

Rocky Mountain Regional Council Board of Directors Meeting Minutes—March 7, 2024, 6PM, via ZOOM

Present:

Kae Madden (Regional Bishop)
Michael Nicosia (Vicar for Ecumenical Engagement)
Jack Wolfe, Chuck Howard (LOC)
Rosean Amaral (facilitator), Tom Moos (scribe) (MoM)
Alice Bradley, Dennis Giblin (COB)
Jane Reina, Anne Grant (CHF)
Don Sutton, Liz Begalla (St. Paul)
Greg Yonker (Treasurer)

Guests:

Aaron Bailey (APB Digital)
Teri Harroun (LOC)

Zoom Meeting Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81677152445?pwd=ejhNZ0MySFBzc2J5bElvdUNaZHJNdz09>

Meeting ID: 816 7715 2445

Passcode: 10500

Rosean opened the meeting at 6:04 by welcoming our guests, Aaron and Teri, and our opening prayer.

Regular Business

1. Regional and Community Marketing: Intro discussion with Aaron Bailey.

Teri introduced Aaron Bailey, a marketing consultant for LOC since 2023. Aaron was doing marketing for Left Hand Church helping to expand their footprint in Longmont. Aaron works with churches, has been a pastor, and is familiar with church needs. LOC. contracted with him in 3 different phases beginning with who LOC is and how they project their image to Longmont and beyond. Aaron began by describing his work with churches to truly understand their context (“soil”) by understanding their community and neighborhood, Who does a church partner with, what other nonprofits, schools, other orgs? With LOC, he developed an understanding of the community by meeting with different groups and the LOC leadership. He included new members, old timers, and families in and outside Longmont area. Heard common themes reflecting ways people are in agreement as well as differing viewpoints. In the 2nd phase, he reviewed LOC social media and website and catalogued, redeveloped their brand identity, website presence, and social media profiles. Ensuing Q&A. Michael: asked about differences between a regional and local community’s websites and whether had reviewed the regional website. Aaron: Audience for LOC is for existing community and potential new members. Local church websites need to be outward facing. Regional website audience is probably different. Who is the audience? What type of info is needed by the potential audience? Liz expressed excitement and asked about costs. LOC 1st phase was \$2500, rebranding

\$3000, perhaps a monthly retainer afterwards. Aaron wants to provide good value to the community – LOC is free to drop Aaron if the fit is no longer right. Alice talked about regional need, whether leveraging funds from member communities to begin addressing marketing regionally makes sense. Aaron responded from perspective of someone seeking a worshipping community: there may be aspects of regional benefit but many might be seeking a specific community with specific characteristics. Dennis asked about analysis and metrics. Aaron responded that attendance metrics may not work anymore - may need to measure a community's impact qualitatively more than quantitatively. Alice affirmed that a website's message and lived experience when guests show up has to be synergistic. Website can turn people off but next step is embodying that message. Teri noted that people who interviewed Aaron have a raised awareness of how each person individually does marketing. Aaron and his colleague, Jen, do a lot of coaching on how folks interact. Alice also commented that language matters, loves LOC's tagline ("A Boldly Inclusive Church"). Aaron: Authentic communication in the entire process and relationships are critical. Aaron shared contact info: 303-900-2721, a@apb.io, <https://apb.io/faith>.

We briefly discussed when to continue the conversation? Schedule another meeting? Discuss further this meeting? Don suggested we not delay too long. Greg advised that we at minimum schedule a follow up meeting. **Action: Need to plan another meeting before the next RMR meeting.**

2. Agenda approval/addition.

Need to review and approve Greg's RMR budget. Added to Financial report.

3. Review and approval of February notes

Don had incorporated changes suggested by Tom. Alice suggested 2 more changes, dropping some text. Approved as amended. Michael distributed the amended notes before end of meeting.

4. Financial report

Greg covered the financial report: regional income, expenses, CCC income from MoM, CoB, CHF, CD yield and reinvestment as per last month's recommendation, checking and savings account balances.

Action: LOC and SP are asked to provide their CCC contributions ASAP and Greg can make CCC payments based on projections. Kae offered Regional support for LOC and MoM local PRIDE charges but both communities felt no financial assistance was needed.

Greg reviewed the budget for 2024-25. Often tithe contributions exceed what is planned because community incomes exceed projected tithes. Jack raised a question about additional forms that need to be filed for "soliciting charities" but we concluded RMR is not one because our income, including donations, come from member communities. Budget includes 3% increase of Bishop and Vicar stipends. Discussion topic: Synod bishop cost – adjusted so the region pays the full amount. Jack/Tom moved/seconded to adopt the budget. Consensus approved the budget.

5. Bishop's report (see Appendix A)

Kae expects her role on the process review team will require substantial time and is making adjustments to other areas of responsibility. Team will include 2 lay leaders and a clergy member who

have already been nominated by HOL and HOP and have some “distance” from the MidAmerican situation. Tulsa and Little Rock are proceeding with consecration of Bishop and may seek affiliation with the Old Catholic Communion. Kae also highlighted that the Nex Benedict funeral service was particularly moving and will be shown to COB community and encouraged participation by other regional communities or separate showings. **Link to be made available.** Attended a Demographics workshop which included discussion on how churches should plan for congregations moving into the “older-old” age group and that immigrants into the State are expected to be a factor in our marketing focus. COB 20th anniversary celebration went really well.

6. Vicar’s report (see Appendix B)

Michael highlighted an invitation from Jayme Matthias to participate on the Internal Review Board quantitative study of clergy which Michael sent to Fr Teri to forward to HOP. CCC: insight on church marketing: the word “community” resonates more than “church” but with some geographical nuances. Easter sunrise preacher will be Erin Gilmore. In terms of advocacy, large LGBTQ+ group (many youth) from Colo Spgs lobbying in response to Pulse shooting. Dennis hopes to attend the Christian Nationalism program – a topic that deeply concerns him.

7. Leadership Council Report

Chuck received no written report this month. Teri sent a draft of needs for Synod volunteers. A big need remains for someone to chair registration team. Rosean mentioned that Rosa might lead on that and Rosean and Linda Joyce may help with registration but it was unclear whether that meant the advanced registration process or registration on the opening day of Synod.

Old Business

1. Synod Planning for October 11-14, 2024-- Holy Synod at YMCA of the Rockies

Jack sent a draft of a transportation needs plan. Ensuing conversation noted that some folks might arrive late (e.g. delayed flights) or have to leave early. Jack wants to assign drivers to registrants flying in from out of state. We discussed that transportation might also be viewed as a scholarship sub-issue. **Jack will revise and refine transportation plan and asks that it be distributed to all RMR community members. Michael volunteered to provide contact info for other team chairs which should also be communicated.**

2. Financial commitment to the region.

Kae reminded folks to submit their commitments and especially CCC contributions ASAP.

3. Scholarships for Synod

After discussion with Kae, Dennis proposed 5 scholarships of \$600 each especially for RMR delegates. 2 applications for scholarships have been received. We may potentially make other moneys available, especially for delegates from Hispanic communities outside region. LOC has historically offered to pay some registration fees. We agreed to think about allocating an additional \$1000 or dividing the remaining funds beyond needed regional assistance into partial scholarships. Tom also raised a

question whether language translation accommodations might be necessary for Spanish-speaking delegates. **Tom to pursue Zoom translation with Trish Vanni.**

4. Clergy continuing education.

5 hours of continuing ed required for deacons, 10 hours for priests. **The clergy are encouraged to track active (not reading a book) education.** Continuing ed is listed on a “ministerial standing form”.

5. Accountability Calendar

Kae added Marade to December’s accountability topics. Do we want a general ECC special appeal? COB has done it on Pentecost. **Kae proposed we all think on that one.**

New Business

1. Recap regional delegate meeting held on Feb 17, 2024

Went well. Rosean noted that some new MoM delegates felt meeting “was scary” – awareness of the overwhelming effort to put together a synod – but enthusiastic.

2. Community Updates

LOC: Chuck – on Good Friday doing a Stations of the Cross walk through older parts of Longmont where KKK held events in the 1960s.

CHF: Frank Quintana will preside at Holy Thurs with a supper as part of mass, bringing bagged dinners that unsheltered would have as their own supper. Jane noted that contact is most effective way to bridge gap – some unsheltered folks expected to attend.

MOM: Joining with 301 faith partners for Holy Thurs & Good Fri and with St Paul’s Episcopal for Easter Vigil. Doing Taizé prayer services and Soup Suppers during Lent. St Paul’s Episcopal is sponsoring walk to a murder site, at which we will pray and lay flowers.

SP: Michael adapted Roman liturgy to remove anti-Semitic biases in the Passion. Stations of the Tomb to not pass over the grief of disciples after the crucifixion. Ecumenical service with UCC siblings. Don gave a heads up about being contacted by a deacon from the archdiocese to challenge him about unsanctioned masses at non Roman-Catholic churches.

COB: More comments on 20th anniversary celebration. Have a traditional Holy Week set of services, hoping Pablo can do Good Friday.

Jane: Truth and Reconciliation committee is planning a trip to Selma, Montgomery and other Civil Rights sites next year.

Closing Prayer: 8:24 closed with Mary Oliver poem, “Logos”.

Lead Rotation of Remaining 2024 RMRC Meetings:

April 11 - COB; May 2-CHF; June 6-LOC; July 6 STP leads in-person at COB;

Aug 1-MoM, Sept 5-COB; Oct 5-CHF leads in person at LoC; Nov 7-LOC; Dec 5-STP

Appendix A—Bishop Notes: Activity in February 2024

by Bishop Kae Madden

Personal:

Listening and Relationship building

Administration

I completed the 6 hour Lutheran-based local ethics and boundaries course held on Zoom along with several other clergy. Rosean was sent the certificates for the records. We have postponed the Church of the Beloved in-person “code of ethics training” for all lay and clergy leaders until the summer, and when scheduled we will invite participation from the region.

Advocacy/Presence/Consultation

North area Memorial for Nex Benedict, March 2nd. Thank you, Michael, for forwarding the information about this event to mourn and to lament our failure to protect nonbinary youth/children and those who have died as a result of violence/bullying. Nex was 16 years old, nonbinary, Oklahoma Osage, and died on February 8th following an altercation at school. The service was live-streamed and the recording is available at [WATCH LIVE! | Stjohns \(stjohnsthornton.org\)](https://www.stjohnsthornton.org). There were very powerful speakers who shared their own stories, their sadness and their challenge to all to keep speaking out for those who live authentically.

Clergy support:

Praying with many...

Clergy meetings and phone calls

Weekly Friday gatherings: It was suggested that the clergy share a Caring Bridge site to self-report any joys or concerns, prayer requests. I created it and we'll see if it works :)

Community support:

Pride: Adams County Pride is June 8th. Tentative plans for COB to have a booth. Anyone else interested? Non-profit vendor booths are free :) [Adams County Pride | Adams County Government \(adcogov.org\)](https://www.adcogov.org)

Liturgies/Sacraments

COB's 20th anniversary celebration:, Feb 10th. It was a wonderful celebration with +Paul presiding. Hard to believe it's been twenty years.

Confirmation COB on June 1st:

Formation

Continuing discernment with candidates Mike and Christy. Conversations continue with another presbyterate candidate in discernment.

ECC

Region: First Delegate meeting on Zoom on February 17th - I think it went well. Next meeting in person on April 20, 9:30 to 11 at COB

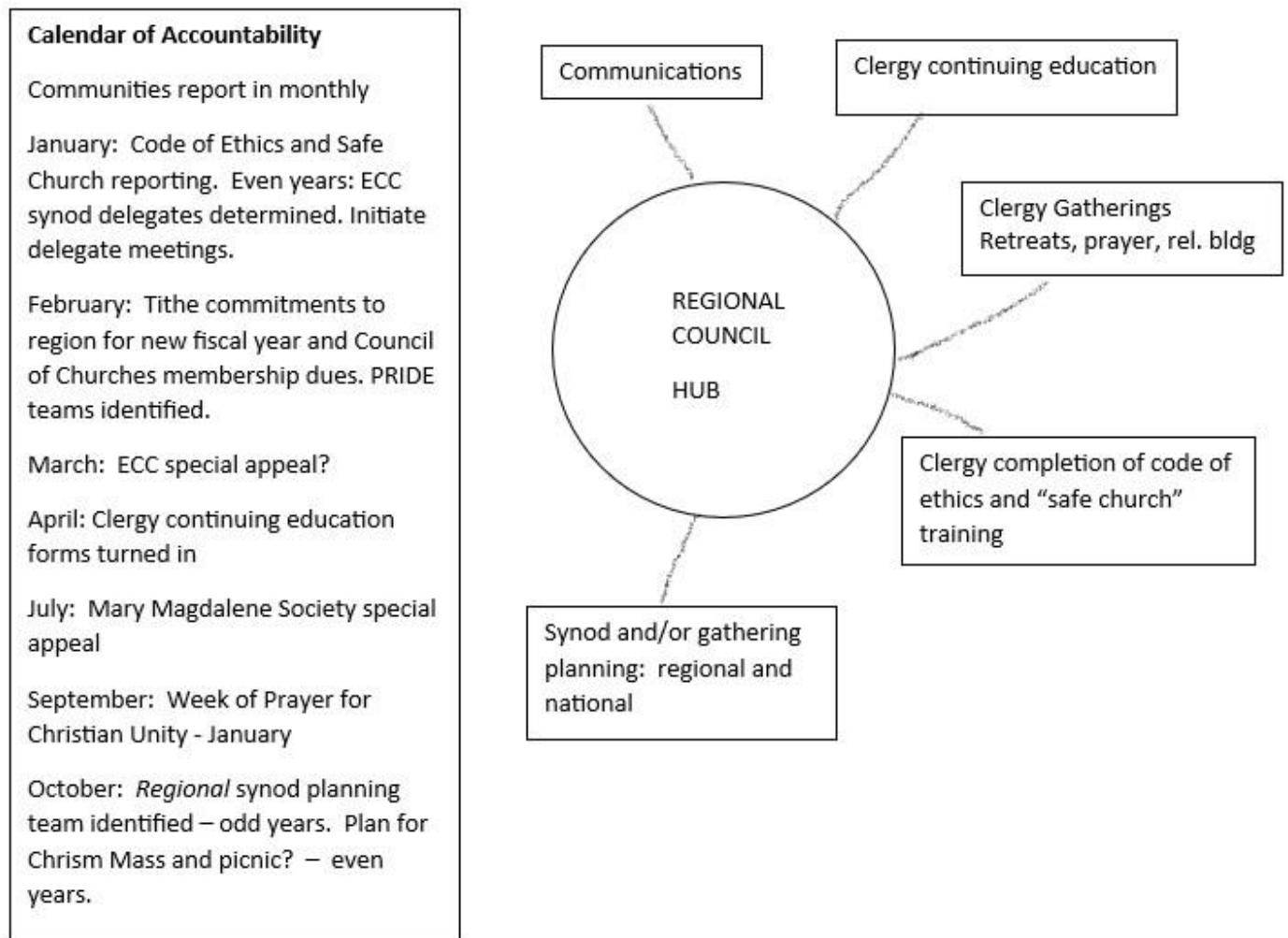
Council of Bishops

- Preparation and Meeting on Feb 12th – 6 hours + Will be forming a “process review team” to determine the sources of disagreement leading to the withdrawal of the MidAmerica diocese.

- Meeting March 4: I was selected to be the bishop member of the process review team along with a clergy and two lay leaders. We hope to have the team formed before Easter and then we will begin our work.

Consulting with Pablo: Phone calls and meetings to discuss the current climate and functioning of the ECC, perspectives.

Brainstorming model of administration of the region....



Appendix B—Ecumenical Engagement Report for RMRC 03 07 2024

submitted 3/6/2024 by Fr. Michael Nicosia

KEY POINTS and ACTION ITEMS

REGIONAL & NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Completed registration for 6/22-23 Denver PrideFest booth.
 Sent Jewish list of Names of God to Fr. Teri and the MoM Liturgy Committee as a resource for their discussions about inclusive language addressing God.
 2/3 Attended remotely Adrian Miller's induction into the Blacks of Colorado Hall of Fame.
 2/8 Attended the NCC webinar on the Nicene Creed (I've since written a full summary with comments which I circulated on 3/6—including a revision of my profession of faith, "our Truth", to better articulate my evolving theology).
 2/8 Completed Ethics and Boundaries training through ELCA.
 2/9 Relayed invitation from Fr. Jayme Mathias to Fr. Teri about The Internal Review Board of Fairfield University's new quantitative study of clergy of the Independent Sacramental Movement, to see if HOP would be interested in circulating it.
 2/11 Presided at MoM.
 2/15 Attended Inclusive Catholics Happy Hour (mostly social).
 2/16 Composed Holy Saturday liturgy "The Stations of the Tomb", shared with Friday pastors' group and wrote a blurb about it for *Extraordinary Catholics!* Magazine.
 2/17 Attended Region's Synod delegates meeting representing StP.
 2/19 received appeal from Stephan Andre Waligur; forwarded to +Kae and Fr. Teri for review.
 2/22 Attended CFCU/ CO Ceasefire Lobby Day and circulated pending legislation.
 2/26 Attended OneCO's LGBTQ+ Lobby Day and circulated pending legislation.
 2/26 Participated in first Synod Planning meeting as Liturgy Team Chair and am coordinating its 1st meeting.
 2/26 Attended ECC Chaplains Zoom gathering; clarified possibilities of their involvement at Synod.
 2/27 Attended Inclusive Catholics Coffee Chat. New attendees were very impressed that we're members of the CCC. Included conversation about church marketing—insight shared about focusing less on "church" (naughty word for many) and more on "community," i.e., relationships (may be regionally nuanced; Mid-Atlantic associate "community" with bad actors in their experience)
 3/5 Attended CCC hosted webinar on CO demographics.
 Participated in weekly regional pastor prayer/sharing.
 Circulated advocacy updates, incl. CCC posts.

COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES – Board Meeting February 28, 2024

For GATHERING THOUGHTS I shared a bit about the NCC webinar on the Nicene Creed

We welcomed Rev. Amy Stapleton—UMC Rep as new board member

OPEN BOARD POSITIONS: VICE CHAIR AND SECRETARY Board positions still open; noted that Secretary need not be a board member, so encouraged asking congregational members.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

- Adrian is available to speak to congregations (incoming donations made to CCC)
- Looking for funding to hire PT coordinator of faith communities' migrant relief services possibly involving American Friends Service Committee; LDS stepped up for House 1000 initiative and is looking for ecumenical partners

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE UPDATE

- Rev. Erin Gilmore, UCC Rocky Mtn Conference Leader, will be this year's preacher
- Considering cashless donations, no collection, cash collection at exits
- Music: Blood Brothers return; jazz saxophonist Ron McMillan providing pre-worship music

ADVOCACY UPDATE

- Michael shared about OneCO LGBTQ+ Lobby Day; large contingent from COSprings; a lot of youth involvement! Adrian asked about legislator turnout, which was minimal
- Probably not having Faithful Thursdays again as legislator turnout very limited

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM PROGRAM WITH ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

- Rev. Amanda Henderson will lead a virtual presentation March 19 at 6:30pm. Details to come.
- High priority for ECUSA diocese; planning on designing logo for ⊙ bumper stickers, signs and memes to counter Christian Nationalism political movement with actual Christian faith
- Anti-Semitism presentation in April; Islamophobia presentation in May

OFFICE MOVE—spaces under consideration

THISSPACE—now have a 10 church cohort engaged