

Rocky Mountain Regional Council Meeting

NOTES

November 4, 2021

Host: *Light of Christ* Facilitator: *Jack* Scribe: *Rachel*

Attendees: LOC: Jack Wolfe and Rachel O'Neill; MoM: Tom Moos and Roseann Amaral (with guest Jane Reina); StP: Greg Yonker and Don Sutton; COB: Dennis Giblin and Alice Bradley; CHF: Anne Grant and Mike Weil; Office of the Bishop: Kae Madden, Michael Nicosia

6:00 PM Opening Prayer/Regional Prayer

Holy One,
Enlivening Spirit,
In the wilderness of new,
root the Body of Christ
fully into our "Yes,"
blooming in Your Holy Season.
Together.

Regular and Not So Ordinary Business:

1. Welcome Rachel and any guests

- *Rev. Jane Reina attended as a guest*

2. Agenda approval/additions

- *None*

3. Personal connections: Role of bishop: How did your community members (and you) respond in regard to priorities based on Kae's letter that was sent out ages ago re: values of the bishop relationship. Do you have a written list of these heard priorities? How do you expect the role/relationship with Bishop Kae to go forward?

- *COB*
 - *Community survey garnered 10 responses*
 - *Mostly continue to be yourself and take care of yourself*
 - *Letter from Fr. Len*
- *MoM*
 - *Original letter sent to Bp. Kae*
 - *"Listen to God"*
 - *Outreach to disenfranchised RC community members*
 - *Use grant money*
 - *Come visit :)*
- *LOC*
 - *Support for pastors*
 - *Conflict resolution*
 - *Dennis seconds - maybe implement something region-wide?*
 - **Action: revisit topic in future meetings**
 - *Council of Bishops representation*
- *Regional council - changes in how RMRC relates to Kae?*

- *Weighty issues related to policy - consensus still the goal, but we can talk about having the buck stop at Kae if need be*
 - *Can be voice of dissent, but still want to work through consensus*
- *Fr. Don*
 - *Negative experience with the former host church was made better by Kae's support, a different form of support from the community. Kae's presence was important for meeting with Bishop Gonia.*
- *Dennis*
 - *We don't know yet what this relationship will be, but will continue to develop over time as we grow as a region*
- *Fr. Don*
 - *Annual informal celebration of regional relationship (no business, only party) e.g., LOC annual meeting a good opportunity for business; e.g., LOC St. Pat's day a good opportunity for party*
- *Tom*
 - *Important to keep hearing regional stories and build connection in order to continue being ecumenical*

4. Bishop's Call Agreement draft initial discussion

- *Starting point is ministry description*
- *Call letter should be specific to bishop, with a list of responsibilities, allowing option for delegation - make as open as possible for those with different strengths to make bishop's office work for future candidates*
- *Needs to have nuts and bolts information like a job contract*
- *Accountability for both council and bishop*
- *Compensation should be listed in this document - need to specify independent contractor vs. employee*
 - *Bumps up from independent contractor to employee if council dictates how to do job, not just what should be done in eyes of the state*
 - *Difficult to do housing stipend (similar to Fr. Michael) for Kae's situation*
- *Other financial obligations regarding synod travel costs, for example*
 - *COB split with regional council?*
- *Use feedback/listening sessions with Kae as a baseline for call agreement*
- *Call agreement not needed for 501 (c) (3) filing*
- **Action: start with broad/vague agreement, but Kae will ask about it at the next Bishops meeting to see what others are doing (including Bp. Frank). Alice and Greg to work on draft.**

5. Approve minutes of October 7th Meeting

- *Change control enabled minutes approved.*

6. Financial Report - including status of temporary budget and decision on Fed loan payoff

- *Office space - originally \$200/mo, no agreement, but may want to go down to \$100/mo based on usage*
 - *Want to maintain relationship for when things open up again, but it's not being used right now*
 - **Action: discuss ways to structure agreement to be more usage-based**
- *Laptop not needed*
- **Action: no excessive expenses predicted, so loan can be paid off now (approved by consensus)**
- *Banking*

- *Get it figured out by the end of the year*
- *Previous discussion regarding switching to a credit union vs. First Bank will continue offline*

7. Corporate Organizational Meeting: including discussion of Bylaws - to be recessed for final action in December.

- *See attachment to minutes email*

8. Vicar/Bishop's Reports: Schedule of Chrism Mass

- Fr. Michael
 - *No interest currently for helping with website planning*
 - *Church vandalism issue hasn't had any movement*
 - **Action: publish on RMRC social media, edit to be blanket condemnation**
 - *Thank you to Michael for inclusion of testimony regarding affordable housing in Aurora*
- Bp. Kae
 - *Chrism Mass - traditionally held during Holy Week, but it doesn't need to be*
 - **Proposal to move to summer to pair with outdoor celebration - approved by consensus**
 - **Action: communities check to make sure they have enough oils to make it until next summer**
 - *If asking Kae to preside somewhere else, give as much heads up as possible to arrange for guest presider at COB*
 - *Host community would give guest presider stipend to COB for their substitute*
 - *Development of regional website could include pages for each of the communities, adding cohesion*
 - *Use grant money to budget for this?*

9. Leadership Council Report

- *Bishop nominations due in 3 months*
- *Synod 2022*
 - *Dates shifted: now 10/9-10/12 in St. Louis (arrive Sunday, half day Wednesday)*
 - *Hybrid attendance option will likely be available, however must be in-person for voting*

10. Community Updates

- *St. Paul hosting "Oktoberfest" potluck November 13 - link sent to RMRC group*

Other Old Business:

- 1. Discussion of "Caffeinated Church" (Tabled for future meeting)

Closing Prayer

Next Meeting: December 1 - St.P; January 6 - MoM; February 3 - COB; March 3 - HF

Appendix A—Bishop Notes for October 2021 *(Bishop Kae)*

General notes: I must admit that the past 2+ months are a blur. I celebrate and rejoice in the consecration and Alice’s ordination and Rosean’s ordination, and I look forward to establishing some level of sustainable engagement in regional ministry 😊 My husband, Greg, is having knee replacement surgery on Wednesday, November 3rd and I requested vacation mid-year from Church of the Beloved on Nov. 3rd plus 5th through 15th. It did not occur to me to request said vacation time from the Regional Council. I apologize for my oversight and hope for your approval.

Transition

- Michael as Vicar in the roles of Ecumenical Engagement: advocacy, interfaith relationships, ecumenical relationships including Colo. Council of Churches board, and communication/media. *Maybe website design and maintenance?*
- My primary focus is 1) Listening internally, building relationships, determining the felt-needs/priorities of the region; 2) getting to know the bishops through monthly calls and the annual retreat; 3) transitioning some responsibilities at Church of the Beloved; 4) learning about the bishop role and responsibilities from Michael and the other bishops;

Listening and Relationship building

- Met with Bishop Kym, working on appt with Bishop Karen Oliveto (United Methodist)
- In contact with various clergy
- First clergy email communication with “news to share” on Oct. 5th with another on Oct. 22nd.

Planning

- Met with Fr. Michael on Oct. 27th
- Met with Tina at the Lutheran Center to explore Microsoft Teams and OneDrive. I have a lot to learn and to consider if we want to have all our records in “the cloud” and opportunities to share documents and have zoom-like meetings via Teams.

Consultation

Support for clergy

Community Support/Visits

October 9 – presided at LoC

Consecration

- **Expenses**
 - Bethany Lutheran
 - ✓ A/V \$100 check to Laura Romig, \$150
 - ✓ A/V assist \$100
 - ✓ Reception: \$100 check to Shawn
 - Free-will Offering to church: my recommendation is \$1000 - pending
 - I recommend a gift card for Sarah - \$100?
 - ✓ Reimburse out of pocket costs from core team members

OPB and Council of Bishops

- Participated in the Council of Bishops call on Oct 11
 - How to make our “action plan” workable with tangible objectives

- Move focus to the top of the stool – the work of the gospel
- What is the unique contribution of each order? To kingdom building?
- Process of confirming upcoming ordinations
- Plans for the year ahead: working collaboratively with all the orders, improving communication and transparency regarding our work together, administrative stuff such as annual letters of faculties, by “being the change we seek” build positive experiences with bishops internally.

Discernment/Ordinations

- Presbyteral ordinations for Alice (Oct 10) and Rosean (Oct. 24th) Yahoo and Alleluia.
 - For Alice’s ordination: liturgy planning, invitation and worship aid. Consulted with two liturgy resource contacts in the ECC. Prepared for Alice’s first Mass on Oct 16th.
 - For Rosean’s ordination: worked with her on the liturgy. Planning to attend her first Mass on November 14th.
- Met with one member in discernment, responded to an inquiry

Colorado Council of Churches

- **Responded to oppose** PROPOSITION 120 PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION on multi-family and lodging properties (condos exempt); CCC Board opposes Prop 120. I based the decision on Together Colorado’s analysis and Catholic social teaching.
- **Considering the response to the Cathedral vandalism**

Participated in Together Colorado’s race and class narrative workshop on Oct. 21: Amended our COB blurb on Prop 120 as follows: **FYI: Colorado ballots: PROPOSITION 120**

We need taxes to support services that matter to all of us: all colors, all income levels, all people of faith. Across the state, at all altitudes, we treasure good schools and education for our children and grandchildren. We count on fire and police protection to be safe. Isn’t it great to have a world of knowledge at our fingertips in free public libraries? Enjoying the wide outdoors with public parks, open space and playgrounds brings joy and peace, enhancing our well-being. This proposed tax reduction will further decrease support for essential services that we and our neighbors need and use. Who benefits from the proposition? Only the few who own hotels and lodging properties. This proposed reduction in property tax is limited to a small commercial group, not homeowners. Colorado Council of Churches Board (of which we are a member) and Together Colorado voted to oppose this initiative because of its negative impact on the common good. If you have questions, contact Kae.

Pending/Parking Lot

Regional Calendar: perhaps it makes sense for the council to maintain a regional calendar so that all may see our regional commitments, bishop commitments, etc. Website? Thoughts?

Budget in development

Laptop?? Not needed
 Insurance
 Website design and maintenance
 Office/Meeting Space: \$200/month DONATION, “normal” printing included – extra for program booklet; Reduced or Not necessary?
 Office supplies/printing
 ECC Bishops retreat – biannual
 Travel to synod 2022
 Synod ECC 2022
 Synod RMR
 Contract wages/Stipend (1099 or Letter of Call) for bishop and vicar(s)?

Appendix B—Ecumenical Engagement Report *(Fr. Michael)*

KEY POINTS and ACTION ITEMS

REGIONAL WEBSITE PLANNING—not started as no one has come forward to assist yet.

STATEMENT ON CHURCH VANDALISM

- Some resistance from CCC Judicators fearing perception of being self-serving (we signed letters of support for mosques and synagogues but have never initiated one; may lead to reframing the statement or publishing at a later date to separate it from the recent actions against Christian churches.
- Feedback from our Regional Council includes desire to publish if CCC doesn’t; sooner the better.
- Submitted revised draft for consideration:

As members of the Colorado Council of Churches, we decry the recent acts of vandalism against the sacred spaces of our Roman Catholic siblings in Christ. We regret not having initiated formal condemnations of previous desecrations of any sacred space of any faith tradition. Our delayed response to the vandalism at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception on October 10th was due to a conscious effort to address an issue deeper than anti-religious bias.

While acts of violence are sometimes committed in response to perceived injustices, we do not condone vandalism, hate speech, the desecration of sacred spaces, or any form of violence as an expression of public dissent. We encourage open and honest dialogue around contentious issues, especially in these times of polarization within church and society, that we may together build a Beloved Community that addresses the needs and concerns of all.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Met with Bp. Kae 4th Thursday of the month.

Participated in Mother Rosean’s ordination.

Participated in weekly regional pastor prayer/sharing.

Circulated advocacy updates and member churches’ social media posts.

Attended 1st Faithful Thursdays planning meeting 10/14; this year CCC’s intern will coordinate. Hope to focus more on legislators participation, possibly inviting them to share their stories of faith and values that underpin their service.

Testified on behalf of CCC re: Aurora Housing Project (details in Appendix C, below)

Participating in 11/27 monthly OPB Ecumenical Seminar.

Participating in “Saints in Sin City” Old/Independent Catholic gathering 11/4-6.
 Preparing HOP Liturgical Resources presentation on the prayers of the Church 11/13.

COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES Board Meeting 10/27

ADVOCACY UPDATE BY HALEY ANDERSON new legislation coming:

- safe worship spaces—funds for security in view of increased hate crimes and vandalism of synagogues
- collective bargaining rights for public workers who don’t have it (details coming)
- CO Civic Engagement Roundtable: redistricting concerned about 8th CongDistrict; Prop 118 custodial funds – timely dispersement; Prop 119 pot tax concerns - seems to point toward enrichment programs e.g, charter schools and may not actually benefit low-income students in the long run
- Nov. 16 lunch and learn Care Portal - education and communication about emergent foster care needs through direct community support

VACCINATION STUDY EVENTS—Greater St. John Baptist Church in Aurora virtual event; hesitancy more historical and cultural vs theological. New Hope Baptist next.

CASTE BOOK STUDY PILOT—20 Tues /30 Wed participants at gatherings thus far; engaged; brainstorming action steps

AURORA HOUSING PROJECT UPDATE

- passed 1st hearing <https://sentinelcolorado.com/news/metro/habitat-for-humanity-affordable-housing-community-gets-1st-ok-despite-neighborhood-pushback/>; will disseminate Fr. Michael’s testimony
- Heart of the Rockies church in Fort Collins (at Lemay/Trilby) working on similar affordable housing project
- related: CO Land Grant for such projects; Adrian may supervise coordinator formerly of Interfaith Alliance

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING OUTREACH GRANT—application due next week; May 2022-May 2023; work may overlap with Mastering Aging

PRESENTATION ON THE MASTERY OF AGING—GUEST Gaye Woods of SCI Health

- community education program 1) 5-week course 2x/week, 2) self-directed starter kit for independent study;
- looking to churches across CO as sites, moving toward being access points, train-the-trainer to take over administration of the courses

Appendix C—Aurora Housing Project Testimony

Presented on October 25, 2021 to Aurora City Council, and published widely by CCC.

My name is Fr. Michael Nicosia, a member of the Board of Directors of the Colorado Council of Churches, and a resident of Aurora.

Thank you, Mayor Coffman and esteemed Council Members for the opportunity to speak in support of Mountain View United Church R-2 Zoning. The 14 member denominations of the Colorado Council of Churches support such initiatives and applaud congregations like Mountain View for seeking to provide affordable housing to some of Aurora’s citizens.

One of the painful realities in our society is that wages have not increased enough to keep up with the cost of living. Back in 2012 I began working full-time for a local hospice, making

less than \$35,000 annually; over the course of my 3-year chaplaincy I didn't receive a single cost of living increase.

To this day, wages have remained stagnant while housing prices have continued to increase. Sadly, this is a reality faced by many essential workers.

At present one in three households in Aurora are cost-burdened.

I'm now nearing retirement age—working for the church, though, I'm not sure when I'll be able to do so! Regardless, if my husband were to become unable to work or should die before me, I might not be able to keep up with the mortgage payments.

With housing prices being so inflated in recent years, if I needed to sell, my finding affordable housing on a limited income would be a struggle, if not an impossibility.

It has been mentioned that under 80 properties are for sale in Aurora for under \$300,000, but keep in mind—the demand is so great that paying \$100,000 over the asking price is not unheard of.

The city's comprehensive housing plans specifically call out the need to create more housing that might be affordable for our city's workforce earning under \$80,000 a year.

While I admit that even that threshold would be out of reach for many, the Mountain View project and others like it would be an invaluable good start.

True, the number of homes proposed may warrant some adjustments on the part of the surrounding neighborhood, but my hope is that we can embrace sacrifices made for the common good.

I and my colleagues of the Colorado Council of Churches support this project. We respectfully request your affirmative vote on the proposed Site Plan and re-zoning application. Thank you for considering this matter as it impacts the well-being of our citizens and ultimately of our entire City.

Site plan approved. Also working on testimony for second hearing on re-zoning scheduled for Nov. 8. I hope to make the point “if not here, where?” and if we're really going to live up to our commitments to affordable housing many more neighborhoods should be rezoned; also will focus on need for city regulations that can mitigate impact of higher-density populations, e.g., reduced speed limits, enforcement of state statutes and city ordinances regulating unnecessary noise, expansion of public transportation accessibility, et al.