

Report of the Synod Council



Your Northeastern Ohio Synod Council met on August 26, 2023 at The Lutheran Center. We began by welcoming and installing our new Synod Secretary and Synod Council Members. We also received a “sneak peek” tour of the renovations made to the building.

A few highlights of our August 26th meeting included:

- **New Staff Member:** We authorized the Executive Committee to issue a call to a new Director of Communication and Formation
- **Synod Assembly:** We approved the venue for our June 1st Synod Assembly. We also appointed members of the 2024 Synod Assembly Planning Committee.
- **Care of Creation:** We considered and created action items from the Care of Creation Resolution referred to your Synod Council by the 2023 NEO Synod Assembly.
- **Financial Policies & Procedures:** We approved the revised Northeastern Ohio Synod Financial Policies and Procedures with endorsement from the Finance Committee.

Your NEO Synod Council next met on October 21, 2023 at Bethel Lutheran in Middleburg Heights. Joined by our Conference Deans, we discussed When Church Stops Working by Andrew Root and Blair D. Bertrand. All other business is reported in the Synod Council Meeting Minutes.

A few highlights of our October 21st meeting included:

- **Vitality Grants:** We approved Congregational Vitality grants for ministries serving in one of the poorest communities in the nation: Calvary, East Cleveland and New Covenant, East Cleveland. We also approved a grant to pay for expenses for the TEEM Leader at New Covenant.
- **Renewal:** We renewed Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities: Oasis, Sagrada Corazon, Iglesia Luterana la Trinidad. We also renewed Mission Developers: Pr. Lisa Arledge and SAM Jorge Uzho.
- **Synod Assembly:** We voted to allow each congregation to bring up to three voting members, provided one of the members is BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and/or under the age of 30.
- **Leadership Changes:** We welcomed Deacon Jenny Frantz as Director of Communication & Formation. We also said a special thank you to Pastor Angel Jackson for her four years of service as NEOS Candidacy Coordinator.

On January 20, 2024, your NEO Synod Council met on Zoom. Among other business items, synod council learned about Strategic Ministries: congregations in ethnic communities and/or communities experiencing poverty that strengthen strategic, innovative, resourceful ministries enriching the whole Church.

Report of the Synod Council Cont'd



A few highlights of our January 20th meeting included:

- **Synod Assembly:** We approved deadlines and committees related to the 2024 NEO Synod Assembly. We also looked ahead to potential dates & venues for 2025 and 2026.
- **Budget Matters:** We approved an amended budget for 2024-2025 as recommended by the NEOS Finance Committee.
- **Strategic Ministries:** We identified New Covenant, East Cleveland and Calvary, East Cleveland as strategic ministries for 2024.
- **Care of Creation:** We received a report from the Care of Creation Task Force as they explore the potential for installation of solar panels and publish "Care of Creation" newsletters.

Finally, Synod Council met on April 13, 2024 at Celebration Lutheran in Chardon, Ohio. Among other business items, the council focused on the financial wellbeing of your Northeastern Ohio Synod. After the conclusion of the meeting, we celebrated the installation of Pastor Jonathan Stufft as the new Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality and Director for Evangelical Mission.

A few highlights of our April 13th meeting included:

- **Youth & Young Adult Ministry Fund:** We established a new Donor Designated Fund aimed to fund future Youth & Young Adult Ministry initiatives within our synod.
- **Care of Creation:** We moved to enroll the Lutheran Center in the Cuyahoga Falls Renewable Energy Credits program.
- **Synod Assembly:** We approved a proposed agenda for the 2024 Synod Assembly and recommended Compensation Standards to the business of the Assembly.
- **Budget Matters:** We approved a proposed budget for 2025-2026 as recommended by the NEOS Finance Committee. We reviewed and stewarded changes to some Donor Restricted and Council Designated Funds.

An archive of approved minutes from previous Synod Council Meetings can be found at: neos-elca.org/synod-council-documents

SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS BY TERM ENDING DATE & CONFERENCE

2024

- Bobby Barns** - Northeast Conference
- Dr. Lito Belardo** - South Central Conference
- Sheryl Budd** - Southwest Conference
- Alexander Clevenger** - South Central Conference
- Janet Hartman** - Southeast Conference
- Kirk Lombardy** - Northeast Conference
- Beverly Lund** - Northeast Conference
- August Weight** - Northwest Conference

Report of the Synod Council Cont'd



2025

Jennifer Ackerman - Northwest Conference

Rev. Steve Bond - Northeast Conference

Yvonne Hoetler - Northwest Conference

Rev. Dan Skillman - Northwest Conference

Linda Weidenbach - South Central Conference (*resigned Feb. 2024*)

Dr. Don Wiff - Southeast Conference

2026

Susan Frantz - Northwest Conference

Johanna Henderson - South Central Conference

Rev. Dr. Marilyn Matevia - Northeast Conference

Rev. Dr. Stephanie Woods - Southwest Conference

ADVISORY MEMBERS

Jennifer Ackerman, Northeastern Ohio Synodical Women's Organization

Jamie Savarin, Lutheran Men in Mission

Synod Officers

Rev. Dr. Laura Barbins, Bishop

Kevin Kampfer, Vice President

Rev. Jeremy Hollingshead, Secretary

Bob Emmerich, Treasurer

This concludes our 2024 NEOS Synod Council Report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hollingshead', written over a white background.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Jeremy Hollingshead