

Synod Council Meeting;  
May 4, 2017

Present: Bishop Gonia, VP Bohling, Dennis Reynolds, Treasurer; Jody Brammer-Hoelter; Jerry Ethridge; Joan Jacobson; Deb Elstad; Rev. Larry Davis; Rev. Dana Peterson; Diana Biggs; Todd Harriod; Rev. Sara Wirth; Rev. Julie Brooks; Betty Peppin: Susan Mitchell; Hendrik Samosir

Guests: Janice Ladd-Horkey; Rev. Sarah Moening; Peter Severson; Andy Sprain; Rev. Judith van Osdol; Ruth Hoffman; Rev. Kent Mueller; Rev. Tim Orlowski

Absent: Maggie Nieberger

**SC 2017.05.01** Motion was made by Jerry and seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed.

- One Leave from Call Status for Rev. Woody Carlson, Rev. Steve Berke, Deacon Margy Schmidt-Ajer
- Retirement Status for Rev. Doug Mathison
- New Board members for Urban Servant Corp
- Extend Call to Christine Higuivia-Street to St. Matthew's, Taylorsville, UT
- Approve the minutes of February 2017 minute and the March 2017 webex meeting

**SC 2017.5.02** Motion was made and seconded to approve the invitation of Service for Rev. David Ryder at Spirit of Joy, Fort Collins, CO. The motion passed.

**SC 2017.5.03** Motion was made and seconded to affirm our support of Rev. Kristy Coppell at First Presbyterian in Alamagordo. She also has a call to Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Alamagordo. The motion passed.

#### Young Adult Member

Melanie Ferraro has resigned; Earline read Melanie's letter of resignation. The other candidate for at-large Young Adult Council Member last year was Amelia Decker. There is consensus that we will ask Amelia if she would like to complete Melanie's term. Jay possits that we should look at the bylaws to see whether we should elect someone at Assembly.

After reviewing the Synod Constitution, it was determined that it is not necessary to hold an election to fill Melanie's position. Andy offered to contact Amelia Decker.

Devotions were led by Susan Mitchell, based on the book Simply Good News by N.T. Wright.

#### Leadership Development

Rev. Sarah Moening

Pr. Sarah presented information about "force fields" (Driving forces *for* something, and resisting forces *against* something) and how they impact decision making.

Pr. Sarah and Andy recommended that we read Theory U.

### Strategic Plan Update and Staff Goals sheet

Dennis asked how we will measure the success of actions taken toward meeting the Strategic Plan..

Bishop Jim noted that there are measurements in the plan; in our October meeting, we may want to revisit the Strategic Plan and make adjustments as needed. Deb added that there is a link on the RMS website that allows Council members to log their visits to congregations.

### Bishop's Update

Bishop Gonia

*Better Together Relationship Team:* The team has 4 goals:

- Inform and educate members of the three expressions of the church and the role of each expression in the life of the church
- Work with the leadership of our Synod to promote connectivity and engagement between the 3 expressions of our church
- Evaluate patterns of financial commitment and mutual accountability between the 3 expressions of the church
- Work with the leadership of our synod to provide vehicles for healthy expressions of fiscal stewardship

Part of the team's task is to assess the capacity within the synod – whether it is larger than, about the same as, or less than current support levels.

### *Churchwide Update – Called Forward Together in Christ*

Bishop Jim read the goals from this document, which is available on the ELCA website.

Motion was made and seconded to move to Executive Session. The motion passed.

Motion was made and seconded to leave Executive Session. The motion passed.

### Facilities Use Policy

Rev. Tim Orlawski

Tim and Ted Mikelson presented the new policy on behalf of the Congregational Ministries Board. The Board has developed a packet that will assist congregations in developing a Property Use Policy, and includes a model policy.

Dennis asked whether the Synod attorney has looked at this packet. The Board prefers that the documents be understood as guidelines, and allow flexibility for congregations to develop policies for their specific needs. Dennis suggests a disclaimer may be appropriate. Jerry notes that a similar sample policy from Churchwide includes a disclaimer. Pr. Sara suggested that the Board look at the language regarding alcohol & tobacco use.

The Board will look at reviewing the document and presenting a revised version.

### Treasurer's Report

Dennis Reynolds

There is a change in the proposed 2017 budget of \$10,000 for the deductible for the roof repair, which costs \$99,000. Maintenance was increased by \$10,000 and Revenue was increased by \$20,000 (to net \$10,0000).

The 2017 Proposed Budget includes the proceeds of the sale of the Cristo Rey parsonage. \$42,000 is added as a line item in revenue. There is a possibility that 2018 revenues will fall short of the projected revenue.

**SC 2017.05.04 Motion was made and seconded to approve the 2017 Proposed Budget and present it to the Assembly. The motion passed.**

**SC 2017.05.05 Motion was made and seconded to accept the 2018 Preliminary Budget and present it to the Assembly. The motion passed.**

#### Revisions to Staff Handbook

Jay Voth and Todd Herriod

The proposed revision relates substance abuse by a staff member or other individual associated with the RMS.

**SC 2017.05.05 Motion was made and seconded to accept the revised substance abuse policy.** There was some discussion about a conflict between the language of “zero tolerance” and the permissive discipline permitted.

**A motion was made and seconded to table the motion. The motion was defeated.**

**Motion SC 2017.05.05 was withdrawn.** The proposal was referred back to the committee, and the committee was asked to receive input from Joan Jacobson and Jody Brammer-Hoelter.

#### Staff Updates

Pr. Judith VanOsdol

In accord with MRA 4, she suggests a period of building trust with participants in the ministry Rejoicing Spirits. In consultation with colleagues, Pr. Judith cautions that worshipping too soon can cause the ministry to falter. She envisions a soft \_\_\_\_\_ beginning in the Fall.

She is working with Well of Hope, St. Stephen’s and \_\_\_ on developing an informal area ministry strategy in the Sterling Ranch area.

She is also engaging in conversation about a small area ministry strategy with congregations in the Park Hill / Capitol Hill area of Denver.

Re: the Aurora Area Ministry Strategy – the coordinator called by Council is completing her two year term call at the end of November. Earline and Betty will help with doing an evaluation of the AMS.

Bishop Jim informed us that 2 of the initial 6 congregations in the Aurora AMS have declined participation. He believes this may be the result of the initial concept coming from Office of the Bishop, rather than organically from the congregations in the area. That said, he does not believe this indicates a lack of success.

Andy Sprain

A team has convened around Re.Formation Always. There will be 2 sessions this weekend around the Small Catechism and the ELCA Social Statement. Over the summer, the same team will work on developing 'A Catechism for Our Day', which will be a web resource sharing forum.

The RMS Youth Gathering in 2018 will be January 13-15 in Colorado Springs. A planning team will be meeting tomorrow; a theme and speakers have been developed. The target is 600 participants. The team is still looking at the proposed 3 year rotation for the venue.

Ruth Hoffman

Ruth presented the Spring 2017 update from the New Mexico Conference of Churches.

Vice President Bohling highlighted the written report of Pr. Janice Kibler.

**SC 2017.05.06 A motion was made and seconded to approve the Financial Wellness Grants Team for the Educate, Equip, Enact Grant. The motion passed.**

Proposal for Preliminary Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop

Earline Bohling

Earline distributed a draft proposed timeline. She has been conferring with other Vice Presidents about the processes their synods use. We need to identify the gifts and strengths the RMS desires in a Bishop, which will complement the Strategic Plan.

Synod Council Meeting;  
May 5, 2017

Present: Bishop Gonia, VP Bohling, Dennis Reynolds, Treasurer; Jody Brammer-Hoelter; Jerry Ethridge; Joan Jacobson; Deb Elstad; Rev. Larry Davis; Rev. Dana Peterson; Diana Biggs; Todd Harriod; Rev. Sara Wirth; Rev. Julie Brooks; Betty Peppin; Susan Mitchell; Hendrik Samosir

Guests: Rev. Sarah Moening; Ruth Hoffman;

Absent: Maggie Nieberger

The meeting opened with prayer.

Continued Discussion re Election of Bishop

Earline Bohling

Earline asked for comment about the draft she distributed yesterday. Joan suggested that the Spring target date be changed to Winter. The consensus is that the limit of 3 names per conference be removed.

In 2012, Conferences met to discuss the traits of a Bishop desired. Some Conferences lifted up names, but names were also submitted. Those people were contacted to see if they wanted to submit a biography. Those people were then included on the first ecclesiastical ballot.

The elections committee, with one member of Synod Council (Todd Harriod), will contact any people whose names are lifted up to determine interest and solicit bio's. Kent will serve as a consultant.

Earline would like a small group of Council members to meet this summer to develop a list of qualities we seek to meet our Strategic Plan. Earline will invite people in conjunction with the elections committee.

**SC 2017.05.07 Motion was made and seconded to adopt the Proposed Preliminary Identification Process, as modified. The motion passed.**

World Hunger

Hendrik Samosir

The World Hunger team, headed by Cindy Robles, attended the World Hunger Gathering of the ELCA in July 2016. The team is initiating a challenge, encouraging people to joint '500 Years on the MOVE for Hunger in 2017'. The challenge is to increase the amount we move, the amount we give, the amount we volunteer in 2017.

Bishop Gonia would like us to adopt some action(s) as a Council, perhaps during our trip to El Paso. He asks the El Paso team to incorporate this into the planning.

Peter said World Hunger has a tool through which we can invite people to contribute toward a particular activity, either as an individual or a group. Google TeamELCA on the ELCA website.

## Immigration Request

Earline Bohling

Josh Stallings sent an email request to Earline, asking us to look at ways to connect RMS congregations in the Denver area willing to support the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition. Josh also asked Peter whether the Lutheran Center might be able to serve as a sanctuary space.

Jim notes that other Synods are examining the issue of being Sanctuary Synods or congregations.

AAMPARO does not have a provision for this, but does encourage welcoming congregations. Alaide Ibarra will be presenting information about AAMPARO to the Assembly. Jim would like to see whether churchwide develops a policy. That said, congregation involvement is not limited.

Jim would like an AAMPARO committee to coordinate some of the resources available to immigrants in our territory. (Earline, please put this on the June Council meeting agenda). Alaide acknowledged that physical sanctuary creates responsibilities and liabilities, so both hosts and families need to be well informed before taking that step. Sanctuary can mean many things, and the definition should be developed by the congregation or synod, in conjunction with their local immigrant community. Alaide recommends that we refer to the ACLU information in our packets.

Earline will get back to Josh about our discussion.

## Constitutional Review Team

Chapter 10 needs to be revised this summer, in order to be submitted in advance of the 2018 Assembly.

Diane Happenberger of Shepherd of the Hills, Fort Collins; The team will meet at 9 a.m. on May 23 at the Lutheran Center. Kent will set up a WebEx, or a phone connection for Jay.

## The El Paso Team

They will meet by WebEx on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:30.

The meeting adjourned with prayer.