

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA
DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
SPIRIT LAKE CASINO-FORT TOTTEN, NORTH DAKOTA
MARCH 13-14, 2015

Present: The Rev. Canon Zanne Ness, the Rev. Jim Shannon, Don Henderson, the Rev. Bart Davis, Sandi Myers, the Rev. Duane Fox, the Rev. Terry Overbo, Deacon Barb Olson, Marilys Carter, Julie Helgaas, Pat Fearing, Robert Fox, Carol DeWall, Mary Ann Henry, the Rev. Christian Senyoni, Charlotte Peterson, Leisha Woltjer, the Rev. Canon John Floberg
Absent: Bishop Michael Smith, Linda Hokana, Carmine Goodhouse, the Rev. Erin Richards, Deacon Brandon Mauai, the Rev. Michael Paul

After enjoying an evening meal together, the Diocesan Council met on Friday, March 13, 2015. The Rev. Canon Zanne Ness convened the meeting in the absence of Bishop Michael Smith. Zanne read from *Holy Women, Holy Men* about James Theodore Holly who was born in 1829 and ordained in 1856. He later settled in Haiti and became the first Haitian bishop and also the first black bishop in the Episcopal Church. The council worshipped together with Evening Prayer.

Roll call was conducted and a quorum was established. Minutes of the November meeting were approved with minor corrections by a motion from Julie Helgaas and a second from Carol DeWall. The agenda was discussed and a change was made to move the treasurer's report from Saturday morning to Friday evening. Julie Helgaas moved for acceptance of the agenda with a second from Bart Davis. Motion carried.

Charlotte Peterson, diocesan treasurer, noted some items on the treasurer's report. She reported that the annual audit had been completed. During the audit, the auditors discovered that the diocese did not have a formal policy for diocesan-owned vehicles and they recommended that a policy be developed. Discussion followed. As of now, the diocese owns the vehicle and pays for insurance, gas, and repairs. The bishop pays for personal mileage at a rate set by the IRS. Sandi Myers will work on drawing up a policy.

Charlotte said that the diocese ended the 2014 year with a net loss of \$5,633. Overall income was \$18,285 under budget. Our Fair Share payments were \$12,770 over the budgeted amount. Investment Fund transfers were at 5.80% which was under the 7.0% budgeted. Expenses were under budget.

Charlotte stated that the loan for the canon missionary's house in Bismarck will mature in July and some decisions will have to be made as to whether to pay off the loan or refinance.

It was noted that there is now a line in the budget (Line 167) for Williston (St. Peter's Rectory). This line shows utilities and mortgage interest for the Rectory in Williston. The offset account is the Bakken Ministry Fund. Part of the down payment for the rectory in Williston came from this fund.

The Diocese of Texas sent two unsolicited gifts to the Diocese of North Dakota.

John Floberg told the council that he had written two United Thank Offering grants. He said that two were allowed if one was in partnership with another diocese. The Diocese of South Dakota has agreed to partner on one of the grants. John will have more to say on the grants at Saturday's session.

There was discussion on the wording of the resolution on the Masuda Fund which was passed at the last council meeting. The council agreed to change the first part of the resolution to read as follows:

“Be it resolved that the annual unused continuing education money for diocesan-employed clergy can be put into the interest-bearing portion of the Masuda Fund.”

The rest of the resolution reads: “If there is a fund balance upon separation from diocesan employment, that fund will be transferred to the Masuda Fund interest (as opposed to principal) to become available to any clergyperson in the diocese for sabbatical.”

Mortgage loan interest payments from the Bakken Ministry Fund were discussed with some concern about the drop in oil prices of late. Bart gave comparisons of the first two months of 2014 and 2015 which showed an increase in the royalty income payments to the Bakken Ministry Fund from 2014 (\$1,857) to 2015 (\$3,459). The fund should be okay for this year.

The Finance Committee has recommended the following people for positions on the Pooled Investment Fund Committee as follows: Bart Davis – 2 year term and John Floberg – 1 year term. The other members will be a person from the Foundation, one from Gethsemane Cathedral, and one to be chosen by the above members. Sandi Myers moved for acceptance of Bart and John as members of the committee. Julie Helgaas seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Sandi Myers and Bart Davis moved and seconded a motion for acceptance of the treasurer’s report. Motion carried.

John Floberg gave some information on the Episcopal Church’s plan to reduce their assessments from the current 19% to 15% in the next three years.

Bart Davis moved to give \$2,500 from the General Convention expenses to Episcopal Relief and Development for their 75th anniversary as a memorial to Terry Star. Terry was to have been a delegate to General Convention from North Dakota. Jim Shannon seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned until Saturday morning.

Saturday, March 14, 2015

The meeting opened with Morning Prayer.

Charlotte Peterson presented the audit report which was reviewed. Questions were asked and answered. Jim Shannon moved for acceptance of the report. Barb Olson seconded. Motion carried.

Bart Davis presented a Rectory Use Agreement which could be adopted by the council for houses owned by the diocese. The diocese does not currently have an agreement of this kind. The following changes were made to the document:

#3 – Add “Notification will be given to the owner for additional residents.”

#7 – Strike the first sentence.

Major appliances are the responsibility of the owner.

John Floberg will be grandfathered in to this agreement. Bart Davis moved for acceptance of the agreement. Marilys Carter seconded the motion. Motion carried. It was suggested that individual parishes could use this document, adapting it to their own use. A copy of the agreement will be posted on the diocesan website.

Bart Davis brought up the possibility of getting a Home Warrantee policy for diocesan-owned houses which would cover things like heating and electric and other items. Discussion followed. Bart will look into this.

John Floberg informed the council about two United Thank Offering grants which he had written. One grant is being co-sponsored by the Diocese of South Dakota. This grant would fund an information campaign on human trafficking. Age-appropriate material would be printed and distributed to schools, churches, and other public places to help people realize what is happening in our state in regard to human trafficking. He has been in contact with people from the God's Child organization, who have material readily adaptable to our needs that could be printed for the project. Someone from that organization has been invited to speak on human trafficking at our Diocesan Convention at Friday's session.

The other United Thank Offering grant would fund a "tiny house" building project for "Terry's Boys," young men who have no permanent homes and need someplace to live. Five of these houses would be built on North Dakota side of Standing Rock. In order to qualify for a house, the young man would have to agree to get his GED or high school diploma if he had not already graduated from high school. He would also have to agree to either attend Sitting Bull College or to work at Prairie Knights Casino. The diocese will be informed by May or June if one or both of the grants will be awarded.

The Youth Committee consisting of Terry Overbo, John Floberg, and Christian Senyoni will continue to work on youth projects. John announced that the Acolyte Festival which was so popular in the past will be held at Gethsemane Cathedral sometime this fall.

Terry Overbo said that possible child care at convention was not in the works at the moment.

Jim Shannon reported that the North Dakota Council of Churches has been disbanded, but there is talk of a new ecumenical group forming in the future.

Christian Senyoni reported on what was happening with scholarships for students in the Sudan and Rwanda.

It was indicated that safe church training was available on-line. Sandy Holbrook can be contacted for information. All new council members are required to have this training if they have not already taken it.

John Floberg reported on the Sudanese ministry at St. John's Church in Moorhead. There has been an opening there because Michael Paul has moved to Williston to become rector of St. Peter's Church. John told the council that a Lutheran minister, Alex Waters, has agreed to take the part-time position at St. John's. A contract will be sent to him for his approval.

John Floberg said the Episcopal Church is working on a future option for churches to apply for matching grants for MDG projects.

Zanne Ness reported for the Commission on Ministry, stating that John Floberg had composed a booklet on ordination which is being further refined.

Bart Davis, reporting for the Standing Committee, said that the Bishop of South Dakota has suggested that their diocese and ours get together to discuss what may be in the future for both dioceses and what levels of cooperation might be put into effect to increase efficiency in each.

Pat Fearing spoke on the United Thank Offering and said that participation had been down this past year. She asked that council members to encourage their church members to participate.

John Floberg spoke on flood relief efforts supported by Episcopal Relief and Development. A program to provide washers and driers and another to provide beef is in the works. This program is in partnership with and supported by the United Methodist Outreach Center and the Spirit Lake Tribe.

John Floberg, speaking for NDCIM, announced that the Rev. Paul Zaharia from Minot is traveling to St. Sylvan's Church twice a month to conduct services.

The next diocesan council meeting will be held at St. Paul's Church in Grand Forks on August 21-22.

Jim Shannon gave the closing prayer and said grace before lunch was served.

Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Pat Fearing, Secretary