

EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2015

St. Paul Lutheran Church, North Tonawanda, New York

REGULAR MEETING

Voting Directors Present: Mark Erbelding; Deaconess Jacqueline Duke; Claire Carlson; Terry Miller; Melissa Fultz; Rev. Carl Prostka; Maureen Grunder; Bradley Dreier; Rev. Daniel Strussenberg; Rev. Murray Brindle; Rev. Chris Wicher; Gordon Tresch, ESQ.; Rev. Karl Haessler.

Voting Directors Absent: Jacqui Green and Rev. John Pingel.

Guests: Rick Porter; Jim Brese; Rev. Matthew Harrison (President, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod); Rev. Christopher Esget (Sixth Vice President, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod).

Called to Order. The Board meeting was called to order by President Wicher at 1:38 p.m. The President noted that he was only doing this because we do not have a Chair for the Board yet. Everyone from the special morning meeting is still in attendance except for the Vice Presidents who left to attend a session for District Regional Vice Presidents and Circuit Visitors led by President Harrison held in the Upper Fellowship Hall of St. Paul Lutheran.

Board Business.

A motion was made to approve the presented agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Gordon Tresch was nominated to be Chair of the Board of Directors. No one else was nominated. A motion was made to elect Gordon Tresch as Chair of the Board of Directors. It passed unanimously.

Claire Carlson was nominated to be Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. No one else was nominated. A motion was made to elect Claire Carlson as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. It passed unanimously.

It was pointed out that the Chair, the Vice Chair and the President serve as the Executive Committee.

A motion was made to make the Executive Committee the Audit Committee. It passed unanimously.

It was noted that New York State requires organizational boards to have official whistleblowers. A motion was made that the Executive Committee also serve as official Whistleblowers. It passed unanimously.

A motion was made to approve the minutes with corrections of the Special Telephone Conference of July 28, 2015. (It was pointed out that the names of Sharon McGuan and Karen Blackmon were spelled incorrectly.) It passed unanimously.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the Special Telephone Conference of August 20, 2015. It passed unanimously.

A motion was made to approve the appointment of Jim Brese as Treasurer of the Eastern District. It passed unanimously.

A motion was made to approve the appointment of Jim Brese as Archivist of the Eastern District. It passed unanimously.

A motion was made to appoint Rev. Keith Knupp and Dan Joyce to the District Constitution Committee. It passed unanimously. It was noted that a third member needs to be appointed. This will be done in the future.

President Wicher commented on The LCMS Fiscal Conference Report of September 22, 2015 held at the Crowne Plaza near the St. Louis Airport. A discussion ensued concerning both the financial and spiritual condition of the Synod.

District President's Report.

Those elected by the District Board of Directors to serve on the Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center Board of Directors for 2015 - 2016 are as follows: Rich Paul; Jay Pohlman; Larry Thompson; Nick Gatto; Donna McKeown; Sharon McGuan; Paul Marks; and, Mark Lambrecht. Rev. Ron Bright is a non voting member. Larry Thompson was elected to serve as Chair. There is room for one more voting member. President Wicher asked for suggestions.

\$5,000 grants have been given to each EDMO (Eastern District Mission Organization). Extra funding is available for those who officially respond with the short and simple reply form. So far, only PALM and NEPA have responded. The President will send a letter reminding all EDMOs that additional funds are available for those who reply.

Over the Summer, Pioneer needed a line of credit of \$50,000 to cover payroll. This was precipitated when a reimbursement of \$45,000 for a ROTC event was delayed. This was expected to be received shortly and Pioneer would immediately reimburse the District. As of the recent Pastor's Conference held at Pioneer, this line of credit still had not been repaid. The Chair, the President, Larry Thompson and Pioneer Director Pastor Alex Knowles are going to meet soon to talk about this situation. The Chair reviewed some of the recent history of Pioneer including their recent financial crisis (which the preceding Board dealt with extensively and thoroughly). While the overall situation is better, some of the issues are still present. It was brought up that Pioneer still owes the District hundreds of thousands of dollars. Rick Porter noted that an additional \$100,000 line of credit to LCEF needs to be repaid in full for 30 days and that a request for the District for help with this may be forthcoming shortly. Jim Brese reminded the Board about the

incredible Mission work done by Pioneer along with the tremendous PR that arises from their military and special needs related programs. Rick Porter also observed that with their new business model there is more hope for the future.

Break

2016 Proposed District Budget

Since District staff person Barb Sigafos cannot be at this meeting, the President is presenting the District Financial Report. The preliminary proposed budget for 2016 was presented. Since we are about \$45,000 behind in the present budget, an appeal will be sent out in later October to all District congregations. It was shown how the proposed 2016 budget is structured to show what percentage of resources and expenses are being directed to each of the major goal of the District (Kingdom Growth, Discipleship Development, Education, Wellness, Administration, and Property) with about 50% going toward Mission. About 38% goes toward Administration. It was noted that the District only has one full time employee at present.

District President's Report (continued)

Speaking of Eastern District staff . . . While Bob Forester has retired and is now living in Michigan, he is still overseeing our communications. Kathy Fretthold is our new Education Executive. Once Faith Lutheran in Penfield, New York installs a Pastor, Lyle Heggemeier will assist with Discipleship Development.

The President noted that he will have Lyle involved with the effort to find a new location for the upcoming District Convention.

Returning to Pioneer, the President brought up that the District was presented with a bill for approximately \$30,000 from Pioneer for hosting the Pastors' Conference. This may be negotiated.

St. Mark Lutheran Church in North Tonawanda, New York submitted a constitution for review. Since Keith Knupp is their Pastor he recused himself from the Constitution Committee and President Wicher took his place for the official review. A motion was made to approve the Constitution and ByLaws of St. Mark Lutheran Church. It was approved unanimously.

Break.

Policy Work. This session was led by Rick Porter. President Wicher left the meeting to hear President Harrison's Question and Answer session for District Pastors in the Upper Fellowship Hall of St. Paul Lutheran. The Regional Vice Presidents have returned to the meeting.

Rick continued the overview on policy based governance, especially as it is set forth in the Carver Policy Governance Guide Series. Special attention was given to District Governance Policy section 1.5 - Desired Outcomes of Eastern District Ministry which were adopted at the May Board meeting after three years of working on this. During the next three years, the Board will continue

to work on the District Governance Policies.

The Chair had the Board review District Governance Policy 4.1.5.1 which states that the District President shall not allow investments outside of LCMS institutions. A discussion arose over what this covers and/or prohibits specifically. The Chair stated that we will work on this at our next Board meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 5:05. A closing prayer was said by our President.

Board members were invited to have dinner at the Grapevine Restaraunt in nearby Amherst. President Wicher was taking President Harrison and Vice President Esget to Anchor Bar in Buffalo before taking them to see the Buffalo Sabres' final preseason game at First Niagara Center.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015

Voting Directors Present: Mark Erbelding; Deaconess Jacqueline Duke; Claire Carlson; Terry Miller; Melissa Fultz; Maureen Grunder; Bradley Dreier; Rev. Daniel Strussenberg; Rev. Murray Brindle; Rev. Chris Wicher; Gordon Tresch, ESQ.; Rev. Karl Haeussler.

Voting Directors Absent: Jacqui Green, Rev. John Pingel, and Rev. Carl Prostka.

Guests: Rick Porter.

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 8:31 a.m.

Opening devotion was given by the Chair.

The Board gave thanks to Carolyn Taylor, Office Manager of St. Paul Lutheran Church for her extra labors of hospitality for the Board meeting and other special meetings hosted by President Harrison.

District President's Report (continued)

Each District Board of Directors is required to send a representative to the 2016 Synodical Convention. The President asked if there were any volunteers. Four members volunteered: Rev. Daniel Strussenburg; Becky Grunder; Deaconess Jacqueline Duke; and, Terry Miller. The President and the Chair said they will decide how to resolve this at a latter date.

The District Staff can also send a representative to the 2016 Synodical Convention. A motion was made to send Bob Forester as the Staff representative. It passed unanimously.

Pioneer's Articles of Incorporation of Pioneer were amended to comply to Synodical requirements. This stemmed from a 1981 Synodical resolution that was never acted upon. This is important for - if you don't follow it, you could lose your 501-3C status. This needs to be done to protect donors to Pioneer and Pioneer's tax status. These amendments were approved by the CCM and is now being sent to our attorney before being given to the state Attorney General in Albany.

First Trinity Lutheran in Pittsburgh has expressed concerns that the congregation's mindset about mission and ministry, especially in an inner city, is not matched by our Eastern District and would be better served by the English District. The Board just visited First Trinity in May and the congregation has received a lot of support by the District. The President said that he would be visiting them in the near future. When a congregation moves from one District to another, each District needs to vote on it.

A new approach to District Orientation for new church workers to the District has been employed. The Internet is now used as opposed to holding a face to face meeting for all new church workers once a year. Previously, attend was sporadic, at best. A new approach using the Internet instead of holding a meeting for all workers once a year. Attendance was sporadic, at best. So far, this new approach has worked well with a 100% response. If the new church worker fully participates, they receive a \$50 Amazon gift card. (It would cost about \$200 a person to bring them out here.)

Our congregation in Clyde, New York closed about 15 years ago. The property was given to the District which has been unable to use or sell it. The property is not in good shape. The Kise family, neighbors to the property have been taking care of the property (there is a family connection) and have expressed an interest in the property. The District decided to give the Kise's the property as a gift. District was going to demolish the building at a cost of \$35,000. The Kise's then decided that they want to keep the building if we would be willing to put on a new roof along with making some other repairs. District agreed as this would cost only \$21,000. The Kise's signed a contract for all of this. Each of the members of the Board gave their signed approval on September 1.

The Board Meeting for May 2016 was scheduled for Rochester but is now scheduled for Philadelphia. Dates for Rochester and Philadelphia may be switched. The Chair has a conflict with February 2016 meeting, yet it cannot be moved up as the President has a COP meeting.

The President is scheduling District wide visitations for next triennium. He will employ our Vice-Presidents and Visitors to assist him in covering all of our congregations.

District Staff reviews will be held in December.

We have twelve licensed Lay Deacons whose licenses are renewed every December. Reviews will be done in connection with this.

Training for delegates of the Synodical Convention is being organized.

The Chair suggested that another workshop/conference be held for congregational presidents. One was held last year, yet it was not very well attended. Board members were encouraged to spread the word among their Circuits when the next one is scheduled.

Our schools and preschools are going to face "tests" from the LGBT community. The President

is considering ways in which we can prepare them to be ready.

The Chair encouraged every Board member to keep track of matters related with the 2016 Synodical Convention, especially with the Overtures. He reviewed Synod's approach concerning the Lay Deacon program. Keep up with Overtures. He encouraged each Board member to learn more about this issue as the Board may be authoring a resolution concerning this in the future. He encouraged us to develop an informed opinion on this important issue - either way.

It was noted that an Overture was passed at our District Convention to overturn the CCM Opinion concerning churches giving money and resources to whatever Missions they want to as opposed to only LCMS approved Missions.

End of Meeting Review

District Governance Policy 2.11.5 covers how Board meetings are structured and should be run. We reviewed how this meeting held up to our policy. It was pointed out that while we represent specific regions and/or circuits that we also represent the District as a whole. Members were encouraged to share pertinent information with those we represent in our regions and/or circuits.

The President made the observation that this Board meeting was different due to the Synodical President's visitation. Still, with each Board meeting there is usually a visit scheduled with a specific Mission or Ministry of the host region.

Deaconess Jacqueline Duke asked for her name to be removed for consideration of representing the Board at the 2016 Synodical Convention.

A motion was made to adjourn at 10:10 a.m. It passed unanimously.

Closing prayer was given by the Secretary who is also the Senior Pastor of our hosting congregation.

Respectfully submitted in service to the Lord and His Church,

Rev. Karl W. Haeussler
Secretary, Eastern District, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod