

Earline opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Julie Brooks and Jay Voth gave the opening devotion based on Celtic Prayer from the Northumbria Community.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bishop Jim Gonia, VP Earline Bohling, Secy. Susan Mitchell, Treas. Julie Reusser, Terry Cole, Jay Voth, Pr. Terry Schjang, Pr. Sara Wirth, Bunga Manarung, Diana Biggs, Debra Frank Dew, Todd Herreid, Ray Ferry, Pr. Matthew Weber, Wyatt Smith, Pr. Reba Kiger-Kolasch, Jeff Fairfax, Pr. Julie Brooks

STAFF PRESENT: Pr. Kent Mueller, Pr. Sarah Moening, Deacon Erin Power, Pr. Leslie O’Callaghan, Deniese Estrada, Kristen Lee, Peter Severson, Kurt Rager, Pr. Michael Tassler, Pr. Ron Beckman, Pr. Dana Peterson, Tina Kvitek.

GUESTS PRESENT: Vicky Daub, Jody Brammer-Hoelter

CONSENT AGENDA: Jeff requested that the Approval of Financial Policy be removed for discussion later in the meeting. This was done.

- Approval of Synod Council Meeting Minutes for April 7 and April 21, 2020
- A call to specialized ministry for Rev. Alicia Harker, chaplain at Centura Health – St. Anthony Hospital (Lakewood, CO)
- A call to specialized ministry for Rev. Kimberlee Law, Partnership Vicar at The Episcopal Church in Garfield County
- Approve the process being used for the May 2, 2020 Synod Assembly

Julie Reusser moved, seconded by Ray, to approve the Consent Agenda. **Motion Carried.** (17 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain)

10:25 a.m. We broke into small groups for discussion by being moved to Breakout Rooms on Zoom.

*Check-in: What are you grieving during this time of isolation, what renews your spirit, and in what ways have you experienced **becoming** during this time?*

10:40 a.m. Presentation by Vicky Daub: “Veterans Servant Corps” in the Rocky Mountain Synod
Vicky gave background information on this military ministry that she is starting, and she asked the Synod Council to endorse the project. Bishop Jim moved, seconded by Jay, to give our word of encouragement and for her initiative to move forward at this time. We will invite her to return to us once the structure is established for a vote on endorsement. **Motion Carried.** 16 yes, 1 abstain)

Break: 11:00 – 11:10 a.m.

Presentation: “Next Faithful Step Campaign” by Pr. Ron Beckman and Tina Kvitek
Bishop Jim introduced the topic by saying it should be sub-titled the “Great Campaign Pandemic Pivot.” Pr. Ron stated the Advisory Board has had to change plans for in-person cultivation events to invite potential donors to the Rocky Mountain Synod Campaign to digital meetings with groups. He presented figures for gifts already pledged - \$177,500 – towards the \$1,400,000 goal. Tina shared figures on the screen about the Campaign.

11:40 a.m. Presentation on 3E (Educate, Equip, Enact) – Key Campaign Initiative – by Pr. Michael Tassler
He updated us on 3E and how the Team is adapting their work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

11:34 a.m. – Presentation on Excellence in Leadership by Pr. Dana Peterson

11:41 a.m. – Messiah Mountain Retreat Center – Update by Jay Voth

The Advisory Board has selected Roger Miller as Chair of the Board. Jay asked Synod Council to affirm Roger Miller as Board Chair. Jay moved, seconded by Terry Cole, to affirm Roger Miller as Board Chair and to review the appointment again at the October 23-24, 2020, Synod Council meeting. Discussion followed. **Motion Carried.** (13 yes, 1 abstain)

An Advisory Board Guideline has been written and requires review and approval by the Synod Council once presented. They expect a full Mission Statement to take much longer to write. The current Vision Statement is: “A space of contemplative connection to God through immersion in creation and community; Inspired and empowered by our relationship with God, we become a people who seek justice, peace, and inclusion for all creation.”

Jay also moved, seconded by Jeff, to follow the bishop’s guidelines as to when to re-open Messiah Mountain. **Motion Carried.** (13 yes, 1 abstain)

Jay told the Synod Council that although his synod council term ends this year and he has moved to Colorado Springs, he desires to continue his participation on the MMRC Advisory Board after his council term expires.

12:00 p.m. – Bishop Jim suggested that we skip the second small group discussion in Breakout Rooms and continue with the agenda.

Presentation on Next Faithful Step Campaign – Bishop Jim and Jody Brammer-Hoelter

Jody told Synod Council that she would be calling each council member to make appointments for Zoom conversations, with the goal of achieving 100% participation in the Campaign by Synod Leaders. She expressed her excitement about being involved with the RMS Campaign.

12:09 p.m. – Bishop Jim closed the morning session with prayer. Lunch Break until 12:43

12:43 – Treasurer’s Report by Julie Reusser

Julie presented the revised 2020-2021 budget, which Synod Council needs to forward for approval by Synod Assembly on May 2, 2020. She explained that 2 one-time gifts totaling \$120,000 reduced the budget’s net loss to (\$124,154). Discussion followed. Terry Cole moved, seconded by Reba, to forward the 2020-2021 budget to Synod Assembly for approval on May 2, 2020. **Motion Carried.**

Julie also presented the Preliminary Proposed Budget for 2021-2022 for our review. In this budget, the use of Mission Development Reserve Funds in the amount of \$125,968 will reduce that year’s net loss to (\$71,454).

Julie also led a discussion on the **Financial Policy**. She told us that funding shown in the policy is not fixed; it is merely an example and can change with each budget.

Jeff asked about synod funding for Westview Church, a Synod-Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) in Boulder, CO. When leaders from Westview came to the October 26, 2019, Synod Council meeting to update us on their congregation’s mission and start, we did not specifically address any funding. Bishop Jim added to the discussion that we always have some investment in our new mission starts, which helps the Synod stay informed and involved in their progress. Following discussion Jeff moved, seconded by Julie Brooks, to approve the Financial Policy.

Motion Carried.

Staff Check-Ins – The Synod Staff was not asked to submit reports for this meeting, but Bishop Jim asked each staff member present if they would like to update the Synod Council on their work.

Sarah – The second cohort for Excellence in Leadership is beginning via Zoom. Congregational transitions are moving along.

Kent – nothing at this time.

Leslie – 2-day Candidacy Committee meetings via Zoom are being held.

Dana – there is another Lilly grant opportunity – for Thriving Congregations. Application due in June, and RMS will apply. And there is another grant available from Lutheran Disaster Response.

Kristen – She will need a council member to attend a congregational vote (via Zoom) for St. Mark's in Aurora on May 10th. If anyone can do this, let her know and she will give details

Tina – She is conducting Zoom meetings with congregations and donors. She is still on lockdown with her ELCA Churchwide work.

Kurt – He reported on the February Bishop's Luncheon and Policy Issues Briefing in Santa Fe. He expressed his gratitude to Ruth Hoffman, former Director for Lutheran Advocacy New Mexico, and all the volunteers for their excellent work to make that event a success.

Peter – He reported on a summer project to revitalize 3 ELCA Social Statements. They will be made into a curriculum and made available to congregations. Peter and Kurt are working on a new ELCA Social Message – Discipleship in a Democracy, and he asks us to take a look and offer our opinions.

Erin – She told us about the weekly Wednesday Webinars on different topics. She also said that work will be done on re-doing the Rocky Mountain Synod website. Also, Guidelines on Discipline will be worked on.

Michael – He updated us on Excellence in Leadership and also said he will be working on a project this summer to address what happens to 3E when the Grant is over.

1:22 p.m. We broke into small groups for discussion by being moved to Breakout Rooms on Zoom.
What is one example of Church Becoming you see happening now in our Rocky Mountain Synod or on the horizon of our life together?

1:47 p.m. Officer Reports

Bishop Jim – The Covid-19 Recommendation is for congregations to refrain from gathering until the end of May. He cautioned us not to rush back, be wise, and invest ourselves in this new way of being church together. He said there are 4 ordinations coming up, and we need to determine how to do them. He gave a shout-out to all pastors, deacons, musicians and technicians for doing a great job with all the digital worship services and meetings that are being held all around the Synod. He gave thanks to all of the Bishop's Staff also. He encouraged everyone to attend the Wednesday Webinars at 3:30 p.m.

Earline – VP Report – She asked us to listen carefully tomorrow at Synod Assembly. The Council is asked to brainstorm ways to integrate new council members in the Synod Council. She asked all to continue to give regular offerings to their own congregations.

Susan – Secretary's Report – She said that congregations are continuing to submit their amended constitutions for review although the pace has slowed.

Earline introduced the Rev. Alena Lamirato, and she spoke to us about a Care for Creation Team.

Synod Council is asked to endorse this self-organizing team so that they may move forward with this work.

Julie Brooks moved, seconded by Matthew, to endorse the Care for Creation Team. **Motion Carried.** (15 yes, 1 abstain)

Earline asked for volunteers for worship leaders for the October 23-24 Synod Council meeting.

Kent, Terry Cole and Susan volunteered.

Our next Zoom Synod Council meeting will be Tuesday, June 16th at 6 p.m. unless there is need to meet sooner.

Earline adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Mitchell, Rocky Mountain Synod Secretary