

Sask Synod Council Meeting Notes
October 2 - 3, 2024
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Saskatoon

We welcomed National Bishop Susan Johnson joining us for our meeting. We began with prayer and a round table check-in with all who were present.

The October 2 portion of the meeting was an orientation session where we looked at the tools we use to communicate effectively, run our meetings and where to find documents with terms of reference and relationships. It was an important reminder for continuing council members and an opportunity for those new to the table to ask questions and become familiar with the processes.

We began the business part of the meeting on October 3. Meeting Chaplain Munye Mtata lead the opening devotion based on the questions asked by Jesus in Mark 8: 27-29. Reflection:

- Who do people say the church is?
- Who do we say the church is?

This led to some deep discussion on identity.

We began by approving the agenda and minutes from past meetings before looking at correspondence. This included a letter from Central Lutheran Church in Moose Jaw outlining their process for closing the congregation. We accepted their closure with great regret but also much thanksgiving for their service and presence in the community.

Bishop-elect Ali reported on his work to date and on plans for his ordination service to take place October 12 at Zion Lutheran church. The role of bishop has been a little daunting but also rewarding. He has focused on relationships we have at all levels both within and outside of the synod. He has visited with many congregations as well as other institutions. He has attended a number of conferences and ordinations of other new bishops in the ELCIC. He has set up people to be conveners in regional clusters of rostered leaders, and has a good team in place to focus on youth in our church. As a council we are grateful for his energy but are concerned about his workload. We need to respond to his needs and the ability to provide support. We look forward to a joyful ordination service.

Pastor Greg Keil reported on the Global Companion Ministry Team. They are working on a Global Companion trip to Argentina next June. They will meet again very soon, and provide more details about this opportunity to meet more directly with, and see some of the work done by our partner in South America.

We received a written report from the Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team chair, Sean Bell and had opportunity to ask questions of Ron Shumba and Bishop-elect Ali who were also involved with the retreat that was held at Kinasao. There is a request to rename the team to Children, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team. Planning is underway for CLAY to be held in Saskatoon next year. The strategy document related to this area of ministry is to be complete by December 31.

Treasurer Jeff Barber reported that the Finance and Audit committee will be meeting later this month. An RFP for new auditors has been done and those will be evaluated. When setting the budget for this year, figures used were closer to actual revenue for last year. Convention stands about \$5,000 under income due to some congregations not yet sending in convention levies. The Bishop's Ordination was not

budgeted for so we will have to go above budget for that. Projections about how long the Synod can be sustained when using reserves every year will be available for the January meeting.

We received written reports from other committees. The Governance Committee reviewed the Synod committees and appointments which in most instances remain in place until December 31. New and re-appointments where applicable will be effective January 1, 2025. The deadline for applying for nomination to be a delegate for National Church Convention is October 31. To date, four nominations (29 delegates to be appointed) have been received.

The Candidacy Committee was happy to report that two candidates have been endorsed to begin studies toward ordination, and two others are in the discernment process. They are also closely following the work being done on the future of ministry and the recruitment process.

Lutheran Campus Ministry reports that their work continues on and off campus. They have one vacancy for student residents. As the building ages, more funds will be required for maintaining the property. Pastor George Hind works well with other ministries on campus and provides a vital service to students.

Bishop Susan reported on national issues as they came up during the meeting but took some time to report on the upcoming convention. The convention theme is 'Rejoicing in Hope', which will take place in Winnipeg in July 2025. In 2026 the 40th anniversary of ELCIC and the 50th anniversary of ordination of women take place, and those celebrations will be incorporated into the 2025 convention. The Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan has been invited as a guest at convention and we look forward to hearing how they "Rejoice in Hope" in their situation. Election of new bishop will take some time. There will be a pre-identification process for identifying potential candidates for national bishop. A discernment guide for congregations will be sent out. Nominations and interviews of potential candidates will take place by May 15th and will be available on the website. There will still be a prayerful ecclesiastical ballot as this is a spiritual rather than political process, but it will give people some background on candidates who are interested in the position.

Information regarding the new Prairie Centre for Ecumenism bursary (Sister Anne Keffer) for ecumenical events was provided. There will be a Celebration of 40 years of PCE to take place on November 22, 2024, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Saskatoon.

We set a tentative date of March 18 – 19, 2025 for the next in-person Council meeting. Bishop-elect Ali lead the Taize chant, and meeting Chaplain Munye closed the meeting with prayer.