

Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

Board of Directors Meeting Notes

August 3, 2023

Host: Saint Paul Facilitator: Michael Nicosia & Donald Sutton Minutes: Michael Nicosia

Attending: Alice Bradley & Dennis Giblin (COB), Chuck Howard & Jack (LOC), Liz Begalla & Don Sutton (SP), Rosean Amaral & Tom Moos (MOM)), Kae Madden (bishop), Michael Nicosia (Vicar).

Guests: Teri Harroun (Leadership Council VP) and Gayle (representing CHF)

Meeting started at 6:05 pm

Opening prayer (Michael)

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

Regular Business

- 1 Welcomed guests
- 2 Agenda approved with moving Teri's report up.
- 3 Reviewed and approved of July minutes with caveat to emphasize member registration on website.
- 4 Leadership council report by Teri Harroun: complicated month
 - Accolades to Alice for help with Lilly Grant.
 - All work in last OPB newsletter.
 - Shout out to Sept. 19 All ECC Gathering on Zoom 6pm MST (link coming)
 - Mid-America (4 communities with some missions) process of bishop election includes work of executive committee and nominating committee; trying to exercise consultative role. Value Bp. Paul's engagement. 3 members of LC have had to recuse themselves from engagement in conversations with the Mid-America leadership as members of Mid-America. The Leadership Council's recommendations ignored, but conversation hopefully continues. Diocese may fracture; dissenting communities would be part of Proto-diocese for a limited time. Prayer for unity called for. Election moving forward in spite of divisive visions; Dewayne Messinger only nominee...election Sept. 1, short of deadline to be ratified at Synod 2024 causing a system to be developed for ECC delegates to affirm the candidate electronically . LC stressing national ECC Constitution, while they prioritize their local Constitution. Pastoral approach taken by LC, not legalistic, in spite of divergent vision of our Communion; concerned with precedent their process is setting. Call to our Region to hold Mid-America in prayer, for them and for all of us.
 - Appreciations of Teri expressed by Bp. Kae.
 - Oct 11-14 Synod set; contract signed with YMCA. LC coming up weekend before (and will be visiting soon to set needs).
 - May hear about Lilly Grant this fall, impacting plans, particularly for funding reps.
- 5 Church accountability report (Don took over leading the meeting)
 - Bishop Kae; asked if any input from communities re her prospective "Calendar" (see Appendix A).
 - Tom might add evaluating sacramental needs related to annual planning of bishop visits.
 - Put the hosting community and the in-person Regional Board's meetings on calendar.

- Good monthly agenda for our individual councils.
 - Kae asked about Mary Magdalene Society collections on calendar; varied as to how communities will respond. Remains in calendar as reminder to consider it (put in action items in minutes in months prior).
 - Recalled Special Appeal to ECC from clergy in **the past**; nothing done since by clergy collectively or communities.
- 6 Bishop's notes (see Appendix A)
- noted prayers for Kris Jenkins; Scott will delay leading/participation in clergy support events.
 - reviewed her personal participation in conversations with Mid-America.
 - Clarified requirements for involvement on Bishops' Appeals Board.
- 7 Vicar's report
- NOTE first item under CCC report in Appendix B.
Council questions which benefits citizens more. Consensus that response challenging our society's persistent resistance to sacrifice for the common good is a good thing, regardless of whether endorsing specific ballot measures.
 - Equality Act support; see below.
 - 13 site members as of 8/2/2023
 - Kae added 9/8-9 actions in support of Registry Act
- 8 Financial Issues. Greg Yonker report on investing in a CD – Don to clarify with him
- 9 Regional bishops employment status (see Appendix C)
- Jack finds current call letter and constitution language need clarity as to legal relationship between Bishop and Region. Ad-hoc committee's consensus, including Kae's was that relationship was as an independent contractor at will In practice subject to the terms of the constitution.. Discussion followed that relationship should be by covenant, neither at-will or by contract, nor as an employee or independent contractor.
 - Jack recommended, based on Committee report, no action necessary at this time, but that as a future action: amend call letter at next drafting to reflect bishop is an "independent contractor-at-will serving the Region subject to the Constitution." Constitution should also be amended at an appropriate time.
 - Don suggested formulating an alternative category, a new paradigm, to capture the covenantal rather than legalistic relationship. Jack agreed that this was possible and perhaps appropriate, but in doing so the risk under current laws should be recognized and accepted.
- 10 Collaboration with Colorado Public Radio tabled until we need to broadcast something.

New Business

Community Updates:

- Holy Family picnic 8/20 at Dcn. Mike's invitation to all communities; grateful for Kae's participation.
- SP newsletter (include Board on email list); installing universal accessible bathroom
- COB 9/9 feast day; had a "fill a back pack / fill a belly" social justice event; 8/5 Sacrament of the Sick during our regular liturgy; looking to have Steve come to give info about Beautiful Redemption
- MOM 7/23 feast celebration with Bp. Paul who blessed pastors; Steve coming to share with Ft. Collins Interfaith group.

Closing Prayer: Liz Begalla, and the meeting concluded at 8:10 p.m.

Next Meeting Host Communities: Sep 7 MoM; Oct 7(Sat) in-Person Mtg, COB location TBD

Appendix A—Bishop Notes: Activity in July 2023

by Bishop Kae Madden

Personal: I celebrated my 17th anniversary of ordination on July 29th (along with Deacon Mike Weil). Time flies :) I plan to take a few retreat days beginning the evening of August 15th through the afternoon on August 19th.

Listening and Relationship building

Participate as available in weekly regional clergy prayer/sharing on Friday mornings.

Administration

Michael and I received our debit cards (thank you, Greg), I think we resolved my employment status for now, and look forward to hearing about moving the region's reserves to an interest-bearing account.

I hope that each community has invited your pastors and a few lay leaders to the gathering on Sept 8 with +Pablo to plan MMS fund-raising. I am waiting for his formal invitation and will send it when I receive it.

Advocacy/Presence/Consultation

Clergy support:

I sent a communication to our clergy inviting them to greater ownership of their relationships and prayer together. Planting seeds. Fr. Scott and Fr. Len responded.

Praying with many...

Liturgies/Sacraments

August 20: Church of the Holy Family picnic and annual bishop visit

Sept 30: Light of Christ community visit

**Be sure to save the date for the ECC 20th anniversary liturgy at 6 p.m. on Sept 19th (the anniversary of the signing of the constitution).

Need to schedule the "annual bishop visit" with each community – what do you imagine that entails for your community?

Formation

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

Continuing work on forming a local Education Team to accompany our candidates' learning and to determine MDiv Equivalency and what classes need to be substituted and/or added for Bishop Kemper School of Ministry. Scott and Teri are part of the team. Progress :) I need an administrative volunteer (or two) to track and report candidate paperwork.

ECC

Council of Bishops

- Monthly meeting on July 10th and ad hoc meetings on July 14th and 25th.

- Continuing to work on ordination and incardination standards and the requirement to submit same to the Council of Bishops prior to approval.
- Continued conversations with St. Matthew's and +Peter, Mid-America election,

With the Leadership Council: pending

Pending: Continued work on members to form the Standing Hearing Committee (Appeals board) regarding constitutionality – I am unaware of anyone volunteering from the HOP or HOL and perhaps someone has.

Pending: Continued work regarding education standards for ordination

Pending: Review of the approval process for ordination of clergy

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....

Calendar of Accountability

Communities report in: for example

January: Code of Ethics and Safe Church reporting. Even years: ECC synod delegates determined. Initiate delegate meetings.

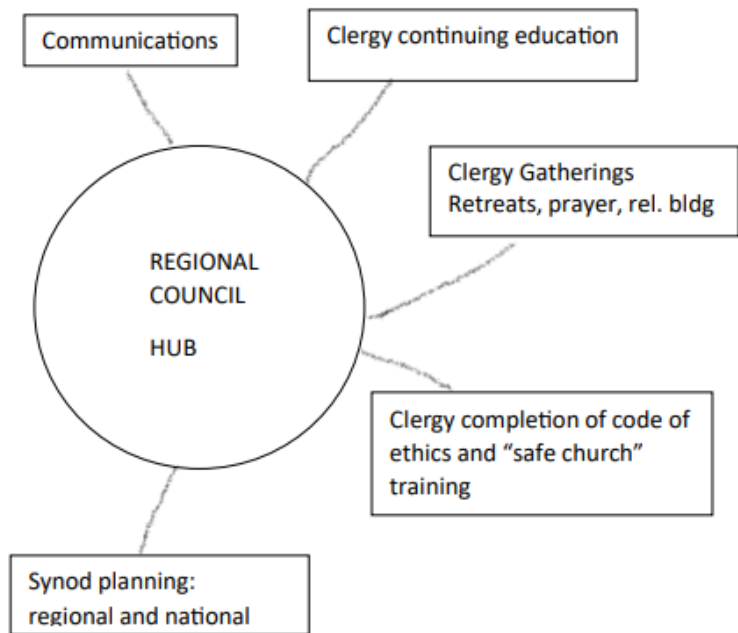
February: Tithe commitments to region for new fiscal year and Council of Churches membership dues. PRIDE teams identified.

March: ECC special appeal?

April: Clergy continuing education forms turned in

July: Mary Magdalene Society special appeal

October: *Regional* synod planning team identified – alternate years



Appendix B—Ecumenical Engagement Report for RMRC 08 03 2023

submitted 8/1/2023 by Fr. Michael Nicosia

KEY POINTS and ACTION ITEMS

- NOTE first item under CCC report below. Thoughts? Can we get regional buy-in?
- Equality Act support; see below.
- 13 site members as of 8/2/2023

REGIONAL & NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Published details on regional website for the anti-racism education opportunities shared by Joan Crawford at last meeting.

Transcribed our church-building “bricks” from Synod and posted on members’ section of website.

7/15 helped staff 301 Faith Partners’ booth at NoCo Pride and presided at MoM’s Pride Mass 7/16.

Contributed to this year’s Inclusive Catholic Summer School:

- Was able to connect Jayme with Bishop Paul re his presentation.
- 7/14 presented my Stations of Justice liturgy.
- 7/17 participated on a panel discussion about outreach to the marginalized.
- 7/21 joined Don S & members of StP giving an overview of ecumenical partnerships in our region; in preparation, debriefed with Rosean A about 301 Faith Partner’s Covenant.
- Though I didn’t register for the full summer school, I have been able to view recordings of Frank Q’s presentation of his liturgy of rebirth for baptized trans persons, and Jayme M’s review of Old Catholic history in Germany (copies available).

7/24 missed monthly ECC Chaplains meeting again due to hospital duties.

7/28 disseminated notice to regional clergy re: the #FaithForEqualityAct Coalition to galvanize communities of faith in support of the #EqualityAct. <https://support.interfaithalliance.org/a/equality-act>

Participated in weekly regional pastor prayer/sharing.

Circulated advocacy updates, incl. CCC posts.

COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES – Board on Summer hiatus, but I’ve been busy:

I alerted Adrian to an editorial in Denver Post: “Proposition HH is latest effort by Colorado Democrats to kill TABOR” <https://www.denverpost.com/2023/07/28/proposition-hh-tabor-property-taxes-kafer/>. Prop HH would allow the State to reduce TABOR refunds to compensate for lost revenues due to proposed lowering of property taxes. I asked if the CCC should publish a response challenging our society’s persistent resistance to sacrifice for the common good. Adrian is drafting said response to be presented to the CCC Board.

My work with the CAFE-Advance Care Planning advisory board continues, discussing scope of next steps and application for another grant.

The Colorado Council of Churches is teaming up with thisspace, a great tool for utilizing church space!

- helps leverage and steward church spaces for primarily temporary real estate use
- parallels Airbnb with faith community sensibilities
- spaces offered to non-profits (can access local and national networks), but applicant qualifications determined by owners
- can assume property management logistics, providing consistency if staff/leadership changes
- expanding from California
- insurance required of renters
- only cost of service is % of rental fees; possible discounts for CCC Member Hosts and Congregants and % to CCC

I disseminated an announcement about their 7/20 informational Facebook Webinar to the region, including our ecumenical partners.

Appendix C—Ad-hoc Committee re Bishop’s job designation

~ Jack’s committee report

Here is my July 27th draft of committee meeting minutes, with one sentence added to end of first paragraph following comment from one committee member.

It was consensus that Bishop is an independent contractor, not an employee, thus Council has no say in how Bishop performs duties. (Note, not discussed at meeting: while this is acceptable to Kae under current Call, it could impact compensation discussion for her replacement. Also, it should be obvious that “whether” rather than “how” the Bishop performs duties is another subject altogether.) One member suggested after meeting that Kae was neither an employee nor an independent contractor but rather in a covenant relationship where issues would be resolved through conversations of mutual respect.

It was consensus that Bishop should serve the Region “at will” rather than under contract. Thus Bishop can resign at any time, and subject to the Constitution, the Region can terminate the Bishop at any time “without cause.” It was noted that Constitution sets forth a procedure for termination and says a 3/4 vote of RMRC is needed determining a valid reason for removal, but that “we don’t want you any more”, perhaps due to loss of confidence, would be a valid reason. Bishop can resign without stating any reason. It was noted that this may be all right, since if the Bishop does not want the job, we probably don’t want the Bishop to remain.

No actions needed at this time.

Future actions:

Call Letter. There is a present understanding and agreement between Kae and Council that she is an independent contractor serving at will. This should be reflected in the minutes of RMRC meeting. It was then the consensus of the committee that when the current Call Letter is amended, or upon selection of Kae’s replacement, then the first paragraph of Section 1 should be revised to read: “The Board of Directors of the Rocky Mountain Region (RMR) of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) issues this letter of call appointing you, _____ **to serve as our Regional Bishop as an independent contract at will, subject to the terms of the Region’s Constitution**, for a term of _____.” Note that Section VII indicates that “either party can terminate this episcopal call agreement according to our Constitution and Bylaws.” Currently the Bylaws do not address the subject of termination, and the Constitution does not address resignation of the bishop other than to state what happens if the Bishop is to resign.

Constitution. At the next opportunity to Amend the Constitution, either at a future Synod, or if deemed necessary by vote of the communities prior to a Synod, it was the consensus of the committee that the second paragraph of Article IV “The Regional Bishop” should be revised to begin: “**The Bishop is an independent contractor at will serving the Region subject to the terms of this Constitution.**”

[Concluding note:] I think this leaves the situation still unclear pending action by the Council, either accepting the relationship characteristics as set forth in my July 27th draft or by adopting an alternative to carry us over until the next Regional Synod.

Jack