

**TEXAS-LOUISIANA GULF COAST SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**

Date of Meeting: March 20, 2021

Venue: Zoom (Electronic)

Attendees: Bishop Mike, Robert Rivera, Paul Antolik, Tom Wildrick, Deirde Hayes (9:35), Carol Flores, Rev. Marcia Kifer, Rev. Chris Michaelis, Caleb Parks, Julie Mulkey, Adan Plata,

Absent: Adelaide Herman, Rev. Rodwell Thom, Shelli Williamson

Staff: Rev. Tracey Breashears-Schultz

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 by Robert Rivera, opening prayer/devotions were led by Caleb Parks

Actions Taken

1. Approved the Consent Agenda. [Motion: Marcia, Second: Chris]
 - The consent agenda included the agenda, **Jan. 23, 2021** Council Minutes, and retirement requests.
2. Approved The motion to recommend the 2022 budget to the Synod Assembly. [Motion: Tom; Second: Deidre]

Discussion

1. Bishop's Report:
 - a. Winter Freeze Appeal: Have raised \$63,000 toward the goal of \$100,000 by the end of March.
 - b. Pandemic: Most congregations are having some form of in-person worship, but with only 25-30% of members. Leadership is tired and anxious as in addition to Covid-19, the past year has seen racial tension, Hurricane Laura, election polarization and the Jan. 6 attack on the Capital.
 - c. Anti-Racism Team – will likely require some council participation
 - d. Post-Pandemic Playbook – LEAD is working on this with ecumenical input. First thing is prayer book for leaders. The need is to recognize that we should not try to go back to the way things were before Covid-19.

2. Bishop's Associate for Mission Report (Rev. Tracey):
 - a. Thank you Notes
 - i. Since the Council cannot be given notes directly to send out, the office will send Council members a packet of pre-addressed, stamped notes to personalize and send off.
3. Vice President's Report:
 - a. The Immigration Task Force will host a meeting with Mary Campbell, Program Director of AMMPRO of the ELCA on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 at 7:00 pm. All are invited.
4. Synod Assembly - Gretchen
 - a. Registration is now open, and 45 registered already, plus 2 visitors and 2 vendors
 - b. Interactive list of agenda and speakers is on the website in interactive form rather than PDF. This will allow rapid dissemination of changes as needed.
 - c. If Council members will not be attending as congregation representatives, they should register as Synod Council.
 - d. Assembly location was moved to Tree of Life due to resources.
 - e. As is often the case, there is concern about having sufficient numbers and types of representatives to meet constitution requirements. Some have expressed concerns about having to sit in front of the computer all day.
 - i. The office staff is adjusting the schedule pace and to provide breaks to minimize time having to be spent in front of the computer. They will also be sending out a "welcome packet" of snacks, etc. to help give a feeling of being at the assembly. Rev. Marcia congregations will be hosting a watch party for congregations in their area.
 - ii. Gretchen is sending out a packet of snacks, etc. and scheduling things so it doesn't feel like you are in front of the screen all day.
 - iii. Synod will work with the Deans to encourage attendance and registration.
 - iv. Carol solicited volunteers for Parliamentarian at the assembly.
5. Treasurer's Report:
 - a. As of March 17, we have been forgiven for first draw PPP loan
 - b. \$36,000 deficit in 2020. Trend of mission support has been steadily downward, but we expect to see an increase in 2022 due to working with the GSB group to improve communication.
 - c. Synod expects a slight increase in the expense budget.
 - d. Much of the increase in revenue is due to increased interest as funds were moved to instruments with higher rates of return.

6. Bishop's Associate for Leadership Report:

a. Candidacy

- i. There have been no panels since the January meeting, but others have been scheduled and will take place before the May Council meeting.

b. Call

- i. Rev. Tracey reviewed the call process for the Council.
- ii. At present, there is much transition due to demographics and Covid-19 resulting in a disproportionately large number of congregations in self-study.

7. Nominating Committee

- a. There are more nominees to vote on this year since no assembly was held in 2020
- b. Need to fill 3 lay and 1 clergy positions on Council, while trying to meet the guidelines on sexual identity.
- c. Any Council member wanting to go to Churchwide Assembly in 2022, needs to let Caleb know as soon as possible.

8. Policy Discussion

- a. Updating the compensation guidelines is still in progress. Updates will be finished and sent to Council prior to the May Council Meeting.
- b. on the Compensation Guidelines

9. At the May meeting, we will discuss if we would be able to hold future Council meetings in person, for those who desire to do so.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Antolik
Secretary