreier; Jacqui Green; and, Maureen “Becky” Grunder.

Meeting Called to Order. The meeting was Called to Order by the Chair at 8:35 a.m.

Opening Devotion. The Opening Devotion was given by the President. Each of our lives are very important to all those around us as the light of God shines through us to them. What would happen to them if we were not around? Referring to Isaiah 42, we too are the light to the nations. Our churches are called to be lighthouses. What happens to communities when churches turn off their lights?

Anticipated Summer and Fall Board of Director Meetings.

* There will be at least one conference call this Summer. It will be late June or early July. The main agenda item will be the election of the Pioneer Board of Directors. Prior to the meeting, the President will send the members a list of names to consider for election.

* The regular Fall meeting will be held October 12 & 13 in the Buffalo Region. A special Orientation session will be held Friday morning. Friday afternoon, a new Chair will be elected.

Unfinished business.

* There is a vacancy on the Synodical Board of Directors for an Ordained Minister. A motion was made and seconded to nominate Pastor Karl W. Haeussler, Eastern District, to fill this vacancy on the Synod's Board of Directors. (The Secretary abstained from the discussion and from the vote.) The motion passed unanimously.

* The President and the Chair acknowledged that this is the final time this Board will meet. Both acknowledged their thankfulness for how well the members of this Board functioned together these past three years.

* The President nominated Pastor Karl W. Haeussler, Senior Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, North Tonawanda, New York, to the Synodical Board of Directors to fulfill a vacancy. Motion made and seconded. Question called. Unanimous. (See attached nomination form in booklet.)

* PALS is a program from Synod designed to help a new Seminary graduate make the successful transition from Seminary to the parish. (Most Circuit meetings are not geared to do this.) It clusters new Pastors together with an experienced Pastor for three years. Pastor Tom Lutz presently leads our Eastern District PALS program. Recently the West Coast Districts have dropped PALS for MAP. Whereas the curriculum for PALS is much more suited for a Midwestern culture, the curriculum for MAP is much more suited for our East Coast culture and the realities in our congregations that our new Pastors will encounter and which, in many cases, make or break them in the early years of their pastoral ministry.

* The District Staff is beginning long term planning which is being led by consultant Cathi Doebler, who works for a consulting firm in Buffalo. She also knows the District and the work of the church well. Many great societal forces are changing congregations which, it turn, change the District. If the President is reelected, this may be his final term. In addition, many of the District staff may be leaving as well. Three years from now, a new District President will be forced to deal with all of this. This long term planning process will help him immensely.

The ensuing discussion raised the following:

+ Is a part time District President in the future of the Eastern District? The work load would remain the same so how would a District President manage all of this while also serving a parish? Only a District Convention could make this decision. The long term planning process could help prepare the District for this discussion if it should arise.

+ The long term planning process will also be looking at meaningful, proactive programs for the District that will help Pastors and congregations deal with these changing societal realities.

+ Would merging Districts be part of this discussion? This could only be decided by a Convention of Synod.

+ The President asked the members for their insights as this long term planning process continues.

* The Chair recommended that all members print out the Convention Workbook and carefully read through it in preparation for the District Convention.

Meeting evaluation. The general consensus among the members was that this meeting, as with our previous meetings, contained a lot of good discussion. Our time together was always very well spent.

Adjournment. As there was no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:14 a.m. A closing prayer was offered by the President.