

## Synod Meeting Summary

May 1 and 2, 2022

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies held its Spring stated and annual meeting via zoom recently. Synod Moderator, Rev. Brian Entz called us to order on May 1 at 6:00 p.m. We welcomed new commissioners and corresponding members and guests.



*Figure 1 Moderator Brian Entz calls the meeting to order.*

New commissioners are:

Berke Landrum, TE, Central Nebraska

Rogene Crawford, RE, Dakota

Danelle McKinney, TE Dakota

Nancy Lister-Settle, RE, Des Moines

Erin Kaye, TE, East Iowa

Paul Penn, RE, East Iowa

Maggie Horak, RE, Homestead

Duane Westing, TE, Homestead

Cathy Manthei, RE, Milwaukee

Jeff Dickinson, RE, Missouri River Valley

Larry Pearson, RE, Twin Cities Area

Daniel Crump, RE, Winnebago

The Call to Worship on Sunday night included reports from each of the staff members.

The Stated Clerk, the Rev. Pamela Prouty shared about the upcoming Presbytery Clerk Review. The Clerks have not been together since the pandemic so they will spend 24 hours together reading minutes and joining in continuing education.

Deb DeMeester, Director of Leadership Development shared updates on a variety of seminary and courses offered by the Synod.

Jim Koon reported that the Synod was able to achieve an operating surplus in 2021 along with a significant increase in the value of its undesignated reserves. The estimated value of programs, presbytery support and outreach funded by the Synod mostly exceeded the receipts provided to the Synod by presbyteries in the form of per capita and mission contributions.

Elona Street Stewart, Synod Executive shared information about the upcoming General Assembly and activities she has been involved with as Synod Executive. Her report also included the questions which the small groups used in response to the documentary.



Figure 2 Synod Executive Elona Street-Stewart

The rest of the evening was spent watching portions of the documentary *Farmhouses in the Heartland: Death of the Dream* and discussing it in relation to how farming has changed and what leads to failure or survival as a metaphor applicable to the church.

After these conversations we prayed our confessions and received the declaration of pardon.

Monday morning started with reports from each Standing Committee. Here are some highlights:

Transforming Communities/Vital Leaders – Chair Sue Rutford (Ruling elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area) shared about past and upcoming events including the Leadership Summit, The Art of Transitional Training week 2, Coaching, the Academy and Synod School.

Strategic Service and Witness - Chair Diane Wray Williams (RE, Presbytery of Northern Plains) shared about grants which this committee approved since the last synod meeting, in support of presbyteries and presbytery camps for training, technology upgrades and program expansion.

Finance – Chair Lance Loveall (Teaching Elder commissioner, Presbytery of Milwaukee) shared that they agreed upon revisions to the Synod Financial policies for Steering Committee consideration and Synod approval in the Fall. The Synod also took action to keep the Synod per capita the same for 2023 at \$5.50, and to maintain current levels of financial support to the presbyteries.

Communication – Chair Michael Sydnor (TE, Presbytery of Prospect Hill) talked about the importance of communication. He shared information about the Synod newsletter, “Keeping in Touch” (Are you subscribed? Here is the link: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Keeping-In-Touch.html?soid=1102873944196&aid=uZsIrfEb5NE>.) Gretchen Milloy, Synod Office Coordinator took us on a tour of the Synod website. Have you explored it? Here it is [www.lakesandprairies.org](http://www.lakesandprairies.org).

The rest of the morning, the Word, was spent watching more from the documentary and meeting in fellowship groups for discussion around the condition of congregations, what has been left behind, what has future value and what needs to be let go.

We responded to the Word with reports from the Board of Pensions and the Presbytery Foundation.

Monday afternoon started with watching more of the documentary and fellowship groups. One of the interviewed said, “We have to do more. But doing more of the same thing is not going to get us out of this situation; we have to do something different.” The groups discussed, “Could what has been a crisis for us actually be what saves us?”

We heard the following committee reports:

Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry (CREM) – Chair Carolyn Grice,(TE, Presbytery of Missouri River Valley) shared about the racial ethnic scholarships they granted as well as the support of the Tribal Colleges.

Self-Development of People – Elona share a description of the three projects funded in 2021. She encouraged synod participants to reach out to community groups and networks who might be interested in partnering with SDOP. The committee has over \$40,000 to allocate in 2022.

Presbyterian Women – Sue Medsker, Synod Presbyterian Women Moderator shared about the upcoming Synod Presbyterian Women gathering, June 16-19 in Sioux City, IA.

Restorative Action Task Force – Teaching Elder Sarah Moore-Nokes shared that they have an adult curriculum ready to use on their website at [www.restorativeactions.org](http://www.restorativeactions.org). Also, the opening worship offering at General Assembly will go towards restorative actions.

The Synod meeting closed with communion.

The next Synod meeting will be October 2-4, 2022.



Figure 3 Carolyn Grice giving the CREM report.



Figure 4 Michael Sydnor giving Communications Committee report.

