

ENGLISH DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

August 22–24, 2025

Location: Risen Christ Lutheran Church, Plymouth, MI

Attendance: Present - ***Mr. Jonathan Busarow, Mr. Chris Cassel, Mr. Thomas Habitz Jr., Mr. Thomas Honebrink***, The Rev. Robert J. Kieselowsky, ***Mr. Rodrick Lane, The Rev. Justin D. Laughridge, Deaconess Jennifer L. Miller, The Rev. Jeffrey G. Miskus (Pres.),*** The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Morehouse, ***Mrs. Sally Naglich***, The Rev. Anthony J. Oliphant, ***Mr. Mark Pfundstein, Ms. Kristin Wellik, The Rev. Dr. Mark A. Wood, The Rev. Luke T. Zimmerman.***

District Staff – Mr. Albert Amling, Mr. Ron Grimm, Mr. John Hoover, The Rev. J. Derek Mathers.

Absent: The Rev. Zachary W. Marklevitz

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

1. Call to Order

Interim Chair Mr. Chris Cassel called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

2. Opening Devotions

Bishop Miskus led the Board in opening devotions.

Hymn #596 & Responsive Prayer.

He reflected on Philippians 3:17, urging believers to follow the biblical pattern of the baptismal life. This life begins in union with Christ's death and resurrection, leading to repentance, freedom from sin, and newness of life (Romans 6). Paul describes it as putting off the old self and putting on the new (Ephesians 4:22-5:7), living in holiness, love, forgiveness, and generosity (Colossians 3). Setting hearts on things above shapes a life pleasing to God—marked by sanctification, purity, brotherly love, quiet diligence, and service to others—striving to live in the holiness already given in Christ.

3. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Rev. Secretary Laughridge conducted the roll call.

With a majority of voting members present, a quorum was confirmed for this meeting.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Motion: **“to adopt the agenda as presented/amended”** was made, seconded, and carried.

5. Introductions

Interim Chair Cassel led introductions of Board members and guests. Members, VPs & Staff shared their various paths (by election and appointment) to the Board of Directors and noted their appreciation for the opportunity to serve the District & see our Ministries up close via Board of Directors visitation.

6. Review of Prior Meeting

Interim Chair Cassel offered a review of key items from the last meeting.

7. Review of AD 2025 English District Convention

Interim Chair Cassel led discussion on outcomes and reflections from the 2025 Convention.

Summary of Comments Regarding the 2025 English District Convention:

Participants reported a generally positive convention experience, highlighting strong preparation by staff and volunteers, meaningful presentations, and active youth involvement. Some concerns were raised about climate conditions in worship spaces, and there was discussion about exploring alternative venues and cost-sharing partnerships for future gatherings.

8. Approval of Minutes

Motion: **“to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on June 25th, 2025”** was made, seconded, and carried.

At 10:00am, the Board stood in recess. It reconvened at 10:15am.

9. Carver Policy Governance Model

Overview of Board purpose and functioning presented by Interim Chair Cassel.

- ++ Review of relevant documents
- ++ Carver Policy Model Powerpoint (2025 & 2018 Editions)
- ++ Board operates in the left-hand kingdom (business) stuff, but is not involved in day to day operations.
- ++ Board uses a modified version of the Carver Model, suitable for non-profits.
- ++ Board supports the District’s work without managing the Staff.
- ++ Noted differences between “Pure” Implementation and English District-LCMS implementation.

++ End Statements are categorized in order to meet the broad interests and needs of the people both within and without our existing Congregations.

++ Our District, in terms of End Statements, reflects and in some ways refines the overarching priorities of Synod itself in how it operates and conducts ministry.

++ Question: "Are our End Statements demonstrably achievable?"

++ Review of English District Policies & Corporate Ops Manual

Responsibilities and Expectations of Board Members, presented by Rev. Zimmerman

++ The Board of Directors discussed the purpose and responsibilities of the English District Board. The focus is not on how the Board is structured, but on the duties it carries out in service to both the District and Synod. The Board's role is to oversee the President's non-ecclesiastical responsibilities, while his ecclesiastical supervision rests with LCMS President Matthew Harrison. In clarifying its identity, the Board noted what it is called to do and what falls outside its scope. Reference was also made to the three primary areas of focus outlined in the District's Corporate Operations Manual.

The Board stood in Recess @ 12:15pm. It was called to order for Friday afternoon @ 1:05pm.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

Afternoon Devotions

Vice President Rev. Robert Kieselowsky led the afternoon devotions. The Theme was "work done in the Kingdom so that others would know the rich mercy and love of God". This is the message of the Bible and also shapes our work as a Board of Directors. The Scripture reading utilized was Luke 5 – the calling of the Twelve.

9. (Continued)

-- Responsibilities & Expectations of Board Members (Rev. Zimmerman)

-- Document with this same name was discussed and presented.

-- Of note, Board Members will:

- 1) Heed Limitations on Authority
- 2) Prepared to attend and participate in Board Meetings
- 3) Take part in shaping the Board's Actions

4) Abide by Corporate Actions taken by the Board (One Voice Principle)

5) Seek to serve the District and not one's own self-benefit

6) Recognize Accountability

10. President's Triennial Theme

President/Bishop Miskus presented the triennial theme and its applications.

Bishop Miskus' August 2025 devotional for the Board of Directors focused on the triennial theme, "Living our Baptized Lives in Christ," with a particular emphasis on humble servanthood from Philippians 2. Paul calls believers, on the basis of Christ's love and fellowship in the Spirit, to unity, humility, and putting others' needs before their own. This does not mean denying personal gifts or abilities, but recognizing Christ in others and treating them with honor. In baptism, we die to selfishness and live to serve, reflecting Jesus' own example—true God who willingly set aside His glory, became a servant, and was obedient to death on a cross for our salvation.

Scripture repeatedly calls believers to serve the Lord and one another, identifying themselves as "servants of Christ." Many verses were shared in order to highlight the centrality of this theme. Christ's humility was followed by His exaltation, showing that God vindicates His people in the end, freeing them to serve without fear of being taken advantage of.

For the Board, humble servanthood means understanding and faithfully carrying out responsibilities, engaging actively in meetings, setting policies, providing oversight, encouraging congregations, and advising the Bishop and staff. For the District staff, it means serving in their specific vocations, equipping and advising pastors and congregations, and working together in unity—trusting God to care for His Kingdom while putting others ahead of themselves.

Three points of change emphasis:

- 1- Circuits are getting more spread out
- 2- Retirement (of workers) Impact on Calling Congregations
- 3- Same number of Congregations, but only 50% of the Congregants

11. Appointment of Treasurer

Bylaw 9.1.2 of the ED-LCMS Bylaws prescribes that a Treasurer be appointed to carry out the responsibilities designated to them. Pursuant to this Bylaw, the Board of Directors of the ED-LCMS will carry out its fiduciary responsibility to appoint a Treasurer to serve the District as an Officer of the District, responsible for the execution of proper financial records and transactions on behalf of the District.

Motion: **"to appoint Ms. Sally Naglich as Treasurer of the ED-LCMS"** was made, seconded, and carried.

12. Election of Board Leadership

Bylaw 9.1.3 of the ED-LCMS Bylaws prescribes that a Chair and Vice-Chair be elected to carry out the responsibilities designated to them. Pursuant to this methodology, Rev. Secretary Laughridge (being ineligible to serve in these offices as an Elected Officer of the District) administered the Election of a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Nominations for Chairperson of the Board were received from the floor as follows:

Rev. Luke Zimmerman & Mr. Chris Cassel

The first ballot for Chairperson of the Board yielded the election of ***Rev. Luke Zimmerman*** as Chairperson of the Board for the 2025-2028 Triennium.

Nominations for Vice Chairperson were received as follows:

Mr. Tom Honebrink & Mr. Chris Cassel

The first ballot for Vice Chairperson of the Board yielded the election of ***Mr. Chris Cassel*** as Vice Chairperson of the Board for the 2025-2028 Triennium.

The Board stood in recess at 3:05pm on Friday afternoon.

13. Fellowship Event

Evening fellowship hosted at the Naglich home, Waterford, MI. The Board wishes to thank the Naglich family for their gracious hosting, and also notes that LCEF VP Mr. John Hoover is our most skilled water-skier, by far.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

Rev. Chairman Zimmerman called the meeting to order @ 8:30a.

Reconvene and Morning Devotions

Devotions led by VP Rev. Anthony Oliphant. The Theme was “when the faithful gather in the presence of their God, they perceive the truth”, and the Scripture reading utilized was Psalm 73.

+++++

The Board of Directors is responsible for officially closing out the actions of a District Convention, specifically pursuant to its final day of proceedings.

Motion: **“To Approve the Minutes from the Last Day of 2025 ED-LCMS Convention”** was made, seconded, and carried.

14. President’s Report

Bishop Miskus’ August 2025 report emphasized the triennium vision, *“Living the Baptized Life in Christ”* (Galatians 2:20). He opened with gratitude to staff, volunteers, and the Board of Directors for their efforts in the successful June Convention and noted that the implementation of adopted resolutions is now underway.

During July and August, the Bishop traveled extensively across the District—Nebraska, Michigan, Ontario, Georgia, and Pennsylvania—for preaching, teaching, installations, weddings, and leadership meetings, while continuing to prioritize Sunday visits to congregations for worship and fellowship. He also met with a Korean congregation in California exploring LCMS membership and discussed the possibility of a school in their community. ***(The Board held a side discussion about the congregation’s loan terms, ultimately approving a motion to continue the existing terms.)***

The Bishop provided a detailed update on the CCC legal case. Although the District won the initial judgment, the property in question was sold below market value to an entity tied to CCC members. Legal action to challenge the sale continues, with Arizona law offering helpful precedent. Board discussion also clarified past issues and reaffirmed the current status of the lawsuit.

He continues to support congregations in the call process, working with staff, Circuit Visitors, and call committees as multiple calls are active and more are expected. He also serves on the advisory board of Canada Corporation, helping guide its gradual integration into the LCEF system.

Pastoral care remains central to his ministry, ranging from addressing restrictions and conflicts to participating in formal dispute resolution, while drawing on decades of pastoral experience.

Ongoing communication with VPs, CVs, and staff is maintained through regular meetings and weekly staff gatherings for prayer, devotions, and ministry updates. Bishop Miskus expressed his thanks for the smooth transition from outgoing secretary Rev. Luke Zimmerman to Rev. Justin Laughridge. He concluded by giving thanks to God for sustaining and blessing the work of the English District.

***** The Board notes its thanksgiving for Mr. Jim Thielen for his many years of faithful service to this Board in relation to CanCorp. *****

15. End Statements: Past, Present, Future

No further discussion on this item, but Rev. Chair Zimmerman notes that we did intend to appoint an Ends Statement Task Force.

This was carried out, & Task Force Members Appointed include: Rev. Dr. Mark Wood, Mr. Chris Cassel, Mrs. Jennifer Miller.

The Board stood in recess @ 9:50am & reconvened @ 10:00am.

16. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Naglich presented the financial report. Questions and discussion followed, including the main expenses that are covered by Congregational gifts to the District. Amortization terms for a couple of District-lended loans were discussed.

17. Electoral Circuit Exceptions & Finalization

Rev. Secretary Laughridge informed the Board that its June 2025 alignment of Electoral Circuits (ECs) was accepted by the Synod Secretary's Office, and that of the 1st VP of Synod. Pursuant to this proposal, the ED-LCMS has 11 Electoral Circuits (22 total votes). Our Visitation Circuits (VCs) were reviewed, along with their Synodical EC designations. Circuit Visitors and Praesidium Members have been notified accordingly in regard to their responsibilities re: Circuit Forums. The hard deadline for Circuit Forums = October 18th, 2025.

Motion: **"To affirm the Synodically endorsed alignment for the 11 Electoral Circuits of the ED-LCMS for the 2026 Synodical Convention"** was made, seconded and carried.

18. Constitution Committee Report

Presented by Rev. Luke Zimmerman.

Motion: **"To approve revisions to Constitutions and Bylaws for Peace-Fremont & Shepherd of the Coast – Palm Coast"** was made, seconded, and carried.

19. Endowment Fund Report

Presented by Treasurer Sally Naglich, on behalf of the Committee. Information was given on the current financial position of the Endowment, the different purposes of Endowment Grants, and current applicants/recipients. A brief discussion was had, in regard to possible diversification of the overall fund management.

Motion: **"To approve Grant Year #2 for CELC-Aurora, ON."** Was made, seconded, and carried.

20. School Ministry Report

The School Ministry report, submitted by Executive Albert Amling, reflects ongoing efforts to support English District schools, church workers, and emerging ministries under the Synod's End Statements (2022–2025). The report is structured around three guiding themes: All Grace, All Sufficiency, All Things. Under All Grace, Amling notes pastors exploring the possibility of starting schools or preschools, with Synod's Genesis process providing structured support. Under All Sufficiency, emphasis is placed on visitation and supporting church workers' wellbeing, though Amling's recent knee surgery has limited travel. He encourages congregations to engage in the Synod's Set Apart to Serve initiative, which fosters vocational discernment among youth. Amling highlights the joy of seeing young people's faith at the recent National Youth Gathering. Under All Things, he reports that the District currently has 37 schools and preschools, with Grace, Wyoming set to house a Lutheran high school in partnership with the Michigan District. Accreditation processes are underway for three schools and two preschools, and he participated in the National Accreditation Commission and the Gospel Conference for Education Executives. Amling conveys gratitude for the opportunity to serve, emphasizing joyful partnership in advancing Lutheran education and church worker recruitment.

21. Assistant to Bishop's Report

Rev. J. Derek Mathers, Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Mission Executive, reported on his work as the new triennium begins under Bishop Miskus. Reflecting on the recent District Convention theme, "Living Our Baptized Life in Christ," and the LCMS Youth Gathering theme, "Endure", (With Jesus/Together/To The End) he linked both with the previous triennium's theme, "God in All Things, Without Borders," forming three adapted focus statements that unite endurance, baptismal living, and mission without boundaries.

Mathers continues as co-chair of the Ministerial Health Commission with Pastor Tim Holzerland, supported by Parish Nurse Marianne Jackson and a team of eight, serving church workers and families in wellness matters. In the Mission Action Team, he welcomed Dr. Mark Wood as new co-chair following Rev. Justin Laughridge's election as District Secretary. The team is actively responding to numerous inquiries for mission starts and development across North America, with a need for additional members.

In his role as Assistant to the Bishop, Mathers aims to complement and strengthen the Bishop's leadership, support Board of Directors' goals, and advance district mission efforts. Upcoming commitments from September to November 2025 include multiple regional church worker gatherings, a Mission Nation Collaboration Team meeting, and the LCC–LCMS Pastor Koinonia Gathering.

The Board stood in recess @ 12:05pm

SATURDAY LUNCH

Lunch with Circuit representatives. The Board thanks local Pastors for meeting with us & sharing with regard to their ministries. Pastors and Laity from Zion Lutheran Church & Martin Luther Chapel joined the Board and shared about their local Congregations.

The Board was called to order @ 1:10pm

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

Afternoon Devotions

Led by Vice President Rev. Michael Morehouse. The Theme was “Our Counsel and Wisdom comes from the Lord, not from Man”, and the Scripture reading utilized was Proverbs 16.

22. LCEF Report

Vice-President Hoover presented the LCEF report, offering a financial and ministry update for the English District through July 2025. He noted that the District maintains a significant portfolio of loans with recent approvals and fundings, while also reporting that no loans are currently delinquent or maturing. Investment accounts remain strong, and promotional efforts continue with new savings and investment products. These savings and investment products are geared specifically to the members, church workers, and youth of our Congregations.

Hoover also highlighted upcoming engagements, including visits to congregations and participation in several regional pastors’ conferences. Overall, the report reflected stable finances, healthy lending activity, and active outreach to congregations and leaders across the District.

23. LCMS Foundation Report

Ron Grimm, Gift Planning Counselor, reports working with 25 active donor gift plans with an estimated value of \$6.6 million, alongside 13 new prospects in early stages. Sixteen testamentary gifts are projected by year’s end, totaling over \$8.25 million. He has assisted three congregations in establishing investment accounts and endowments amounting to \$150,000 and supported campaigns such as the Lutheran High School gymnasium project. Grimm’s work includes gift confirmations, presentations on lifetime giving, and visits to congregations in Arizona, Ohio, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and New York. He continues to conduct congregational endowment reviews, donor visits, and educational presentations. Notably, two direct gifts (stock and property) are pending finalization, and multiple virtual meetings with leaders have been completed. Looking ahead, Grimm plans to visit additional congregations in Michigan, New York, and New Jersey for giving presentations and investment discussions. His report reflects steady donor cultivation, significant projected outcomes, and a continued emphasis on congregational partnerships to strengthen endowments and encourage planned giving. Mr. Grimm closed with Proverbs 16:9, emphasizing God’s direction in these efforts.

24. Board Appointments

A number of Board-designated appointments were carried out in keeping with the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors. These resulted in the following appointments:

To Endowment Fund Board of Managers: **Ms. Kristin Wellik**

Advisory Representative to 2026 Synodical Convention: **Mr. Tom Honebrink (Alt. Ms. Kristin Wellik)**

To LCEF Loan Committee: **TBD** --- Appointment scheduled for November 2025 Meeting.

25. Executive Session

At 1:50pm, the Board entered Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. The executive session was completed at 2:30pm.

26. Preliminary Budget

Treasurer and Finance Committee presented the preliminary budget for review.

The English District Ministry Plan outlines preliminary budget assumptions for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2027. Congregational support is budgeted based on prior year contributions and ongoing discussions, including support from Canadian congregations during their transition to LCEF. Board Designated Funds are allocated for conventions/conferences (\$131,900), technology/property maintenance (\$62,400), Endowment grants (\$216,000), LCMS Foundation gift planning (\$55,000), and Chicago grants (\$30,000). Bequests and grants not yet received are excluded from revenue, while LCEF operating results will be incorporated in November. The Endowment Fund contributes \$293,000 to ministry grants, with salary adjustments planned to align with cost-of-living increases over three years. Health insurance costs have risen by 14.75%, covering three employees. \$55,000 is allocated for LCMS Foundation Planned Giving Counselor, reducing the Endowment Fund corpus. The plan includes a \$30,000 annual partnership with DRLM, four Board of Director meetings at District congregations, and Synod support retained at 10% of congregational contributions. Forecasted expenses include allocations for Endowment grants (\$80,000), property replacement (\$3,000), and LCMS Foundation gift planning (\$55,000). The budget reflects a strategic approach to resource allocation, ensuring alignment with ministry goals and financial sustainability.

The Treasurer has presented the English District LCMS Ministry Plan, detailing income, expenses, and changes in net assets from 2024 to 2027. Income sources include unrestricted and restricted congregational support, gifts, investment income, loan interest, and other revenues. Major expenses cover synod contributions, grants, salaries, benefits, conferences, and administrative costs. The plan highlights fluctuations in income and

expenditures, with significant revenue from asset sales in 2024. Forecasts for 2026 and 2027 show efforts to stabilize finances, including board-designated funds for grants and initiatives. Overall, the plan reflects a strategic approach to managing resources for ministry and operational sustainability.

27. End Statements Reading Assignment

Board members assigned reading: The Policy Governance Model and the Role of the Board Member by John & Miriam Carver.

28. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was reported at this time.

29. Future Meeting Dates and Locations:

November 4 (Travel), 5–6, 2025: St. Louis, MO – Airport Hilton & Chapel of the Cross - STLMO

February 6-9, 2026: Houston, TX

May 2026: TBD, in conjunction with District Church Workers Conference

30. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

The Board made its final adjournment at 3:25pm. Closing prayer led by Vice President Rev. Anthony Oliphant.

SUNDAY

Worship and Departure

Submitted by

Rev. Justin D. Laughridge

Secretary – ED LCMS

September 9, 2025