

# Synod Council Minutes

## May 2, 2020 – 9am-12 pm

**Present:** Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, Melissa Peper Firestone, Becky Seibert, Phil Koenig, Casey Cox, Rev. Mindy Elliott, Brent Gardner, Cindy Harris, Rev. Ann Marshall, Cindy Milbry, Jacob Nekoranec, Deb Noll, Rev. Steve Ramsey, Thomas Ritter, Rev. Jarrod Schaaf, Michelle Schaffer, Diana Schneider, Rev. Janine Shearer, Rev. Ed Strietelmeier, Christina Wheeler

**Synod Staff Present:** Jennifer Pruetter, Jacob Henry, Rev. Sarah Schaaf, Calla Gilson

**Absent:** Jari Knowlton Simard

### 1. Opening Devotions and Eucharist

Devotions given by Rev. Steve Ramsey focusing on the book of Joshua. "Be strong and of good courage. Find your voice, God is in control." "We have never been here before; God is in our midst." "Get your feet wet. Our heads are wet, and we belong to you our God." Closed with prayer.

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

Meeting called to order at 9:21 am via zoom.

- **Approval of Jan 25 Minutes** - Found on pages 5-7 of packet  
**Motion to approve Diana Schneider, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Ritter, motion approved**
- **Approval of Apr 6 Minutes** - Found on pages 8-10 of packet  
**Motion to approve Cindy Milbury 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed Strietelmeier, motion approved**
- **Review of Executive Committee decisions** - (no decisions since last meeting)

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

Written report can be found on pages 11-12.

Importance of our Mission the Crucified and Risen Christ gives hope. Bishop Daniel gave a review of written reports. We have become a video production team at the Synod. Thankful for all those who have been helping. We are moving forward. Synod staff has been contacting parish secretaries, parish pastors, to give support. We are moving with fast tracking our Discipleship program, hoping to help our parishes to move forward with this reality. God will continue be with us. We are in the Year of Mission, and next year is the Year of Generosity. Dreaming for 2022 Year of Vision. Focus on Revelation. Good things are happening. We are thankful for the addition of Pastor Sarah Schaaf. She has been a tremendous addition and we really appreciate her gifts. The addition of Calla Gilson in April to Synod Staff. She has been a joy and continues to bring much experience to us for which we are grateful. November 7, 2020, Day of prayer, God's mission in our Sacred Space is the theme.

Bishop Daniel shared that he has learned a lot of great skills from the Lily course completed online and hope to put them into use.

We are putting together a task force for (include list from earlier email), return to worship. Guidelines and questions to help pastors on how to return according to Federal Government

and State of Ohio guidelines. We will slowly return. Suggestion is that we continue to suspend in-person worship during the month of May and encourage creative ways to worship. Phil commented that the Mayor of Findlay said that in-person worship could begin in May. The task force decided to rely on the advice of Gov. DeWine and Dr. Acton and to honor their stay at home request. Steve Ramsey shared communication for St. John in Dola saying that churches are exempted. Gov DeWine made clear that he will not step on First Amendment rights but strongly encourages stay at home recommendations.

May 18 & 22 Festival of Homiletics is available online and is free. Bishop Daniel encourages all of us to check it out. Sunday after Easter Synod led worship was online and we are planning to do this again, perhaps Memorial Day Sunday. All meetings from Synod are on our YouTube page for review.

What gives you hope these days? Responses were: Planting and tilling, things continue, Pray as you go app, more people may be hungry for the community due to the outreach through technology, touching base with congregation members, and making new connections, people that are stepping up to help others, hopeful that random acts of kindness and generosity and sharing of stimulus checks, lack of drama and controversy in situations, deep concern for the earth, crime is way down in courts, earth is taking a sigh of relief during this time, very faithful giving over the past few months to the mission, taking a look backward and finding hope as ordinary people doing extraordinary things, listen to God's voice, impressed with peoples ability to try new things and hope that we hold onto this energy, applying energies in the right direction, appreciated watching our leaders trying new things, laugh and keep trying.

**Action SC 20.08** On Leave from Call Request

"At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the following individuals for on leave from call:

Pastor Brian Krause, year 3

Pastor Dana Bjorlin, year 2

Pastor Howard Abts, year 3."

**Motion made by Bishop Daniel, Cindy Harris 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion approved**

**Action SC 20.09** Retirement Request

"At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the retirement status of Pastor Steve Bull."

**Motion made by Bishop Daniel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Ritter, motion approved**

**Action SC 20.10** Family Leave Request

"At the recommendation of the Bishop, Synod Council approves the family extension of Deacon Heather Smith, ending August of 2022."

**Motion made by Bishop Daniel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cindy Milbry, motion approved**

**Move to go into Executive Session to discuss misconduct action, made by Bishop Daniel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Casey Cox, motion passed, motion to move out of Diana Schneider, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brent Gardner**

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

No updates. We may need to continue to meet via Zoom as we continue during these times. Appreciate how far technology has come.

## 5. **Secretary's Report** – Led by Becky Seibert

Nothing new to report.

## 6. **Treasurer's Report** – Led by Phil Koenig

Our audit of the 2019/20 fiscal year financial statements has been interrupted by the ongoing public health crisis. The auditors are working remotely, but most of our supporting documentation is not available digitally and we have had to manually scan and email documents as they are requested.

We hope to have the audit wrapped up in the next few weeks and will be able to distribute financial reports at that time.

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

Review of information in packet by Phil and the impact financially during this time. Jacob continued with review of status of audit trying to be done remotely, we are hopeful that we are close to being finished and will get reports out as soon as possible. Investments for last year did well and helped with the shortfall of mission of support. Jacob shared on screen Net Assets designated by Synod Council and reviewed. Donor restricted funds reviewed as well. Review of Cash analysis for end of fiscal year thru end of January 2020.

Diana questioned about the donor possibility discussed at last Council meeting in connection for the Discipleship Initiative. Was the donor contacted and what is the status of that offering. The donor has been contacted and they wanted to wait until their taxes were done; so we are still in waiting process. Follow-up will continue by Bishop Daniel.

## 7. **Administrative Matters** – Led by Synod Administrator Jacob Henry

### **Assembly related actions**

See the Needed Actions Related to Assembly on page

Jacob reviewed pages 18-19 of packet. Our constitution allows for Synod Council to appoint individuals to fill those terms until next assembly. (2021) One-year interim term. In 2021 the person elected will fulfil the term of the interim since terms are for three years. Updated list of Roster will be put together by Jacob and Jennifer. Vacant committee terms will not hurt to stay vacant for the next year.

### **Action SC 20.11** Imagining Renewal Microgrants

"Synod Council approves the 'Imagining Renewal' Microgrant proposal and authorizes the use of \$5,000 from the Healthy Leaders Healthy Lives fund, \$5,000 from the Rural and Small Town Ministry fund, and the remaining balance of the Evangelical Outreach fund \$1,400, towards this microgrant process."

### **Motion made by Deb Noll, 2<sup>nd</sup> Casey Cox, motion approved**

Calla Gilson reviewed the handout that was included in the packet. Jacob reviewed the funding portion of Imagining Renewal Microgrant proposal. Follow-up questions can be directed to Calla via email and checks can be mailed directly to Synod office with note of imagining Renewal Microgrant included with check. Applications will be offered digitally as well as mail when requested. Review of Power Point of how some of the grants would be used. How will this be advertised? Social Media, contacting all our congregations, Synod communications, extending to lay leaders, word of mouth.

**Action SC 20.12** LIFT Grant

"Synod Council approves a grant of \$7,500 from the synod's endowment fund for the LIFT ministries."

**Motion made by Cindy Milbury, 2<sup>nd</sup> Janine Shearer, motion approved**

Pam Kensler will provide an update of LIFT and the grant request.

Pam joined the meeting and gave an update included in packet. LIFT continues to support congregations during this time. Zoom LIFT account is being used by congregations for Bible studies, meetings, etc. Grants are used to fund position that Pam Kensler holds Director of Discipleship and Outreach. LIFT has transition team working to define the future of filling position left by Pastor Scott. LIFT has hired a Ministry assistant, Bridge of Hope and Pastoral Care Assistant.

**Action SC 20.13** 2021 Assembly

"Synod Council sets date of June 11 and 12 as the date of the 2021 Synod Assembly. The assembly shall be held at the BGSU Student Union."

**Motion made by Deb Noll, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Casey Cox, motion approved.**

**Action SC 20.14** LOMO Constitution Change

"LOMO requests change in constitution wording striking the wording "Camp Mowana" as this has been sold.

**Motion made by Cindy Milbury, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ed Strietelmeier, motion approved**

**8. For the good of the order** – Led by Vice-President Melissa Peper Firestone

Excited to have Calla on board. Exciting things happening.

Good to see everyone, missing lunch and community together.

Ed S still in progress for building new church. A lot of inside work still to be done, outside work done.

Grateful to see Jake and hear his update.

**9. Sending Blessing and Prayer**

**Pastor Sarah Schaaf closed session with prayer. Meeting adjourned at 11:55 am**

**Next meeting September 23, 2020**

Respectfully submitted

Becky Seibert  
Synod Council Secretary