



Synod
of Lakes &
Prairies

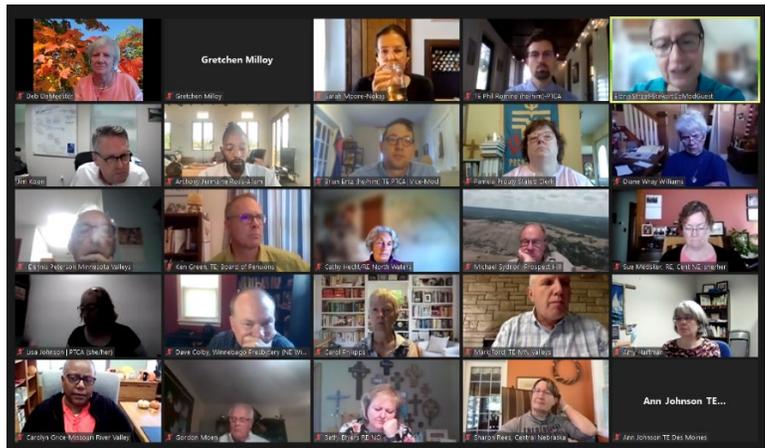
Synod Meeting Summary

October 3-4, 2021

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies met via Zoom. Opening Worship led by Rev. Deb DeMeester, Director of Leadership Development and Rev. Pamela Prouty, Stated Clerk used resources from the [Peace and Global Witness Special offering](#) including a video sermon from candidate under care of the Presbytery of Des Moines, Hannah Lundberg. Communion was observed for World Communion Sunday.

Deb DeMeester led the educational time on "Congregational Vitality: the quest for pastoral leaders."

Monday morning started with Fellowship groups talking about take-aways from the presentation the previous night as well as talking about the future structure of Synod meetings.



During the business meeting reports from Synod committees and Synod staff were heard. Highlights from the reports:

Communication Committee:

The new [synod website](#) and brand were launched in May 2021. The committee is publishing a monthly e-newsletter, [Keeping in Touch](#). Future plans include efforts on furthering the mission and vision of Matthew 25, continuing to develop the website and enhance the online presence of the Synod, and preparing an annual report

Personnel Committee:

Working to have a Spring 2022 Zoom or in person Personnel Committee Training Workshop or multiple events to give guidance to Presbytery Personnel Committees. INPUT NEEDED: Please contact [Gretchen Milloy](#) with requests for information that your Presbytery Personnel Committee would benefit from receiving. Gretchen will forward your information to the committee chair.

Strategic Service & Witness Committee (SSW):

Brought a recommendation to approve the revised Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation of Clearwater Forest, Inc.

Self-Development of People (SDOP):

This year, the committee heard from a variety of community groups. Three proposals rose to be viable, and the committee has reviewed their requests and completed site visits with them, using zoom. We are recommending funding for the three and declining the others because they do not meet the eligibility requirements. We will award grants at amounts less than requested but still significant enough to meet their goals. This is determined by the amount we have available to us, and the number of projects received and approved. The three groups are all from the Fargo area and while each is distinct and has submitted a unique plan of action, they share similar goals around employment opportunities and food insecurity for the families in their communities.

Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministries (CREM):

Approved a request for the Synod to be a sponsor of the 2021 Facilitating Racial Equity. Last year several of our CREM scholarship recipients attended. More information at: <https://overcomingracism.org/programs/conference/> and <https://overcomingracism.org/about-frec/mission-and-goals/>

Approved a request for the Synod to support the racial justice programs of the MN Council of Churches. We have committed to this partnership for several years to accomplish work the Synod cannot do alone. More information: <http://www.mnchurches.org/what-we-do/healing-minnesota-stories> and <http://www.mnchurches.org/what-we-do/truth-and-reparations>

The committee extend the Racial Ethnic Student Scholarship deadline to October 8, 2021.

Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee (TCVL):

Conducted a review of work accomplished in the five-year Strategic Priorities.

The committee is establishing priorities for 2022.

Approved mentor coaching scholarships for this fall.

Finance Committee:

Approved the signing of a Mortgage Subordination Agreement on the Synod's loan to the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Presbyterian Women:

Native American Concerns Committee members attended the Dakota Presbytery meeting.

Our two book groups are still meeting by Zoom. One group reads and discusses books by and about Native Americans and the other group reads and discusses books about justice and peace topics. Anyone is welcome to join these groups.

Our Synod Gathering planning committee is hard at work planning our triennial gathering. It will be held next June in Sioux City, IA.

One of our synod officers, Kathleen Keefer, was just elected Vice-Moderator of PW, Inc., our national organization.

Stated Clerk's Report:

Reported the Presbytery 2021 Annual Statistics

Treasurer's Report

The Synod is projecting an operating surplus of approximately \$79,000 for 2021 (excluding investment portfolio gains to-date of approximately \$420,000). We are projecting to return an estimated \$1.00 in program and financial and missional support for every dollar that we project to receive from presbyteries and churches within the Synod.

Director of Leadership Development:

provided an oral report

Synod Executive's Report:

Highlighted a few ways we strengthen relationships and provided an update on how we've done that since our last meeting in May:

- Staff still meet monthly by zoom, whether working at the office or away from it.
- Some staff are working in the office and others are working remotely. We are following agreed upon safety measures suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health in light of COVID-19 and the rising spread of the Delta variant.

- Presbytery Leaders, as Presbyter Forum, meet monthly by zoom with surprising high attendance even over the summer months.
- There is transition going on in a couple of our presbyteries right and we anticipate a few more in the next year. I am working with the presbytery search processes to fill those vacancies.
- Glad to hear some amazing Matt 25 initiatives to dismantle structural racism and poverty while building vital churches. Shout out to Milwaukee Presbytery for their imaginative and aggressive commitment to reduce poverty and structural racism.
- Presbytery staff, stated clerks, and leaders are significantly engaged with synod staff, commissioners and partners for mutual advice, support and input on our shared ministries.
- As Co moderators, Gregory Bentley has been part of the revisioning of the PMA [look for PCUSA news to come] and I am working with COGA making plans right now for the 225th GA as a hybrid meeting.
- I'll be participating this weekend in the installation of the new president of Macalester College, Dr Suzanne Rivera.

Election of 2022 Synod Moderator and Vice-Moderator

Rev. Brian Entz, Presbytery of Twin Cities Area commissioner was elected as the 2022 Synod Moderator. He presently serves the Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, MN. Ruling Elder Sue Medsker, Presbytery of Central Nebraska was elected as the 2022 Synod Vice-Moderator. She is a member of the Presbyterian Church in Hastings and has served as the moderator of the Synod Presbyterian Women. Congratulations to both!



Brian Entz, Moderator



Sue Medsker, Vice Moderator

Installation

- Call to Discipleship
 - Questions of Brian Entz and Sue Medsker
 - Questions of the Synod
 - Do you, the members of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies confirm the call of God to Brian as Synod Moderator, to Sue as Synod Vice-Moderator in the service of Jesus Christ. If so, please respond by saying We do.
 - Synod: We do
 - Will you support and encourage them in this ministry? If so, please respond by saying "we do."
 - Synod: We do
- Prayer & Declaration of Installation



Recognizing Commissioners

COMPLETING 2 TERMS

- Ted Coppock, Des Moines
- Joan Berglund, Homestead
- Beth Ehlers, North Central Iowa
- Jerry Lutkemeier, South Dakota

COMPLETING 1 TERM

- Jim Bonewald, East Iowa
- Mark Ford, Minnesota Valleys
- Carolyn Grice, Missouri River Valley
- Sue Goodin, Northern Waters
- Michael Sydnor, Prospect Hill
- Bob Rice, Winnebago



Report from the Restorative Actions Task Force

The Restorative Actions Task Force gave a [presentation on their work](#). More information can be found on the website at [Restorative Actions](#). Coming soon: "A Time to Repair." A curriculum for individuals seeking to discern the theological questions around Reparations to Afro-Americans. [Watch the introduction video](#).

Break-out groups discussed ideas for engaging presbyteries, churches, and ecumenical groups in support of restorative activities. The members of this task force include Gregory Bentley, Milissa Carter, Molly Casteel, Jim Koon, Sarah Moore-Nokes, Philip Romine, Jermaine Ross-Allam and Elona Street-Stewart.

Proposed 2022 Budget

The Synod passed a 2022 proposed budget which allowed for an operating deficit of \$20,841. The budgeted deficit falls beneath the \$42,000 deficit allowed for in the 2021 budget and falls within our guideline tolerance of 2% of the undesignated investment portfolio.

The Synod is scheduled to meet for their annual and stated meeting on May 1-3, 2022. The Steering Committee will be meeting on October 25 to discuss possible changes to our meeting schedule for 2022.

The Synod acknowledged the service of outgoing moderator, Rev. Janice Palmer, Presbytery of South Dakota, and the service of commissioners concluding their terms:

Joan Berglund, RE, Homestead

Jim Bonewald, TE, East Iowa

Ted Coppock, RE, Des Moines

Beth Ehlers, RE, North Central Iowa

Jerry Lutkemeier, RE, South Dakota

If you are not receiving the Synod newsletter, Keeping in Touch, [click here to sign up](#).

Be sure to visit our website at: www.lakesandprairies.org.