

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD COUNCIL
SYNOD OFFICE, DENVER, COLORADO
JANUARY 23-24, 2009**

Members present:

Bishop Allan Bjornberg	Pat Holman
Vice President Linda Bobbitt	Allison Johnson
Treasurer Dennis Reynolds	John Knutson
Secretary Katherine Cruson	Jan Krakow
Kathy Armstrong	Jeff Louden
Jim Bailey	Paul Rosin
Sue Brandt	Robert Sandoval
Dave Cruson (Friday)	Jeff St. Clair
Chuck Exley	
Peggy Fetchenhier	
Vera Guebert-Steward	

Members absent: Mike Muirhead, Richard Nehring, Chris Larson Renquist,
Synod staff members present: Dan Bollman, Madelyn Busse, Jim Hytjan, Janice Ladd-Horkey,
Kent Mueller.

Guests: Brad Wood – LAM-CO (Friday); Ruth Hoffman-LAM-NM (Friday); Rod Pearce—
Lutheran Ranches of the Rockies (Friday); Pr. Michael Fick – Campus Ministry Committee
granting committee chairman (Saturday)

The meeting opened Friday, January 23, 2009, at 8:40am with a welcome by Vice President
Linda Bobbitt, followed by introductions of all attending. Vera Guebert-Steward will be in
charge of worship and devotions for Synod Council meetings.

Opening Worship was led by Vera. The four keys of family: rituals, service, family
devotions/worship, and caring conversation will be modeled at Synod Council gatherings.

**Linda introduced the session by stating the 3 foci of this meeting: 1) How we live out our
Vision, Passion, Action (VPA) vision. 2) Funding. 3) Role and responsibilities of Synod
Council.**

1) She gave a brief history of VPA from 2005 through 2008. How to live out our VPA vision:
what do we focus on? How will we work together?

A. Focus

1. Goals (handout: RMS Goals and Associated Activities – not all-inclusive) After
reviewing current synod activities, three potential priorities emerged:
 - connections (synodical)
 - healthy leaders and congregations (synodical)
 - faith formation in congregations

Specific attention to each of these areas will build capacity for future efforts which may include
evangelism.

Does it meet a need? Does it reach a goal? The first two priorities create a place that gets the
attention of folks longing for a connection. Where is the world in this? Healthy congregations

will lead to connections with the world. The purpose is to deepen discipleship, bringing people to Christ. How do you encourage health? Identity (I), Connection (C), and Faith Formation (FF) are all equal to each other. $I=C + FF$, $C=I + FF$, $FF=I + C$. “Healthy leaders” is the key. Synod Council’s role may be increase leaders’ (lay and rostered) faith formation. The role of leader is as a transformer.

Small groups discussed these two questions: where is there leverage for success in each area? Where are the current strengths on which we can build?

The small group answers included the following:

Discovering a simple, common language; experience and activity vs. membership, realizing commonalities, stories we have, need more options for communicating with each other, say thank you, be affirming, combat “Congregationalism” (being lone ranger, as individuals and congregations), name attributes of health, pay attention to the diversity of synod in land, culture and spirituality; trust at the heart; positive, hopeful anticipation; Synod Council can serve as role models to synod and congregations; respond to communications (two-way communication); naming expectations in process, implying accountability; living the questions that we are continuing to ask: why are we here? Who are we?; educating lay leaders.

Strengths to build on, leverage points:

- A. 1. Intentional education opportunities for lay people in each congregation about what are healthy congregations 2. Synod Council
- B. 1. 32 congregations are in call process-a opportune time to study; financial, constitution, 2. Gatherings which work. 3. VPA. 4. Bishop and staff who are nurturing. 5. A model of connecting experts. 6. People connecting across denominations
- C. 1. People in leadership roles in congregations and synod. 2. Moxy to live the questions. 3. Synod diversity. 4. Theology. 5. Lutheran heritage
- D. People outside the church; 175 congregations; connection between congregation, synod, region, churchwide. Service: God’s work. Our hands. Assets; places of great generosity; technology; ecumenical partnerships; LAM; Outdoor ministry; other ministries.

We need to ask

- What is already happening in these areas?
- Where are the gaps?
- What is the best group to address this issue?

Once we have the principles, Synod Council members can use conversations between meetings with other groups, come back in September. We can connect with each other by dumping discoveries into an online discussion – using a Blog shared by this group. We need to spend intentional time working on this.

Condensing the principles to these phrases:

1. Interdependent ministry
2. Trust - relation-based trust
3. Naming expectations and the common goal
4. Naming attributes of health: Positive, hopeful anticipation: grace
5. Discovering common language
6. Communicate

7. Accompany
8. Diversity in unity; unity in diversity

Are “trust, communicate, and accompany” modeled in our conversations? How are these principles present in the work we do? Where might we look to improve ourselves? How can we use the strengths as leverage points? Having the conversation in that way, we model these principles. For each focus area we need to ask these questions and use the answers to develop recommendations

Rod Pearce, Lutheran Ranches of the Rockies:

Rod presented a PowerPoint show describing the extensive ministries of LRR. He shared the board’s decision to sell one of their properties near Red Feather Lakes and the difficulties they are having around water treatment requirements. They are one of 146 Lutheran outdoor ministries. LRR had 426 campers on site in 2008, but they need 800 to 1,000 campers to balance their budget. He is exploring ways to collaborate with Campus Ministry and other groups.

Ruth Hoffman, LAM-NM:

The New Mexico Lutheran Advocacy Ministry concentrates on issues of poverty and hunger. Nine ELCA Social Statements apply to poverty and hunger. Bishop stated that the trust, dependability, and reliability of the people in the Rocky Mountain Synod LAM offices is legendary. Legislators appreciate the unbiased information. The Ministry has strong partnerships with other agencies.

SC2009.1.3. MOTION: To approve the “Statement of Working Relationship Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-New Mexico.” Approved.

Brad Wood, LAM-CO:

The Colorado Lutheran Advocacy Ministry made a few changes in their Statement of Working Relationship LAM-CO.

SC2009.1.4. MOTION: To approve the changes to the “Statement of Working Relationship Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado.” Approved.

How do you see the potential and historical connections between LAM and with Synod Council? RMS LAM is better organized than most LAM’s in the nation, doing advocacy ministry very well. Having a Synod Council liaison with LAM was helpful. LAM wants an advocate in every congregation to build networks in NM and CO.

Budget proposal: Treasurer Dennis Reynolds

Anticipated revenues from congregations are reduced by \$200,000. 50% of our revenue goes to ELCA. RMS has \$300,000 to \$400,000 in reserves now. ELCA in mid-December made a commitment to keep benevolence at the same level. ELCA suggested that synods spend their existing reserves. Most of RMS reserves are with Vectra Bank; others with Mission Investment Fund. Auditors are being interviewed because the previous auditor is not going to audit the books this year. RMS currently has a loss of \$84,000 as of December 2008. 2008 Assembly was in the red. Events are expected to break even. The Synod Assembly budget is based on attendance of 425 to 450 people. Fixed costs are musicians, speakers. Per capita giving to synod –

congregations think they are giving 15%, but after looking at total income and total benevolence, it may be closer to 7%.

Future budgets will depend on the revised 2009 budget, as the economy influences congregation giving. Next budgets should try to focus on the areas of connections, faith formation, and healthy congregations. This means focusing our money, time, and energy.

A general discussion about the budget and its relationship to our priorities followed:

- Expect to see money supporting gatherings of leaders.
- Staff driven ministries; how will the Office of the Bishop re-organize duties? Focus priorities of staff on priorities of Synod Council.
- What are we as a synod doing that congregations could do? What should we as a synod be doing? We need visioning and dreaming to have a sense of direction. Look at where we want to be and figure that cost. We want to be vision-driven rather than budget-driven. This budget should clearly articulate our vision for ministry for the congregation as well as for the synod. We need an interpretative piece explaining Synod Council vision and mission. What is the role of the synod budget? How does this help the synod move forward, but not do what congregations need to do? Change budget to fit the 3 categories, model how we are good stewards. Is role of Synod Council to do, or to encourage creativity?
- Strong statement of commitment to the larger church.
- Take some of duties of Youth and Household Ministry from Assistants to the Bishops.
- How are we supporting ministries through this budget? Are there places we are supporting the institution rather than the ministry? What is our appropriate relationship with the ministry? Agency support – is that the appropriate place for ministry? 1. What is our relationship to these ministries? Are there different ways we can partner with the agencies/campus ministry? 2. How does staffing reflect our priorities? Campus Ministries have looked at different models for ministry. The proposed budget includes a 20% cut to Campus Ministry in 2010 to encourage more sites to look at different models. Other places have been looking at different ways of using the resources (Church in Society Board). Have we given ministries and agencies the tools to be self-sufficient, yet a part of the ministry of the synod? LFS receives \$130,000 as partners; they have blessed us immensely. How do we evaluate any ministry? The first requirement is that the ministry supports the wider mission of the church. RMS has kept support of outdoor ministry the same for 10 years as they quadrupled their ministry. Their goals support our goals.
- What are the hard decisions: what do we need to cut/move? How can we most efficiently use the dollars we are given? Whose responsibility is it to attend to the ministry?
- Know the priorities before the budget is built.
- Priorities include the need to support youth and household ministry (includes campus ministry).
- We are hoping local congregations will take on the support of ministries. As RMS shifts more ministries from our budget to congregations, will we “force” congregations to decrease their benevolence to synod? A negative comment was “congregationalism”, the more we push congregations into an individualized setting, instead of interpreting into a connection. How do we know what should be done communally, and what should be congregationally? We are helping congregations become more contextually evangelical. How many ministries are happening within a mile of the congregations (such as campus ministry)? Consider widening the campus ministry to look toward young adult ministry. Congregations join together to support a common cause and goal.

- Model hope and trust.
- Apply to congregations' foundations for funds. Twenty congregations provide 1/3 of our support.
- Intentional education of lay leaders may promote stewardship. Stewardship is teaching a way of life.

Vera led a closing prayer.

Saturday, January 24, 2009

As Synod Council gathered at 8:30am, Linda asked each person to write on separate Post-It notes: 1. a question or comment about anything; 2. encouraging comments about models for campus ministry; 3. Thoughts about Staff position of Youth and Household Ministry.

Worship led by Vera, meditation by Bishop Bjornberg, prayers by Kathy Armstrong.

Vice President Bobbitt introduced the morning's topic: healthy congregations, faith formation. The foci on these areas: budget, the whole network that is the RMS, how we communicate. Katherine provided a handout of Committees, Boards, and Commissions; and a Synod Council Duties chart. Linda gave a Summary of Boards and Committees, as relating to baptismal vows.

Outdoor Ministry: They are separate corporations, have a liability firewall, have accountability only to their boards, and are connected with ELCA.

Campus Ministry: Pr. Michael Fick, a member of the Campus Ministry Board provided information to the council. The structural change is reflecting churchwide changes, still in process. Campus Ministers are under synod call for term calls. Payroll was from synod or in combination with other funds. Salary recommendation was through Synod Council. Churchwide changes: ceased being a term call, synod is now providing grants based on requests from each site, payroll decisions are made by each local board. Review is conducted by churchwide. Call, payroll, and accountability (review) are on 3 different levels. The RM Synodical goals for Campus Ministry: 1. Each site is to develop a personnel committee, to consider evaluation at that site. 2. To strengthen local boards. The change in funding creates a need/opportunity for local boards to make decisions they are not trained to do. Campus Ministry committee envisions a change in philosophy and approach happening over a period of time. Campus Ministry is 10% of synod budget. RMS honors the ministry of people who are serving. To strengthen the local boards the synod committee hopes to use videoconferencing to connect Campus Ministry committee and local boards. Many resources are available from ELCA.

The granting agency could be the seat of accountability. The proposed 20% cut in campus ministry budget is not across the board and does not take effect until 2010. Board considers the recommendations from quadrennial reviews. Consultations could include all sites this year to communicate the changes. If RMS committee is to make this change, what is the Synod Council vision for what may emerge? The synod needs \$150,000 from congregations to keep 2009 budget. Pr. Fick said: 1. Campus Ministry committee needs to know the budget figure before the

granting process. 2. Synod Council should instruct Campus Ministry committee about the process to engage with local boards and the timeline. 3. It is always helpful to talk directly with campus ministers. Bishop Bjornberg will meet with Madelyn, Pr. Fick, and others. Vera Guebert Steward and Pat Holman volunteered.

These are the principles from Synod Council

1. Ask for exploration by each site board.
2. Each site board should assess its current model.
3. State the reality of RMS budget.
4. Encourage local congregations be contacted about possible changes.

Reports:

A. Allison Johnson, Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) handout:

B. Jeff Loudon: 2008 assembly gave green grants. Grantees are requested to give updates. Handout will be emailed.

C. Katherine Cruson, Secretary:

SC2009.1.1 MOTION: On November 17, 2008, to extend a Call to Specialized Ministry to Pastor John Bauer, Director of Chaplains and Counselors at Pikes Peak Hospice and Palliative Care, Colorado Springs, CO. Approved.

SC2009.1.2. MOTION: On November 17, 2008, to extend a call to Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber to serve the House for All Sinners and Saints, an emergent ministry in Denver, CO. Approved.

SC2009.1.5. MOTION: To approve the minutes of Sept. 19-20, 2008. Approved.

D. Bishop Allan Bjornberg - written report

1. Mission Support
2. Advisability and safety of going to Juarez during Synod Assembly.
3. Proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality

SC2009.1.6. MOTION: To extend a call to Specialized Ministry to Cassandra “Sandy” Olson to serve as director of Alternatives for Simple Living for a term of three years. Approved.

SC2009.1.7. MOTION: To approve the amended and restated bylaws of Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center. Approved.

Eben Ezer Pr. Arne Bjelland is serving as interim chaplain. The chaplain could be called to All Saints Lutheran Church and serve the Brush parish.

Bishop Bjornberg will convey some information from Synod Council to Theological Conference next week. These suggestions were given: How seriously we take fiscal responsibility and ministry through VPA; Trust, relationship and accompany; change from leading to accompanying; Name the 3 priorities of connections (synodical), healthy leaders and

congregations, and faith formation in congregations; RMS will be dipping into reserves – hope that will be a model for congregations.

A draft Synod Assembly Resolution about VPA priorities was presented. The purpose is for communication with and a buy-in from the assembly. Synod Council decided to not present it as a resolution.

The following persons **volunteered to work on Synod Council priorities**: Faith formation: Jan Krakow, Kathy Armstrong; Healthy Congregations: Vera Guebert-Steward, Pat Holman, Jeff St. Clair; Connections: Paul Rosin, Dan Bollman, and John Knutson. Tell Linda who is the point person for each priority.

Vice President Bobbitt encouraged Synod Council members to meet with committees about VPA foci –go to meetings with committees & boards. VPA could put together talking points.

Consensus for Synod Council members to attend meetings of RMS committees and boards to share priorities and discuss lines of communication .

SC2009.1.8. Motion: To appoint Garrett Struessel to Campus Ministry Committee. Approved.

SC2009.1.9. Motion: To approve the recommendations from the Church in Society Board.

SC2009.1.10. Motion: To amend: remove Constitution language, Council affirms the restructuring and transition. Approved amendment.

Approved the amended motion of recommendations from the Church in Society Board.

Steering committee for Church in Society includes the chairman of Hunger Appeal, environment, LAM, includes Jeff Loudon, add a Synod Council member with foci and VPA.

Assembly offerings are collected at opening and closing worships. The Hunger Network offering is during plenary. If the assembly offering is donated to Border Ministries, pastors of Border/ El Paso will decide how to divide the offering.

SC2009.1.11. Motion: To approve the offerings from 2009 Synod Assembly be donated to Border Ministries. Approved.

Youth & Household Ministry is vital, find a way to fund the staff position.

Synod Assembly budget presentation:

Dennis highlighted differences between 2009 and 2010.

Line 12 will depend on RMS income.

Under line 6. Operating cash reserves – total need fluctuates. Now Synod Council has a basis for the Executive Committee to make decisions about the logical progression of cuts so as not to use all cash reserves. Dennis suggests we present this proposed budget, and have a contingency plan.

Line 49 leadership: money for the foci.

Lines 16,51,17,18 no groups were set up to use this amount.
Line 58 could be reduced back to \$3270. Approved.
The 20% reduction for campus ministry takes effect in 2010.
Lines 28, 30 were put in line 25 to Laramie WY, Las Cruces NM, and Logan UT.

SC2009.1.11.Motion: To approve the budget as presented to Synod Council with a plan to look at areas of revision from a small group that will aid in making decisions should we have revenue shortfalls. Approved.

Next meeting:

-Role of Synod Council as liaison. A suggestion was made that options be presented, instead of filling a void. Have some statements prepared in order to focus the discussion.

Closing prayer by Bishop Bjornberg. The meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

Katherine Cruson, Secretary
Janice Ladd-Horkey, Recorder

Next meetings: April 29, 2009 El Paso
 April 30-May 2 Synod Assembly
 Sept. 18-19 Denver
 Jan. 15-16, 2010 Denver

Sign on office in RMS building: VIP: Visionary Integration Professionals
“Principle – principal check”