

Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting, January 6, 2022 6:00PM

Host: Mary of Magdala; **Facilitator:** Rosean Amaral; **Notes:** Tom Moos

Present:

Kae Madden (Regional Bishop)
Michael Nicosia (Vicar for Ecumenical Engagement)
Jack Wolfe, Rachel O'Neill (Light of Christ)
Rosean Amaral, Tom Moos (Mary of Magdala)
Alice Bradley (Church of the Beloved)
Greg Yonker, Don Sutton (St Paul, Denver)
Mike Weil, Anne Grant (Church of the Holy Family)

Opening Prayer/Regional Prayer (Rosean began the meeting at 6:04)

Regular Business:

1. Welcome any guests (No guests)
2. Agenda approvals/additions
 - Regional response to Boulder fires (Tom)
 - Regional website development (Michael)
3. Review and approval of December notes
Several folks submitted corrections. Rosean and Tom had emailed corrections. Kae emailed amended minutes with corrections. **Action: Michael is going to integrate all the changes and send out amended minutes for all to review.**
4. Personal connections: Members shared memories and highlights of Christmas.
5. Financial Report
Greg presented the financial report for December, tithe incomes, expenses and bank balance. The Council approved the report.
6. Bishop Notes and Vicar Report
Kae's Bishop Notes. Rosean asked about the visioning workshop on Models of Church, specifically whether it will be just for Holy Family? Kae said she is willing do a similar workshop for others. Greg asked for more detail about what was going on in Wisconsin with lay ecclesial ministers wearing cleric garb and whether Mimi and Mary in their preparation for ordination have been properly prepared. Kae summarized the candidate review process and noted that Mike Bober is retiring and there were open questions about their educational background. There is a balance between transparency (especially for the community in which the candidate would serve as priest) vs confidentiality. How much of a

candidate's life gets put out in front of the community? There is also a difference between presbyteral ordination –vs- being elected pastor. Emmaus still needs to figure out what they are going to do in terms of finding a pastor. Open questions: if there are concerns, how do we go to the source as best we know it? What can and should the local region/diocese do? What can't they do independently? How do we support diversity and what should be standard across the ECC? Father Don: who do we identify as the point person to go to the source to get information and resolve issues? In Wisconsin, the community met with Mike Bober and Bp Rafe and reached strong consensus. The good news is that the issues could be worked through constructively. Alice thinks the situation, which could have been very divisive, was handled well. We want well-formed clergy.

Other feedback: Alice also thanked Kae for the clergy gathering: holy and meaningful. Rosean and Mike seconded. Tom asked about topics in her report's Budget Development Section, whether the RMRC needed to discuss any of that further? Kae suggested this needs to be discussed and worked out with the normal RMRC budget process during Jan and Feb and as we plan national and regional synods. **Jack suggested adding another category for the budget that covers donations and charitable giving, e.g. gun buyback, Easter sunrise donations, and Boulder fire response.**

Michael's Vicar's report. Main topics were web site design, gun violence statement, regional and national collaborations and Colorado Council of Churches (CCC) advocacy. Michael highlighted that the Voices for Justice team needs point persons to review/follow Colorado legislation being developed for specific judicator policy areas. These folks need not be on the CCC council but would be a support group with specific legislative focus areas and report back to the Council. Michael also asked for participation in the zoom Faithful Thursdays noon session on Jan 20 to strengthen the evidence of support for these topics for legislators. Michael reported on the draft of the Gun Violence statement that Kae, Sheila and Michael worked on – ran it by Colorado Cease Fire who approved it for length and content. **Michael proposed releasing the statement with the next gun buyback event.** Sponsorships are still being sought - the desired regional sponsorship for the gun buyback program would be between \$500 - \$1000. Greg proposed a budget of setting aside some savings and some for worthy causes. We discussed being generous and also need to get our budget in order and pay Bp Kae for the work done so far, before allocating substantial funds for charitable giving. **The group agreed to donate \$500 in sponsorship for the gun buyback.**

7. Leadership Council Report

Mike discussed topics from the HOP news letter: zoom gathering for clergy this weekend discussing liturgy (Jan 8, 10:30 Pacific) and on January 29 a discussion for HOP, HOL and COB to discuss the appropriate procedure for making claims about unconstitutional conduct. Deacons met a couple of weeks ago to discuss the definition of the diaconate in the Constitution/Statutes which differs significantly from the original Constitution and the deacons are unhappy about the changes. Deacons will propose an edit for October synod. According to Michael, the new revised wording came from Bp Rafe's seminar about the permanent diaconate, particularly how it has been reclaimed in the Episcopal Church. **Firm deadline for nominations for Presiding bishop is Jan 31.**

Old Business:

1. Jack Wolfe 501(c)(3) filing

Jack started on the filing but got stalled by some of the financial processes for handling fees associated with the forms. Jack noted inconsistencies in the requirements for churches and organizations of churches to file forms 1023 (or 1023EZ) to obtain a 501(c)(3) which is still necessary for sending donor acknowledgement letters. Needs previous financials and projected financials and balance sheets. Are we a “public charity” (a majority of our funding comes from outside sources, not members) or a “private foundation”? Greg is working on a 501(c)(3) for St Paul. **Jack will get EIN number and do some more digging into regulations whether the region actually needs to formally apply for the 501(c)(3) or are covered because we are an organization of churches.**

2. Bishop Call letter

Jack and Greg will respond to the Call letter offline. Rosean raised a concern about compensation beginning on Jan 1 but asked if Kae should be paid retro-actively. Greg also asked about how to handle past payments to Michael in light of retro-actively splitting stipends (we don't ask Michael for money back!). Kae is fine with starting the compensation in line with our fiscal year and ultimately suggested we consider back-pay as we develop our budget. Michael proposed that splitting of stipend begin at least next month. Rosean also asked whether Kae should be present for discussion on the amount of compensation – we agreed Kae can be present. Rosean also asked about termination of call being too much “at will” but would prefer some verbiage supporting a suitable period of notice. Kae found sections in the regional Constitution covering termination of service and we agreed to keep that policy defined there.

3. Budget (still in development)

Kae and Greg asked communities to put together projections for contributions to the region. Quarterly and monthly contributions are still acceptable. Some communities are shifting from a model of a flat rate contribution to one based on member offerings.

4. Update on regional website designer?

Michael contacted Mike Orr from Caffeinated Church and got a list of vetted web designers that the Episcopal Church uses. Michael suggested using the WIX platform which allows drag and drop website development, no programming skills required. **Michael also asked the Council to visit the Ekklesia360 website and review their video** (<https://www.ekklesia360.com/> then click on “See How it Works”. For a self-paced demo, click on “Try it Now”). Michael also requested and received feedback on the list of content areas, menus, and organization of static vs dynamic content. We briefly discussed preserving the domain name. **Michael will investigate pricing.**

5. CCC contributions

Clarification on division of CCC contribution: \$1/member (dues) + \$60/community (Michael's share of BOD-raised funding) still works for us. The CCC contribution is in addition to the communities' regional tithes and is generally paid by communities during the first quarter of a year.

New Business:

1. Bishop/Vicar relationship, split stipend, education...
Kae wants to avoid lots of out-of-pocket expenses for Michael and herself. She wants some budgetary allocation for educational opportunities and recognizes there may be unexpected opportunities that will need to be presented to the Council for review/approval. Greg expressed support for allocating funds for educational programs.
2. Week of prayer for Christian Unity
Kae asked pastors whether the communities have participated in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Given that most communities are nested in churches or associated with faith partners, she suggested we do a one-time evening prayer with these partners. Michael suggested we might not have time to plan with partners for this year (Jan 18 – 25), but might instead invite their participation in a prayer service we've prepared and include giving partners active roles. Such a prayer service would be over Zoom. Rosean volunteered to work with Kae on this. Michael likes laying a seed for a more involved and cross-Colorado Week of Prayer next year. Kae proposed Fri Jan 21, 2022 at 7:00 pm. **RMRC members should start sending out Save the Dates to our faith partners now. Zoom details will be forthcoming as the event gets planned.**
3. Responding to Boulder fires.
No goods of any kind are needed. Donate via the Community Foundation of Boulder County. Tom communicated Kae's email message via MoM's bulletin inviting folks to donate financially or through the assistance opportunities cited in the email. Jack mentioned that temporary housing is still a critical need. Michael encouraged all the member communities to continue posting needs or topics of interest to their Facebook pages which he follows and leverages for broader communications. Alice expressed appreciation that Kae sent her helpful and supportive email so soon after the fire.
4. Greg shared some details about St Paul and partner faith community helping an Afghan refugee family and suggested there may be further opportunities to help other Afghan families as they come to Colorado.

Closing Prayer: Rosean (8:18 pm)

Next Meeting Host Communities: February 3, COB; March 3, CHF; April 7, LOC; May 5, STP

Appendix A—Bishop Notes: Month of December 2021

submitted 1/4/2022 by Bishop Kae Madden

General notes: Michael as Vicar in the roles of Ecumenical Engagement: advocacy, interfaith relationships, ecumenical relationships including Colo. Council of Churches board, and communication/media.

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:

- Appt with Bishop Karen Oliveto (United Methodist) set for Jan 25th
- In contact with various clergy
- Advent gathering for prayer and relationship building on Dec 4 was attended by 10 clergy and myself. Plans for monthly gatherings.

Planning: Met with Fr. Michael on Dec 22

Consultation: Support for clergy – personal and resources

Community Support/Visits:

- Scheduled to preside at CHF on January 16 and will lead a visioning workshop on Models of Church on Jan 22
- Scheduled to preside at LOC on February 12 with discussion following

OPB and Council of Bishops: Participated in the Council of Bishops call on Dec. 13th: Centered on ordinations in mid-America diocese and the misunderstandings and resolution. I'm happy to share more in person.

Discernment/Ordinations:

- Met with two members in discernment

Colorado Council of Churches:

- Invitation to proclaim the Word and give a blessing at the Red Rocks Sunrise Service. It would impact my availability to preside for Church of the Beloved Easter morning Mass so need approval from my parish council in order to decide.

Pending/Parking Lot

Regional Calendar: Are our communities offering any classes that could be opened for regional participation?

Budget in development

Insurance

Website design and maintenance

~~Office/Meeting Space: \$200/month DONATION, "normal" printing included—extra for program~~

~~booklet Reduced or Not necessary?~~ Turned the office space back to the Lutheran Synod with the generous understanding that we can use the small conference room or other meeting space as needed/available.

Office supplies/printing
ECC Bishops retreat – biannual – likely some funds in the ECC budget for travel and lodging
Travel to synod 2022
Synod ECC 2022
Synod RMR 2022? 2023?
Contract wages/Stipend (1099 or Letter of Call) for bishop and vicar(s)?

Appendix B—Ecumenical Engagement Report for RMRC 01 06 2022

submitted 1/4/2022 by Fr. Michael Nicosia

KEY POINTS and ACTION ITEMS

Website designers—Canon Mike Orr of the Episcopal Diocese referred us to a list of developers at <https://caffeinatedchurch.org/freelance-website-design-support>.

I also looked up the platform used by the ECUSA Diocese of Dallas, <https://www.ekklesia360.com>. I would suggest a developer who uses WIX platform, easy to use and update, no language needed.

List of some of the components we're hoping to include on the regional website:

- Dynamic home page, possibly with videos, definitely with photo slide shows, and links to any current hot button issues or statements.
- "About us" page with links to various documents like a history outline, our Constitution, et al; and a link to the national ECC page.
- "Our communities" page with photos, worship schedules, and links to our respective websites.
- "Bishop's Office" with +Kae's bio, details of how she was elected, photos of her consecration, and any pastoral letters, future blogs and videoed messages.
- "Regional Council" page with meeting agendas and minutes; list of current officers and board members with their contact info.
- "News" page with photos and blurbs about ordinations, special celebrations and outreach programs (local and national).
- "Advocacy and Ecumenical Engagement" - Media releases and public policy statements, upcoming outreach and lobbying opportunities, and links to our Ecumenical partners.
- "Calendar of events" that individual communities can populate.
- An interactive "Synod" page, password protected for local and national delegate discussions; links to relevant GoogleDocs; a message board for discussions if possible.
- Photo/video gallery.
- "Contact Us" page

Youth member of COB offered to help; ran above list by him, but haven't heard if this is in his skill set; managing a professionally designed site may be.

Gun Violence statement—Ran statement crafted by Mthr. Sheila, +Kae and myself by Eileen McCarron from Colorado Ceasefire who says it's a good statement, not too long.

After discussions with +Kae, contacted Pastor Chris Gilmore of 6thAveUCC, to find out level of sponsorship; \$500-\$1000, but happy to include our name as a sponsor for whatever we can contribute to the pot. The recent shooting spree in Denver and Lakewood, and the Boulder Co. firefighters threatened by a person with an AR-15, also make the statement timely.

CCC Voices for Justice team recruiting point persons to follow legislation (see below)

REGIONAL & NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Met with Bp. Kae.

Participated in weekly regional pastor prayer/sharing.

Circulated advocacy updates and member churches' social media posts, including:

The Colorado Council of Churches support of proposed recommended improvements to our Social Studies standards which are in keeping with our Public Policy Statement on Education.

https://secure.everyaction.com/8_wX9Hh9KUK6LBSjSQ-GrQ2#! .

Attended CHUM/WHI Appreciation Un-Luncheon 12/8.

Participated in Regional Clergy Retreat 12/4.

Represented CCC at 12/6 appreciation night for Rabbi Brian Fields, retiring President of the Rocky Mountain Rabbis and Cantors Assoc. and Director of Judaism Your Way.

Presided at MoM on 12/12

Participated monthly OPB Ecumenical Seminar 12/22.

Participated monthly ECC Chaplains meeting 12/27.

Participated in weekly **Faithful Thursdays Kick Off planning---VIRTUAL; moved to 1/20 at noon;** will be prerecording flute intro on steps of Capitol.

COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES— 12/14 Board Meeting

ADVOCACY

- *Voices for Justice* team meeting every Monday; **recruiting point persons to follow legislation:**

If you are interested in getting hands on with Colorado public policy and want to see your voice make a difference in this legislative session, join our *Voices for Justice* team!

Voices for Justice focuses on state and federal public policy issues concerning affordable housing, criminal justice, healthcare, hunger and welfare. In working with congregations and faith-based organizations, *Voices for Justice* seeks to create a powerful faith movement ready to take action in our communities and at the State Capitol.

This group tracks bills that are relevant to our public policy statements through each step of the legislative session, so that we can make the Colorado faith community aware of what's going on in our government. Responsibilities include: attendance of weekly meetings at 9:00 am on Mondays, virtually or in-person, using Microsoft Excel and the General Assembly's website to keep track of where each bill is, and testifying on behalf of bills when needed. Check out what we kept track of last year.

See what our *Voices for Justice* team member Sue Ricker says about their role and its impact:

I have been a part of Voices for Justice for several years and it has been my honor to serve in this capacity. It has given me the opportunity to "walk the walk" for social justice. I have advocated for legislature in my areas of trafficking, foster care and sexual abuse and have seen and celebrated legislation passed to further the cause of social justice.

I contact state legislators and their aides, I have testified in front of committees, and reported back to my social justice committee at my church to encourage their communication with state legislators. I recommend this experience to all who believe in making changes for the vulnerable. When I started, I never could have imagined that I could actually testify in front of a committee, but the bravery of those who have testified to their experiences quickly showed me that I needed to speak out.

The five months of the normal legislative session have educated me in many issues. The most recent topic has been foster care. I am a retired high school teacher and have watched while some students suddenly leave my class, losing what credits they could have received. When they "age out" at eighteen, they have needed to support themselves and many times are unable to finish a diploma or a GED. Recently there has been legislation to assist them in completing educational goals should they decide to take advantage of the help offered. It's wonderful to see the progress that has been made.

I recommend Voices for Justice highly to those who want to make a difference.

We need people to cover the following issues: Immigration, Racial justice, Affordable Housing, Poverty, Environment

Your voice matters to our legislators, and as people of faith, we have a responsibility to speak up for issues of social and environmental justice that affect our well-being and that of our neighbors. Please email Haley Anderson at cccsjf@cochurches.org if you're interested!"

- Faithful Thursdays—no public gatherings on west steps of Capitol; looking at alternatives

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE FUNDRAISING—looking for principal speaker; half way to fundraising goal of \$30K to be met thru foundation grants, individual donations, additional grant; researching charging for parking to help with additional \$10K venue expenses; no social distancing requirements for venue

2022 BUDGET—\$10K deficit, expected to be covered by grants

2022 PROGRAM proposed:

Ecumenical

- 1st Quarter: Blessing of the Capitol, Faithful Thursdays, Voices for Justice, CURIOUS Partnership
- 2nd Quarter: Easter Sunrise Service at Red Rocks; Faithful Thursdays, Voices for Justice, CURIOUS Partnership
- 3rd or 4th Quarters: Faith Leader trip to The Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, Mental Health First Aid trainings
- 4th Quarter: Civility gatherings, Judicatory Retreat, Rural listening session

Social Justice

- 1st Quarter: Voices for Justice, Faithful Thursdays, Congregational Land Survey, *Caste* Study Group action recommendations
- 2nd Quarters: Voices for Justice, Faithful Thursdays, Congregational Land Survey, *Caste* Study Group action recommendations
- 3rd Quarter: *Caste* Study Group action recommendations
- 3rd and 4th Quarters: 2022 statewide electoral issues

On-going

- Ecumenical church visits
- Gov. Polis Clergy Council meetings (haven't happened during pandemic)
- Quarterly judicatory meetings
- Vaccination study
- CCC Board Retreat