Laestadian Lutheran Church
279 N. Medina Street. Suite 150
Loretto, MN 55357

Annual Meeting of the Laestadian Lutheran Church — July 7, 2018
MINUTES

Date/time: Saturday, July 7, 2018 9:00 a.m.

Location: Glacier Peak High School
7401 - 144th Pl SE, Snohomish, WA 98296

Item 1: Opening

Meeting convened at 9:00 a.m.
Opening hymn: SHZ #378, *Unto the Mountain Holy*
Devotion: Carey Simonson, Psalms 90
Hymn: SHZ *#398, Come All That Labor*
Hymn: SHZ #140 *Saints of God* sung in memory of all believers who have gone to rest during the past year.

Item 2: Call Meeting to Order: *Jim Frantti*

The Annual Meeting of the Laestadian Lutheran Church (LLC) was held on Saturday, July 7, 2018, 9:00 a.m. at Glacier Peak High School, 7401 – 144th Pl SE, Snohomish, WA 98296

From LLC Bylaws, Article II, Section 5:
The number of Delegates selected by each member congregation to attend the Annual Meeting is determined as follows: 1 to 49 members in the congregation – one (1) Delegate
50 to 99 members in the congregation – two (2) Delegates
100 members and over in the congregation – three (3) Delegates
Three Delegates is the maximum allowed any one congregation.

Congregation Delegates:
Board chairman Jim Frantti noted that 57 out of 67 registered delegates were present. This constitutes a quorum, and all business before the meeting can be properly conducted. Congregation delegates were registered by member congregations in accordance with LLC Bylaws, Article II, Section 5. Such registration constitutes the official congregation representation at the Annual Meeting.

Frantti presented officer suggestions from among the delegates, noting that the delegates are free to select officers of their choice from among their midst.

Suggestion of officers for meeting:
Chairmen (2): Mike Jurmu, Minneapolis; Daryl Johnson, Prescott Valley
Secretaries (2): Don Keskey, Elk River; Dave Young, Rockford
Proofreaders (2): Dana Johnson, Glendale; Peter Hill, Ishpeming
Ballot committee (2): To be chosen only if a secret ballot is needed
Translators: (Preassigned) Matt Keranen, Mikko Pasanen

Approval: Rockford delegate Mike Kariniemi made a motion to approve all the suggested officers, seconded by Detroit delegate Paul Huhta. Unanimously approved.

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Item 3: Greetings

Jim Frantti welcomed all delegates, board members, staff, and visitors to the annual meeting. He spoke to the importance of this meeting, as it gives directives for the work of the coming year, and review of the previous year. He addressed some of the concerns that have been experienced during the last year. There have been questions of central doctrinal matters and age-old teachings of God's Kingdom. Some comments critical of the LLC, as well as local congregation boards and ministers, have been heard. When those comments come, they are troubling. Fruits of the Spirit are gentleness, meekness, kindness, longsuffering, and forgiveness, and criticisms that feel like attacks cause sorrow and concern. God, through His congregation, has called servants and workers to the work, and it is saddening and disheartening to hear strong criticisms and negative comments. On the other hand, we have felt the love and support of believers through encouraging comments of brothers and sisters in faith. Those encouraging and supportive comments are needed to encourage weak servants to continue to serve with God-given gifts. God has His timetable and will take care of things in His time. Patience and longsuffering are needed, along with care and forgiveness. As we speak about the work, we have much reason for hope and encouragement. God has given us a time to freely do the work.

Greetings from Finland: *Ilpo Saukkonen, SRK*

Ilpo related greetings from the children of God in Finland, where they have rejoiced over the mutual work of the gospel, but above all over our mutual faith. He brought greetings from the *Suviseurat* in Äänekoski, held the week prior, where the motto was "Thy sins be forgiven thee." This is a great matter, when God forgives all of our sins. That which is forgiven on earth is forgiven also in heaven. The topic of the speakers and elders meeting there was "The Grace of God as a teacher," the same teaching message of grace we have also been able to hear at these services. We have rejoiced over the functioning of the Summer Services Radio, which has been able to speak this message throughout the world. At the SRK annual meeting, we rejoiced of the mutual mission work we do in connection with SFC and LLC, work that is done in the spirit of mutual love. It is important that the children of God in North America and Finland are able to do this work in undivided love. Mutual mission work to Africa and South America in 2018 continues. In July and August, in connection with a mission trip to The Gambia and Senegal, speaker brothers will visit Guinea for the first time, with one minister from SRK and one from Togo. Domestic mission work in Finland has been reorganized into three areas, North, Central, and Southern Finland. There is an area-wide conference each year in April, and the theme for this year's conference was "In the hearing of God's Word." Ilpo noted the flags from 13 countries here at the LLC services. At the SRK services there were 18 different flags representing countries in which SRK does mission work, work that is expanding in cooperation with LLC.

Greetings from Sweden: *Veli-Matti Heikkinen, SFC*

Veli-Matti brought greetings of love, unity and God's Peace from believers in Sweden, as well as from the SFC Board and Work Committee, Chairman Timo Löppönen and Vice Chairman Matti Heikkinen. He also related greetings from their Summer Services and Annual Meeting. The Summer Services motto was "The Lord is my strength and my shield," Psalms 28:7. There were about 1,000 service guests there in Mockfjärd, Dalarna, the largest congregation in Sweden. God richly blessed those services. There is a very small flock of believers in Sweden and Norway, about 500 members plus children, a total of about 1,000 believers. The enemy of the souls is not resting, and God's

children in Sweden are living in a worldly time and the shadows of the evening are growing longer. But we feel we are in good care there, as here, and God's gospel is our strength and has the power to keep us on the way to heaven.

We are thankful for the good cooperation between the three sister organizations, LLC, SRK and SFC. God has pulled us closer to each other than ever before. We live in an amazing time, tightly bound by God to each other. We have enjoyed many joint meetings, including those with all three organizations. The last meeting was in Loretto, Minnesota in 2017, with brothers from Sweden and Finland there. We welcome some brothers from LLC to the next meeting in Stockholm May 2 – 5, 2019. We have spoken much in these meetings about mutual work and much about faith and doctrine. They have been deep discussions touching difficult matters, but I have always felt that we are believing in the same way. We are in the same faith, we have the same spirit, and we are bound with love. Jesus taught, "By this all men know my disciples, if ye have love one to another." I must truly say this love is here. May God bless His kingdom in North America and bless your work. We remember you in our prayers and ask you to remember us there in Sweden.

Other greetings: From Dan Rintamaki, and Ed Rintamaki and others in Williston.

Item 4: Minutes of July 1, 2017, Annual Meeting

The Minutes of the July 1, 2017, LLC Annual Meeting were mailed to member congregations on August 31, 2017. The proofreaders conveyed their approval of the minutes as written on August 22, 2017.

Proposal: Approve the minutes as written and submitted to member congregations on August 31, 2017.

Discussion:

Decision: Spokane delegate Mark Magee made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Cokato delegate Lars Keplinger. Unanimously approved.

Item 5: 2019 Membership Dues

"Member congregations are obligated to pay the annual membership fee determined by the members or their Delegates at the Annual Meeting of the LLC" (LLC Bylaws, Article II, Section 1). The dues obligation is a congregation obligation, and congregations use a variety of methods to collect funds from their individual members.

Locally established dues guidelines cover both the LLC dues and the needs of the local congregation. It is a common practice to set a minimum dues level to be a congregation voting member, along with a recommended dues level to cover both local and LLC commitments.

The LLC established practice is that the local congregations pay LLC dues based on the number of voting members reported at their local congregation annual meeting. It is much appreciated that some

congregations have even been able to pay LLC dues based on the number of adults, 18 years and over, regardless of local congregation membership.

Current Dues:
- $32 (USD) per member per month, $384 per member per year
- Student: 50% of the above membership dues

LLC Board recommendation:
The delegates at the 2017 LLC Annual Meeting requested a study to deliver the *Voice of Zion* subscription to all households and cover the costs through dues, study an increase in *opisto* scholarship funds to students, and to cover the invoicing of SRK and SFC minister travel in LLC dues.

- To deliver the *Voice of Zion* subscriptions to all households, dues will need to increase $2-3/member/month to cover the costs. It is recommended to continue the subscriptions as we have in the past.

- An *opisto* alumni committee has been formed, and they are reviewing ways to help support *opisto* students financially.

- Increasing dues by $1/member/month will allow LLC to discontinue invoicing congregations for SRK and SFC ministers who travel to the U.S. and Canada on mission trips and to add two more foreign mission trips.

The 2019 budget with no dues increase reflects a deficit operating budget of $47,518. This is due to increasing work as well as increasing costs at the three camps. The camp support areas are reviewing ways to obtain close to a cash-neutral budget for 2019.

Option 1-no dues increase:
• Continue to invoice for SRK and SFC mission trips to U.S. and Canada, and no increase in foreign mission trips to Africa. LLC will fund the deficit budget with reserves and continue to work with the camp support area to work towards a cash-neutral budget.

Option 2-$1/member/month increase:
• Discontinue invoicing for SRK and SFC ministers and increase foreign mission trips to Africa by two additional trips. LLC will fund the deficit budget with reserves and continue to work with the camp support area to work towards a cash-neutral budget.

Option 3-$2/member/month increase:
• Discontinue invoicing for SRK and SFC ministers and increase foreign mission trips to Africa by two additional trips. LLC will have a balanced budget and will continue to work with the camp support area to work towards a cash-neutral budget. If a positive budget is obtained, the excess will fund increasing work or pay additional principal payments on the loans.

The LLC Board recommends Option 3-$2/member/month increase.

The current dues rate was established by the July 4, 2015, LLC Annual Meeting and became effective January 1, 2016.

Discussion:

Jim Frantti gave some background on the dues increase. At the 2017 Annual Meeting, the delegates suggested raising LLC dues to build in coverage of three items: 1) A *Voice of Zion* subscription for all believers. 2) Provide funds to help with *opisto* scholarships since the cost of going to *opisto* has significantly increased. 3) Cover the cost of SRK and SFC brothers on North American mission trips instead of invoicing congregations that are served.

Delegates also requested that the LLC Board present some options with explanations to facilitate discussion in the congregations before this annual meeting, as well as a recommendation. It was determined that it would take a $2–3 per member per month increase in dues to cover VZ subscriptions for all members. It would be a huge challenge to try and track all members' addresses. since LLC members are congregations and not individuals. We would need to find a new way to track individual membership. It seemed better to retain the current system of individuals paying for their subscriptions. Recently, an *Opisto* Alumni Committee was formed that will operate in a similar fashion to the LLC Humanitarian Aid Committee. They will be looking at ways to raise funds to help support *opisto* students financially. The three dues increase proposals did not include covering these items.

The Operating Plan showed budgets for each of the three options. Operating income with the first two options would result in a deficit of $30–50,000 at the end of 2019, and the third option would be close to a break-even result. One item to note is that our camp operations contribute to a budget deficit. While we would prefer to operate on a cash neutral basis, it varies from camp to camp and year to year. Ilpo mentioned at the Board Meeting that SRK's two big expense items are mission work and camp work, but they view camp work as very important and put a high priority on it.

Delegate input/suggestions:

- Many congregation delegates expressed overwhelming support for Option 3.
- Camp fees:
    - Raise fees to move closer to cash neutrality.
    - Set camp fees at actual cost so members know how much it really costs, and this could help to balance expenses.
    - Leave camp fees as they are now, advising that deficits are covered by the budget. Post actual costs so people are aware, and can contribute more if they have the means.
    - LLC input: We have not wanted to set camp fees at a rate that some cannot afford or cause them to be reluctant to send children to camp due to a financial burden.
- Mission work:
    - Mission work is more important than camps. Mission trips are a very effective way for God's Word to get out.
    - LLC response to a delegate's question of how many mission trips there are to Africa each year: LLC, SFC and SRK do joint mission trips to Ecuador and Africa. In 2018 there are 24 trips, 7 to Ecuador and 17 to Africa. This year we dropped the Ghana-

Togo trips down to 5, and there are 6 trips each to Kenya and The Gambia-Senegal. Each organization contributes to a central budget to cover the expenses. In July, the Gambia-Senegal mission trip will include Guinea, and if God blesses that visit, we anticipate additional requests for services. It may not be possible to always tie a trip to Guinea with the Gambia-Senegal trips. An individual from Tanzania has requested to meet with mission speakers in Kenya in August, and again, if God blesses that visit, there may be additional requests for services in Tanzania. Based on inquiries and developments, at the beginning of 2018 we look ahead to 2019. We anticipate that we will be expanding to other countries, and the committee felt it would be wise to address that potential in this budget.

- SFC/SRK invoicing: Additional funds from dues increase will offset discontinued invoicing.
- Support for the work: Full support and trust was expressed for the work. When the board recommends an option, we trust they have done their due diligence, weighed options, and the funds will be well spent.
- Subscriptions: Congregations could choose to include *Voice of Zion* subscriptions in their local congregation dues rather than making it an LLC item.
- Voting at the Annual Meeting, input from LLC: Delegates are sent to represent the congregation, and they can feel free to vote upon directives from their congregation. Often congregations will instruct the delegates to express the congregation's wishes, but to also listen to the spirit of the meeting. The congregation authorizes delegates to act on their behalf, so in that way they can be free to act with the spirit of the meeting. If the congregation does not authorize to vote with the spirit of the meeting, the delegates should abide by that, but they would have a secondary responsibility to bring back information to the congregation as to why other congregations voted otherwise.

Decision: Brainerd delegate Andrew Raisanen made a motion to accept Option 3, seconded by Seattle delegate Tyler Kautz. Motion carried by a majority (2 dissenting votes).

Item 6: 2019 LLC Draft Operating Plan

The Operating Plan covers progress and plans on the work of the Church, especially new items to bring to the attention of the membership and to receive input from delegates. It is important to remember that much work is ongoing and important but cannot all be noted in this Plan. The office staff and Board will continue in a variety of ways to keep the membership informed of the ongoing work of the Church.

See attachment: Lo, I am with you always (Matt. 28:20)
2019 Laestadian Lutheran Church Operating Plan
(Proposed Plan – 2018 LLC Annual Meeting)

Highlights presented at the Annual Meeting by the LLC Board and Directors:

Jim Frantti—LLC Board

Jim reminded delegates that the operating plan is a draft which can be changed based on delegate input. It is the plan for how the Board and Staff will work in the coming year. We are not looking for

final approval at this meeting, but rather for delegates and congregations to express questions and suggestions for the work. After this meeting, the plan will be reworked if necessary to incorporate changes from congregation input. Delegates will review the plan after any changes, and the plan will become final at the LLC Board Meeting in October.

LLC Board: The LLC Board consists of 15 members representing three regions, each of whom serve 3-year terms. In a typical year, there are 5 meetings. There are 6 Board committees, and Board members serve on at least 1 or 2 committees, to give input and guidance to the staff. The role of the Board is to serve and support the work. Some areas of work are best done collectively, such as publishing the *Voice,* or planning mission work, but the bulk of gospel work is done in local congregations. Gospel work is sometimes on an individual basis, believers talking to neighbors, classmates, or friends. We want to do what we can from the organization to support that work. We welcome input from the congregations throughout the year. Feel free to contact the office with suggestions or requests for support in the work.

Cooperative work: We work closely with SFC and SRK in every area of our work, and we meet frequently. Our staff with their staff, and our board with their board, discusses the work and current topics. Believers in Ecuador, Ghana and Togo have organized, and they have boards with whom we work as well. In The Gambia, their new board is currently taking care of documentation and filing with the Gambian government to be a bona fide church.

Adrian Pirness—Christian Education

Camps: The dues discussion touched on camp fees and support. It is still our goal that our camps could operate on a cash neutral basis, or close to it. Camp fees are supplemented by camp support area dues. We can communicate for awareness of actual camp costs so that people can donate higher than the suggested fee if desired.

Bible Class: We intend to send a survey this fall to congregations asking for input on how they are approaching Bible Class and if there is any need for additional support. Based on that, in 2019 we will work on resource material.

Support staff: With the increasing number of camps, particularly confirmation schools, we need to develop a bigger pool of support staff to work at those camps. While Rod Nikula worked at the office, he started working on a pool of teachers and directors that could be used in a 3-year rotation. An assistant director one year would serve as a director the following year, and then have a year off the third year.

Opisto alumni: The LLC Board gave support at their February meeting to form a committee of *opisto* alumni with the primary focus of raising funds to support scholarship students. A committee is in place with representation from Minnesota—Troy and Brita Fredrickson, Tyler and Sarah Muhonen, Ed and Yvonne Tolkkinen; Arizona—Dana and Becky Johnson; Saskatchewan—Lauri and Jenni Simonson; and the Pacific Northwest—Karl and Janelle Haapala. They will meet in September for the first time. In 2019, hopefully this committee, with a pool of former students, will be able to staff our Language Camp activities.

Jon Bloomquist—Mission Work

Domestic Mission Work:

It continues to be the case that domestic mission work does not get as much attention as we would like to give it, as God has so abundantly blessed foreign mission work, which takes a lot of time and energy. Of course, mission work happens without any direct work from the office, through the confession of faith of individual believers, which will always be the main and most effective means of mission work.

Advertising materials: We do have some advertising pamphlets that have been developed over the years that could be utilized in domestic mission work. This spring we enlisted the Midwest mission committee to work with the materials we already have and bring some suggestions to the Midwestern Area-wide Board Meeting in November. Those guidelines and suggestions can then be shared with the western and eastern areas.

Support materials: We hope to provide support materials for ministers called to serve in some of our remote and small congregations scattered around the continent. It can be a difficult situation to go serve where one has never been before, maybe never met any of the people, and know little about the circumstances.

Translator webinars: We have had 3 webinars for Finnish-English translators, with participation rates of 15 to 20 each time. We hope to duplicate that effort for Spanish-speaking translators or potential translators.

Foreign Mission Work:

Spanish translators: We have a real need for Spanish translators who can translate from English to Spanish. In Ecuador, we have one very capable translator, but unfortunately for us, he has found full-time employment. We have no ministers who speak fluent Spanish, so we have to send translators from North America or Finland, which adds expense. We need to continue to develop translators and skills. Jessica Nikula's job at the office is changing and we have been granted a little of her time to work on Spanish materials.

Organization in foreign countries: In Ecuador, there is a small flock that continues to believe and endeavor. They want to get organized, and this year we are focusing on getting them registered as an organization there. In Togo, they just completed revisions and adoption of new bylaws. It is a good model for us to use. We hope to use it in Ghana, where initially they had some bylaws that don't fit our operations very well.

Expansion of the work: This month there is the first visit to Guinea, in West Africa, and potentially next month to Tanzania. It is difficult for us to see ahead where this work is going. The Heavenly Father knows how to find His own, in the most unlikely and remote places, places we just cannot imagine. It looks like Africa is now the place where God has many that He is seeking and calling.

Workers from Togo: We have now begun to ask the Togolese EELT to assist us in the mission work in Africa. Nicolas Deh made his first mission trip to The Gambia and Senegal a year ago with an SRK brother, and he will be making his second trip there, again with an SRK brother. This time the trip will include Guinea. We have also asked Nicolas to participate in Skype calls with MW3, the mission work committee of the 3 sister organizations, consisting of Veli-Matti Heikkinen from SFC, Juha Alanko from SRK, and me. Nicolas speaks French, the language of Senegal and Guinea, and for that reason we anticipate he can help us communicate better, partly because of language, but also from the perspective of African eyes. We could give many examples of cultural things that we cannot see because our worlds are very different. We have also asked for ELLT participation in a similar fashion in Kenya in 2019. It may be Emmanuel Ametsifé who will assist in that country.

Mutual work, and appreciation: In this mutual work, one of the highlights of every month is the meeting of the MW3 committee. Helen Hillukka also participates as meeting secretary. We also have a subcommittee, the MW3 Facilities Committee, which involves others looking at facility needs in foreign countries. We want to thank the brothers and their families for their willingness to serve on the foreign trips. Words cannot tell you how much the believers in those countries appreciate your support and your help. On every trip, we hear it; it means more to them than we can know.

Keith Waaraniemi—Pastoral

The discussion at the Ministers and Board members meeting indicated some of the difficulties we are dealing with together as God's congregation. During these kinds of questions and difficulties, it is difficult to maintain a positive and hopeful outlook; yet there is reason to do so because God is with us and will help all of us if we want to remain humble and believing. I ask for your prayers in that regard for myself and fellow workers. On the LLC Board and at the office, we have discussed how the times we live affect our work. It takes a lot of energy and a lot of time as we visit about the questions of our time, which we need to do. We need to support one another. We pray that God will continue to help us as He has helped us unto this day. We want to maintain that kind of hopeful positive outlook that the Good Shepherd is in our midst guiding us.

Doctrine and Life, Questions of our Time articles, Voice of Zion: New in 2018 in the *Voice of Zion* is a page on Doctrine and Life, Questions of Our Time, suggested by our Publications Director. The Pastoral Committee takes responsibility for publishing timely and important articles on this page. It has been an interesting learning experience with each new topic when in reviewing the articles, we learn so much about our faith and doctrine in the times we live. This has been blessed, and we pray God will continue to bless it. If you have suggestions for topics, feel free to pass them on to us. We will continue as God gives wisdom and strength to publish this page every month.

Support for marriage and family: We wish to support ministers with regard to marriage counseling, pre-marriage counseling, and weddings, but haven't been able to produce much on paper. It is ongoing work in progress. It is so important in our time that we support marriage and family. The enemy of souls is attacking in this area. We have this treasure in God's kingdom that marriage is viewed as a lifelong union between man and woman. God's kingdom has a future in the young people. Youthwork begins from home, so support of marriage and family continues to be very important on an LLC level as well as in local congregations.

Addictions: Addictions are spoken of much more in society today. In addition to alcohol and drugs, we can add gaming, gambling, and sexual addictions. We are in society and God's children are not untouched by these problems that are all around us. In all areas of LLC work, we have considered this work and done what we are able to continue to support congregations, ministers and workers in the congregations to understand and deal with addictions that come up in our midst. There is much need for understanding of those who have fallen in these areas. We need to deal with these situations in love and truth, grace and forgiveness, realizing that people who struggle may fall again and again and need to hear again and again that they can believe sins forgiven. Connected to this, we need to understand that we are not professionals. We need to work with societal resources to help those who struggle, in preventive care as well as treatment.

Bible Translation: This work, although on hold as of late, continues to be one we want to pursue, to provide guidance for North American believers on what other translations would be reliable versions to help us understand the King James version. The goal is not to change the pulpit Bible, but to provide suggestions and resources. As in Luther's time, our goal is that the people would be able to read God's Word in a language they understand. One obstacle for young people reading God's Word is the old English in our beloved King James version. May God guide and lead in this sensitive area.

Prayers: We ask for your continued prayers and support in all areas of work. There are questions and criticisms, but much more is the support personally received. May God bless us and keep our goal on heaven.

Matt Keranen—Publications

At the end of June, Matt moved with his family to the United States, to join the LLC staff as Publications Director. Originally from Oregon, he spent half his life in Finland.

Publications is a broad area, closely connected with the areas of Christian Education, Mission Work, and Pastoral work, and providing materials for personal use. Publications are important tools for relaying the message of salvation and the life of a believer. *Voice of Zion* is a good title, because that paper, and all other publications, are not the voice of LLC, but truly the voice of Zion.

Plans are in place for release of some books next year—*Mother!* and *Single, but Not Alone*—collections of writings that address a certain phase of life that many believers have, and can provide insight in one's own life. Work is underway to identify the need for updating the hymnal at some point. We want to work more in support of recording technicians, and there is thought of planning an international music camp.

Eric Jurmu—Administration and Operations

We enjoy a time of mutual love and unity of spirit in the office. We also work closely with the LLC Board and sister organizations. Too often we take for granted the unity and love of the spirit. But now in the day we are living, and we experience the opportunity to work together where we feel mutual love and unity of spirit, it is truly a gift from God. We are thankful for your support, and ask you to remember us and pray that God will continue to direct the work as only He can.

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Personnel changes:

When Paul Waaraniemi retired after many years as publications director, Walt Lampi stepped in and worked in preparation for Matt Keranen's arrival. Walt served for almost 2 years, not only in publications, but as a valuable resource in these times of spiritual concerns and difficulties. With his experience during the time of the last heresy he has a clear perspective from those times, which was very helpful. Now we welcome Matt Keranen, his wife Liisa, and their family, and the gifts that Matt will bring to the work.

A couple of years ago, we hired Rod Nikula as Christian Education Coordinator. Looking back, we see how God gave direction to that decision. Adrian's time was increasingly taken up with technology needs, and Rod could focus on projects such as reorganizing the confirmation school curriculum to an eight-day plan, which will start next year. Rod has now retired from this position.

Jessica Nikula has moved into Rod's position, which is now LLC Project Coordinator. As the work grows, we need additional workers and resources. May God bless Jessica's work moving forward.

The LLC Board, at its July 5th meeting, approved the hiring of 2 part-time administrative assistants to take Jessica's position. Maria Fredrickson and Brita Fredrickson have been hired, each committing to 25 hours per week.

Facilities:

The Stony Lake Camp expansion is going well. Over the winter, believers from northern Minnesota worked to get the lodge ready for use for the April 2018 Ministers Camp. Bunkhouses and a new sauna building are now under construction, and an outdoor pavilion will also be built.

A dormitory will be built at Kamp Kipa this year replacing a number of old cabins.

The Prairie Shores Camp in Saskatchewan was purchased and renovated and is now operational.

LLC property at Silver Springs, near Monticello, has many possibilities for North American Zion. Priority is getting the property ready for 2019 LLC Summer Services, hosted by Rockford. A large tent, 120 x 260 feet, has been reserved to be used as the main service area, with other smaller tents to be rented and used in support areas.

Technology:

As so many have noted, we do much mutual work with our sister organizations. A recent meeting involved people in Finland, Sweden, various parts of the U.S. and Canada. Technology gives us this opportunity. Adrian Pirness continues to serve as technology director, and we are asking more of him in this regard. The staff needs to stay abreast of upgrades and new advances in technology, only for this that the work of God's kingdom moves forward. An LLC app is being tested now with hopes to release soon.

Elizabeth Juntunen—Finances

In 2017, income and expenses were $2.2 million, with operating income of $28,000. Cash has been adequate for cash fluctuations during the summer months. We use reserves to fund the camp season and have not needed to borrow money for many years. The increase in fixed assets from 2016 reflects the purchase of the Silver Springs Land, the expansion of Stony Lake Camp which will continue to increase in 2018, and the Kamp Kipa dorm which is in the beginning phases. The long-term debt is loans on the purchase of Silver Springs and Kamp Kipa, and also the expansion of Stony Lake. The LLC Board and Staff wish to thank the congregations for their generous support.

Discussion / Delegate Input:

- Camps: Background checks for camp staff: With last-minute staffing for camps, such as 4 days before camp, the background checks might not get completed before the camp starts. What to do? (This was not addressed.)
- Mission work:
    - Expressed appreciation and support for the work that goes into foreign mission trips with the language and cultural differences. It is God's work, and God will continue to bridge the gaps.
    - If it's possible to plan another group trip to Africa, we highly encourage youth or couples to go. It's amazing to see the joy in their heart when they have the peace of God, even when their temporal lives are much different than ours.
    - It seems the amount spent on mission work is quite small considering the overall budget. Could more funds be directed to that area, since it is such an important part of our work?
    - On many of the foreign mission trips, there are so many locations that it is impossible to visit all locations on any one trip. Similarly, the SRK and SFC trips to North America cannot visit all congregations, but the office is doing this difficult scheduling as best as possible.
- Publications:
    - Appreciation expressed for all the digitizing work, and encourage increasing digital capabilities where possible.
    - Request for status of "Voices of the Past" sermons, Peter Nordstrom tapes, that were to be released on CD in 2012.
    - Encouragement to develop an app for mobile phones to access the new LLC website.

Support for 2019 LLC Draft Operating Plan:

Action item: Approve 2017 financial statements

Illinois delegate Tim Niskanen made a motion to approve the 2017 financial statements, seconded by Cokato delegate Lars Keplinger. Unanimously approved.

Action item: Approve 2019 proposed budget

Williston delegate Ryan Rintamaki made a motion to approve the budget with the $2 dues increase. Elk River delegate Luke Byman seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Item 7: Election of LLC Board Members

Terms of the following LLC Board Members are due to expire in 2018:

Midwestern Area At-Large	**Steven Haataja**
Midwestern Area	**George Koivukangas**
Midwestern Area	**Keith Waaraniemi**
Eastern Area	**Peter Kuopus**
Western Area	**John Stewart**

At-Large Positions: By decision of the LLC Board of Directors at its July 1, 2017, meeting, each At-Large Board position will remain assigned to its current LLC area.

Discussion: None.

Decision:

Outlook delegate Jeremy Simonson made a motion to nominate all three of the Midwestern Board Members, Steve Haataja, George Koivukangas, and Keith Waaraniemi. Brainerd delegate Andrew Raisanen seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Ishpeming delegate Peter Hill made a motion to support nomination of Peter Kuopus, seconded by Detroit delegate Paul Huhta. Unanimously approved.

Longview delegate Karl Haapala reported the Western Area supports John Stewart to continue as a Board member. He made a motion to nominate John Stewart, seconded by Roaring Fork Valley delegate Jeremy Keranen. Unanimously approved.

Item 8: Future Summer/Winter Services

2019 Summer Services, Midwestern (Rockford)
2020 Summer Services, Eastern (Marquette)
2021 Summer Services, Midwestern (Northern MN Congregations)
2022 Summer Services, Western (Longview)
2023 Summer Services, Midwestern (Monticello)
2024 Summer Services, Midwestern (Saskatchewan)

The Board asks that all requests for hosting Summer Services be submitted to the LLC Board in writing. In turn, the Board will coordinate these requests and suggest the location of Summer Services to the Annual Meeting for the coming years.

Informational: Year 2019 Events

2019 LLC Phoenix Winter Services – Thu–Sun, February 21–24, 2019
2019 LLC Summer Services (Rockford) – Thu–Sun, July 4–7, 2019

Phoenix delegate Dave Forstie extended a welcome to the 2019 LLC Phoenix Winter Services. Their congregation enjoys hosting, and all are welcome.

Rockford delegate Mike Kariniemi reported that plans are moving forward to utilize the Silver Springs property for an outdoor-type Summer Services. All are welcome!

Item 9: Reports from Delegates

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

- Selecting officers for the annual meeting:
  - Currently, LLC Staff suggests meeting officers from the delegates that are submitted from congregations. Suggested officers meet prior to the annual meeting to go over meeting procedures.
  - Eric Jurmu outlined other options that would give meeting officers more time to prepare for the meeting.
    - The current year's delegates could choose next year's officers. This would give officers a full year to be involved in congregation and area-wide meetings and learn more about the work.
    - Congregations would need to select their delegates one year in advance.
    - Considering 2019 when Services are in Rockford, any Rockford delegates may be busy with duties of hosting services. We could decide to use the following year's services hosts as meeting officers, such as 2020 services hosts as 2019 meeting officers.
  - Delegates overwhelmingly chose to leave the system as it currently is.
    - The current system seems to be working well. LLC staff can suggest officers, and we will serve to the best of our ability and trust that God will give the gifts as needed.
    - Selecting officers a year ahead of time could lead to difficulties when some of them cannot attend.
    - A one- or two-week notice could be given, if possible, especially to meeting chairmen.

- New congregation:
  - The LLC Board approved new congregation Coastal California Laestadian Lutheran Church. This is the 34th LLC congregation, and they have 19 members.
- Positive reception for the Operating Plan booklet.
- Confirmation school selection:
  - It was changed this year to a first-come first-served system.
    - This created some challenges on the first sign-up date.
    - A request was made to have the first preference for students to attend locally, so that both the student and the family could save travel expense of attending.
  - LLC response:
    - The enrollment process will be studied to see how families can have the opportunity to attend a local camp.
    - A challenge, especially on the West Coast, has been that there are not enough spots for all the local students. Work is underway to secure a second facility to enable having two confirmation schools on the West Coast.
    - We hope everyone has the freedom to contact LLC if there are some circumstances that don't work, and we will do our best to make accommodations.
    - LLC will communicate about this item with congregation chairmen in the coming months.
- Support for the workers in God's kingdom:
  - Those doing the work have our support, love and prayers, and we are happy with how things are going.
  - LLC and ministers work extremely hard, and it is tough to hear they are struggling and negative comments are made against them.
  - Agreement that there is unity between LLC, SFC and SRK, and encouragement to say with confidence that statements to the contrary are not true.

Item 10: Adjournment, Closing

Meeting adjourn time and motion: Wolf Lake delegate Joe Wuollet made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by North Sound delegate Dennis Niemela. Unanimously approved at 2:30 pm.

Closing prayer and Benediction: Carey Simonson.

Closing hymn: SHZ # 343, *Oh, Sing My Soul*

Congregation name	Delegates Allowed	Alternates	Delegate Name	Date notified LLC	Sign in 2018
Alaska	2		Eric Mattila	5/8/18	
			Jeff Raisanen	5/8/18	
		Alternate	Aaron Kuopus	5/8/18	
		Alternate	Bryce Ojalehto	5/8/18	
Brainerd	1		Tom Parks	6/3/18	
		Alternate	Andrew Raisanen	6/3/18	
Cokato	3		Wes Simonson	6/5/18	
			Lars Keplinger	6/5/18	
			Travis Simonson	6/5/18	
		Alternate	Ben Raisanen	6/5/18	
		Alternate	Brent Simonson	6/5/18	
		Alternate	Travis Byman	6/5/18	
Detroit	1		Paul Huhta	6/24/18	
		Alternate	Briar Siljander	6/24/18	
Dunblane	3		James Simonson	6/5/18	
			Robin Pirness	6/5/18	
			Grant Simonson	6/5/18	
		Alternate	Ryan Ylioja	6/5/18	
		Alternate	Roger Ylioja	6/5/18	
Elk River	3		Don Keskey	5/23/18	
			Luke Byman	5/23/18	
			Daniel Hillukka	5/23/18	
		Alternate	Kevin Moll	5/23/18	
		Alternate	Bob Niemela	5/23/18	
		Alternate	Ben Huhta	5/23/18	
Flagstaff	1		Dean Johnson	5/8/18	
		Alternate	Gary Kesti	5/8/18	
Flathead Valley	1		Tim Landa	6/4/18	
		Alternate	Troy Muhonen	6/4/18	
Gillette	1		Troy Johnson	5/31/18	

Glendale	**2**		Adam Wuollet	5/7/18	
			Dana Johnson	5/7/18	
		Alternate	Frans Kuoppala	5/7/18	
Illinois	**1**		Ruth Niskanen	5/31/18	
		Alternate	Tim Niskanen	5/31/18	
Ishpeming	**2**		Steve Laiho	5/25/18	
			Peter Hill	5/25/18	
		Alternate	Mike Hill	5/25/18	
Lethbridge	**1**		Mikael Janhunen	5/15/18	
		Alternate	Kris Ylioja	5/15/18	
Longview	**3**	Alternate	~~Bryan Simonson~~	6/5/18	Karl Haapala –
			Aaron Riutta	6/5/18	
			Michael Huhta	6/5/18	
Menahga	**3**		Leslie Ylitalo	5/27/18	
			Ron Honga	5/27/18	
			Neil Waaraniemi	5/27/18	
		Alternate	Scott Hillstrom	5/27/18	
		Alternate	Josh Byman	5/27/18	
		Alternate	Eric Haataja	5/27/18	
		Alternate	Mark Haataja	5/27/18	
Minneapolis	**3**		Josh Ylitalo	5/26/18	
			Mike Jurmu	5/26/18	
			Jim Wikman	5/26/18	
		Alternate	Matt Sturos	5/26/18	
		Alternate	Barb Lever	5/26/18	
		Alternate	Gary Wuollet	5/26/18	
Monticello	**3**		Kevin Kumpula	5/30/18	
			Ross Fredrickson	5/30/18	
			Ryan Ylitalo	5/30/18	
		Alternate	Doug Grangroth	5/30/18	
		Alternate	Mark Huhta	5/30/18	
		Alternate	Gary Tiffany	5/30/18	
North Sound	**1**		Dennis Niemela	6/1/18	

North Sound		Alternate	Gabe Karvonen	6/1/18	
Outlook	**3**		Andrei Warwaruk	6/1/18	
			Jeremy Simonson	6/1/18	
			Rick Haapala	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Justin Haapala	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Shane Simonson	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Jay Simonson	6/1/18	
Pelkie	**1**		~~Matthew~~ Frantti	6/1/18	P.F.
		Alternate	Paul Waaraniemi	6/1/18	
Phoenix	**3**		Tom Johnson	5/24/18	
			Dave Forstie	5/24/18	
			Keith Hillukka	5/24/18	
Prescott Valley	**2**		Daryl Johnson	5/23/18	
			Doug Karvonen	5/23/18	
		Alternate	Lars Johnson	5/23/18	
		Alternate	Keith Moll	5/23/18	
Roaring Fork Valley	**3**		Jeremy Keranen	5/24/18	
			Mikko Petaisto	5/24/18	
			Ian Byman	5/24/18	
		Alternate	Charlie Jurmu	5/24/18	
		Alternate	Pete Marjanen	5/24/18	
		Alternate	Dan Grangroth	5/24/18	
Rockford	**3**		Mike Kariniemi	5/31/18	MK
			Jon Tarnanen	5/31/18	JT
			Dave Young	5/31/18	DLY
Rolla	**1**		Bonnie Bercier	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Cherie Belgarde	6/1/18	
Saskatoon	**2**		James Lehto	5/25/18	
			Mike Strand	5/25/18	
Seattle	**3**		Brent Mattila	6/12/18	
			Mike Grady	6/12/18	Mike Grady
			Tyler Kautz	6/12/18	TBK
		Alternate	Evan Niemela	6/12/18	

Spokane	**2**		Mark Magee	6/1/18	
			Chris Simonson	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Kelton Simonson	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Braden Lever	6/1/18	
Toronto	**3**		Jari Pigg	6/4/18	
			Simon Hotari	6/4/18	
			Anita Pigg	6/4/18	
Ulster Park, Bethel	**1**		Nathan Aho	6/1/18	
		Alternate	Heidi Aho	6/1/18	
West Barnstable	**1**		Bill Rasku	5/12/18	
Williston	**2**		Carl Karvonen	5/31/18	
			Ryan Rintamaki	5/31/18	
		Alternate	Paul Herrala	5/31/18	
		Alternate	Mitch Byman	5/31/18	
Wolf Lake	**2**		Joe Wuollet	6/4/18	
			Kent Simonson	6/4/18	

Total delegates 67 58

LAESTADIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GHANA

Re: Greetings to LLC 2018 Summer Services

It is with great joy that we greet you with the love and peace of God as you begin this special walk of faith with God for the next few days. The believers in Ghana join you during this summer service in spirit as dear brothers and sisters in faith. We will remember you in our prayers that God will open His Word to His servants and grant receptive hearts to His children that the seed of the Word will fall on fertile soil, germinate and produce good fruits and feed the souls of those that are hungry for righteousness.

God's peace, On behalf of the Laestadian Lutheran Church of Ghana

Joseph Kuse, Chairman

George Dodzidenu, Secretary

EGLISES LUTHERIENNES LAESTADIENNES DU TOGO (ELLT)
Laestadian Lutheran Church of Togo (ELLT)

Re: Greetings to the LLC 2018 Summer Services, Snohomish, Washington

Dear brothers and sisters in faith God's peace!

We are so happy to learn that God has made your summer services possible again. We Togo believers hope that God will strengthen your faith through His gospel during the days you will pause before His face there. Even though we are not together with you during this event, we are present in spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit will be present among you and will give words to preach and open hearts to believe.

On this occasion we address our thankfulness to all believers there for their willingness to help us spiritually and also for humanitarian assistance. We send our gratitude to you hoping God our Heavenly Father will bless you. May He preserve you and us in this precious faith where the gospel of forgiveness is flowing day by day. We remember you in our prayers, we ask you to remember us in yours.

God's peace!

On behalf, of the Laestadian Lutheran Church of Togo

President Nicolas Ametepe Kofi DEH
Secretary Douglas Kofi AGNAVE

LUTHERAN LAESTADIAN CHUCHES OF TOGO P.O. BOX: 30151
PHONE:+228 99615650
E-MAIL: llchurchtogo@gmail.com

ECUADOR SUMMER SERVICES GREETINGS

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,
For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;
Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ

Philippians 1:3-6

Dear brothers and Sisters in faith,

Many warm greetings from the small Zion in Ecuador. We remember you in our prayers at the same time remember us in your prayers during the summer services. Warm greetings from the Congregations in Ecuador: Quito, Guayaquil, Riobamba, La Merced, Naranjito, Balzapamba, Salinas de Guaranda y Chiquicha.

Special Warm Greetings from the LLC Ecuadorean National Comitte:

TEODORO HERNANDEZ
ALEX PANIZO
MICHAEL MITE
MILTON MARTINEZ
MIGUEL SANTANA