

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD COUNCIL  
DENVER, COLORADO  
September 18-19, 2009**

Members present:

Bishop Allan Bjornberg	
Vice President Linda Bobbitt	Allison Johnson
Treasurer Dennis Reynolds	John Knutson
Secretary Katherine Cruson	Jan Krakow
Kathy Armstrong	Jeff Louden
Sue Brandt	Mike Muirhead
Dave Cruson	Richard Nehring
Chuck Exley	Paul Rosin
Peggy Fetchenhier	Robert Sandoval
Pat Holman	Jeff St. Clair

Members absent: Jim Bailey, Vera Guebert-Steward, Chris Larson Renquist  
Synod staff members present: Dan Bollman, Jim Hytjan, Janice Ladd-Horkey, Linda Staats  
Guests: Pr. Craig Settlage - ELCA Mission Support, Vocation and Education

The meeting opened Friday, September 18, 2009, at 8:45 am with a welcome by Vice President Linda Bobbitt followed by introductions of all attending. Bishop introduced Craig Settlage. John Knutson prayed. Paul led an exercise in "Here I stand." Linda B. reviewed the agenda. John Knutson and Paul Rosin will be the devotion leaders.

**Report from Churchwide Assembly: Linda and Bishop**

1045 voting members attended. 17 voting members were from Rocky Mountain Synod (RMS), including Bishop Bjornberg and Vice President Linda Bobbitt. Comments were added by voting members Katherine and Paul, ELCA staff member Craig, and visitor Dan Bollman. They noted the prayerful, respectful nature of the discussion for the Social Statement on Human Sexuality and the Ministry Principles. They also reviewed the many other actions, reports, and worships.

**Budget: Dennis Reynolds, Treasurer**

The synod audit is complete. The new auditor John Cutler has experience working with nonprofits. The auditor's report will be posted on RMS website. Income is down 4% (\$182,000) as of August. Expenses are in line with the budget. August is the worst month for many years. 26 congregations are \$2,000 or more behind in contributions. Dennis projects \$240,000 shortfall by end of fiscal year. Issues of sexuality discussion and the economy may be affecting income. General fund reserves are \$216,000, down from \$400,000. There could be \$160,000 left in reserves at end of year. There is \$900,000 in certain designated funds which could be re-designated, or we could borrow from designated funds and repay later. The 2010 budget approved by Synod Assembly may be cut by between \$300,000 and \$350,000. What is the expectation of congregational giving to synod? 15% from new starts, and most try to keep that level. History is to approve 15% at Synod Assembly. The average is 6 to 7%. The ELCA average is 5.8%.

### **What is Synod Council called to do?:**

Linda B. reviewed Vision, Passion, Action (VPA) purpose, goals, and guiding principles. The foci approved by Synod Council are: connections, healthy congregations and leaders, and faith formation. Executive Committee talked to some boards and committees; all wanted a personal connection with Synod Council, but each had a different role for that person. Synod Council is a policy board. Who are the people to be the connections? What resources do they need? What difference does Synod Council make? What leverage do we have?

Worship centered on Connections, with readings from James 1 and Mark 9.

### **Reports from Staff:**

#### **Bishop Bjornberg:**

Written report.

Valley, Denver, CO requested information about options for closing. Mountain of Faith, Tooele, UT issued a call to a non-Lutheran pastor. Prince of Peace, Casper WY moved into a new building, attendance is up 20%. Trinity, Evanston, WY redevelopment not working well – they are worried about their viability. United Church of the San Juans, Ridgway, CO has a building on their site. They are seeking approval as a federated church of the ELCA, with United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Staffing: welcome Linda Staats.

Bishop sent a letter to the synod's U.S. senators and representatives about the illegality and immorality of brutal interrogation as directed by Synod Assembly Resolution #6. The only response so far is from Sen. Bennett.

### **SC2009.9.1. MOTION: To extend leave from call for Dena Williams. Approved.**

Reaction to churchwide assembly action on sexuality: 5 to 10 congregations in RMS may leave ELCA. Our Savior, Roy UT has voted to begin process of leaving. Lutheran Church of the Cross in Evergreen, CO, Joy in Parker, CO, and St. Stephen, Northglenn, CO are talking about leaving. Oromo, Denver, CO lost 60% of its members.

One question is the possibility of congregations leaving. Another question is about congregations who are talking about withholding or re-directing funding.

### **Craig Settlage, ELCA Mission Support Office of Synodical Relations:**

Over the past 40 years, more and more financial support is retained in congregations. ELCA Blue Ribbon Committee said our current way of funding is the best way we know, even though it is not adequate. No other church body in USA has the resources ELCA has. 2009 budget was reduced by \$1.7 million. Impact across synods will be different as congregations react to sexuality issues. The more contact with congregations, telling the story, the more it will help people understand what ELCA is doing. A pattern of completely designated giving is disastrous for our church. Thanks to Synod Council for their commitment of sharing of dollars.

Jim Hytjan: written report. His job description with ELCA includes new ministry starts which include local consultation, local buy-in, synodical money, churchwide support. Renewing congregations include congregations talking to each other, like Natural Church Development.

**SC2009.9.2. MOTION: To adopt the “Evangelizing Congregations Mission Covenant.”  
Approved unanimously.**

This is a model of how congregations may intentionally think about ministry. It is leveraging relationships that are already in existence and encouraging congregations to talk with each other.

Sept. 27 Guillermo Yela, a Presbyterian (USA) minister, will be ordained in Albuquerque.

Linda Staats: written report. Western States Youth Gathering is dissolved. An intentional leadership development for youth has models in other synods. Other synods in Region 2 are not considering this, although there are many people from other synods interested in planning.

**Small Group Discussions: Having people to move plans forward:**

SC2009.9.3. MOTION: That the Synod Council authorize the creation and development of a team for the purpose of communicating to all congregations within the Rocky Mountain Synod and authorize the use of non-operational funds as designated by the Executive Committee.

**SC2009.9.4. MOTION: To amend the motion by replacing “communicating” with “interpreting the mission of the synod and the church”. Approved.**

**SC2009.9.3. MOTION as amended: That the Synod Council authorize the creation and development of a team for the purpose of interpreting the mission of the synod and the church to all congregation within the Rocky Mountain Synod and authorize the use of non-operational funds as designated by the Executive Committee. Approved.**

**Small group discussions:**

Building lease: Dave, Paul, Robert, Richard – to be discussed outside of Synod Council meeting  
Policies review (personnel, insurance)  
Salary Recommendations (A group is already meeting- Don Filegar is chairman.)

Questions to consider during discussions: Who? When? Form group from Synod Council or delegate to others? Resources?

Constitution: Katherine, Linda B., Robert, Paul, may add other people. Deadlines: Nov. 15 to Synod Council, Nov. 27 to congregations. Add to/subtract from constitution, relationships with all groups (including separate groups such as Green Committee), define Synod Council roles.

Connections: Peggy, Richard, John: 5 out of 10 conference dean interviews have been completed. By Oct 15<sup>th</sup> they will report to deans. Jim Bailey will work with Kent for RMS website as a resource center – worship videos, conflict, prayer, listserv with congregation presidents, youth workers, etc. Peggy – sister congregations; eConnections feature a congregation each week. Congregations can define themselves in non-geographical ways: e.g., inner city, rural, college.

Healthy Leaders/Healthy Congregations: will gather 2 lay, 2 clergy, 1 AIM or diaconal minister who will gather best practices of congregations; decide how to distribute materials; framework. They will report to Council in January. Include parish nurses?

Mission Interpretation: Use Congregational Ministries Board, an existing structure. Ask them to develop an action plan. Develop a theme. Develop a Q & A. Mike will be touchstone.

Dan Bollman: Written report. Transition team has looked at policies; Healthy Starts at the beginning of a new call, pastor and congregation behavior after a call has ended. The team needs to write up a policy which could be adopted by Synod Council. Deans can be trained to be a part of the call process, so they can receive phone calls about the call process. Deans can put together a document of their responsibilities, and receive training in call process, as well as hear results of “connections” interviews. Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp: Executive Director Rob Pearce resigned. The board president has overseen day-to-day operations. They have raised close to \$90,000. Mark Burkhart will work with the board on future directions. Sky Ranch is owned by an association of congregations from the ALC Central States and run by a board.

**Green Committee: Jeff Loudon**

Written report. Three people are on the team plus Jeff. Their challenge is to connect the stories. Give name and email of someone from congregations who would like to be an “informer”.

Closing devotion: Affirmation of Baptism, Kathleen Armstrong.

## **Saturday, September 19, 2009**

Opening prayer at 9:15am

**SC2009.9.5. CONSENSUS: Synod Council will appoint Ann Hultquist to Candidacy Committee. Approved.**

**Secretary Report: Katherine Cruson**

**SC2009.9.6. MOTION: To approve Synod Council minutes of April 29, 2009. Approved.**  
Corrections: page 3 AB is Bishop Allan Bjornberg; page 2 Linda Staats is part-time.

**SC2009.9.7. MOTION: To approve all required synod constitution amendments except †S.6.04.B09. and †S10.01. Approved.**

**SC2009.9.8. MOTION: To approve optional synod constitution amendments. Approved.**

**SC2009.9.9. MOTION: To approve †S.6.04.B09. Approved.**

We will add quota numbers for lay, clergy, men, women, youth, young adults in report to Synod Assembly and other reports. We need to consider the logistics for Synod Assembly. Bishop and Kent will communicate about constitution changes, including youth and young adults as Synod Assembly voting members. Allison, Linda S., and Dave will review materials.

**SC2009.9.10. MOTION: To approve †S10.01. Approved.**

## **Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Allison Johnson**

Written report. 200 attended the LYO Convention.

**SC2009.9.11. MOTION: To approve the expenditure in 2010 of \$2000 as seed money to support the development of a Region II Leadership/Discipleship School for Youth.**

**Approved.**

The Executive Committee will decide in December where the money comes from and will bring that decision to Synod Council in January, 2010.

**SC2009.9.12. MOTION: To propose that minimum remuneration for supply preaching be \$150 for first service, \$50 for each addition service and full IRS mileage. To propose considering paying more for time if over 1 hour is necessary for driving each way.**

**Approved.**

This will be listed in synod salary guidelines and on synod website.

### Constitution changes:

Give flexibility: set goals and priorities, ministry teams, etc. Get rid of boards, committees we are not using. VPA and boards are not aligned or correlated. How do we want the boards structured? How much should members be designated in elections?

Three categories of groups:

Oversight groups: necessary for ministry of synod: candidacy, campus ministry

Catalyst groups: enable ministry between congregations, etc. These may be aligned with our current goals and priorities (VPA): e.g., global missions

Combination of catalyst and oversight groups:

Use a matrix with a continuum from required to “mission”, structure vs. self-organizing

Diversity: Regional diversity/conference, lay/clergy, age, gender, size parameters, audience impact, experience, terms of office

Each board can state what it needs (experience, geographical, etc.).

Training, equipping, and education are a part of every group.

Some groups could have some elected plus appointed members– appointed to fill the needs.

What is the appropriate level (is a synod committee necessary – or a conference level)? Who is it serving, or who does it need to serve? Which impact only a few people, or many? Broader impact indicates election, greater leadership skill.

Include the ELCA Mission Statement and RMS Purpose on materials:

1. Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world. (ELCA Mission Statement)
2. Every person, every congregation, every ministry bolding serving God’s mission in Christ (RMS Purpose)

### **Leased Office Space Subcommittee**

A subcommittee of Richard, Dennis, Dave, and Robert will look at office space options, identify needs for space, information from staff and others, possibly extending lease one year.

### **Audit committee:**

At January Synod Council meeting Dennis and Robert will recommend committee members.

### Compensation Guidelines committee

This will be formed by Bishop. Revised guidelines will be on the synod website. 1.7% increase is recommended by Mountain States Employers Council. A Bishop's letter could be a preface, including such factors as economy, variety of states, a God of abundance, ranges of compensation. Pastors set their own housing percentage. Revise the worksheet, include websites for resources. Clergy Financial Services, Loveland, CO is a recommended resource.

### 2009 Synod Assembly

Gender equity – One concern seemed to be how to work with people, especially women, on leave from call. A handout for going on leave may be prepared which would encourage connections, and include what the synod can expect from the person on leave and what that person can expect from the synod. Linda B. will ask the gender equity group if they want to do more. The Transition team could add this to their charge.

### 2010 Synod Assembly:

Kent and Bishop Allan are building the teams. Paul has volunteered.

Suggestion to the assembly planning committee: St. John's Bible facsimile was in the center of worship in churchwide assembly, from St. John's Abbey in Collegeville MN. \$750 is required for insurance purposes. An original St. John's Bible could come in an exhibit to a museum.

### **Next meeting, Jan. 15-16, 2010:**

Role of Synod Council as liaison

Discussion of the process of electing a bishop in 2012

Building lease thru Jan. 2012 - report from committee

Audit committee members to be proposed by Dennis and Robert

Salary survey

Budget proposal to be presented to 2010 Synod Assembly

Reports from small groups: Healthy leaders/healthy congregations, constitution, connections, mission interpretation

Mission statement and ELCA logo be placed on all our working statements

2010 Synod Assembly update

Green ministries update

LYO report

Region II event

2<sup>nd</sup> Mile giving (Sierra Pacifica) – raising awareness of benevolence; how to respond to congregations that want to give to synod but not to ELCA.

Take the pulse of the synod as we experience it

John and Paul serve as devotion planners, chaplains

Campus ministries responses: feedback from Bishop

Companion synod update: calm, but not placid in terms of political, Mahajanga has split into 2 synods. RMS expects a request for companion synod for both. Second grant from Companion Synod Committee to Hoole as a woman theologian to increase English fluency; she may be going to Norway for her Ph.D.

Lutheran Social Services of the South, El Paso, TX is in major re-structuring; they are requiring all services to have more full paying customers. Peter Nicolaou is leaving. Foster child care has dropped drastically.

Closing devotions “Grounded” by Pat Holman. John 8

The meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

Katherine Cruson, Secretary  
Janice Ladd-Horkey, Recorder

Next meetings: Jan. 15-16, 2010  
May 26 – Synod Council  
May 27-29 Synod Assembly, Denver Hyatt Regency Downtown