

Synod Council Minutes

January 23, 2021

9am – 12pm

Present: Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, Melissa Peper Firestone, Becky Seibert, Rev. Mindy Elliott,

Brent Gardner, Cindy Harris, Rev. Ann Marshall, Deb Noll, Tom Ritter, Rev. Jarrod Schaaf, Michelle Schaffer, Rev. Ed Strietelmeier

Synod Staff Present: Rev. Sarah Schaaf, Jacob Henry, Jennifer Prueter

Guest/Presenter: Rev. Beth Giller, Deacon Sherry Krieger-Synod Staff

Excused/Absent: Casey Cox, Cindy Milbry, Rev. Steve Ramsey, Jari Knowlton Simard,

Christina Wheeler

1. **Opening Devotions** – led by Pastor Sarah Schaaf

Pastor Sarah shared a video conversation/devotion with Camino de Vida Pastor Mary Carmen who has not returned from Mexico due to delays in renewal of her and her husband's visa due to the covid pandemic. Pastor Mary continues to communicate with the friendships she and Leo made while in the Fremont area. She remains positive and believes that God is in control and sees the big picture. She relies fully on the Lord. Pastor Sarah has frequent contact with Pastor Mary Carmen and comes away with hope after every conversation.

Pastor Sarah asked Council to share our feelings during this past and present time of the covid pandemic. *"What are you waiting for?"*

Responses: Finally worshipping in our new building/old building, hugs, pastoral visits, vaccine, seeing grandchildren, ways to stay positive:

"What is the purpose God is giving me at this moment?" *"What have you discovered during this time?"* Responses:—a lot of people can do more

techno than they thought they could, engaging in something that is not familiar, people accept change gracefully this different way to worship,

what is the next step to keep this going when we get back in person,

difficulty on not having in person relationship, long to be with people

physically, the slowing down is what the world really needed, Remember the lessons and the lollipops, small things can make a difference-phone

calls. *"What new things might God be doing in our lives our parishes, our communities?"* Responses: New life from death. Learned to value things

more, Treasure the little things, put my faith more in God, Opportunity to

create ministry teams within parishes-sharing pastoral support, partnerships

with parish neighbors. Pastor Mary Carmen closed with prayer from her video. There will be one Highlight video each month available on the Synod webpage.

2. Business Meeting Call to Order – Led by Vice-President Melissa Peper Firestone

Melissa asked for approval and review of the following.

Approval of Dec 12 Minutes

Found on pages 8-13

Motion to approve made by Rev. Ann Marshall, 2nd Rev. Ed Strietelmeier, approved

Review of Jan 6 Executive Committee decisions

Found on pages 14-17

Jacob reviewed - No action needed

3. Bishop's Report and Teaching Time – Led by Bishop Daniel

St. Paul's mission was 3-fold: Make Disciples, Begin House churches, and Fund Raising. We begin our study (Mt. 6:21) *"For where your treasure is there is where your heart will be also."* from the Sermon on the Mount. (Mt 5,6,7) Love God thru 4 practices: 1. Give to the poor 2, Pray 3. Fasting 4. Give generosity – Giving to God-Dr. Mark Allen Powell – Generosity is a spiritual discipline; Generosity is directly connected to our hearts- by being generous we can grow our hearts. Changed hearts have a direct result to change in parishes, in the world. *"When you hear the word treasure what do you think of?"* Money, gifts of talent, knowledge, what you value most in life, your treasure is going to influence where your heart is. *Can treasure cause difficulty in our lives, our time both blessing and indictment, how you use your time. What would your life be like if you gave away half or 75% or 90% of what you own?"* Closed with prayer

Bishop reviewed his report on pages 18-19

On the Way campaign from October 1, 2020 through December 2021, gained momentum each month. We set a goal of \$52,020 and by New Year's Eve we had received \$53, 48. As of yesterday we have received \$62,480 plus a monthly pledge. Gifts were received from 11 congregations

and from 190 from households. Synod staff contributed \$3,025 while Synod council contributed close to \$12,000. Folks became comfortable with on-line giving with 43% of total funds received through on-line giving. Our Rostered leaders were very generous with 40% making at least one gift. Thank you!! One Congregation have this as their Cause of the month. We have been working with UMC leadership and our next step will be to work with the Presbyterian folks. New relations in Convoy UMC will soon partner with Trinity in Convoy and be sharing pastoral resources. Folks will be joining us from East Toledo soon to share news of East Toledo Parish.

Pastor Steve Bauerle and Pastor Dave Bliss have been talking about ministry partnership-Disciples of Christ parish on the river. Melissa shared that they have already been working together for the past year (Haskins/Waterville) and have had events outside during the summer, working to integrate the two congregations. An Intern will be coming soon.

St Paul Janera Pastor Steve Edmiston took a call to Southern Ohio Synod. This congregation is taking a vote this Sunday to leave the ELCA. Bishop Daniel addressed the congregation recently and found 61 votes to stay, 65 to leave. 9 yes to full support, 99 yes to full support to NWOS. We have a history and connectiveness with this congregation. Bishop committed to walk with them through this process.

Action SC 21.01 On Leave from Call Request

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves on leave from call status for Deacon Hannah Demaree (year 2), and Pastor Clyde Singh (year 2).”

Motion to approve made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Brent Gardner, motion approved

Action SC 21.02 Retirement Request

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the retirement of Pastor Vicky Coombs.”

Motion to approve made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Cindy Harris, approved.

Action SC 21.03 Synod Council Call

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council extends a Synod Council Call to Intentional Interim Ministry to Pastor Howard Abts.”

Motion to approve made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Tom Ritter, motion approved.

Action SC 21.04 Approval of Updated Dean Position Description

“Synod Council approves the updated position description for Conference Deans.”

Motion To approve made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Brent Gardner, motion approved.

Action SC 21.05 Appointment of Conference Deans

“At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council appoints the following Conference Deans: Pastor Will Stenke for Central Conference and Pastor Shawn O'Brien for North Central Conference., Pastor Stacy Lauer-Scovanner for Eastern Conference.”

The updated position description can be found on pages 23-24.

Motion to approve made by Bishop Daniel, 2nd Brent Gardner, motion approved.

(10-minute break)

Melissa Peper Firestone asked for a motion to move into Executive Session.

Motion to move into Executive session made by Brent Gardner, 2nd Jarrod Schaaf. Motion to move out of Executive session made by Jarrod Schaaf, 2^{ne} Deb Noll. Motion approved. No actions were taken in Executive Session.

4. Vice President's Report – Led by Melissa Peper Firestone

Action SC 21.06 Synod Assembly Delay

“Synod Council approves delaying the 2021 Synod Assembly until September 24-25, 2021. Synod staff will determine a suitable location as soon as it becomes reasonable to do so.”

Background info can be found on page 5. Jacob reviewed the background information before motion came. Preference is to have Assembly in-person however will plan for both in person and hybrid event.

Motion to approve made by Melissa Peper Firestone, 2nd Cindy Harris, Motion approved

Action SC 21.07 Appointment of Nominating Committee

“Synod Council appoints Melissa Peper Firestone, Mindy Elliott, and Tom Ritter to one-year terms on the Nominating Committee.

Additional committee members will be sought out and appointed at a later meeting.”

Jacob reviewed Action and history of Action.

Due to the delayed assembly and previous committee vacancies, the nominating committee will need to be re-appointed. We are seeking three council volunteers to serve on the committee for one-year terms. We will also be seeking non-council individuals to serve staggered terms to fill out this committee. The committee will seek out nominees for the 2021 Synod Assembly’s consideration.

Motion to approve made by Brent Gardner, 2nd Jarrod Schaaf, motion approved.

5. Secretary’s Report – Led by Becky Seibert

Nothing new to report

6. Treasurer’s Report – Led by Synod Administrator Jacob Henry

Congregational giving and mission support reports are included in this packet.

Jacob reviewed financial statements received in packet. Still searching for person to fill the Treasurer spot. Included in the packet was the management letters from our auditors. Suggestions from letters were taken in consideration and we will establish a team to address suggestions. Will follow up when we have a new Treasurer. Review of Statement of Activities. We are approaching the end of our fiscal year and will most likely end the year below budget. Review of Statement of Financial Position by Jacob. There were no questions after review. Still reviewing the conversion from the old system to the new and it has gone well. Audit is scheduled for March 22, 2021 and will be virtual.

Action SC 21.08 Use of Discipleship Initiative Funds

“Synod Council approves the use of Discipleship Initiative funds to fund the salary for the Lead Coordinator of the Discipleship Initiative. This action is retroactive to the hiring of the position.”

For the 2020/21 fiscal year, this would be approximately \$35,417 that would be moved out of Support Staff Salaries in the budget and deducted from our donor restricted Discipleship Initiative account. Question How long is that sustainable to fund this position? This Action is for this year only. The salary is still in the budget so in future years Council would review yearly. Answer is yes because amount is figured into the budget. How does this affect the continuation of the Discipleship Initiative? There has been minimal expense from this fund through the last two years.

Motion to approve made by Cindy Harris, 2nd Rev. Jarrod Schaaf, motion approved.

Action SC 21.09 2021/2022 Budget Revision – *Second READING and VOTE*

“Synod Council approves the revised budget for the 2021/2022 budget.”

Jacob reviewed Action item with any changes, (Annual Fund) from pages 27-29 included in packet.

Motion to approve made by Deb Noll, 2nd Tom Ritter, motion approved.

7. Administrative Matters – Led by Synod Administrator Jacob Henry

Action SC 21.10 SAWC Renewals

“Synod Council approves the renewal of Sonfire by the River, Pemberville and Camino de Vida, Fremont as Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities for 2021/22.”

Background info can be found on page 5. Jacob reviewed Action item.

Motion to approve made by Rev. Ann Marshall, 2nd Tom Ritter, motion approved.

Action SC21.11 East Toledo Parish – SECOND READING and VOTE
“Synod Council approves a grant for \$7,000 from the Endowment Fund for the formation and staffing of the East Toledo Parish and Council will review the progress of the ministry within a year.”

A representative from the East Toledo Parish was present to share more about this grant proposal. Those present were Deacon Sherry Krieger and Pastor Beth Giller to review the Action item. They have also been in conversation with other congregations in the area. Pastor Cindy Ritter will be part time at Bethlehem and Pastor Giller will be lead pastor, Pastor Jake Nekoranec has been instrumental in bringing the other congregations in the area into the process to be an Ecumenical Parish soon.

Pastor Beth shared (St. Mark) has been intentional in collaborative ministry in this area. They have a team of six at St. Mark and East Toledo to “try experiments” during this time. Conversations have been exiting and positive. They felt it important to include the Synod Council as part of the calling of Jake Nekoranec as a first call along with Bethlehem. The Call would be a 3-year Term call. Jake is waiting a call and Bishop supports his ministry skills along with Pastor Beth and Pastor Cindy Ritter. How do we nurture support and support our inherited church as we know it? A strong pastoral team to going forward is envisioned. They are having conversations with all East Toledo parishes (5) with open invitation to be part of this ministry.

Motion made to approve Action SC21.11 made by Melissa Peper Firestone 2nd Rev. Jarrod Schaaf, motion approved.

Action SC21.12 Appointment of Office Taskforce
We will be seeking three volunteers for this taskforce. More background info is available on page 6. Jacob reviewed background information included in packet.

“At the recommendation of the Executive Committee, Synod Council appoints Brent Gardner, Tom Ritter, Becky Seibert, to a taskforce charged with making a recommendation on selling the synod office building and transitioning towards a remote-staff model. The taskforce is to return a recommendation for consideration at the May council meeting.”

Motion to approve Action item made by Deb Noll, 2nd Rev. Ann Marshall, motion approved.

Jacob shared idea of Synod Annual Report. Carolyn Guy sent draft of On The Way Mission Stories. Focused on Mission. Jacob to send out to Council asking for comments. Most likely to be shared electronically with parishes.

- 8. For the good of the order** – Led by Vice-President Melissa Peper Firestone
- Brent shared Zion and St. Paul have entered into announcements of merger of two congregations. Please keep in prayer.
 - Tom Ritter using technique to memorize Bible verses. Creating good passwords. Using a phrase of the first letter of each word. Create good passwords.

9. Sending Blessing and Prayer

Next meeting May 1, 2021 at 9:00 am via zoom.

Deb Noll closed with reading from Dare to Journey and prayer.

Respectfully submitted.

Becky Seibert, Synod Council Secretary

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