

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Minutes of the National Church Council Meeting via Zoom  
March 3-5, 2023 | The Grand Winnipeg Airport Hotel, Winnipeg, MB**

**Present:**

Officers:	National Bishop Susan Johnson Gene Blishen, Treasurer	Bruce Cook, Vice-Chair
Council:	Rev. Chris Bishopp Sarah Harrington Stephen Holmes Kathleen Jensen	Rev. Kevin Powell Heidi Van Schaik Rev. Katrina Vigen
Synod Bishops:	Bishop Kathy Martin, BC Synod Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod Bishop Sid Haugen, SK Synod ( <i>Mar. 3 &amp; 4</i> )	Bishop Jason Zinko, MNO Synod Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod
Staff:	Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop, Communications and Resource Generation Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Kyle Giesbrecht, Director of Finance and Administration Deacon Gretchen Peterson, Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Leadership Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Desiree Mendoza, Meetings and Communications Coordinator	
Online:	Linda Grainger, Secretary Bill Gastmeier ( <i>Mar. 3 &amp; 4</i> ) Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry	Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb John Nilson
Guest Co-Facilitator:	Brian Mitchell-Walker	
Not in Attendance:	Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still The Rev. Peter Wall, Assistant to the Bishop for Worship	

**FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023, 7:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M.**

**Opening Worship**

Meeting co-chaplains Rev. Kevin Powell and Kathleen Jensen led the opening worship.

**Business Session One:**

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called the meeting to order.

**Recognition of Territory**

**Welcome**

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook cited the Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of the meeting.

*A land acknowledgement is a way to recognize and show respect to the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited and cared for the land for thousands of years before colonization. Treaty 1 was*

*signed in 1871 between the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota nations and the British Crown, covering the southern region of what is now Manitoba, including the city of Winnipeg.*

*We recognize the unique relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land, and their ongoing contributions to the local communities and society as a whole. It is a reminder of the ongoing need for reconciliation and understanding of the legacy of colonization, which has resulted in the displacement, marginalization, and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples.*

*"We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration."*

## **Approval of Agenda**

M/S That NCC approves the meeting agenda. **CARRIED.**

## **Code of Conduct**

Bishop Susan encouraged the meeting group to read the *Code of Conduct*.

The Complaint Handling Committee (CHC) for this meeting consisted of Rev. Kevin Powell and Carmen Ramirez.

## **NCC Covenant**

### **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb asked to be excused when the nominations for the Leadership Award are being presented to NCC for action.

### **Approval of September 15–17, 2022 NCC Meeting Minutes**

M/S That NCC approves the September 15-17, 2022 NCC meeting minutes. **CARRIED.**

### **Approval of E-vote Minutes**

M/S That NCC approves the January 6, 2023 e-vote minutes.

**CC-2023-01 "That NCC approves the opening of an account with Canaccord Genuity with the required wording as follows:**

- 1. The Organization (ELCIC) establish and maintain one or more accounts, which may be margin accounts, with the Firm (CANACCORD Genuity) (the "Accounts").**
- 2. Any 2 of the representatives of the Organization specified following paragraph 2 is hereby authorized to give written or oral instructions with respect to purchases and sales (including short sales) in securities (including options) and any other**

transactions in the accounts, excluding the payment of funds to any entity not the organization; to bind and obligate the Organization to and for the carrying out of any contract, arrangement or transaction made with the Firm; to pay such sums as may be necessary in connection with the Accounts; to give instructions with respect to the delivery or transfer of securities; to endorse any securities and/or contracts in order to pass title thereto; to direct the sale or exercise of any right with respect to any securities; to sign for the Organization, affix its seal, if any, and deliver on its behalf all releases, powers of attorney and/or other documents in connection with the Accounts; and generally to do and take all actions as are deemed by any such representative to be necessary or proper in connection with transactions in securities for and on behalf of the Organization.

**Susan Johnson – National Bishop and President**

**Kyle Giesbrecht – Director, Finance and Administration**

3. This resolution shall remain in force and be binding upon the Organization until a copy, certified true by a duly authorized representative of the Organization, of a resolution repealing or replacing this resolution shall have been received by the Firm.
4. All acts and things done and documents executed on behalf of the Organization, as hereinbefore authorized, may be relied upon by the Firm and shall be valid and binding upon the Organization, whether or not the seal, if any, of the Organization has been affixed to any such document.”

**CARRIED.**

**CARRIED.**

### **Report of the National Bishop**

Bishop Susan presented her report to NCC.

### **Report of the Officers**

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the Report of the Officers to NCC.

### **Synod Bishops**

The synod bishops which included Bishops Kathy Martin, BC Synod; Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod; Sid Haugen, SASK Synod; Jason Zinko, MNO Synod; and Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod were invited to share any additional information to supplement their written reports.

*(Vice-Chair Bruce Cook turned over the chair to Bishop Susan.)*

## Discussion re: Court of Appeal Decision

M/S That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole to discuss the decision of the Court of Appeal. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC enters into an in-camera session. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC leaves the in-camera session of the Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC ends the session of the Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

## Closing Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2023, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

## Business Session Two:

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called the meeting to order.

## Opening Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

M/S That NCC adopts the February 21, 2023 ELCIC Officers Minutes. **CARRIED.**

## Anti-Racism Training (Session 1: Awareness)

Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Brian Mitchell-Walker<sup>1</sup>, life coach and workshop facilitator, co-facilitated the anti-racism training at the NCC meeting. The session focused on *awareness* and proceeded to the *knowledge* portion as time allowed.

<sup>1</sup>*Brian is a certified life and executive coach (Be Mindfully Well and Deep Living Institute) and works as a consultant and coach for The EDGE Network for Ministry Development of The United Church of Canada. For more information on Brian, please visit: <https://bemindfullywell.com/> or his [LinkedIn page](#).*

## Closing Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

*(Lunch)*

## Business Session Three:

### Opening Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

Bishop Susan chaired the meeting.

### Report of the Task Force Addressing Ableism

Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop for Justice, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relations gave an introduction and background on the work of the Task Force Addressing Ableism.

**CC-2023-02** That NCC adopts the *Report of the Task Force Addressing Ableism* and recommends it to the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

*(Appendix A: Updated Report of the Task Force Addressing Ableism)*

### Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues

**CC-2023-03** That NCC approves the revision of the text in number 7 under ‘Recommendations’ of the Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues from:

“That the ELCIC review, modify, design, promote, guide, monitor, and adhere to Nominations, Election and Hiring processes at all levels of the church to ensure that intentional efforts are being made to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion; and that progress is shared widely.”

to:

“That the ELCIC reviews, modifies, designs, promotes, guides, monitors, and adheres to nomination, election and hiring processes, to ensure that intentional efforts are being made to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that progress is shared widely; and to encourage other levels of the church to do the same.”

**CARRIED.**

**CC-2023-04** That NCC adopts the *Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues* and recommends it to the 2023 Special Convention.

**CARRIED.**

*(Appendix B: Updated Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues)*

## Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel

M/S That NCC agrees to table the motion regarding the *Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC ends the session as Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC agrees to lift from the table the motion regarding the *Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel* and resume discussion. **CARRIED.**

CC-2023-05 That NCC approves the following amendments on the document *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*.

On page 1 add **new point 5:**

5. Our churches to study and reflect upon the long history of anti-semitism within Christianity and the ongoing legacy of anti-semitism in our biblical interpretation and theology (Christian Supersessionism);

**CARRIED.**

CC-2023-06 That NCC approves the following amendments on the document *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*.

Add new 5.e. (what will now be 6.e.)

- e. repent for the ways our faith has been weaponized to harm Jewish, Arab, and Muslim communities; and

**CARRIED.**

CC-2023-07 That NCC approves the following amendments on the document *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*.

On page 2, edit bullet 4 to add the term *Christian Supersessionism*

- Commitment to challenge Christian Zionism, *Christian Supersessionism*, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

**CARRIED.**

Note: New footnote to define *Christian Supersessionism* to be added into the document.

CC-2023-08 That NCC approves and recommends for adoption to the 2023 Special Convention the amended *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*. This resolution has been prepared in partnership with the Anglican Church of Canada. **CARRIED.**

[\(Appendix C: Revised Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel\)](#)

**Appointments—  
Guidelines for Appointments  
Appointments by NCC and by the Bishop  
(Bios of 3 new appointments)**

**CC-2023-09** That NCC makes the following appointments for terms that run until December 31, 2025:

- Reappoint David Schulze as ELCIC representative on the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) Board.
- Reappoint the following persons to the Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) Advisory Board for three-year terms (as per the roles outlined in the CECF Management Handbook): Rev. Adam Snook, (Eastern Synod), Deacon Michelle Collins (MNO Synod), Rev. Ali Tote (SK Synod), Rev. Jeff Decelle (ABT Synod), Bishop Kathy Martin (BC Synod), Bishop Susan Johnson (National Staff), and Gene Blishen (Treasurer, ex-officio).
- Appoint Jamie Foley (lay), Rev. Munyengetero Mtata (pastor), Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson (Luther), and Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein (LTS); and reappoint Bishop Sid Haugen, Deacon Scott Knarr, Vanessa Bergeron (lay), and Dr. Stephen Martin (ACC) to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee. (Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb was appointed by NCC in September 2022).
- Reappoint Rev. Paul Gehrs to the KAIROS Steering Committee.
- Reappoint Rev. Paul Gehrs to the Canadian Interfaith Conversation.
- Reappoint Bishop Susan Johnson, Bishop Jason Zinko, and Rev. Paul Gehrs to the Lutheran Council in Canada.
- Appoint Sharon Machina to the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada.
- Reappoint Linda Granger as LCBI Board Advisory member to the board.

**CARRIED.**

**Special Convention and Assembly Agenda**

Bishop Susan mentioned to NCC that she intends to give the apology again regarding the LGBTQ2SIA community, and hopes that the convention will affirm it.

**CC-2023-10** That NCC approves the draft agenda for the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

*(Appendix D: Draft Agenda for the 2023 Special Convention)*

**Nominations for ELCIC Leadership Award**

Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation presented the *ELCIC Leadership Award* nominations for the 2023 Special Convention. There are eight nominations in total. She also provided explanation on the *Leadership Award*.

Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb stepped out of the room due to conflict of interest.

**CC-2023-11** That NCC awards the *ELCIC Leadership Award* to Pat Lovell at the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

*(Break)*

### **Report of the Task Force on Carbon Neutrality**

**CC-2023-12** That NCC receives the *Updated Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Carbon Neutrality* and recommend it to the 2023 Special Convention for adoption.

**CARRIED.**

*(Appendix E: Report of the Task Force Addressing Carbon Neutrality)*

### **Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (Tab 18)**

**M/S** That NCC agrees to table the *Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia*, and let the working group comprised of Rev. Katrina Vigen, Rev. Paul Gehrs and Heidi Van Schaik work on the recommended wording and report back in the evening business session. **CARRIED.**

### ***One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion***

**Motion:** That NCC approves and recommends for adoption to the 2023 Special Convention the agreement *One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion* declaring that a relationship of Full Communion exists among the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America. (This motion affirms motion CC-2021-24 to approve and recommend this same document.)

**CC-2023-13** That NCC approves the substitute motion “That NCC affirms motion CC-2021-24 and recommends for adoption to the 2023 Special Convention the agreement *One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion* declaring that a relationship of Full Communion exists among the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America.”

**CARRIED.**

*(Appendix F: One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion)*

*(Break)*

### **Closing Prayer**

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

*(Dinner)*



## Business Session Four:

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

### Opening Prayer

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Rev. Kevin Powell.

### Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia *(continuation)*

M/S That NCC lifts up the motion on the *Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia* from the table. **CARRIED.**

The working group comprised of Rev. Katrina Vigen, Rev. Paul Gehrs, and Heidi Van Schaik presented the recommended wording to NCC after consultation with the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia.

CC-2023-14 That NCC approves replacing Recommendation 9 in the *Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia*—

9. We encourage the ELCIC to undertake a 2-year National Study on the ELCIC's affirmation of Human sexuality, consent, and ethical non-monogamy.
  - a. We encourage the ELCIC to work alongside the Task Force addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia to populate a committee of scholars, rostered leaders, and laity who would engage in the writing of this study.
  - b. We encourage Synods, Congregations, and Individuals of the ELCIC to engage with this work and offer feedback.
  - c. We encourage the Study to report back to convention in two years with the possibility of continuing their work of listening, engaging, and educating those within the ELCIC on this topic or move towards a vote on the ELCIC's affirmation of Human sexuality, consent, and ethical non-monogamy.

To—

9. We encourage the ELCIC to create national resources which would support listening, safe conversations, and discernment at all levels of the church around healthy, consensual relationships, including ethical non-monogamous relationships.”

**CARRIED.**

CC-2023-15 That NCC receives the *Updated Report and Recommendations of the Task Force addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia* (March 2023) and recommends the report as amended to the 2023 Special Convention for adoption. **CARRIED.**

*(Appendix G: Updated Report and Recommendations of the Task Force Addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia)*

Bishop Susan thanked NCC for how the group handled the reports presented. It gives hope not only to herself but for the special convention as well.

## Reports—

### Audit

Kyle Giesbrecht, Director of Finance and Administration informed NCC that the Audit Committee will convene and provide a recommendation for e-voting sometime in April or May.

### Conference of Bishops

Bishop Susan shared her experience during her trip to the Holy Land while attending the ordination of Sally Azar, the first female pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Synod Bishops Kathy Martin, Larry Kochendorfer, Sid Haugen, Jason Zinko, and Michael Pryse also shared their experiences and insights during the ordination.

### Constitution – no report

### Faith, Order and Doctrine – no report

### Finance

Treasurer Gene Blishen presented the Finance Report to NCC. Kyle Giesbrecht, Director of Finance and Administration gave more explanation on the reports presented to NCC.

**CC-2023-16** That NCC approves for the CECF Advisory Board to pay out to the Synods a total of \$200,000 but of this amount, \$60,000 will be allocated to the Welcome Angels Program with the Rhenish Church. **CARRIED.**

**Motion:** In reference to the 2023 Budget, Finance Committee recommends—noting the need for clearer direction regarding strategic goals and related expenditures, we recommend discussion as a Committee of the Whole to define priorities of the Church and thereby allocate resources in line with those priorities.

**M/S** That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

**M/S** That NCC ends the session as Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

**CC-2023-17** That NCC approves the 2023 budget presented by the Finance Committee. **CARRIED.**

**Motion:** That NCC establishes a budgetary allotment of \$100,000 to create a pilot project to offer centralized payroll services to congregations and partner organizations through the National Office, in concert with all synods and their respective treasurers. Furthermore, A feasibility assessment may include analysis of software, regulations, information flow, proposed funding model, identification of stakeholders, underwriting, etc. to be presented to NCC in fall of 2023.

**M/S** to amend the motion as follows: That the Finance Committee explores how to offer centralized payroll services to congregations and partner organizations, in concert with all synods and their respective treasurers, and report back to NCC in the fall of 2023. **CARRIED.**

**CC-2023-18** That NCC approves the Finance Committee to explore how to offer centralized payroll services to congregations and partner organizations, in concert with all synods and their respective treasurers, and report back to NCC in the fall of 2023. **CARRIED.**

## **Governance**

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook gave an oral report to NCC.

## **Closing Prayer**

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

*(Social Time)*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

## **Business Session Five:**

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

## **Opening Prayer**

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Rev. Kevin Powell.

## **Correspondence**

### **ABT Synod Correspondence to NCC**

Bishop Larry Kochendorfer of the ABT Synod gave some background on the correspondence presented to NCC.

Bishop Susan will write back to the ABT Synod Council to give gratitude and thanks.

### **Letter from Jon Fogleman to NCC**

**CC-2023-19** That NCC refers the correspondence from Jon Fogleman to the Constitution Committee. **CARRIED.**

Bishop Susan will write back to Jon Fogleman and inform him that process has been initiated.

### **Letter from Rev. Eric Krushel (on behalf of the BC Synod Council)**

**CC-2023-20** That NCC refers the correspondence from Rev. Eric Krushel BC Synod Council chair) to the ELCIC National Officers for the next steps and report back to NCC. **CARRIED.**

## **Recommendation from the Complaint Handling Committee**

Bishop Susan thanked Trina Gallop Blank, Kyle Giesbrecht and Rev. Paul Gehrs for their work on the Complaint Handling Committee.

**CC-2023-21** That NCC refers the recommendations presented by the Complaint Handling Committee to the Governance Committee. **CARRIED.**

### **Treasurers Group Mandate**

Treasurer Gene Blishen gave more background on the document presented to NCC. Bishop Susan will write back to the treasurers' group and express our thanks and continued support for their ongoing work.

**CC-2023-22** That NCC acknowledges the end of the ELCIC Task Force for Benevolence (reference CC-2018-49). **CARRIED.**

### **New Business**

#### **Request from GSI for a Zoom meeting with NCC to share strategic plan**

Bishop Susan gave more background on the request made by GSI. The staff and NCC will be looking at potential dates in June for a Zoom meeting (Week of June 12, time TBD). Bishop Susan will inform GSI and she will get back to NCC.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Meeting Highlights**

Prayers  
Anti-Racism Training  
Resolution – Palestine and Israel  
Full Communion – Anglicans, Lutherans and Moravians  
Excitement towards the Special Convention  
Task Force Reports  
Special Convention

*(Appendix H: Meeting Highlights)*

#### **Meeting Evaluation**

- Food was great and the close proximity of the current hotel to the airport is ideal
- U-shape table set-up in the next meeting
- Value in the Committee of the Whole
- Training via Zoom (online) to allow more time for discussion on the direction of the church
- Allow time in the September meeting to encourage more conversations
- Sharing of expertise/experience (ABT Synod) so others could leverage on it

*What resources do we need so we can have good conversations in September?*

- Challenges and opportunities in resource generation that will change/impact our outlook
- Pieces from the Reimagining the Church document to be used in other pieces
- Changing cultures in relation to faith formation (Spiritual Renewal)
- Membership, updates on stats, and numbers in regards to giving

- Lutheran global view (i.e. LWF) and what those other cultures bring is important to us, too.
- Information on recruitment initiative (rostered)

## **Closing Prayer**

Meeting co-chaplain Rev. Kevin Powell led the Closing Prayer.

## **Next Meetings:**

### Next Meetings:

#### 2023

June 28 at 4:00 p.m. (MST) - right before the Special Convention (University of Calgary)

September 7–9 (Thursday-Saturday)

Chaplains – MNO Synod team (Bishop Jason Zinko, Rev. Chris Bishopp and Sarah Harrington)  
Bible Study –

#### 2024

March 1-3 (Friday-Sunday)

September 5-7 (Thursday-Saturday)

**Meeting Adjourned.**