

ENGLISH DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 18, 2023

Meeting Location:

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church, 13667 Highland Road, Hartland, MI 48353.

Attendance: Voting Members - Mr. Lucas Fitzgerald, Ms. Carol George, Mr. Thomas Habitz, Rev. Jamison Hardy (*Pres.*), Mr. Thomas Honebrink (*via telecommunication*), Rev. Robert Kieselowsky, Mr. Rod Lane, Mr. Terry Leu, Mrs. Kristin Wellik, Rev. Luke Zimmerman. **Non-Voting Members** - Rev. Jeffrey Miskus, Rev. Michael Morehouse, Mrs. Sally Naglich, Rev. Robert Rogers, Mr. Jim Thielen. **Staff** - Mr. Ronald Grimm, Rev. Daniel Lepley, Rev. Derek Mathers.

Not in Attendance: Mr. Albert Amling, Ms. Gail Grieser, Rev. David Petersen, Rev. Douglas Spittel.

Call to Order: Chairman Terry Leu called the meeting to order at 9:15am.

1. Morning Devotions

Rev. Robert Rogers, Midwestern Region Vice-President, conducted morning devotions, leading the Board in Responsive Prayer 1. His homily based on 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 spoke about the spiritual milk and meat that need to be presented appropriately to parishioners, as well as the role that teachers of the faith have as conduits of the Gospel used by God.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Secretary Luke Zimmerman called the roll of Board members, noting that a quorum of voting members was present.

3. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Chairman Leu presented the agenda to the Board members for approval. Motion: *"To approve the agenda as presented."* Motion carried.

4. Approval of December 2022 Meeting Minutes

Secretary Zimmerman presented draft minutes of the December 2022 Board of Directors meeting to the Board for approval. Motion: *"To approve the minutes as presented."* Motion carried.

5. Review of December 2022 Meeting

Chairman Leu initiated a review of the December 2022 meeting held in Atlanta, GA. Members spoke positively about the hospitality shown by the host congregations, while commending the relative strength of the congregations. Members suggested avoiding hosting meetings during the Advent Season. President Hardy asked Board members to identify potential sites for meetings, particularly if there are District areas or ministries to visit.

6. District President's Report

President Jamison Hardy began his report to the Board by welcoming members to the congregation where he also serves as assistant pastor. He noted that Rev. Douglas Spittel was absent to preside over the funeral of Rev. Hans Andrae, while Rev. David Petersen was absent to substitute for Rev. Eric Andrae as a conference speaker this weekend.

President Hardy informed the Board that a third planned estate gift was presented to the District, which was expected during the recently completed fiscal year. He also discussed the potential closure of Living Water - San Diego, CA following Rev. Steven Duescher's impending retirement later in 2023.

President Hardy reported that he was elected as the Synod Council of President's representative to the Concordia University System Board. An incident that the Concordia University System Board is beginning to address are actions taken by Concordia University Austin to move itself from under Synod supervision and governance. The university's Board of Regents is currently in discussion with the Synod Board of Directors.

President Hardy discussed the controversy tied to the publication of *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications*. He informed Board members that the Council of Presidents was provided an informative presentation that debunks many aspects of the criticism leveled at the included essays. Synod President Matthew Harrison will be issuing a further statement concerning some of the criticisms, as well as some of the critics. Publishing a second edition of the book with alteration remains a possibility.

President Hardy provided some basic updates about the upcoming 2023 Synod Convention. Several members of the District's delegation will be serving on Floor Committees. Secretary Zimmerman informed the Board that all overtures adopted by the 2022 District Convention or by the Board of Directors have been submitted and received by the Synod President's Office.

President Hardy updated the Board about the legal proceedings concerning the Arizona Campus Christian Center. Legal counsel indicates that the process outlined in the bylaws of the Arizona Campus Christian concerning reversion to the Wesley Foundation has not been followed. All parties to the lawsuit have agreed to trial by judge, which will take place in March 2023. President Hardy stated that he is pleased with the current position of the District within this legal matter.

President Hardy presented information about congregational transfer requests from the District, which may require Board actions at future meetings:

- *Peace in the Valley - Benson, AZ* has requested transfer to the Pacific Southwest District.
- *Peace of the Desert - Palm Desert, CA* is considering a request of transfer to the Pacific Southwest District.

President Hardy presented information about congregational transfer requests into the District:

- *Trinity - Denver, CO* requested transfer from the Rocky Mountain District, which has not been acted upon by that District.
- *Our Savior - Raleigh, NC* has requested transfer from the Southeastern District.
- *Good Shepherd - Charleston, SC* has requested transfer from the Southeastern District.
- *Beautiful Savior - Arlington, TX* requested transfer from the Texas District, which was rejected.
- *Lord of Life - Plano, TX* has requested transfer from the Texas District.

President Hardy asked the Board to grant its endorsement to receive the five congregations requesting transfer to the English District should the respective geographic District Board of Directors grant approval of the transfer requests. Motion: *"That the Board support the District President's activity with these five congregations requesting transfer into the English District."* Motion carried.

President Hardy thanked Chairman Leu for leading three youth members of District congregations to attend the LCMS National Youth Leadership Corps (YouthLead) conference. Mr. Rod Lane spoke favorably about the program and its benefits to the youth participants.

President Hardy informed the Board about the February 26-28 joint meeting that will be held between District pastors and pastors from the Lutheran Church–Canada in Ontario. At issue is the protocol agreement that exists between the two church bodies, which is seen by English District congregations within Canada as inhibiting mission work, especially among non-Anglo ethnic population groups.

President Hardy announced that the Synod Office of National Mission appointed a new director: Rev. Daniel Galchutt.

7. District Staff Reports

Rev. Derek Mathers, Executive Assistant for Missions, updated the Board about Shepherd of the Canyon - Gold Canyon, AZ. The District has provided a grant to the congregation for potential future church locations. Rental of property for meeting location is being considered. He also emphasized the recent reports of congregations adding new members in various regions across the District. He informed the Board about the upcoming Mission Activity workshop scheduled for April 2023. The meeting is open for both District church workers and lay members of District congregations. Two mission congregations are currently being developed (Gold Canyon, AZ and Whitewater, WI); the mission plant in Hazelwood, PA anticipates having a seminary candidate assigned to it in April 2023.

Rev. Daniel Lepley, District LCEF Vice-President, highlighted loans being issued to congregations to purchase or construct buildings. Agnus Dei - Marshall, MI is closing on its purchase of a church building. Crosspoint - Sahuarita, AZ is nearing the end of permitting to begin construction on a new building. This is happening despite the current economic status of the nation.

Mr. Ron Grimm, District Planned Giving Coordinator, reported that he had presentations in five congregations since the last Board meeting. Planned giving includes gifts being designated to the District Endowment Fund.

8. Constitution Committee Report

President Hardy presented the Committee's Report, which endorsed approval of the revisions to the governing documents of First - El Cajon, CA. Motion: *"To approve the revision of governing documents of First - El Cajon, CA."* Motion carried.

9. Recess and Lunch

Chairman Leu announced that the meeting stood in recess. President Hardy led Board members on a tour of the congregation's facilities, after which lunch was provided.

Chairman Leu reconvened the meeting at 12:35pm.

10. Afternoon Devotions

Rev. Rogers led the Board in Responsive Prayer 2. His homily was based on Matthew 5:21-37, which focused on Jesus' teaching about the LORD's Law. Prayers for various concerns identified by Board members were offered.

11. District Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Sally Naglich presented the preliminary Statements of Financial Position as of December 31, 2021 and 2022 and the Statements of Activities and Functional Expenses for the 11 months ended December 31, 2022 for the United States and Canada, as well as the December 31, 2022 Financial Statements for Canadian Church Extension Fund.

Treasurer Naglich also presented an accounting of funds gained by sales of properties that had been ceded to the District. The report showed how funds have been disbursed according to the formula established by the Board: 10% to Synod, 60% to the District Endowment Fund, 30% Unrestricted [*cf. AUG 2022 Minutes, Item #19*].

Motion: *"To accept the Treasurer's Report."* Motion carried.

12. Canada Corporation Report

Mr. Jim Thielen, Chairman of the Canada Corporation, informed the Board about meetings held by the corporation concerning the LCEF's proposal for operations in Canada:

- At its January 25 meeting, the CCEF Board approved in principle bylaw changes necessary for the transition to be completed and confirmed that when requested, they are willing to formally adopt the amended articles and bylaws.
- At their meeting on February 10, CCEF member congregations approved the amended articles and bylaws in principle and confirmed that when requested, they would formally adopt the amended articles and bylaws.

The Synod Board of Directors is slated to take up the matter at its meeting in May 2023.

Mr. Thielen reported that no current loans are non-performing. Due to ongoing discussions with LCEF, the Canada Corporation is not currently pursuing lending opportunities with Ontario province congregations.

13. District Endowment Fund Report

Chairman Leu drew attention to the decline in Endowment Fund earnings is attributable to the current economic status of the market. A summary of Endowment Fund grants was provided. The lack of earnings means that grants being issued in FYE January 31, 2024 will come from carryover funds from FYE January 31, 2023.

A Board member inquired how scholarship grants are determined, whether there is a particular formula utilized to determine the individual amount of the gifts awarded. The Board member also sought information tracking church worker grant recipients during the past several years by category (*ordained, commissioned—teacher, other commissioned*); that information should be found and produced in the near future.

Another Board member also asked whether establishing a legal defense fund for church workers had ever been considered. Some thought toward funding that possibility could be considered.

14. District Treasurer Task Force Report

Secretary Zimmerman presented details of the Task Force's update report to the Board. Emphasis was placed on the timeline that the Task Force had developed to carry out its work.

15. Regional Alignment Discussion

Chairman Leu introduced the matter of Indiana Circuit being aligned with the Midwestern Region. A resolution from the Indiana Circuit Forum adopted in October 2022 requested that the circuit be returned to the Lake Erie Region. Board members offered thoughts about the matter of regional alignment, as well as the potential for visitation circuit realignment, which would require District Convention action. The President and Vice-Presidents were directed to bring a proposal concerning regional alignment to the Board for consideration and action at its May 2023 meeting; the request of the Indiana Circuit should be taken into advisement in the development of the proposal.

16. District Board Flow Chart

Chairman Leu noted that the required activities outlined in the District Board Flow Chart for FEB 2023 had been covered.

17. District Loan Committee Appointments

President Hardy presented nominees for the District Loan Committee: *Sally Naglich, William Magill, Jim Thielen*. The Board approved the appointments.

18. Items for Next Meeting

Board Members identified business items for the MAY 2023 meeting:

- Update from District Treasurer Task Force
- Proposal from President and Vice-Presidents concerning Regional Alignment

19. Future Meetings

The following dates and locations were identified for future meetings of the Board:

MAY 8-9, 2023	Fairlawn - Fairlawn, OH	<i>(Meeting to begin at 1:00pm on MAY 8.)</i>
AUG 18-20, 2023	Immanuel - Alexandria, VA	<i>(Dates may be adjusted.)</i>
NOV 4-5, 2023	St. John the Divine - Chicago, IL	<i>(Suggested travel via Midway Airport.)</i>
FEB 5-7, 2024	Immanuel - Orange, CA	

20. Adjournment

Motion: *"To adjourn the meeting."* Motion carried; the meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm. Rev. Rogers offered closing prayer, including matters identified by Board members and for safe return travel.

Submitted,

Rev. Luke Zimmerman
Secretary, English District-LCMS