**Minutes: Board of Directors Meeting – Subject to Approval by the Board**

Minnesota South (MNS) District

February 17, 2024 – 9:00am to 3:00pm

District Office, Burnsville, MN

# Mission Statement

Cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

**1. OPENING DEVOTION**

Rev. Matthew Johnson, Associate Pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Corcoran served as the chaplain for the day. He led a devotion using “The Litany,” as well as a wood cut of the 6th petition of the Lord’s Prayer. His devotion focused our attention on the temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11).

**2. PARLIAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the President, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, at 9:24am.

1. Roll Call

Present: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; Rev. David Mumme; Rev. Thomas Evans; Rev. Keith Grimm; Rev. Kurt Klaus; Mr. Daniel Thao; Ms. Alfrieda Baldwin; Rev. Matthew Johnson; Mr. Travis Barclay; Mr. Bill Summers; Rev. Jonathan Vollrath; Mr. Daniel Uttech; Mr. Joel Landskroener

Staff: Mr. Sean Martens; Dr. Phillip Johnson; Rev. Vue Lee; Mr. Kai Larson; Rev. Fred Hinz; Ms. Nadine Meyer

Excused: Rev. David Kind; Rev. Mark Loder; Mr. Rick Marko; Ms. Sara Sorenson; Mr. Dave Kenow; Rev. Eric Nelson; Mr. David Koosman; Mr. Andy Frerich; Rev. Stefan Wismar

1. Approval of Agenda

The motion carried for the agenda of the day to be approved.

1. Approval of Minutes of Past Meeting (*prepared by Keith Grimm, Secretary*)

A motion was made and seconded to approve BOD minutes from December 12, 2023. The motion carried.

1. Correspondence

Rev. Keith Grimm, District Secretary, highlighted that LCMS Secretary John Sias is looking for nominations for one ordained and four lay persons to serve on the Concordia Plans Service Boards. LCMS bylaws require that at least five of the twelve laypersons be experienced in the design of benefit plans; five must be experienced in the management of benefit plan investments; and one must have significant financial/audit experience. For this upcoming term they are especially looking for candidates who have experience managing benefit plan investments. The deadline for receiving nominations is Friday, March 1, 2024.

In addition, the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) requests an opinion on the following question: Is it consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod for a district convention to conduct a non-binding advisory vote of nonvoting advisory delegates prior to votes of voting delegates? Opinions are to be forwarded to Synod Secretary Dr. John Sias before March 15, 2024.

**3. GUEST PRESENTER**

Minnesota South District LLL President, Mr. Kevin Bonine, reported on LLL (Lutheran Hour Ministries) activity. Their goal is resourcing Christians so that the gospel can effectively reach more people locally and throughout the world. The tagline of Lutheran Hour Ministries continues to be: “Bringing Christ to the nations and the nations to the church.” 195 million lives are touched every week through this international ministry. The next MN South District LLL Rally will be held at St. Michael’s Lutheran Church in Bloomington April 14, 2024.

**4. VISIONING / STUDY ITEMS / PRESENTATIONS**

Governance change considerations to the MN South District’s BOD Policy Manual were discussed.

**5. POLICY FORMATION**

1. Governance Change Review

Dr. Phil Johnson, Assistant to the President - Mission Formation, and Rev. Matthew Johnson shared the governance structure process and proposed changes to the MNS District Handbook. The goal is the BOD’s management is done efficiently and its governance responsibilities are carried out fully. The District’s proposed organizational flow chart was compared to previous ones.

1. Governance Change Communication Plan

Dr. Phil Johnson, Assistant to the President - Mission Formation, and Rev. Matthew Johnson shared what needs to happen for these changes to take place. The policy manual must first be approved by the BOD. The MNS District Handbook must be consistent with synodical handbook changes. Updates to the MNS District Handbook must be sent to the Synod’s Committee on Constitutional Matters (CCM) for approval prior to the MNS District convention. The final iteration of the District Handbook, which will be submitted to the 2025 District Convention, must be completed by March 2025.

The BOD decided that orientation presentations be offered in April (*Go First!* Ministry Conference), May, and September 2024. Finally, we went through questions submitted by BOD members in preparation for these orientation presentations.

**6. REPORTS**

1. President’s Report Highlights, Q & A: Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford presented his report of activities from December 2023 through February 2024, as well as his upcoming calendar of meetings/events through May 2024. He also mentioned that 11% of churches are now pastorally vacant throughout the Synod. Finally, he opened himself for questions from the BOD.

Rev. Vue Lee, Minnesota South Missions Executive, reported he is working with Synod mission leaders to emphasize church planting. In addition, Vue is visiting multiple churches encouraging and inspiring them to develop a mission mindset.

Dr. Phil Johnson, Assistant to the President - Mission Formation, mentioned he is coaching several leaders and churches in the District to partner and work collaboratively with each other. He is also guiding churches who are going through the process of closing. Finally, he highlighted the *Go First!* Ministry Conference at Concordia Academy in Roseville April 19-20, 2024.

Mr. Sean Martens, Assistant to the President, Education & Commissioned Ministers, talked about enrollment trends in District schools and centers. Our Lutheran elementary schools are up 37% since COVID. Our childcare centers throughout the district are down 21% in this same time period. There is an increase in enrollment in non-Lutheran Christian students and unchurched students. There were 119 children baptized through Lutheran schools in the MN South District last year. Finally, the number of commissioned ministers from all Concordia Universities, who are eligible to receive their first call, is 115 (68 of these are teachers), which is far below requests for candidates.

Rev. Fred Hinz, the District’s Public Policy Advocate, reported physician assisted suicide is currently being profiled and promoted in the Minnesota legislature. The discussion is also taking place to make abortion (at any stage) to be part of the Minnesota constitution.

Ms. Nadine Meyer, Communications Director for the District, mentioned she is working on publicizing the *Go First!* Ministry Conference and continually updating the District’s website and eNews. She continually is looking for stories, events, and scholarships to emphasize throughout the District.

Mr. Joshua Wagner, Business Manager for the MN South District, updated his transition into his new role. About half his time is spent on financial management and the other half is overseeing office management. He will be the convention manager for the next MN South District Convention.

1. Treasurer’s Report: Mr. Joshua Wagner

Mr. Joshua Wagner, Business Manager, shared the financial summary for the fourth quarter and twelve months ended December 31, 2023. The change in assets for the quarter was $225,673 compared to a budget of $(224,239), over budget by $449,912. The change in net assets for the twelve months ended December 31 was $162,951 compared to a budget of $(532,559), over budget by $695,510. Congregational support was $594,685 for the three months ended December 31, as compared to a budget of $512,512 or $82,173 over budget. Congregational support for the twelve months ended December 31 was $1,950,150 as compared to a budget of $2,050,000 or $99,850 under budget. Through December there were 182 congregations (78% of total District congregations) making gifts ranging from $100 to $132,000. Net gain on investments for the year was $271,178.

District expenses for the fourth quarter ended December 31 were $863,342 compared to budget of $842,521over budget by $20,821. Expenses for the twelve months ended December 31 were $3,065,415 compared to a budget of $3,326,579 under budget by $261,164. Operating investments as of December 31 were $2,616,366 and Endowment investments were $3,982,273. The District continues to pay its bills in a timely manner.

1. Finance Committee Report

Mr. Kai Larson shared the Finance Committee report and asked for questions.

d) LCEF Report and Delinquent Loan Report

Mr. Kai Larson, LCEF District Vice President, reported investments are totaling $92,209,450 as of December 31, 3023. This includes $907,348 in new money; and $287,463 in refinanced loans with LCEF. Kai has been having loan discussions and closings with several congregations. In addition, the District LCEF “Real Estate Solutions” group is working with several District congregations. Finally, he reported there are currently no impaired or troubled LCEF loans in the Minnesota South District.

e) Special Reports

There were no special reports.

1. Other committee minutes: Schools & Commissioned Ministers; Ministerial Health; Mission Formation; Missions; Pre-Seminary Committee

**7. POLICY REVIEW / GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford introduced how we will be studying particular policies in the BOD Policy Manual in future monthly meetings.

**8. INFORMATION AND DECISION ITEMS**

1. Approve proposed BOD Policy Manual

It was motioned and seconded that the BOD approve the use of the proposed Board Policy Manual in lieu of the forthcoming revised District Handbook being approved by the District Convention. (This is approved for trial use for the remainder of the current triennium or until the BOD approves the use of the manual itself). The motion carried.

1. Constitution Committee – Constitutions for Approval

It was moved and seconded to accept the constitutions of:

* Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (of Potsdam), Elgin, MN
* Redeemer Lutheran Church, Wayzata, MN
* Royal Family Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN
* South Shore Trinity Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, MN
* Trinity Lutheran Church, (Wilton) Waseca, MN

1. Nominations for replacement of Rev. Eric Nelson, Region 4, Ordained Representative.

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford asked for nominations to replace Rev. Eric Nelson as the BOD Region 4 Ordained Representative. Eric recently accepted a call to serve in the Michigan District. We will vote on nominated names at the BOD meeting in May.

1. *Go First!* Ministry Conference will be at Concordia Academy in Roseville April 19-20, 2024.
2. Corporate Resolution requested by American Portfolios that authorizes Joshua Wagner as signer on the investment account.

This motion was made and seconded to authorize Mr. Joshua Wagner as a signer for this investment account. The motion carried.

1. The BOD thanks Mrs. Gayle Baumgard for her many years of service to the MN South District and the Missions Committee. We commend her to God’s grace and blessings throughout the future.
2. CCM Ag. 24-3025; Advisory Delegate Poll and 2023 Res.9-08A – Request for response

The motion was made and seconded that the MN South District affirms the recent adopted resolution and doesn’t implement this practice. However, we see times when this could be beneficial and ask the CCM to study this further.

1. **ROUND TABLE** Celebrations and/or prayer requests were shared.
2. **CLOSING PRAYER**

Rev. Matthew Johnson, who served as the chaplain for the day, led us in our closing prayer. Then we sang this hymn: “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide.”

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20pm.

**BOD meeting Schedule Chaplain**

May 7, 2024 Rev. Jonathan Vollrath

September 16-17, 2024 vacant

December 10, 2024 Rev. David Mumme

February 15, 2025 Rev. Tom Evans

May 6, 2025 Rev. David Kind