

Notes from Rocky Mountain Regional Council Meeting December 5, 2019

AGENDA

Host: Mary of Magdala Facilitator: Rosean Amaral Scribe: Kae Madden
Excused: Don S and Teri H
Guests: Mary Lu Stenson with Bishop Call Team, John Immele and Chuck Howard with the Polity Team

Note: Traffic on I-25 delayed the arrival of Jane and Rosean, so Kae facilitated the beginning of the meeting and scribed.

Opening prayer/Regional Prayer

Holy One, sweet Guide
Reveal Your will; our new "yes"
together. Amen.

Regular Business:

1. **Introductions and Welcome** of guests (above). We also welcomed back Deacon Mike Weil, serving on the council from Church of the Holy Family.
2. **Agenda approval/additions** – agenda was approved
3. **Personal Connections:** What is getting in the way of your waiting for God this Advent? We shared around the table
4. **Approval of Nov. 2019 notes:** The Nov. notes were delayed, sent email on Dec. 5th, were revised by Vicar and re-sent to members for review. **Action Item: Please review and respond electronically to Michael with edits/to approve by Dec. 12th. Assuming consensus, they will be posted.**
5. **Financial Report** – The financial report submitted by Greg was approved.
6. **Vicar's Report** – Michael presented the items in red for discussion. In regard to the Colorado Council of Churches' expectation that board members contribute at least \$300 (in addition to the organizational dues), Kae suggested that the regional council make a contribution of \$300 now from the regional budget. In the future, the member communities of the region could be encouraged to consider budgeting for their share of the dues (\$1 per member) plus a share of the \$300 expected contribution (currently \$60 with 5 communities). The 2019 allocation was approved. **Action item: Michael asked the RMRC to consider at the next meeting an expense budget for the teams for copying and other expenses.**

New Business:

1. **Church of the Holy Family:** Mike gave an update on CHF. The community is in need of our prayers as they once more regroup. Mike, Kathleen Gorman and David Dunn are working to stabilize and provide pastoral care. The community hopes to establish a time and place for a Sunday Mass. CHF council has authorized Mike to serve on the RMRC – the only rep at this time. CHF encourages us to move forward in the bishop process and they will participate as able.
2. **Bishop call process--what to do?** See above. Also, LOC member, Jack, read a statement from their leadership regarding moving forward in the process and their recommendations. After much

discussion and appreciation of a diversity of points of view, **the following process steps were agreed upon by consensus:**

Next Process Steps:

1. The RMRC addressed additional items in the draft constitution as presented by the Polity Team at the meeting on Dec. 5th. Polity team will revise according to input received.
2. The Polity Team and the Bishop Call Team will meet together to compare the respective documents and make sure they are congruent and comprehensive. Any discrepancies will be resolved. The teams will meet on a schedule to allow for reporting at the RMRC meeting on Feb. 6th.
3. The Bishop Call Team will submit the call letter, nomination form and draft calendar for the process (by Feb. 6th?)
4. The Polity Team will submit the "Final draft" of the Constitution to the Council for review, **and to each community for their edits and comments** . Following the review, the Polity Team will incorporate any changes.
5. Both documents (ministry description and constitution) will be submitted as a packet to the council and communities for affirmation to proceed with the call process. The affirmation "process" is left to each community. A mutually acceptable date will be set to receive results.
6. As part of the affirmation process, as in previous deliberations, each community needs to discuss the firmly held value and spirit of regional consensus – that our community would be willing to "live with" the decision of four communities collectively. If four of five of our communities affirm, we would move forward.
7. If affirmation is received, the call process commences (with both documents available to candidates).

***subsequent to the meeting, Jack submitted a draft of a new calendar that was sent to the members. Dennis asked if the call letter and nomination form would be part of the packet in #5.

***It was noted that the minutes of our RMRC meetings need to be sent to the members of the Bishop Call and Polity teams.

3. Updated Polity draft for RMRC review: With Chuck's leadership, the council and guests reviewed for discussion the items indicated by the polity team from the latest draft of the constitution. Among the items for discussion: ethical code of conduct, striking the bishop veto and override, the amendment process, officers, the reflection of the "three-legged stool" and our mission statement. The suggested changes will be reflected in the next iteration of the document. Many kudos to the team for their faithfulness to an evolving process. The deliberations were fruitful. We are very close....take heart!

4. Regional contribution to the Bishop's visit expenses: Bishop Denise's visit was initially planned at the request of COB for confirmation. The air fare for Denise was \$464. Her housing was provided by Mark and Mary Lu Stenson. Kae provided a gift card for her meals. As the weekend evolved, the bishop spent sacred time with Church of the Holy Family and members from other communities in addition to her confirmation ministries. In the interest of transparency and recognition of how bishop visits tend to evolve, Kae and Dennis requested that the region consider a small contribution to the expenses. COB promptly reimbursed Denise. Mike said he would also bring it up to CHF. (Please see Appendix I below for formal policy previously established.)

5. ECC Community Information Surveys: The administrator of the OPB has requested that each community re-send their survey information submitted previously. **Action Item: Michael asked that we re-send our survey information (previously submitted in June) to the OPB.**

Old Business:

1. Bishop call letter and nomination form – the team will continue its work in development
2. Local Bishop Ministry Description – status quo
3. Detail the election process – in development (see above)
4. RMRC Membership: CHF representative – Mike Weil
5. ECC pins – Greg’s intention remains to send samples of the pins to the other ECC communities. Mike noted that we could also just wait until synod 2020 and bring them then.

Community Reports: we ran out of time

Closing Prayer-- Rosean

Jan. 2, COB (confirmed); Feb. 6, CHF; Mar, 5, LOC; Apr. 2, SP

Remember, when you host to send out the agenda, have a facilitator and scribe, bring opening and closing prayer, the consensus policy, and bring some snack to share. Send notes in a timely fashion.

Appendix A

July 2018: RESOLVED, that the community that invites a bishop be responsible for the entire expense, including a stipend for a replacement celebrant at the bishop’s home parish, if applicable, and they should cut the check for the expenses; that if the bishop says a Mass at another community in the Region that such community contribute \$100 to the inviting community; and that if the bishop meets with the clergy and/or others from the Region, that those at the meeting each chip in \$15-20 to the inviting community.

Appendix B—Vicar Report for RMRC 12 05 2019 *(includes Nov. report)*

FORMATION/RECEPTION

New LOC diaconal ordination candidate gathering community discernment team.

New MoM candidate-in-discernment in convo with +Francis and +Rafe re school for M.Div.

Awaiting final affirmation of OPB for MoM ordination candidate whose file is complete including reports of Evaluation Team, and for go-ahead to form an Evaluation Team for COB ordination candidate.

Old Catholic Seminar monthly Zoom Conference: **4th Tuesdays** beginning Jan. 28, 2020.

Please let Vicar know of plans to participate so he can forward contacts to +Francis.

REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

ECC/ELCA ecumenical agreement about shared liturgical ministries

- Interviewed by OPB publicist John Kerans; gave him contacts for CCC Exec.Dir. and communications point person for RMS-ELCA; contact for Fr. Don Sutton re local media connections thru StP.
- Relayed regional communications on the topic to St. Oscar Romero in Albuquerque, also impacted by agreement.
- All 5 RMR communities affirmed agreement; OPB and RMS-ELCA notified; plan to sign at joint liturgy.

ELCA/ECC joint liturgy on Oct. 30th at St. Paul 7pm

- Worked with St. Paul Music Director/Liturgist Mark Filbert, Kent Mueller, +Jim and +Francis on some liturgical planning. StP will provide music ministers citing not enough rehearsal time for regional participation. Clergy asked to vest in albs and red stoles.
- Disseminated publicity materials developed by RMS-ELCA.
- Tried to include participation of confirmation candidates from around the region in Sprinkling Rite, but was enlisted to do the asperges at the last minute by the Lutheran Pastor.
- EVALUATION: great celebration, very inspiring; **planning revealed role of deacons in liturgy very different in the two traditions (something to be included in the Task Force's education goal).**

ECC/ELCA regional Task Force ~ Bp. Francis hoped to gather the task force when here but scheduling conflicts make a future Zoom conference more feasible. **Is the Vicar needed to help coordinate this?**

Participated in meetings of **Bishop Call Committee and Polity Team** to review consultation comments; played catch-up on publishing notes.

Presided at **MoM** 10/20 and 11/17; **StP** 10/5+26; **Dignity/Denver** 10/27; **CHF** 11/16 and supported community at meeting afterwards; **LOC** 11/30.

Presented **Soul Shop** workshop on suicidal desperation awareness for COB on 11/10.

Populated regional **Facebook** page @coloradoecc and augmented **Instagram** and **Twitter** presence.

Produced and edited **regional newsletter**, Fall 2019 edition to include ECC/ELCA Agreement, but holding off on publishing Bishop Ministry Description and call for nominations (waiting for CHF go-ahead).

Message received 12/5 for the Council:

Mother Cynthia thanks all who sent her loving messages since our last meeting, and is always glad to hear from you. Although her application to do the 30-day spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius at the Jesuit retreat center in Sedalia was accepted, they did not have a director to offer her in the last 30 days before they closed for Christmas in mid-December. She's been visiting friends around CO since ending her shorter retreat in Sedalia before she leaves to take delivery of household goods in NC — then plans to return in the new year to do the spiritual exercises. Her personal email address is cynthiadrewa@gmail.com — which she says any of the pastors may pass on to their parishioners who ask how they may be in touch with her. P.S. She'll be celebrating Mass this Sunday evening [12/8] at Mary of Magdala.

COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Attended final **Rabbi/Ministers Gathering** on 10/17, **discontinued** for lack of participation commitment; shared blessings of this relationship-building experience; brainstormed future collaborations, including possible interfaith Holy Land trips, showing up for each other's tragedies and celebrations, et al.

October Board Mtg

- New MCC denominational rep John Case; in need of CCC Treasurer replacement.
- Reviewed fundraising opportunities including new grants for programs re homelessness, 2020 Census, CURIOUS Partnerships' Vaccination Listening Sessions

November Board Mtg

- Still in need of CCC Treasurer replacement.
- ECC Vicar hopes to be a CCC rep to Aurora Communities of Faith meeting preparing for MLK event.

@coloradoecc Facebook page post: appeal for donations to CCC on Vicar's behalf (Board Members are expected to give-or-get #300/year).

Attended Otium lunch and prayer service for pastors hosted by LECA-RM Synod on Dec. 4.

BISHOPS/VICARS CALL 10/16

RM ~ ECC/ELCA liturgical agreement affirmed by Region and to be signed at 10/30 joint liturgy; vision inspiring other innovation, e.g., Trinity Lutheran/St. Paul Episcopal/Mary of Magdala ECC beginning to form an ecumenical center with shared resources. New ordination candidate in discernment. Local Bishop Call may go out by end of November!

SW ~ Rev. Delores had surgery and was in no shape to be on the call. In the SW, we had our monthly zoom call. This call was facilitated by a lay person and Elaine has it recorded. The 2 priests from NM were not on the call due to serious health problems. It was decided to expand and include Synod representatives.

MidAmer ~ Bishop Rafe recovery from pneumonia. Little Rock diaconal ordination of Carol Ann Blow; received Fr. Dan, retire EPUSA priest.

EC ~ Regional retreat coming up. Prayers for Rev. Denise and Healing Shepherd – son of parishioners died of suicide.

PNW ~ Eccesiology study on-going, leading to brainstorming adjectives/descriptives for the PNW, e.g., want to be “a community of hope.” Ordination candidates progressing. 2 priests having surgery, another w mystery diagnosis, raised issue of what communities do without their priest.

+Rafe brought up Fr. Mike Bober's HOP report in ECC Report re: **education formation of priests.**

Led to creative conversation re: ministry gaps, aging priesthood, and the future of the ECC:

- History of “simplex priests” without full educations serving sacramentally as interims or as parish assistants, but not as pastors. Recognize validity of concern warranting further discussion.
- +Kedda brought up idea of video-taped lectures to fulfill part of equivalencies, combined with mentorships and communal learning models.
- Assoc. of Theological Schools (ATS) important accreditation for online and remote learning.
- Idea of developing assets map of the Communion – members with advanced degrees able to be serve as mentors, lecturers, teachers.

- Rather than full education before ministry, possibility of seeing ministry in stages as an internship and part of education/formation.

Independent Catholics Gathering in Austin ~ +Rafe may raise issue re differing ecclesiologies and theologies.

BISHOPS/VICARS CALL 11/20/19

- EC** ~Transgender Day of Remembrance at All Souls, partnering with Reading Pride Celebration and LGBT Center of Greater Reading; 7th or 8th year participating.
 ~Retreat went very well in October; 19 participants, Florida missed.
 ~Developed EC Facebook page and a regional resource directory (communications, fundraising, retreats, spirituality, et al.); formed retreat committee and spirituality book club.
 ~Shared travel woes of Bishops requiring flexibility.
- RMR** ~Oct. 30 joint ECC/ELCA-Rocky Mountain Synod Eucharistic Worship a historic event. Signed document and coverage to appear in RMR newsletter.
 ~Progress in calling local bishop partially on hold while two communities in leadership transitions.
 ~Colorado Council of Churches received grants for educational and advocacy programs re homelessness, vaccinations, census, civility gatherings; Faithful Thursdays advocacy at the Capitol in planning stage with other social justice organizations. (+Francis reiterated value of participation in such Councils; acknowledged PNW interfaith alliances.)
- PNW** ~ Ecclesiology study wrapping up; exploring what to do with it as they build their diocese.
 ~Priest candidate Mir Plemmons and his fiancée initiating coffee shop/bar discussions.
 ~Dcn. Connie very involved in local safe communities for undocumented refugees.
 ~Fr. David Gerardot working with homeless populations as is ECC rep with Interfaith Works.
 ~Spokane priest with undiagnosed illness (primary caregiver to husband and grandchildren); prayers requested.
 ~New community in Coeur d'Alene ID progressing in its formation.
 ~+Kedda planning trip to CA.
- SW** ~Canceled this month's meeting, trying to identify lay church reps.
 ~Vicar working with two churches looking into becoming official ECC member churches.
 ~Advocated for universal hot lunches for AZ school children; refrigerator donated to school Nurse's office.
 ~Rev. Delores prepping for ankle replacement; prayers appreciated.

2020 Synod ~ In negotiations about speaker fee.

Old Catholic Zoom Book Club on 4th Tuesdays to start Jan. 28, 2020.

Looking for someone who can coordinate a large group Zoom platform.

Old & Independent Catholic Gathering in Austin TX attendees happy with how it went, want to keep it going. Possible monthly networking calls. +Francis not able to assume commitment beyond annual gatherings, but opens invitation to others in the ECC wishing to build these relationships.