



**Report of the Secretary
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod
April 2018**

During my sixth year as Secretary, I faithfully recorded minutes for all meetings of the Synod Council and Executive Committee. Copies of all actions and meeting minutes of the Synod Council are on file in the Synod Office.

The Executive Committee of the Synod Council met two times since the 2017 Synod Assembly. The Synod Council subsequently ratified interim actions taken on their behalf at regularly called sessions. Minutes are on file and available for examination by anyone interested.

As a Synod Council, it is a privilege to work with a Team that constantly strives to improve the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod. We are Blessed to be called to serve in our capacities. It is a privilege to be among so many Courageous Faithful!

Synod Council Purpose and Guiding Principles

We are Jesus' disciples communicating God's vision to this Synod.

We will:

Pray and Worship
Study Scripture
Proclaim "Jesus Is Lord"
Promote justice and reconciliation
Honor one another
Celebrate our diversity

In addition to its regular business, the following actions have been taken since last Synod Assembly:

April 2017

*VOTED SC 04.17.16 To approve San Mateo in Waco, TX as a Synodically Authorized
Worshiping Community.*

*VOTED SC 04.17.17 To rescind the vote to change the name of the NTNL Finance
Committee to the NTNL Audit/Finance Committee.*

September 2017

*VOTED SC 09.17.23 To enforce the obligations due the Synod by Santa Maria de
Guadalupe, Irving and San Miguel, Ft. Worth.*

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VOTED SC 09.17.24 *To approve \$11,000 from Unbudgeted Mission Programs to enforce the obligations due the Synod by Santa Maria de Guadalupe, Irving and San Miguel, Ft. Worth and ask the Synod Council to approve the Executive Committee to be able to use Unbudgeted Mission Programs funds for possible future use.*

February 2018

VOTED SC 02.18.04 *To approve the Resolution regarding the ministry of Santa Maria de Guadalupe as recognized by Synod Council.*

VOTED SC 02.18.08 *To recommend the preliminary approval of the audit timing constitutional amendment at the Synod Assembly in April so final approval can occur at the 2019 Assembly.*

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Synod Constitution Updates

The following updates to the Synod Constitution will be necessary for Assembly:

S7.11.01. The time and place of the ~~annual/biannual/triennial~~ Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced ~~six~~ months prior to the assembly.

S7.22.01. All rostered ministers ~~ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ on the roster of this synod who are retired and who are in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

S7.22.02. All rostered ministers ~~ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ on the roster of this synod who are on leave from call and who are in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

S7.22.03. All rostered ministers ~~ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ on the roster of this synod who are designated as disabled and who are in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

S7.27.04. A minister of Word and Sacrament ~~An ordained minister~~ from a church body in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serving as a pastor under contract to a congregation of this synod shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly during that ordained minister's service in this synod.

S8.12.A.92. *Ministers of Word and Sacrament ~~Ordained ministers~~ on leave from call as stated in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 7.31.16 shall include with the annual report of his or her ministry to the Bishop of Synod, a letter requesting a continuation of being placed on leave from call, such request to include the reason for the continuation request and efforts made in the past year to be available for or to seek a call.*

- S8.12.B.92 *All ~~ministers of Word and Service associates in ministry, commissioned teachers, and consecrated deacons and deaconesses~~ on leave from ~~call appointment~~ as stated in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 7.52.16 shall submit to the Bishop of Synod, annually, a letter requesting a continuation of being placed on leave from ~~call appointment~~, such request to include the reason for the continuation request and efforts made in the past year to be available for or to seek ~~a call appointment~~. The letter shall be submitted 90 days prior to the Annual Synod Assembly.*
- S9.01.01. *Synod Council members, voting members from this synod to the Churchwide assembly, and members of the Discipline Committee and Consultation Committee shall be elected at large by the Synod Assembly. Synod Council members, except the officers, shall be elected at large by the Synod Assembly from nominations submitted by conferences so that there are two lay persons from each conference, one male and one female, and ~~an ordained minister~~ a minister of Word and Sacrament or Synodically Authorized Worship Leader from each conference on the Synod Council. It is the expectation that the two lay voting members serving on the Synod Council shall not be from the same congregation, nor be married to each other or from the same household. It is the expectation that one of the voting members from a conference shall be under the age of thirty-five (35) at the time of election and the other shall be age thirty-five or older at the time of election. The Synod Council shall ensure that a youth member is elected to serve on the Synod Council. Clergy members to the Synod Council may be from the same congregation as one of the lay voting members.*
- S9.01.03. *When it becomes evident that ~~an ordained minister~~ a minister of Word and Sacrament or lay voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to be in attendance at the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and all alternate voting members in that category of voting members are also unable to attend or are not available, the Bishop of Synod may appoint an appropriate substitute.*
- S10.01.02. *The term of office for laypersons and ~~ordained ministers~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament nominated from conferences to serve on the Synod Council is a single four year term. An uncompleted term, when vacant, shall be filled by the Synod Council from nominations submitted by the appropriate conference.*
- S10.03.A92. *Authority to issue letters of call to ~~ordained ministers and letters of appointment to associates in ministry, consecrated deacons and deaconesses, commissioned teachers, and certified or commissioned lay professionals~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service as authorized by Chapter 7 of the Constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be in the Synod Council by at least a two-thirds majority ballot of the members present and voting at any regular or specially called meeting of the Council.*
- S12.01.01. *There shall be seven (7) mission conferences of congregations and Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWCs) in the territory of this synod, six (6) geographic and one (1) non-geographic. The Synod Council shall assign congregations and SAWCs to appropriate conferences. Conferences shall be:*

HISPANIC/LATINO MISSION CONFERENCE - Alvarado: San Gabriel; Arlington;

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Adviento; Fort Worth: *San Miguel*; Dallas: Walnut Hill and Emanuel; Garland: First Sagrada Familia; Irving: Santa Maria de Guadalupe (*in Exile*); **Waco: San Mateo**.

PANHANDLE MISSION CONFERENCE - Amarillo: Beautiful Savior; Gruver: Oslo; Levelland: St. Paul; Littlefield: St. Martin; Lockney: Trinity; Lubbock: Gloria Dei and Shepherd King; Slaton: Grace and Immanuel; Spearman: Faith; Wilson: St. John; Clovis (NM): Trinity.

WESTERN TEXAS MISSION CONFERENCE – Abilene: Grace; Avoca: Bethel; Midland: Hope and Midland; Miles: Trinity; Odessa: Christ's; Roscoe: First Salem; Sagerton: Faith; San Angelo: Calvary.

METROPLEX WEST MISSION CONFERENCE: - Alvarado: San Gabriel; Arlington: Advent, **Adviento** and Shepherd of Life; Fort Worth: Community of Hope, Faith, Grace Evangelical, King of Glory, Kyrie Pub Church, St. Matthew's, *San Miguel* and Trinity; Granbury: Emmanuel; Haltom City: Christ the King; Umoja; Jacksboro: Church of the Damascus Road; Keller: New Hope; Richland Hills: Calvary; Southlake: Abiding Grace; Springtown: Hope; Stephenville: Common Grace; Vernon: Peace; Weatherford: Messiah; Wichita Falls: Faith and Trinity.

METROPLEX NORTH MISSION CONFERENCE – Allen: Christ the Servant and Gethsemane; Carrollton: Grace; Coppell: Finnish Community and Rejoice; Denton: Christ the Servant; Durant, OK: Our Saviour's; Flower Mound: Faith; Frisco: Rejoice; Plano: Preston Meadow and Resurrection; Richardson: St. Luke and Dallas Oromo; Sherman: Trinity; and The Colony: Good Shepherd.

EASTERN MISSION CONFERENCE - Dallas: Bethany, Central, Christ, Emanuel, First United, King of Glory, Mount Olive, St. John, Umoja, and Walnut Hill; Duncanville: New Life in Christ; Garland: Ascension, First Sagrada Familia, and Gloria Dei; Glenn Heights: Lord of Life; Grand Prairie: Our Redeemer; Greenville: Redeemer; Irving: Good Shepherd, Holy Trinity, Santa Maria (*in Exile*); Longview: First; Mabank: Four Mile; Marshall: Good Shepherd; Mesquite: Our Savior; Rockwall: Joy; Shreveport, LA: Holy Trinity and St. Stephen.

*SOUTH CENTRAL MISSION CONFERENCE – Bartlett: St. John; Clifton: Our Savior and Trinity; Comanche: Hope; Coryell City (Gatesville): St. John; Cranfills Gap: St. Olaf; Crawford: St. Paul; Killeen: Immanuel; Malone: St. Peter; McGregor: Zion; Meridian: Faith; Rosebud: Salem; **Shive (Pottsville): St. Paul;** Pottsville: Trinity; Temple: Covenant and First; Waco: First, St. Matthew **and San Mateo**.*

- S12.01.02. The functions of the conference shall be to:
- a. Assist its congregations and this synod in determining the mission and ministry needs of its geographical area.
 - b. Arrange for program, training, and leadership development as desired by congregations in the conference.
 - c. Seek the resources of this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to meet ministry needs in the conference.

- d. Provide a way of forming coalitions for ministry, sharing resources, and meeting needs in a coordinated manner. Two or more conferences may join together for a specific project.
- e. Develop collegiality among the ~~ordained ministers, associates in ministry~~ rostered ministers and laypersons within the conference.
- f. Recommend to the bishop ~~an ordained minister~~ a minister of Word and Service or Synodically Authorized Worship Leader (SAWL) from within the conference to serve as dean. The term of the dean is three years. A person is eligible to serve two consecutive terms. When a vacancy occurs, a dean shall be appointed by the bishop to complete the term. The employing organization of the dean may be reimbursed by the conference for the dean's expenses. Additional conference organization and leadership shall be developed as needed to meet ministry goals and objectives.
- g. *Nominate persons to serve on the Synod Council according to procedures outlined in these bylaws.*

+S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care
 - 5) see out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distributions of its communications and publications
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each ~~pastor~~ minister of Word and Sacrament with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and with the council, administer discipline and endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America churchwide organization and of this synod.

S14.13. *The ~~pastor~~ minister of Word and Sacrament (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations*

SYNOD ASSEMBLIES

- A. The annual Assembly of Synod shall be rotated among the conferences in such a manner that it is held in the Metroplex and away from the Metroplex on alternate years. The Synod Council shall determine the specific location of the Synod Assembly.

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- B. The Synod shall pay expenses of Synod Council members to attend the Synod Assembly, if they are not voting members of their congregations. The Synod shall pay the expenses to Synod Assembly of chairpersons of Commissions, who are not voting members from their congregations. *SC 88.02.06*
- C. There will be no reimbursement for expenses of non-voting members, other than those noted in B above, who attend the assembly.
- D. Displays at the assembly shall be available to organizations, agencies, and institutions that are directly related to the Synod or the ELCA and to other organizations and individuals who receive proper permission from the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. *SC 99.06.04*
- E. All expenses incurred by NT-NL rostered and recognized Chaplains (institutional and federal) to attend the Synod Assembly will be reimbursed from the assembly income. The total amount to be reimbursed for all chaplains, regardless of the number submitting expenses meeting accepted synod guidelines, shall not exceed \$2,000.00. *SC 92.05.12 & SA 90.04.29*
- F. Registration fees for all retired pastors desiring to attend the annual synod's assembly as voting members shall be waived.
- G. The assembly shall recognize anniversaries of Ministry. ~~Ordained Ministers, Associates in Ministry and other Lay Ministers~~ Ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service on the roster of the synod shall be recognized on the twenty fifth anniversary of ordination or commissioning and each five year anniversary thereafter.
- H. *Congregations on the twenty fifth anniversaries of their founding and every twenty-five years thereafter shall be recognized.*

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA

To be published on our NT-NL Facebook page and web page – and in other places where people have the ability to post comments for public reading:

1. If you cannot be polite, please do not share your thoughts. Expressing a negative view is certainly acceptable, but personal attacks are off-limits. Comments that include insults, ridiculing, bullying, threatening tone or obscenity will not be tolerated and will be deleted by an administrator.
2. Please keep your comments concise. It is in the nature of Facebook and other electronic media that public comments will be brief, so please respect the time and space of this page and its readers.
3. Please keep your comments on topic.
4. You are solely responsible for the content you post. The administrators of this page have the right (but not the obligation) to review, screen, delete, edit and/or move any content posted on the page.
5. Solicitation of money, goods or services that do not support ELCA ministries (congregational, synodical or churchwide) is not permitted.

We invite and value your opinions, but remind readers that opinions expressed by commenters are not necessarily those of the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod and have not been checked for accuracy. If you have questions or comments regarding these guidelines, please contact the NT-NL Synod Office.

SC (12.09.22)

WINDFALL GIFT ALLOCATION POLICY

Background

The Mission Synod Council of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Mission Area Synod recognizes their responsibility to manage all funds entrusted to the NT-NL Mission Area Synod in a prudent manner,

with the understanding that donated funds will be put to use as designated by the donor. If the donor does not specify a restriction, the Mission Synod Council recognizes the need and responsibility to make appropriate and wise decisions regarding the use of these funds. In light of these responsibilities, the Mission Synod Council establishes this policy specifying how “a Windfall Gift” should be applied to meet the various priorities.

Definitions

Windfall Gift: A Windfall Gift will be defined as any unrestricted, unbudgeted gift, of any amount, given to the NT-NL Mission Area Synod equal to or greater than the threshold amount. It includes gifts of cash, stocks, or securities and could include bequests, intended to take effect at or after death, by a donor, through a Will, a Trust, an IRA, pension plan or similar benefit plan, an annuity or insurance policy of any type, any type of survivorship account, or similar wealth transfer document or plan.

Threshold Amount: The threshold amount shall be equal to \$10,000. Generally, any unrestricted gift, bequest, or grant below the threshold amount may be used as needed to meet the needs of the Mission Area Synod as determined by the bishop in consultation with the Executive Committee and approved by the Mission Synod Council through the normal budgeting process.

Policy

It is the Organization’s policy that any Windfall Gift be allocated as set forth here:

1. Not less than eighty-percent (80%) of a Windfall Gift will be allocated to the NT-NL Mission Endowment Fund unless there is a specific mission campaign underway within the Mission Area Synod at the time the gift is received.
2. Not more than twenty-percent (20%) of a Windfall Gift will be allocated to non-endowment needs of the organization as recommended by the bishop, in consultation with the Executive Committee and approved by the Mission Synod Council as part of the regular budget management process.
3. Specific allocations shall be made at the recommendation of the bishop and Executive Committee, with the approval of the Mission Synod Council, within the allocation guidelines specified above.
4. During the duration of a special appeal or a capital campaign, the windfall gift policy may be suspended for the duration of the campaign, at the recommendation of the bishop and Executive Committee with approval by the Mission Synod Council, allowing Windfall Gifts in their entirety or portions thereof to be allocated to the active special appeal or capital campaign. Such suspension of policy will require a two-thirds majority vote of the Mission Synod Council and must be limited to the duration set forth in an approved capital campaign.

SC (13.01.19)

Congregation Constitution Updates

Throughout this past year, we have received numerous constitutions for approval that reflect the changes of the new Model Constitution from the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. This process has been streamlined by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and dramatically reduces the time in updating constitutions. **Please submit your current constitution if you have not done so to Office@ntnl.org.** The preferred method to submit the constitution for comparison to the Model Constitution is to send in Microsoft Word format. If you do not have this capability, an Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) is acceptable. If this is not possible, please send a copy of your current

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constitution, and we will convert the document to the appropriate digital format. In this way, we may send back to you recommendations for updating your constitutions, which will dramatically reduce the time necessary in this process. It also is a very good use of time, which seems to be a barrier to maintaining these documents. In the future, with updated constitutions on file, it will be easier to receive the new changes to the Model Constitution, and we can send out recommendations saving countless people hours to handle this process. And we support you in your language. So, please, send us a copy of your congregation's constitution if you have not done so. **We are here to support you in this process and to make this a painless endeavor in the future. Also important to note that after each ELCA Churchwide Assembly changes to model constitutions follow. So great rule of thumb, review congregational constitutions every three years.**

Final Thoughts

Now in my sixth year, I have been continually blessed to have the guidance of the NT-NL staff and Synod Council in the execution of my duties. I look for their continued support. In our efforts as a Synod to support the DFW Faith Health Collaborative, we are seeing marked improvement of services, programs, knowledge, and care through our efforts. This idea is not just for the Metroplex, it works everywhere there is a serving heart with a passion for healthcare and their congregation. We need congregational liaisons who can become conduits to information and advocates for care for congregational members and their communities. If you would like to know more, just ask me. Thanks to everyone for your help, prayers, support, and friendship throughout this past year!

Todd Weiss,
Secretary of Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod