

**MONTANA SYNOD COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2007**

**Present:** Bishop Jessica Crist, Vice President Jake Block, Secretary Peggy Paugh Leuzinger, Pastor Dave Peters, Clarice Beery, Allan Roush, Pastor Gary Cockrell, Tamara Crowder, Pastor George Karres, Mike Young, Pastor Joel Brosten, Pastor Kim Wilker, Scott Southwick, Pastor Bill Duffey

The Synod Council gathered for worship at 9:00 a.m. with Bishop Jessica Crist preaching. New council members, Tamara Crowder and Mike Young were installed.

Vice President Jake Block called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m. The Council members introduced themselves.

The agenda was approved as printed.

**SC07.09.01**

**Secretary's Report:**

The minutes from June 1<sup>st</sup> were presented. George Karres indicated that he was present at the meeting..

**EC07.09.02**

**VOTED TO APPROVE MINUTES WITH CORRECTION**

A thank you note from the Clergy Spouse Retreat was read.

A letter of resignation from Pastor Mark Morgenstern as adjunct staff for Synod Evangelism was read.

**Treasurer's Report:**

In Harold's absence, Jake presented the Treasurer's Report

Year to date actual income: \$599,964.01 Year to date Expenses: \$609,698.21

**EC07.09.03**

**VOTED TO ACCEPT THE TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Bishop's Report:**

Bishop Crist commented on the beginning of her term and offered thanks for the participation in the service of installation. She underscored what she anticipates as themes for her term as Bishop. These include an emphasis on Word and Sacrament, being people who are open, hospitable, ecumenical and interfaith, being people who have ownership of this church, being a church that savors learning, being a church that looks outward, not inward.

She stated, "We have a lot of work to do together. Let's structure our priorities for the synod Council based on the evaluation from the spring. Let's be clear about the priorities of the Synod Council from the Constitution."

The Bishop also offered the goals that she will be working on:

Relationships and presence – being in as many congregations as possible, particularly to preach.

Encouraging an excellent staff: through accountability, communication and education.

Stewardship and ownership: "With more money we could do more ministry."

Expanding our vision of church: through communication and recognizing and utilizing the gifts of the people around the synod.

Bishop Crist commented on the Churchwide Assembly. Allan Roush presented the highlights of actions of the Churchwide Assembly. Jake and Jessica also offered a few thoughts. Also, comment was made that Dave Peters was elected to the Churchwide Council.

**Lutheran Social Service Report:**

Pastor Dave Peters shared his report from LSS. He is excited about a new call to the Synod, but also feels a sense of loss at leaving LSS. The LSS Board is moving forward by discerning their next steps and direction. He is anticipating that there will be about 8 placements of infants this year. \$13,000 was raised by the LSS Golf Tournament.

**Report of the Executive Committee:**

Recommend that a call be extended to the Rev. David W. Peters to serve as Associate to the Bishop.

**SC07.09.03**

**VOTED TO EXTEND A CALL TO REV. DAVID W. PETERS TO SERVE AS ASSOCIATE TO THE BISHOP**

The Bishop reported that Susan Hedahl has been hired as the Executive Assistant for Administration and Patti Horst has been hired as the Executive Assistant for Programs.

**Establishment of committees and chairs**

**Administration and Finance**

Gary Cockrell, Chair  
Harold Spilde  
Tamara Crowder  
Allan Roush  
Jake Block, ex officio

**Mission and Outreach**

Kim Wilker, Chair  
Scott Southwick  
George Karres  
Barb White

**Education and Society**

Ashley Glover, Chair  
Mike Young  
Glenda Truesdell  
Bill Duffey

**Planning and Organization**

Joel Brosten, Chair  
Steve Bahnmilller  
Clarice Beery

### **Recommendations for “On Leave From Call” Status**

First Year:

Rev. Jeff Olsgaard

Rev. Sharon Kaiser Korsmo

Karen Green, Diaconal Minister

Third Year:

AIM Terry Tysk

Rev. Ron Martin Dent

Rev. Melanie Martin Dent

### **SC07.09.04**

#### **VOTED TO APPROVE THE ABOVE AS ON LEAVE FROM CALL**

The Executive Committee recognized that Pr. Thad Person will be removed from the clergy roster as three years have passed.

### **Disability Status:**

The Executive Committee affirms the Bishop’s determination in consultation with the Board of Pensions that the following have been placed on disability status and recommend to the Synod Council that they affirm this determination.

Rev. Patricia Harant:

Rev. Peter Ramseth:

Bonnie Olsgaard, AIM

### **SC07.09.05**

#### **VOTED TO AFFIRM DISABILITY STATUS**

### **Congregation Updates:**

The council was informed of the status of the Big Sky Synodically Authorized Ministry: a joint congregation of the Episcopal Church and Lutheran located at Big Sky.

The Presbyterian Church in Hot Springs has approached the congregation and Janet Young (there as the LPA, now in the TEEM process) about the possibility of a joint congregation. There will be a meeting in October to discuss the possibilities with both the Presbyterian and Lutherans

### **Mutual Ministry Committee**

The following have been asked to serve on the MT Synod Mutual Ministry Committee:

Peter Christ, Wava Goetz, Dan Heskett, Maryann Morgenstern

### **SC07.09.06**

#### **VOTED TO APPROVE MEMBERS OF THE MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

### **Special Call to Pastor Jim Shelden**

Recommend that that the Synod Council extends a call to special service to Jim Shelden to serve as Rocky Mountain Hospice Chaplain in Bozeman.

### **SC07.09.07**

#### **VOTED TO EXTEND SPECIAL CALL TO PASTOR JIM SHELDEN**

The Meeting was recessed for lunch and committee meetings

The afternoon plenary session was called back to order at 3:30 p.m.

Mark Goetz was introduced as the MT Synod Hunger Coordinator. He may be contacted at (406) 727-1700 or [mgoetz@ceoexpress.com](mailto:mgoetz@ceoexpress.com) He commented on the important job that both Dorothy Borge and Patti Callaghan did as the previous Hunger Coordinators.

#### **Administration and Finance Committee:**

Designate \$23,800 (\$5775 monthly) of the Associate to the Bishop's defined compensation as housing allowance.

#### **SC07.09.08**

**VOTED TO DESIGNATE \$23,800 OF ASSOCIATE TO BISHOP'S DEFINED COMPENSATION AT HOUSING ALLOWANCE**

Auto Allowance for the Bishop and the Associate to the Bishop:

Effective Nov. 1, 2007, the Bishop and Associate to the Bishop will be allowed a car allowance of \$400 per month and \$1000 for oil/tires/repairs as needed, and gasoline reimbursement at actual cost. This policy will be reviewed at the Feb. '08 Administration and Finance Committee meeting.

#### **SC07.09.09**

**VOTED TO ESTABLISH AN AUTO ALLOWANCE FOR BISHOP AND ASSOCIATE**

The committee requested an update of the temporary restricted funds with descriptions of the funds. What is the money for and how does the money get spent?

#### **Lutheran Ministries of the Montana Synod**

Dave Ophus presented the quarterly report for his work with the LMMS. From 1998 through 2006 he reported a total of \$5,500,000 which has been given to MT Synod ministries and the congregations since the inception of this ministry. Over \$10 million has been given/designated since 2001. He also stated that gifts to the Montana Synod Funds since 1996 total \$418,000.

#### **Education and Society:**

Nominations to serve on the LSS-MT Board are Kathy Slehofer, Pastor Bruce Kolash, Pastor Steve Van Gilder.

#### **SC07.09.10**

**VOTED TO ELECT KATHY SLEHOFER, PASTOR BRUCE KOLASH, PASTOR STEVE VAN GILDER TO THE LSS-MT BOARD**

The Montana Synod Council affirms the decision made by the LSS-MT Board regarding the future of LSS-MT.

#### **SC07.09.11**

**VOTED TO AFFIRM THE DECISION MADE BY THE LSS-MT BOARD REGARDING THE FUTURE OF LSS-MT**

Joan Schmidt presented a report about NRIT. Laurie Jungling has been called as the interim director. NRTI will be in a transition process for several months.

Al Beyer appointed to a second term on the NRIT Advisory Committee.

**SC07.09.12**

**VOTED TO APPOINT AL BEYER TO A SECOND TERM ON THE NRIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Avis Anderson appointed to the MT Synod Candidacy Committee to replace Shelley Wickstrom.

**SC07.09.13**

**VOTED FOR AVIS ANDERSON TO BE APPOINTED TO THE SYNOD CANDIDACY COMMITTEE**

The Education and Society Committee recommended an increase in the Continuing Education Guidelines for rostered persons to \$700 contributed by the congregation/ministry and \$300 by individuals.

**SC07.09.14**

**VOTED TO INCREASE CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR ROSTERED PERSONS TO \$700 CONTRIBUTED BY THE CONGREGATION/MINISTRY AND \$300 CONTRIBUTED BY THE INDIVIDUAL**

**Planning and Organization Committee:**

**Nominating Committee:** Because of transitions, the following clusters are requested to elect the following: Clergy member from Bear Paw Cluster, Lay Female from Crazy Mountain, Clergy from Fort Peck, Lay Male from Northeast, Clergy from Shepherd

**SC07.09.15**

**VOTED TO REQUEST THE ABOVE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS TO BE ELECTED IN 2008 FOR THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**Synod Council Appointees:** Lay females to be appointed to the Synod Council from the Golden Triangle and Great Divide clusters to fill terms not yet completed.

**SC07.09.16**

**VOTED THAT LAY FEMALES BE APPOINTED TO FILL TERMS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL FROM THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE AND GREAT DIVIDE CLUSTERS.**

**Synod Assembly:** The suggestion was made that the wording regarding the Synod Assembly for '08 be communicated early and positively that the Synod Assembly is a theological conference and that items that would come before the Churchwide Assembly in 2009 come before the Synod Assembly the same year.

The planning for the Synod Assembly will be coordinated by Associate to the Bishop, Pastor Dave Peters.

The Planning Committee suggested that the assembly in 2010 continue in the pattern of the Great Falls/Billings rotation.

Jean Larson has been appointed to LERN (Lutheran Ecumenical Representative Network).

**Mission and Outreach Committee:**

The Committee heard reports from Mark Goetz and David Ophus.

The committee discussed mission interpretation and how to help people to talk about the mission of the church, to speak articulately about our mission, to give tools and encouragement to people.

**Other Business:**

Vice President Jake Block asked people on the Synod Council to take a look at the Churchwide Assembly Brochure and have each committee do some thinking about how to communicate and interpret what happened in the Synod.

**Questions for Region 1 and Churchwide Consultation**

The Synod Council spent some time answering the questions posed for the conversation between Region I and the Churchwide Consultation.

1. What are the mission and ministry opportunities that are being addressed on the territory of the synod? How would you describe the relationship of congregations in your synod to one another and to the synod office? Does the synod have an “identity” that is known by congregations and leaders in the synod? Does the identity of the synod shape its mission?

**Being addressed:**

Native American relationships/ministries  
Transformation/Revitalization/Mission Growth/New Buildings/Centered life congregation -- living faith in daily life.  
Growth – not about numbers, but our “growing deeper”

**Relationships of congregations to synods:**

Region 1 --what’s that?  
Bishop, Associate in local congregations --- identity is in visibility and relationships

**Concern:**

Expand commitment of all generations -- men needed, start with boys/youth

2. In the above context of relationship, identity and mission, what are the issues that are most challenging?

Distance/expanse of synod  
How can congregation’s better share assets  
Collegiality  
Discouragement permeates people

3. What are the key areas of partnership that need to be addressed with the Churchwide organization? How can we be better partners in addressing mission and ministry opportunities? Are there specific needs or requests of the Churchwide organization? If so, what? Is there an issue that needs to be discussed with a Churchwide unit? Are the “unfunded mandates” that you believe have impacted the synod?

**Your mission vs. our mission....**

Communicate, communicate, communicate to congregation and synod and among ourselves.  
Communication is about relationship.

4. What is your synod's strategy to increase mission support in the synod's congregations?

Benevolence education, legacy giving, Synod relationship to congregations, "Do I feel good about it?" Encourage catchy way of communicating – like the phrase "God's work Our Hands.

Share and tell and keep on telling stories, stories of the faith, the church, and the mission before us.

The next meetings of the MT Synod Council are:

February 22-23, 2008, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls

June 6, 2008, Holiday Inn Grand, Billings

September 19-20, 2008, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls,

February 26-28, 2009, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls,

June 5, 2009, Great Falls

September 18-19, 2009, Ursuline Centre, Great Falls

The plenary session was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

After dinner, Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling, Interim Director of NRIT was introduced and she introduced Rev. Susan Briehl who taught "The Psalms".

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger  
Montana Synod Secretary

(These minutes not yet approved)