

Northeastern Ohio Synod Council Meeting
January 20, 2024
Zoom Teleconferencing

Present: Bishop Laura Barbins, Vice President Kevin Kampfer, Treasurer Bob Emmerich, Bobby Barnes, Lito Belardo, Pastor Steven Bond, Sheryl Budd, Alex Clevinger, Susan Frantz, Yvonne Hoelter, Kirk Lombardy, Beverly Lund, Pastor Marilyn Matevia, Erin O'Neill, Pastor Dan Skillman, Linda Weidenbach, Don Wiff, Pastor Stephanie Woods, Janet Hartman, David Lenz; Guest: Pastor Mitch Phillips

Excused: Secretary Pastor Jeremy Hollingshead, Jennifer Ackerman, August Weight, Jamie Savarin

Absent: Johanna Henderson

GATHERING/CONNECTION

1. Kevin Kampfer called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. He welcomed newly appointed council members, Janet Hartman (Southeast Conference Lay Person) and August Weight (Youth Member).

OPENING

2. Pastor Stephanie Woods opened the meeting with prayer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVED Synod Council Agenda [Moved Administratively; adopted by unanimous consent]
SC24.01.01 To approve the Northeastern Ohio Synod Council Agenda for January 20, 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS

3. Bishop Barbins spoke to a letter received from the Ohio Council of Churches.

REPORTS

SECRETARY

APPROVED Approval of Minutes [Moved Administratively; approved by unanimous consent]
SC24.01.02 To approve the minutes for the October 21, 2023 Northeastern Ohio Synod Council Meeting

4. Acknowledgement of November 28, 2023 Executive Committee Minutes (approved).
5. Acknowledgement of January 3, 2024 Executive Committee Minutes (yet to be approved).

BISHOP REPORT – Bishop Laura Barbins

6. Bishop Barbins mentioned her report.
7. Bishop Barbins spoke to the following:
 - a. Churchwide will be announcing our new DEM within the next week.
 - b. Pastor Dirk van der Duim resigned in good standing from the roster of the NEOS.

- c. She will be traveling to El Paso, TX to participate in a Boarder Immersion Experience representing Region 6. A grant from Boarder Servant Corp. will pay half of the cost.
- d. The first meeting of quarterly gatherings of Judicatory Heads was held at the Lutheran Center on January 11, 2024.

VICE PRESIDENT REPORT – KEVIN KAMPFER

8. Kevin referred to his report.
9. Kevin noted that an updated Synod Council Directory was posted to the SC January Supporting Docs Folder in Basecamp.
10. Kevin also noted that a list of Synod Council positions to be elected at the 2024 Synod Assembly was posted to the SC January Supporting Docs Folder in Basecamp. Members were encouraged to consult this list to determine if their position was up for election, whether the member can stand for re-election, and if so, to prayerfully consider standing for re-election.

TREASURER REPORT – BOB EMMERICH

11. Bob spoke about his report.
12. Bob also discussed a simplified spreadsheet to track the Synod's monthly financial performance for the general operating fund that was posted in the Basecamp Reports Folder for the meeting.
13. The Synod's estimated year-to-date loss is -\$211,313.

BISHOP ASSISTANT'S REPORTS – The Rev. Mitchel Phillips and The Rev. Julianne Smith

14. Pastor Mitch referred to his report.
15. Pastor Mitch noted that an updated Google pin map for the synod with current called leader status has been posted. A link to the map can be found in his January report.
16. Questions were raised regarding the number of pastoral vacancies in the NEOS. The Bishop proposed that this be a "learning topic" to be reviewed at the April or June SC Meeting.
17. Kevin mentioned Pastor Julianne Smith's report.

LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION

18. Kevin read the following report submitted by Jamie Savarin:
"The Lutheran Men in Mission Board of officers are having conversations with Drew Tucker, his team and Hopewood Outdoor Ministries. The goal of these discussions will be to continue Lutheran Men in Missions: To help men gain a stronger relationship with the church and become like Jesus in faith and mission to serve others."

WELCA

19. No report submitted – Jennifer Ackerman was unable to join the Zoom call due to technical difficulties.

CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL – David Lenz

20. David noted that he is into his 4 ½ year of his 6-year term and has been quite busy with Churchwide Council work in addition to his work as a member of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.
21. David reported the following action by the Churchwide Council:

- a. Granted a 4-6 month leave of absence to Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.
 - b. Appointed The Rev. Michael Burk Presiding Bishop Pro Tempore of the ELCA.
 - c. Received the report of Mr. Neville Reid, a partner in the firm of Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll, LLP, that summarized his audit of the ELCA's governing documents for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The report has been referred to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. It is anticipated that recommendations for changes to the Churchwide governing documents will be introduced at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly resulting from the audit.
22. David referred SC members to the following websites for additional information and updates: www.elca.org.crlc and www.elca.org.churchcouncil.

PRAYER FOR HOLY INDIFFERENCE AND WISDOM – Pastor Stephanie Woods

OLD BUSINESS

Action Item Review: (Items identified during the October 28, 2023 meeting). – Completed

Care of Creation Task Force – Pastor Marilyn Matevia

23. Pastor Marilyn reported that there have been difficulties in finding a suitable time for all of the committee members to meet.
24. Pastor Marilyn shared that the committee is engaged in the following actions:
 - a. Determining Cuyahoga Falls permitting requirements for the installation of solar panels.
 - b. Identifying companies that install solar panels.
 - c. Publishing Care of Creation Newsletters

2024 Synod Assembly Matters

25. 2024 Synod Assembly Committee Updates - Chairperson
 - a. Nominating Committee – Susan Frantz
 - (1) Susan noted that Paul Gochnour has agreed to serve as the Northeast Conference member of the Nominations Committee. Two individuals have declined the invitation.
 - (2) Susan asked the SC members to help identify individuals within their conference to serve on the committee
 - (3) Susan also asked SC members to prayerfully consider standing for re-election if eligible.
 - b. Elections – Alex Clevinger – No report
 - c. Minutes – Jennifer Ackerman – No report
 - d. Reference and Counsel – The Rev. Marilyn Matevia – No report
 - e. Credentials – Beverly Lund – No report

NEOS 2024 Synod Assembly Nominating Committee

APPROVED 2024 Synod Assembly Nominating Committee [Moved (Frantz); seconded; carried]
SC24.01.03 To approve Paul Gochnour as a member of the 2024 NEOS Nominations Committee. Further to authorize Bishop Barbins to populate the committee with three (3) additional members.

PRESENTATION ON FINANCIALS – Bishop Barbins and Bob Emmerich

26. A video was shown that reviewed our Synod's 16 donor and 22 council designated funds. Individual slides of this video were posted to the SC Basecamp January 2024 Resource Docs folder.
27. Bob presented a roll up of the proposed 2024-2025 revised NEOS Budget.
28. The budget anticipates a loss of -\$73,906 before depreciation and fund transfers.
29. The Bishop explained the concept of a zero-balance budget.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING – Bishop Barbins

NEW BUSINESS

NEOS 2024-2025 Revised Budget

APPROVED Amendment to the proposed NEOS 2024-2025 Revised Budget V.5 [Moved (Barbins); Seconded; carried]

SC24.01.04 That the Christian Education Fund (\$12,486) be used as a transfer towards the LOMO line-item expense.

APPROVED Proposed NEOS 2024-2025 Revised Budget V.5 [Moved (Emmerich); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.05 To adopt the revised Northeastern Ohio Synod 2024-2025 Amended Budget as recommended by the NEOS Finance Committee and amended by Synod Council.

Gift Policy

APPROVED NEOS Gift Policy [Moved (Emmerich); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.06 To adopt the Northeastern Ohio Synod Gift Policy.

Travel Policy

APPROVED NEOS Travel Reimbursement Policy [Moved (Emmerich); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.07 To adopt the Northeastern Ohio Synod Travel Reimbursement Policy.

Zero Out Negative Balance of the Capital Asset Account

APPROVED Zero out negative balance of the Capital Asset Account [Moved (Emmerich); Seconded; carried]

SC24.01.08 To transfer funds from the PNC Investment Account to bring the Capital Asset Account to a zero balance.

2024 NEOH Synod Assembly

APPROVED 2024 NEOH Synod Assembly Deadlines [Moved (Barbins); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.09 Motion: a.) Nominations deadline – March 15th (Bio forms)

b.) Resolutions and Memorials – April 15th

c.) Assembly Registration – April 1st through and including May 1st

2024 NEOH Synod Assembly Parliamentarian

APPROVED Authorization to appoint the 2024 NEOH Synod Assembly Parliamentarian [Moved (Hoetler); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.10 To approve that the Executive Committee of the Northeastern Ohio Synod be given authorization to appoint the Parliamentarian for the proceedings of the 2024 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly

2025 NEOH Synod Assembly

APPROVED Authorization of 2025 NEOH Synod Assembly date and venue [Moved (Barbins); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.11 To hold the 2025 Synod Assembly as a one-day Zoom Meeting at the end of May or Beginning of June with the date to be determined by the Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly Committee.

2026 NEOH Synod Assembly

APPROVED Authorization of 2026 NEOH Synod Assembly date and venue [Moved (Barbins); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.12 To hold the 2026 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly on June 5th and 6th (with a tentative need for Thursday, June 4th) at the John S. Knight Center, Akron, OH.

Roster Matters

APPROVED Approval of Roster Matters [Moved (Barbins); seconded; carried]

SC24-01.13 To approve the following Roster Matters presented *en bloc*:

a. On Leave from Call

1. Pastor Andrew Genszler (eff. 10/15/2023 – year 3)
2. Deacon Marla Kay (eff. 9/1/2023 – year 5, study)
3. Pastor Sarah Taylor (eff. 10/16/2023 – year 1)
4. Pastor Deborah Pinnegar (eff 09/01/2023 – year 1)
5. Pastor Jonathan Stufft (eff 12/4/2023 – year 1)

b. Retirement Roster

1. Pastor Julie Thoms (eff 11/1/2023)
2. Pastor Paul Thoms (eff 11/1/2023)
3. Pastor Julianne Smith (eff. 2/1/2024)

c. Disability Roster n/a

NEOS Strategic Ministries for 2024

APPROVED NEOS Congregations identified as Strategic Ministries for 2024 [Moved (Lund); seconded; carried]

SC24.01.14 To approve the following Northeastern Ohio Synod congregations as Strategic Ministries for 2024:

- a. New Covenant Lutheran, East Cleveland
- b. Calvary Lutheran, East Cleveland

Congregational Constitutions

APPROVED Congregational Constitutions [Moved (Hartman); seconded; carried]

SC23.01.15 To approve the following congregational constitutions. These come with the recommendation of the Constitution Committee and are presented *en bloc* for Synod Council approval.

- a. Christ the King, Twinsburg
- b. St. Matthew, Medina
- c. Emmanuel, Salem
- d. Holy Trinity, Akron

Welcoming a New Congregation

APPROVED To admit Hope Lutheran Church, Mansfield, OH. to the NEOS as a member of the Southwest Conference [Motion (Barbins); seconded; carried]

SC23.01.16 That Hope Lutheran Church, Mansfield, OH. be admitted as a congregation of the Northeastern Ohio Synod and a member of the Southwest Conference of this Synod.

Update to the NEOS Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions

APPROVED To update Continuing Resolution S12.01.E23 of the NEOS Constitution and Bylaws to reflect congregations that have closed and newly formed. [Moved (Bond); seconded; carried]

SC23.01.17 To update Continuing Resolution S12.01.E23 (The Southwest Conference) of the Northeastern Ohio Synod Constitution, Bylaws with the following changes:

- a. Delete - #19 St. Paul, Ontario – [Service of Closure Dec. 3, 2023]
- b. Delete - #23 St. Timothy, Mansfield – [Service of Closure Dec. 10, 2023]
- c. Add – Hope, Mansfield – [Celebration of Formation Jan. 14, 2024]
- d. Update resolution number to S12.01.E24 and renumber congregations in alphabetical order.

ACTION ITEM REVIEW

Action items were assigned, agreed to, and will be recorded in the Basecamp January 2024 “To Dos” by Kevin Kampfer on behalf of the Synod Secretary.

CLOSING PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER – Pastor Stephanie Woods

NEXT MEETINGS

30. Synod Council – April 13, 2024 – In-person – Location TBD
31. Executive Committee – Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

ADJOURNMENT

32. The meeting was adjourned by Kevin Kampfer at 12:02 p.m.

(Minutes of the meeting prepared by Kevin Kampfer due to the absence of Secretary Hollingshead.)

