Synod Council Meeting 5-17-15

Present: VP Bohling, Bishop Gonia, Diana Biggs, Rev, Kathy Armstrong, Jody Brammer-Hoelter, Jerry Ethridge, Rev. Zach Parris, Dennis Reynolds, Deb Elstad, Hannah PUrkey, Susan Mitchell, Betty Pepin, Terry Cole

Guests: Pr. Judith van Osdol

Diana opened the meeting with prayer at 6:05

Requests for Changes in Clergy Status

**SC2016.05.01 Motion was made and seconded to approve the request by Rev. Penny Walsh at St. John’s, Thornton, CO to be placed on retirement status as of June \_\_, 2016. The motion carries.**

**SC2016.05.02 Motion was made and seconded to amend the previous decision to place Pr. Walsh on on-leave-from-call status (not retirement status) as of June 6, 2016.**

**SC2016.05.03 Motion was made and seconded to approve the request of Pr. Jorge Espinoza to extend his on-leave-from-call status for another year. The motion carries.**

Model Severance Policy

The Synod Council has approved the model policy. Pr. Sarah asked how it will be disseminated. Bishop Jim suggested that it be posted on the website and noted on the eConnection.

Rejoice Lutheran, Erie, CO flood relief funds Bishop Jim & Pr. Judith

Rejoice has requested a “Fast Growth” grant, receipt of approved flood relief funds, and a MIF loan. Rejoice has an existing MIF loan, which has been refinanced previously, but the payments are irregular. Pr. Judith looked at the application for the Fast Growth grant, and found Rejoice does not meet the criteria. The Erie area is exploding demographically, but the congregation is not growing. Pr. Judith believes that the congregation needs accompaniment in moving forward.

Dennis recalled that the Synod Council has voted to send some of the flood mitigation funds to So. Carolina Synod, and some to Rejoice. Rejoice has only received one bid for the needed work. He and Pr. Ron have tried to meet with Rejoice, but the meetings have been cancelled. Pr. Kathy notes that other congregations in the Boulder/Broomfield Conference donated directly to Rejoice, and she wonders how those funds were used.

Bishop Jim stated that Ron would like to put together a comprehensive report on the relationship of Rejoice and disaster relief efforts.

We reviewed SC2015.10.03: “*SC2015.10.03 Motion was made and seconded to make a recommendation to the Disaster Relief Committee that the Rocky Mountain Synod send up to $5,000 each to the South Carolina Synod and the Mara Evangelical Church for assistance with disaster relief. Following discussion, the motion was amended:*

*Motion was made and seconded to make a recommendation to the Disaster Relief Committee that ½ of the amount remaining after we address the anticipated request from Rejoice Lutheran in Erie, Colorado, will be sent to the South Carolina Synod and the Mara Evangelical Church for disaster relief. The motion passed as amended.”*

The money has not been sent to any of the named recipients. Dennis thinks Rejoice is asking for $35,000. The fund balance is $50,255. That would leave about $15,000 to be shared between Mara Evangelical and the So. Carolina Synod. Ron will need to confirm the amount of that request.

The current MIF loan is secured by the land and building. MIF is asking Pr. Judith and Bishop Jim to assist them with determining how to proceed, as Rejoice is not meeting its commitment. There is a discrepancy between the amount of payments reported in their newsletter, and the amount MIF shows it has received. Pr. Kathy asked what will happen if Rejoice defaults; will MIF foreclose? Pr. Judith thinks that would be the worst-case scenario. She is looking for guidance from the Council about next steps.

**SC2016.05.04 Motion was made and seconded to ask the Pastor and lay leadership of Rejoice to meet with the Office of the Bishop, the Conference Dean and 2 members of the Synod Council as soon as possible to clarify the outstanding issues, and to withhold any disbursement of funds until such time as Rejoice creates a sustainability plan.**

RMS has already sent about $15,000 to Rejoice for flood relief.

A voice vote was taken. The motion passed. Earline will inform Rejoice of the Council decision.

Jerry suggested that Bishop Jim contact the Bishop of So. Carolina Synod to see if there is still a need for those funds, and Global Mission re the Mara Evangelical Church.

Staffing Plan for Office of Bishop Bishop Jim

He has reviewed his ideas with the Exective Committee, and will be meeting with the staff tomorrow. He will present the proposal at the June Council meeting.

Strategic Planning

All day meetings will be held on May 31 and June 14. Work continues!

Mission Support from Congregations

The Exec. Committee reviewed 3 year giving records. This information will be sent to congregations for verification. In mid-June congregations will be asked what factors contributed to either increasing, maintaining or decreasing their mission support. Evan Moilan advised that we need to frame all conversations about giving in terms of the mission we are asking congregations to support.

Pr. Judith will be convening the Generosity Table beginning in June. That group will work with information collected from congregations.

Theological Conference

Will there be a focus on stewardship/generosity? The staff will be discussing that at their meeting May 18th, as some speakers have already been invited.

Earline asked who else from Council will be meeting with Rejoice. Consensus is that it will be Dennis.

Bishop Jim reported that the feedback from Synod Assembly has been very positive, and he thanked Council members for their participation.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 with prayer led by Susan Mitchell.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Brammer-Hoelter