



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

April 9, 2013

Mrs. Anne Carter, Former Council President
Grace Lutheran Church
435 Westover Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Ms. Deb Sands, SAWC Chairperson
Amazing Grace worshipping community
S14670 County Road FF
Eleva, WI 54738

Dear Mrs. Carter and Ms. Sands,

Following the summary judgment rendered by the circuit court, the two factions in disagreement at Grace Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, apparently came to differing interpretations as to the January 16, 2012, adjudication decision of the Synod Council, specifically the interpretation of point three of the decision: "That Grace Lutheran Church immediately recognize that anyone who meets the criteria of *C8.02(c) and who does *not* want to remain affiliated with LCMC is a voting member of Grace Lutheran Church. Individual members who wish to remain affiliated with LCMC may hold associate membership status at Grace Lutheran Church as per *C8.02.d., if they so desire." Additionally, we have received 2 letters from Mrs. Anne Carter to the Synod Council dated April 4, 2013 and April 5, 2013. It is evident from these communications that Mrs. Carter and those who concur with her point of view grossly misunderstand the Synod Council's adjudication decision, constitutional interpretation, and the polity and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Because the judge has directed both parties back to the Synod Council for guidance and direction, the Synod Council of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin provides the following clarification of point three referenced above:

1. The January 16, 2012, Synod Council decision required immediate action. In response, the LCMC faction conducted two disaffiliation votes seeking to disaffiliate from ELCA. These votes on February 26 and May 30, 2012, were done in response to the Synod Council decision. By their actions and decisions, those who occupy the building at 202 West Grand have demonstrated their ongoing desire to "remain affiliated with LCMC." Thus, all persons who are not affiliated with Amazing Grace, a synodically authorized worshipping community, immediately "hold associate membership status at Grace Lutheran Church."

2. If those who hold associate membership status do not wish to hold such status because of their LCMC affiliation, they may withdraw their Grace Lutheran Church associate member status and have no affiliation with Grace Lutheran Church.

3. If those who hold associate membership status wish to be full voting members of Grace Lutheran Church, they may make membership application to the new ELCA Congregation Council to indicate that they do "not want to remain affiliated with LCMC." The Synod Council hopes that many associate members will relinquish their LCMC affiliation so that they may qualify for possible voting membership at Grace Lutheran Church in the future.

4. Those Grace Lutheran members affiliated with Amazing Grace, a synodically authorized worshipping community, and all others who were unconstitutionally removed from voting membership from Grace Lutheran Church are immediately restored to full voting membership.

As a result of the adjudication decision of the Synod Council, the constitutional implications for Grace Lutheran's leadership are clear. The Synod Council states the following so that there can be no misunderstanding or misinterpretation regarding membership and leadership:

- Because the LCMC affiliated persons at 202 West Grand who acted as a Congregation Council are immediately associate members of Grace Lutheran Church, they no longer hold elected positions of leadership; only full voting members are constitutionally eligible to hold elected leadership positions in an ELCA congregation.
- Initially, only those associated with Amazing Grace are eligible for elected leadership at Grace Lutheran Church.
- Former leadership affiliated with LCMC is to immediately cease and desist all matters regarding the governance of the congregation and immediately take cooperative steps to transfer all governance authority to Amazing Grace leadership (turn over facility keys, financial records, data bases, account signatory authority, etc., and provide all information and complete access to information to govern the congregation). All personal property of Grace Lutheran Church shall remain at 202 West Grand Avenue.
- All member applications of Grace Lutheran associate members must be submitted to the new ELCA Congregation Council for consideration.
- Eligibility for the Grace Lutheran Foundation board of directors will also be determined by constitutional membership criteria.

The adjudication decisions of the Synod Council of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin are final. With the above clarification, the Synod Council hopes and prays that Grace Lutheran Church will engage in ministry and mission as a fully participating member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and that the long road to reconciliation and healing may begin.

Sincerely,

The Synod Council of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin – ELCA

cc: Tom Guelzow, Synod Attorney
Pastors of the Chippewa Valley Conference – ELCA