

Synod Council
Bishop Report
September 12, 2020
Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt

Grace and Peace be with you all in the name of Jesus Christ!

1. COVID continues. Racial injustice continues. Unrest continues. These are all obvious statements, concerns and life. We have opportunities to think and be different because of who we are in the waters of baptism. Thanks for being on this journey in leadership in SOS as we begin another year. Remember our year in the ELCA/SOS for serving begins officially right after assemblies and usually this is our first official meeting of the new term. At the meeting I want to take about 10 minutes during my Oral Report and break you up into groups of 3 to talk about this question: **What could congregational life look like in the next 6 months?** I'm giving you "heads up". Then we will share ideas, thoughts, paint a picture or tell a story. I'll take notes and then pass your ideas, thoughts, and word pictures with the Outside the Box Team.
2. At the beginning of the meeting VP Ellis will ask that we appoint 2 new members to the Council to fill the vacancies for Lay Woman, Scioto Conference and At-Large-Man. Thank you to Ms. McCandlish and Mr. Lyatuu for saying yes to this call. Once we appoint them they will have a chance to introduce themselves. I am still working on finding a Lay Man for both Cincinnati and Dayton. Several were asked and either did not respond or declined because of other commitments at this time.
3. We are all moved into the new office suite (not settled yet) but we have internet, a new fridge, dishwasher, furniture and phone system! Everything is up and working. At this time Ms. Uemura and Mr. Brodbeck, Pr. Abrams, Dr. Nakamura and I are regulars at the office. Ms. Barton-Nonno comes in as necessary. The work plan going forward is to slowly introduce us back in person. Pr. Kerrigan, Dr. Driver, Mr. Pecuch are commuters and come and go as necessary. Our staff meetings are both in person and Zoom. Sunday commitments are as scheduled for Pr. Abrams, Pr. Kerrigan and me. My hope is that we are able to schedule in such a way that there is at least 14 days between our Sundays out. Temperatures are taken at home and if anyone is sick they stay home! Other weekday meetings, as much as possible, are still via Zoom/Go to Meeting. If we do go out we are masked, socially distanced and follow the protocol for the congregation we are meeting with. I don't want any of us to be super spreaders.
4. Staffing Updates: I am happy to announce that Mr. Josh Brodbeck is now full time Synod Administrator along with his other duties outside the office. He will take on

full responsibility for Office Management as well and work with the landlord when necessary. He has been in charge of negotiating our contracts for phone, internet, copy machine and coordinated all of the moving pieces of the puzzle that it took to move us from our old space to our new space. This was a huge job! Thank you Josh!

5. Other Staffing Updates: Mr. Chris Burnett, ELCA Planned Giving Partner was terminated by the ELCA. The partnership with ELCA Planned Giving is on hold. Finance Team will reevaluate the need for this position in the next months as we consult with GSB as Thrive moves into the planned giving phase of the mission campaign. We are looking into Gentreo, a company that can provide individuals opportunities for Estate Planning for a low cost and it costs the SOS nothing and we would publicize it. More about this at the meeting. As you also know, Sr. Sally Burk has completed her work with us as Pulpit Supply Coordinator.
6. I am happy to announce that we have 2 new pastors who were Ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament since we met in July. We welcome Rev. Richard Freudenberger and Rev. Corey Wagonfield.
7. Over these months we have had periodic Zoom check ins with Rostered Ministers. The most recent was with RM with school aged children and Youth Workers. Other Zoom check ins are in the works.
8. Pr. Abrams will give a quickie update on our vacancies and the new pastors who have come into this synod since COVID began. Vacancies are low, new pastors have arrived and are serving and congregations are thinking differently about how we are church together. Pr. Kerrigan will report on our Vibrant Church Workshops, SAS, and the Collaborative and how we are doing things differently. COVID has not stopped us!
9. The 5/3rd Bank account is finally closed out. I'll tell you a funny story about that at the meeting. We will also have a report on the Finance Team's recommendation for Investments.
10. Outside the Box Team continues working on how we can best assist congregations in thinking about now and the future with technology. More to come at the meeting. This is an amazing group of leaders.
11. After 25 years of leadership on the Candidacy Committee we say thank you to Pr. Steve Kimm for his service. Candidacy is such an important part of the formation of students going into ministry and so we say thank you! You will be asked to make several appointments to that committee in the meeting. Come the Spring Assignments, for Candidates, a new system will be in place. At the fall meeting of the Conference of Bishops we will vote and begin a new process. What that will look like will be determined in final form at this October meeting.

12. Portico: We will see the lowest increase in medical premiums for 2021. Portico has been a great source of help during COVID for plan members especially providing resources.
13. Over the past 5 years I have served on the Capital University Board of Directors and in the spring I stepped down from that position in order to go back onto the Trinity Lutheran Seminary Advisory Board and this summer was appointed to the Wittenberg University Board of Directors. Part of the responsibility of bishops is to serve on these boards from time to time and it was my turn to return to Trinity and to work with Wittenberg.
14. As mentioned the COB (Conference of Bishops) will still meet October 1-2 virtually. That should be interesting with 66 of us (that includes the Presiding Bishop). As of this writing we have the following new bishops: Bishop Elects: Craig Schweitzer-Western ND, Ginny Aebischer-South Carolina, Amy Current-SE Iowa, Tessa Moon-Leiseth-Eastern ND, Amy Odgren-NE Minnesota, Joy Mortense-Wieb-South Central Synod of Wisconsin. AND as we meet, the Northeastern Ohio Synod is in Assembly and I will keep you updated on how that process is going during the meeting. We of course keep them in prayer. I was asked to preach at the closing service, which I did via video. I have also been asked to be the mentor bishop for the new bishop. Several of the bishop elections have been postponed until next year for several sitting bishops, while another bishop has retired and an interim bishop appointed. What a way to be elected....in the middle of a pandemic. Virtual Assemblies are the thing of the future and NOW. We too will be adjusting our By-laws to allow for this to happen here in SOS.
15. The ELCA is under a redesign and I hope to have some information for you by the meeting. I'll keep you posted.

Looking forward to seeing you on our computer screens on Saturday! Take care and stay well.