

**Northern Lights Regional Board Meeting  
February 9, 2020**

**Attending:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
John Keener	Moderator	Present
Amy LaCroix	Moderator-elect	Present
Jennifer Prekeges	Secretary	Present
Bill Jennison	Treasurer	Present
Clint Collins	Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Rep	Present
Gretchen Mertes	Personnel Committee Rep	Present
Rick Lewis	Nominating Committee Rep	Absent
Kara Markell	Commission on Ministry Rep	Absent
Doug Garner	Big Sky Area Rep	Present
Emily Comstock	Big Sky Area Rep	Present
David Carringer	Columbia River Area Rep	Present
Rick Donahoe	Columbia River Area Rep	Present
Gary Shoemaker	Baker/Salish Sea Area Rep	Present
Kylie Wright	Baker/Salish Sea Area Rep	Present
Colin McRaney	Rainier/Tahoma Area Rep	Present
Herema Puono	Rainier/Tahoma Area Rep	Present
Leslie Smith	Youth/Young Adult Rep	Present
Yessie Jarvey	Youth/Young Adult Rep	Absent
Sandy Messick	Transitional Regional Minister	Present

**Call to Order and Opening Worship**

The meeting was called to order by Moderator John Keener at 6:03 PST/7:03 PM MST. We identified ourselves and our role on the board. John led a devotional based on our journey to become the Northern Lights Region, and noted the historical significance of the moment. He drew on Genesis 28, the story of Jacob's dream of wrestling with God, and emphasized the importance of marking significant events along our faith journeys. We need to mark this moment, even though we are not physically together. He challenged us to proclaim the holiness of this event in our hearts.

**Review and Affirmation of Executive Committee Decisions**

1. Amy LaCroix to be the Northern Lights Region representative to the General Board
2. \$25 scholarship to attendees at the Regional Assembly in May; attendees may choose to accept the scholarship or not

The Executive Committee motion to affirm the decisions of its 1/20/20 meeting was seconded by Doug Garner; the vote was favorable.

**Financial Report**

Treasurer Bill Jennison briefly reviewed the final report of the Northwest Region, as a template for what we will see for the Northern Lights Region. The dashboard is the short-and-sweet view of the region's finances; more detailed reports can always be shared with those who would like to see them. This report is prepared by the Office of Treasury Services at the General Church. We pay about \$9000

per year for this service, less than what we would pay for an audit. Disciples Mission Fund return to the region will be 67% of giving from Northwest Region and 92% of giving from the Montana Region. Over the next two years, we will be transitioning to a single amount.

Bill said that the Finance Committee, including members from each of the four areas, will be meeting next week. One of its first orders of business is to develop a non-designated bequest policy, as the region will be receiving \$1.5 million from the sale of the University CC church property in Seattle and \$85,000 from Origin Christian Church in Spokane.

## **Business:**

### **• Child Safety Policy**

Chris Snow, Youth and Children's Ministry coordinator, joined us to present the Child Safety policy. He used the Montana and Northwest Region policies as starting points to develop a policy for the Northern Lights Region. Bill corrected the use of the region's name ("the Northern Lights Region" or "The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region"). He also noted that some crimes against persons may or may not be what the policy envisions, depending on the jurisdiction; they may include crimes that do not involve sex or abuse. Chris clarified that the region will cover the cost of the background check through our insurance; cost is \$10 per person. Doug questioned the need for two reference letters, especially since many camp volunteers are recruited rather than volunteering. Chris said that the reference is now done via an online form, and that the committee is looking for a clergy reference and a second personal reference. Rick asked if the policy applies to work done in local congregations; Chris responded that it only covers work being supervised by the region.

David asked if there is a time limit on past convictions. Chris suggested that we could add language to allow for exceptions, but Sandy said her understanding was that the policy intentionally doesn't allow any flexibility. Bill said there may be ways to "tweak" the language to allow consideration if the conviction has been vacated, noting that sex crimes are generally not expunged. Leslie and Colin agreed that persons convicted of sex crimes should not be allowed to work with children. John suggested that if we try to build in some "wiggle room," that this be done in consultation with the region's lawyers. Bill noted that the policy as it stands is clear and easy to follow.

The policy proposal from the Youth and Children's Ministry was seconded by David. The vote was favorable with one abstention.

## **Reports from Commissions and Committees**

- Reports from the Personnel and Youth and Children's Ministry Team were received without comment or question.
- Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Ministry Team – Clint in his report suggested that there be a co-chair to the team who is a person of color. He doesn't know how we will go about accomplishing this but would like to start a conversation. Bill expressed his appreciation for the high quality of the report and asked if there is anti-racism training in the works. Clint said he is actively looking for a team. Several board members suggested ideas for members for Clint's team. Clint will look into structures for the team and will come back to the board with one or more action items. Sandy suggested that the board position be shared by the two co-chairs, and that any vote be taken by the chair of color.
- Global Ministries – Sandy noted there is a planned mission trip to Colombia coming up, to which the Disciples should be able to send 4-6 people. The Global Ministries Ministry Team will be coming to the board to adopt JUSTAPAZ as a regional partner.

## **Business:**

### **• Revised Bylaws**

We reviewed edits to the section on congregational representation at Regional Assemblies. The new language indicates that representatives will be certified by the congregational moderator or pastor, to be acknowledged by the regional secretary prior to the start of the first business session. Board members are given voting privileges if they do not otherwise have them.

Bill moved and Jennifer seconded that that the bylaws be adopted. Doug noted that the names for the areas are different than what we have been using. Bill offered an amendment to use these names:

- Salish Sea Area
- Tahoma Area
- Columbia River Area
- Big Sky Area

Doug seconded the amendment; the motion was favorable. The vote on the adoption of the bylaws was also favorable. Sandy will ensure that the bylaws are appropriately amended, and will have Amber post them on the web site and send them to board members.

### **• Revised Rest and Renewal Leave Policy**

This policy includes an exception, to include either one or two two-week leaves for Regional Administrator Amber Saladino after her 18 years of service. Doug moved and Gretchen seconded that we approve the policy to include two two-week leaves. The vote was favorable.

## **Regional Assembly Committee Report**

Gary expressed the joy of getting to work with members from both of the former regions. He is excited and says it will be a lot of fun. He suggests that the board should participate (as a group) in the talent show.

## **Regional Minister's Report**

Sandy asked board members to be in prayer for congregations in the pastoral search process. This includes 3 of the 11 Montana churches. Search and Call has gotten busier recently, after somewhat of a lull over the last year or so. The Commission on Ministry has several candidates entering the final stages of the ordination process. She brought up the idea of Area Regional Coordinators, who would be deployed in the areas, to represent the region and support congregations when Sandy is not able to do so. Funding might be found in the bequest from University Christian Church. Sandy will work with the Personnel Committee to try to bring this about. She concluded by talking about the challenges facing regions and regional ministers, and asked us to be in prayer for her and her fellow regional ministers.

## **Other Business**

- Signature card for the Christian Church Foundation – we need to have four signatories on this account. Bill moved and Gary seconded that the board officers be the signatories.
- Request for Transformation Grant – First Christian Church, Clarkston has requested a Transformation Grant to fund its feeding ministry. The Northwest Region had a policy to offer grants addressing several aspects of the church's life, but the Northern Lights Region does not have a similar policy. The Finance Committee will consider whether to recommend and how to finance a grant mechanism.
- Board meetings – Bill reminded us that with the passage of the bylaws, we are now committed to four meetings per year, including one face-to-face meeting after the Regional Assembly.
- Inventory of congregational activities – Jennifer asked about the Northwest Region's inventory of congregational mission activities, and also whether we could have a similar inventory on how

congregations are addressing environmental care. Sandy said that the mission inventory is supposed to migrate to the new web site, and we should have the ability to identify Green Chalice congregations.

**Closing Prayer/Adjournment**

Sandy offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM PST/8:53 MST.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Prekeges, secretary