

# Rocky Mountain Regional Council Meeting, June 4, 2020

## NOTES

**Host:** Church of the Beloved Facilitator: Dennis                      Notes: Kae

**Present:** *Greg, Jack, Teri, Dennis, Michael, Rosean, Jane*    **Absent:** *Don, Mike*

### Opening Prayer/Regional Prayer

Holy One, Sweet Guide, reveal Your will; our new YES, together. Amen

### Regular Business:

1. Welcome any guests: *John Immele, Jim DeMuth*
2. Agenda approvals/additions:
  - a. *Discussion of how the council communicates with “guests” or non-members, i.e. distribution of notes, agendas, etc.*
  - b. *Is there any action/response for the region re: injustice*
3. Personal Connections: What is one positive that has emerged personally in the last month? *The conversation centered around a shift to relationships, connecting stories, our eyes being opened, awareness of our health*
4. Update on Fr. Don, Fr. Michael’s mother, Rosean and any general health concerns check-in: *all doing well and improving*
5. Financial Report:
  - a. **follow up on CCC dues:** *Greg will write the check and mail it \$400. St. Paul and MoM dues are pending. CHF, LOC and COB paid*
  - b. *Question re: Budget projections regarding funding of RMRC: all communities indicated stability*
  - c. *Disaster loan: Greg applied for and received approval for a disaster loan of \$2800. (Not paycheck protection). The funds may be utilized as a loan over 30 years with a payment of \$12/month at 3.75%. Or the monies may be returned.*
6. Vicar Report: *Highlights on the Governor’s Covid guidelines for faith communities circulated (particularly guidelines for outside services); Pride events; importance of returning ECC community information surveys; the comprehensive resources from Iliff via the CCC, involvement in advocacy.*

*action item: a request to Michael to send “an independent Catholic comparison information article with presentation”??*
7. Regional newsletter appreciation: *Much gratitude for Michael’s stellar work compiling the latest issue – weaving our stories together.*

### Old Business:

1. Community updates (round robin): short term plans? Governor’s guidelines: *Reinforce that each community is in discernment at a local level and may uniquely*

*respond to meeting in the physical church. Reminder that the church is not the building –it’s US! Discussion about how each community is responding to the issue of institutional racism.*

2. Calling a Bishop:

- a. New prayer for June 13/14<sup>th</sup>: The following prayer was approved for introduction on Corpus Christi:

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

- b. Timeline for what’s next? *Through discussion, determined that it makes sense to re-convene the Bishop Call Team and the Polity Teams. The Bishop Call Team would “get a temperature” of energy around electing our bishop given the reality of Covid and the ever-changing culture. Items to consider: Do we move forward and set a calendar for the election? How do we remotely gather for the voting process? What may the liturgy/ceremony entail and the finances necessary? What is the reality of preparing for synod and what is the capacity of our small pool of leaders? The Polity Team is invited to compare our local constitution and see how it matches up (or not) with the draft ECC constitution and statutes.*
- c. Calling a bishop recent court decision communicated via emails. Thank you, Jack. *Regarding “independence” consensus that we were okay with our constitution as is*
- d. Synod and consequences on Calling a Bishop: *no rush to elect a bishop before synod. There are procedures in ECC Constitution to affirm remotely in off-synod years.*

3. Ordinations update?

- a. *Jane has set a date of June 20<sup>th</sup> to drive to St. Louis with her son for an outdoor ordination and zoom broadcast. Hooray!*
- b. *Rosean has completed some of her coursework, is working with Fr. Paul on sacramental theology and will need her evaluators to be assigned.*
- c. *Alice is waiting for the green light to move forward in her transitional diaconate. Should just be dotting a couple i’s and crossing t’s.*

## **New Business**

1. New National ECC Constitution and By-Laws sent to Synod delegates. What action(s) do we want to take as a region? *The delegates of each community will review the documents and then a regional conversation set for June 27<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.*

- a. *action item:* Teri will check with the HOP regarding the process and expectations.
- b. *action item:* Greg will set up the zoom link for the regional delegate meet-up.
2. “Strengthening Our Future” conversations. How do we encourage participation? Feedback on general outline for the bishop? *action item:* publicize in our own communities
3. Any feedback on the Old Catholic History and Theology seminars? *we ran out of time and did not discuss*
4. Are folks willing to gather virtually. Should we take advantage of this and create an ECC Regional Prayer Service/Dance Party/Movie Night/ Education Event or something. Are we missing an opportunity to connect ourselves regionally? - Fr. Teri *we ran out of time and did not discuss*
5. PRIDE – will we be part of the virtual PRIDE? *action item:* Michael is working on the flier and needs local information from non-metro communities
6. How to communicate with “non-member guests:” *we decided to continue our current policy of communicating regular agendas, notes, etc only to members and for a member to make a connection to forward to guests. action item:* Jane will circle back to Jim DeMuth.

Closing prayer

Host communities: July 2 (Thursday before Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup>) HF; August 6 LOC; September 3 (Thursday before Monday, Labor Day) SP. Oct. 1 MoM

*action item:* Kae will check in with Mike W. regarding HF hosting in July

*action item:* please correct/utilize the following email addresses in RMRC communications:  
Greg: [gyonker@me.com](mailto:gyonker@me.com) and Mike W: [maweil@msn.com](mailto:maweil@msn.com).

## Appendix A—Vicar Report for RMRC 06 04 2020

### FORMATION/RECEPTION

Verified completion of COB ordination candidate file, awaiting affirmation of Presiding Bishop.

Also helped another candidate update her file.

Clarified education requirements for ordination aspirant in Erie CO. Reiterated relationship building with one of our communities as first step in discernment.

### REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Participated in 5/14 **Colorado Faith Communities United** to end gun violence (CFCU) Zoom meeting and shared PowerPoint with Region. CFCU issued letter to Gov. Polis addressing his easing of Concealed Carry Regulations during the pandemic; I signed as an individual clergy person and friend of CFCU.

Participated in **Old Catholic Zoom Seminar and Independent Catholic Zoom gathering.**

Participated in **Capitol Hill United Ministries (CHUM) and Women’s Homelessness Initiative (WHI)** 5/27 Zoom meeting with participating congregations.

Registered for **Denver virtual PrideFest**; \$30 fee reimbursed by RMRC. Directs viewers to our regional website;  
**ACTION ITEM:** need to design home page for pride month across region, as well as pinning dedicated post to our Facebook page.

Disseminated **Governor/Faith Leader updates**.

Participated in weekly **regional pastoral ministers Zoom gatherings** and extended invitation to others.

Helped coordinate regional response to **ECC Community Information Survey**.

Edited input and published **Regional Newsletter** and updated Regional website.

**Preached/co-presided** for MoM's Zoom Easter para-liturgy on 5/17.

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

## **BISHOPS/VICARS CALL 5.20.20**

### 1) 2020 Synod

- a. +Frank announced the Leadership Council determined to have a virtual council this year. +Frank emphasized a general concern for gathering as a large group. The virtual gathering (October 12-15<sup>th</sup> 2020) will be held but will not be held for four days. This will be a chance to communicate and decide on important business and to celebrate the different communities. No decision has been made when the next Synod will be held, one possibility is to hold a Synod in 2022.
- b. Fr. Michael shared the Rocky Mountain ELCA just held their Synod virtually and he invited +Frank to connect with their Bishop.
- c. Rev. Denise requested we use zoom to utilize the breakout rooms. Rev. Denise suggested a Synod in 2021, as well, to continue communication and community building.
- d. Fr. Henry emphasized having a Synod in 2021 might be exactly what the communion needs given the effects of the pandemic, and if there are certain measures met nationally but it would be an important effort for people to feel a part of the communion as a community.
- e. Rev. Denise offered the idea of having a joint meeting again in 2021 given the circumstances, as well as, a possible Synod in 2022.

### 2) Regional check ins

- a. Rocky Mountain Region: Fr. Michael said the Rocky Mountain Region's pastoral ministers have gathered weekly via zoom. One issue that has come up; when it is a limited amount of time (50-60 min) people tend to use all that time up with the check in and the meetings never get beyond the check-ins. The next meeting will be 3 hours to allow for this. The invitation for this call goes out to all pastoral ministers (lay or ordained). So far 7 people are attending. Fr. Michael shared that Fr. Don Sutton is doing well and present for liturgies. He has been discharged from rehab and recuperating with two parishioners at their home.
- b. Fr. Michael shared the Colorado Council of Churches is taking this opportunity to do another remote service for Pentecost. This will be in the form of 5 minute devotionals by the Judicators woven into a service that will be broadcasted via Zoom. Rev. Delores is also having a zoom Pentecost service. +Frank is asking people to dress in red at Sts. Clare and Francis and dress the room in red in honor of past practices at Sts. Clare and Francis.

Fr. Michael shared an update on their Bishop call process. The regional council feels they are going to make another push, after Corpus Christi, to try and "fan the coals again" and to garner more enthusiasm around the call. There is no time table at this point due to the unknown circumstances of the pandemic.

- c. Fr. Michael asked if Bishop Denise gleaned any insights from the Old Catholic zoom call. Bishop Denise shared there was a lot of great resources shared from the Priest who spoke at the gathering, Paulist Fr. Ricky Manalo. Fr. Michael shared some other insights from this call; such as the push into technology that should have been in place a long time ago and yet we shouldn't get use to not meeting in person either. He shared the excitement of being able to reach shut-ins, as well, due to the gift of technology.
- 3) COVID-19
- a. +Frank brought up some information in the ECC report and asked members to distribute this to the pastors in their areas. This includes advice from the CDC and practical and direct advice from the Wisconsin Council of Churches.
  - b. Fr. Michael stated the Governor in Colorado has pulled together a Religious Stakeholders task force to offer recommendations that will come out of the faith communities that can be offered to the health care communities. He also stated the RMS Lutherans have put out a statement saying that communities will not be meeting until September and since a lot of ECC communities are worshipping in Lutheran churches, this has a side effect on ECC communities worshipping this summer.
  - c. +Frank emphasized that Arizona and Colorado will not be having in person services until September. Fr. Michael brought up the possibility of outdoor services with social distancing in place. (subsequent news: Fr. Michael asked to preside at hybrid Mass with Dignity Denver; limited number of liturgical ministers 6-7 and 3-4 in assembly, all socially distancing in church space, shared via Zoom. His presiding will be contingent on their limiting sung participation.)
- 4) Community Information Survey
- a. +Frank asked that each person emphasize this survey amongst their region. It is a 20 question survey being offered through survey monkey. This will most likely take 20 minutes. Please contact leaders, pastors and delegates via email and with follow up phone calls.
  - b. This survey will go out May 21<sup>st</sup> and the deadline is the first week in June.
  - c. Rev. Denise brought up the HOP is offering a zoom COVID opportunity for clergy and priests to come together to talk about how the pandemic is impacting community life. She said this is another opportunity to emphasize this community information survey.
  - d. Erin will check in with Bishop Kedda, Bishop Rafe and a representative in California on how best to garner responses from communities. +Frank will touch base with someone in California to contact people. Erin will check on an automated version that will send a reminder to people who haven't finished. Fr. Michael asked that the questions be copied and pasted in the email itself, so people can gather the information and then respond to the email.

**COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES** Board Meeting April 29, 2020

*Financials:* Adrian reviewed the financials. We may have to return some of the money for the census grant because the drive is to end on June 1. We then had a discussion about applying for PPP for covering Adrian's salary. We will also have some opportunities to apply for grants for non-profits as the summer unfolds. We only got \$600 from the Easter Sunrise Service.

*Faithful Thursday Updates:* All events have been cancelled until the legislature reconvenes. In meeting with the groups, Adrian reported that when the legislature reconvenes, the coalition will use the opportunity to rethink how to have all three groups share in delivering the message. The groups will

also join together for the closing ceremony, but they may face limitations due to requirements for social distancing.

*Census Hub Update:* Megan Van Ens reported on the efforts for getting the faith community involved in the census. Nationally, the Bureau is reflecting about a 53.7% response rate; Colorado is at 57.6% in terms of response. We're still looking at a June 1st date to send field people out. For May, are prioritizing reaching out to the churches again. The Presbyterians have been good about getting the word out. Adrian reached out to the Judicatories through their communications team to reach out to their congregations. Megan invited members to reach out to her individually in order to help reach their constituencies. Her email address is: cocensusfaithhub@gmail.com.

*Voices for Justice:* The volunteers tracking the session are on hiatus until the Session starts again.

*Virtual Sunrise Service:* 7,000 views on our channel and then CBS-Channel 4 reported another 3,000 viewers. So, we reached no fewer than 10,000 people, all told. We had great feedback and reached people who otherwise would not be able to participate. Stan asked whether we could get any analytics on who watched the service.

*Doing our work virtually:*

- We may have an opportunity to reach the people we don't usually touch. We could perhaps do sermons or other gatherings virtually. Also, could do some recordings around Faithful Thursdays.
- We then spent some time brain-storming how we could use this time to reach out to other groups of people, including reaching out to seniors. We also thought about how to reach out to the youth. A suggestion was for Adrian to do small segments on Soul Food and Spirituality that could go out to our constituents.
- We are putting on a **virtual Pentecost Service** with contributed devotions from myself and the other Judicators.
- Adrian has put up a COVID-19 resource page for parishes and church communities. We then discussed how CCC might help/support the effort to get the word about options and directions out. Kristina shared Iliff's ReSource page on COVID-19 info for leaders and congregations: <https://www.iliff.edu/resource-2020-pandemic-toolbox-2/>.

*Signing of Petition:* The consensus of the group was that the initiative to declare churches an essential service would not be well received by the Judicatories. While we all agreed that church services and meeting together is essential, we also know the method of gathering can be accomplished in many different ways. In fact, most of the denominations are finding ways to gather virtually or with social distancing even through the end of the year.

## **MORE ADVOCACY**

As other CCC judicators were publishing **statements re George Floyd's death**, I published "The Essential Response to George Floyd's Death: Truth-Telling" on social media and our regional website.

I also contributed to Interfaith Alliance of Colorado's **Moral Minute Montage** (available on Thursday 6/4)). Let us know that your community or congregation is participating and share messages via #SolidaritySabbath.