

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Minutes of the National Church Council Meeting

September 7-9, 2023 | ELCIC National Office, Winnipeg, MB

Present:

Officers:	National Bishop Susan Johnson Gene Blishen, Treasurer	Bruce Cook, Vice-Chair Linda Grainger, Secretary
Council:	Rev. Chris Bishopp Bill Gastmeier Sarah Harrington Stephen Holmes Kathleen Jensen	Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb Rev. Dr. Kevin Powell Heidi Van Schaik Rev. Katrina Vigen
Synod Bishops:	Bishop Sid Haugen, SK Synod Bishop Jason Zinko, MNO Synod	Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod
Staff:	Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop, Communications and Resource Generation The Very Rev. Peter Wall, Assistant to the Bishop for Worship 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 Carter Brooks, Communications Specialist (<i>Friday a.m. only</i>) Catherine Crivici, Graphic Designer (<i>Friday a.m. only</i>) Shalini Narula, Office Assistant (<i>Friday a.m. only</i>)	
Online:	Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry (<i>Sept. 8 only</i>) Bishop Kathy Martin, BC Synod	
Guest:	Rev. Tara Lynn, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	
Facilitator/	Brian Mitchell-Walker, Co-Facilitator (<i>Friday a.m. training</i>)	
Presenter:	John Wolff, President and Chair of the Board ELCIC-Group Services, Inc. (<i>Chaired Annual Information Meeting and presented on behalf of GSI, Friday p.m. only</i>)	
Regrets:	John Nilson Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (<i>on sabbatical</i>)	

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023, 7:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M.

Recognition of Territory

Bishop Jason Zinko (MNO Synod Co-Chaplain) recited the Recognition of Territory.

Opening Worship

Meeting co-chaplains Rev. Chris Bishopp, Sarah Harrington, and Bishop Jason Zinko 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.

Today, we meet on Treaty 1 territory. On August 3rd, 1971, Treaty 1 was made between the Anishinaabe and Muskegon Cree peoples and the Crown. The seven First Nations that are represented by Treaty One Nation are: Peguis First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, Long Plain First Nation, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation and Swan Lake First Nation. This land is part of who they are – their blood, their past, their current and their future.

Land acknowledgements are not meant to shame people, but to encourage each of us to live into reconciliation and the calls to action and to break down the barriers that colonialism has created for generations. How do I, how do we break down these barriers? If we have a question, do some research; watch indigenous movies and documentaries; learn more about indigenous art and artists; visit a local indigenous friendship centre; participate in Orange Shirt Day; go to a powwow; invite elders to share their knowledge. We strive for respectful partnerships with all the first peoples of this province and this country as we search for paths to healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together. We acknowledge the harms of the past, we are committed to improving relationships in the spirit of reconciliation, and we appreciate the opportunity to meet and live and learn on these traditional lands in mutual respect.

Bruce welcomed our online meeting participant, Bishop Kathy Martin, BC Synod; Assistant to the Bishop for Worship, The Very Rev. Peter Wall (first time in NCC); and our guest from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Rev. Tara Lynn.

Approval of Agenda

Updates to the agenda would include: Replace Discussion on Court of Appeal with CECF Handbook; Under Convention Review add adoption of draft minutes for the 2023 Special Convention.

New Business: New logo design; CLWR Appointments; and Discussion about NCC dates for September.

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

Code of Conduct

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook encouraged the meeting group to read the *Code of Conduct*.

The Complaint Handling Committee (CHC) for this meeting consisted of Linda Grainger and Carmen Ramirez.

NCC Covenant

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Deacon Gretchen Peterson asked to be excused when the discussion on her sabbatical request will be presented and decided by NCC.

Approval of March 3–5, 2023 NCC Meeting Minutes

M/S That NCC approves the March 3-5, 2023 NCC meeting minutes. **CARRIED.**

Approval of E-vote Minutes

M/S That NCC approves the April 21, May 19 and June 2, 2023 e-vote minutes *en bloc*.

CC-2023-23 That NCC requests a special convention to be held to confirm Motion CC-2022-18 “That NCC approves an online National Convention in 2022 for essential business and an in person special convention in 2023 to deal with other matters.”

CARRIED.

CC-2023-24 That NCC approves the 2022 audited ELCIC financial statements (see attached). **CARRIED.**

CC-2023-25 That NCC approves the addition of a May 15th deadline for Advanced Study grant applications. **CARRIED.**

CARRIED.

Report of the National Bishop

Bishop Susan presented her report to NCC. In addition to her written report, she mentioned that the ELCIC National Office has hired Peace Anthony-Idoko as the new Director of Finance and Administration. Peace will start work on October 2.

Sabbatical Request

Deacon Gretchen Peterson excused herself from the room during this meeting discussion.

CC-2023-26 That NCC approves that Deacon Gretchen Peterson, Assistant to the Bishop, Youth and Leadership be granted a three-month sabbatical leave for 2024. **CARRIED.**

Program Committee for Youth Ministry

CC-2023-27 That NCC approves the recommendation from PCYM as follows:

That the age for applicants for Luther League Legacy Fund be changed from “under the

age of 25 at the time of application or be involved in training with direct benefit to youth under the age of 25 years” to “30 years of age and under at the time of application or be in training with direct benefit to youth 30 years and under.” **CARRIED.**

Report of the Officers

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

Response to BC Synod

Bishop Susan will write back to BC Synod in response to Rev. Eric Krushel’s letter to NCC and ask for clarification and for more details. Bishop Michael and Bishop Susan will draft some information for the Conference of Bishops regarding the *Discipline Manual for Rostered Ministers*.

M/S That NCC approves the May 5 and August 30, 2023 Officers’ minutes. **CARRIED.**

Synod Bishops

The synod bishops which included Bishops Kathy Martin, BC 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.

Amended Item on our CECF Handbook

Bishop Susan referred NCC to the proposed *ELCIC Mission Fund Handbook* formerly *Church Extension Capital Fund (CECF) Management Handbook*. She walked through the changes with NCC.

CC-2023-28 That NCC approves the *ELCIC Mission Fund Handbook* as presented. **CARRIED.**

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

Closing Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 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 Sarah Harrington (with prayer from Rev. Katrina Vigen).

Anti-Racism Training (Racial Justice Education Session 2: Knowledge)

Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Brian Mitchell-Walker¹, life coach and workshop facilitator, co-facilitated the anti-racism training at the NCC meeting. The session focused on *knowledge*.

¹*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](#).*

(Break at 10:30 a.m.)

Closing Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain.

Both teams from the ELCIC and CLWR joined for a prayer service to dedicate the new offices.

(Lunch)

Business Session Three:

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

Convention Review

Convention Minutes

CC-2023-29 That NCC approves the 2023 Special Convention Minutes. **CARRIED.**

Convention Motions Review

Bishop Susan explained to NCC that this list of convention motions is meant for review to see what to prioritize and discern what actions to take.

A few of the review notes:

Motion no. 4 – We will write letters and invite educational institutions; Will issue an invitation to CLWR and ELCIC-Group Services, Inc.

Motion no. 6 – Due to restricted language, it was suggested to use stronger language and make it inspirational. Rev. Dr. Kevin Powell and Stephen Holmes volunteered to work on the wording and bring it back under Unfinished Business.

Motion no. 7 – Bishop Susan mentioned that we have *Inclusive Language Guidelines* that we will be updating and make it available to congregations.

Motion no. 8 – Will refer the work to the Program Committee for Worship.

New ELCIC Logo

Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation presented the proposed ELCIC logo to NCC. She started off by discussing the evolution of the ELCIC logo from its formation in 1986 up until the present. She then transitioned to presenting the newly proposed logo design with explanation on the visual aspects and rationale behind the visual imagery.

CC-2023-30 That NCC adopts the new ELCIC logo as presented. **CARRIED.**

CLWR Appointments

CC-2023-31 That NCC approves the appointment of Cam Broten and Rev. Adam Snook to the CLWR Board. **CARRIED.**

NCC Meeting Dates

M/S That NCC approves moving the September meeting dates to the second week after Labour Day. **CARRIED.**

Reports—

Conference of Bishops

Bishop Jason Zinko presented an oral report to NCC.

(The Audit, Constitution, and Faith, Order and Doctrine Committees have no reports at this time.)

Finance

Treasurer Gene Blishen presented the Finance Report to NCC.

CC-2023-32 That NCC adopts the Treasurers' Mandate as circulated, and that NCC recommends that synods also adopt the Treasurers' Mandate. **CARRIED.**

(Break)

ELCIC-Group Services, Inc. (GSI) Annual Information Meeting

John Wolff, President and Board Chair of ELCIC Group Services, Inc. chaired the GSI Annual Information Meeting and presented to NCC.

(Appendix A: GSI Minutes of the Annual Information Meeting)

(Come back at 6:30 pm)

Open Discussion on the Future of the Church

M/S That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole to discuss the future of the church. **CARRIED.**

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

Closing Prayer

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Sarah Harrington.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2023, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Business Session Five:

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

Opening Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Bishop Jason Zinko and with a reading by Kathleen Jensen.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Guest's Report to NCC

Rev. Tara Lynn from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was our guest at this fall's NCC meeting. Tara is a member of ELCA's National Church Council and chair of the Faith, Society and Innovation Committee. She's also involved in the committee working on the future structural renewal of the ELCA. She's involved with ecumenical relations along with Kathryn Lohre, working on primary topics consuming ELCA.

Tara felt inspired upon hearing NCC's conversation on various matters and how they do their work. She highlighted the emphasis given by ELCA working towards truth and healing. They aspire to help congregations to come into increased awareness and knowledge regarding their Indigenous communities and its history. For the month of September, ELCA's focus revolves around the topic of boarding schools. In addition, their church is also working on a social message regarding gun violence. Tara expressed her deep gratitude to NCC. For her it's a joy and a delight to hear NCC during the meeting. She mentioned how both of our churches face similar challenges.

Unfinished Business

Carbon Neutrality

CC-2023-33 That NCC approves for the ELCIC to move towards "Carbon Neutrality" (Net Zero) and that the ELCIC National Office, its staff and programs commit to minimizing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are within their control and neutralizing remaining emissions by like-for-like removals. **CARRIED.**

CC-2023-34 That NCC approves for the ELCIC to encourage our synods, seminaries and shared ministries to adopt similar targets. **CARRIED.**

New Business

NCC's March 2024 Meeting

M/S That NCC approves to hold its March 2024 meeting online. **CARRIED.**

Meeting Highlights

(Appendix B: NCC Meeting Highlights – September 2023)

Meeting Evaluation

Closing Prayer

The MNO Synod meeting co-chaplain closed the meeting in worship and prayer.

Next Meetings:

2024

March 1-3 (Friday-Sunday)

Chaplains – Rev. Katrina Vigen and Heidi Van Schaik

September 12-14 (Thursday-Saturday)

Chaplains –

2025

March 7- 9 (Friday-Sunday)

Summer Convention Dates (TBD)

September 11-13 (Thursday-Saturday)

Meeting Adjourned.

**ELCIC Group Services Inc.
Minutes of the GSI Annual Information Meeting at the
National Church Council Meeting | September 8, 2023 (hybrid)**

Present:

Officers:	National Bishop Susan Johnson Gene Blishen, Treasurer	Bruce Cook, Vice-Chair Linda Grainger, Secretary
Council:	Rev. Chris Bishopp Bill Gastmeier Sarah Harrington Stephen Holmes Kathleen Jensen	Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb Rev. Dr. Kevin Powell Heidi Van Schaik Rev. Katrina Vigen
Synod Bishops:	Bishop Sid Haugen, SK Synod Bishop Jason Zinko, MNO Synod	Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod
Staff:	Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop, Communications and Resource Generation The Rev. Peter Wall, Assistant to the Bishop for Worship 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:	Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry Bishop Kathy Martin, BC Synod	
Guest/Presenter	John Wolff, President and Chair of the Board, ELCIC-Group Services, Inc.	
Not in Attendance:	John Nilson Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (on sabbatical)	

Annual Information Meeting

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2023, 4:00 P.M.

John Wolff called the meeting to order.

John Wolff, President and Board Chair of ELCIC Group Services, Inc. presented to NCC. John presented the following: Pension Plan financial highlights, stats, and corporate activities; ELCIC Group Services, Inc.'s financial highlights, stats and corporate activities; resolution (acceptance of financial statements, appointment of auditors, and election of directors).

Bishop Susan thanked John for his courage and leadership in presenting before NCC. She also asked John to thank the GSI Board for the “why” and noted that the stewardship John has shown

has been helpful to the church.

ELCIC Representation on GSI Board

John mentioned that Rev. Susan Climo, Rev. Carla Blakley, and Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen are the nominations to the board. GSI is still looking for one additional board member. The board will appoint this individual.

Resolution of the Sole Member

M/S That NCC approves the Resolution of the Sole Member and that the signing officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) be authorized to execute the resolution.

CARRIED.

(See Attachment: Signed Resolution of the Sole Member of ELCIC Group Services, Inc.)

Meeting adjourned.

RESOLUTION OF THE SOLE MEMBER
of
ELCIC GROUP SERVICES INC.
(herein called the "Corporation")

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) as recommended by the Board of Directors of ELCIC Group Services Inc., that the financial statements of the Corporation and the ELCIC Pension Plan together with report or comments of the auditors are hereby received; and
- (2) as recommended by the Board of Directors of ELCIC Group Services Inc., that PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP is hereby appointed auditor of the Corporation to take office until the next annual meeting of members at such remuneration as may be determined by the directors, the directors being hereby authorized to fix such remuneration;
- (3) as recommended by the Board of Directors of the Corporation, that the following persons are hereby elected as directors of the Corporation for a term of four (4) years to terminate at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation then held, or until a successor is elected:

Rev Susan Climo
Rev Dr Gordon Jensen
Rev Carla Blakley

The foregoing resolution is hereby signed by the sole member of the Corporation entitled to vote thereon at a meeting of the member.

DATED the 8th day of September, 2023

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Per: 

Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Per: 

Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



September 2023

National Church Council Meeting Highlights

The ELCIC's National Church Council (NCC) met September 7-9, 2023. This was NCC's first time meeting at the ELCIC's new office space located at 400-185 Carlton Street, Winnipeg.

The following are just a few highlights from the recent council meeting. For specific wording on motions and additional actions from the meeting, please view the draft minutes which will be available online:

<https://elcic.ca/national-church-council/>

Bishop Jason Zinko, Sarah Harrington and Rev. Chris Bishopp, from the MNO Synod, led worship for the meeting.

Anti-Racism Training

On Friday morning, NCC members participated in anti-racism training led by Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Brian Mitchell-Walker, certified life-coach and executive coach at Be Mindfully Well and Deep Living Institute. This was the second anti-racism training session for NCC members. The session focused on knowledge, terminology, the *Doctrine of Discovery*, markers of white supremacy culture and included videos on white privilege.

NCC Welcomes Special Guest

NCC welcomed Rev. Tara Lynn from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Rev. Lynn is a member of the ELCA's National Church Council. As chair of the Faith, Society and Innovation Committee she serves on the executive team for the ELCA. She spoke of some of the "similar challenges and similar joys" that the ELCIC and ELCA share. The ELCA has embarked on a "future church initiative," as they spend time considering what the future of the church will look like, including future structure, future shape and purpose. They are also working on "strategy towards authentic diversity."



Office Dedication

As this was the first meeting of NCC at the new shared office space for the ELCIC and Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), a dedication of the new space was held on Friday afternoon with ELCIC and CLWR staff also present.

2023 ELCIC Special Convention

A significant amount of agenda time for NCC was spent reviewing all the motions from the 2023 ELCIC Special Convention. With reports and recommendations from four task forces at the special convention, as well as other convention business, there is a significant amount of work between now and the 2025 National Convention. NCC discussed a plan to work through all the motions over the next two years.

Committee of the Whole

NCC spent time meeting in “committee of the whole.” Committee of the whole allows for more informal conversation not centered around a specific motion. During this committee of the whole time, council members had a frank and open conversation around their concerns and hopes for the future of the church. This was meant to be the first of many conversations on this topic with the outcome of the conversations enabling a broader scope for where the church is at and providing a connection back to strategic planning for the council.

Next Meeting

The next NCC meeting is scheduled to take place March 1-3, 2024. In light of conversations around our carbon footprint and “that the ELCIC National Office, its staff and programs commit to minimizing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are within their control,” (which comes out of the work of the Carbon Neutrality Task Force), NCC approved a motion to hold the March meeting online via zoom.