

Minutes of the Board of Lay Ministry (BOLM) Zoom Meeting
September 16, 2021
5:30 p.m.

Present: Co-Lay Leaders Nancy Flint, Gayla Jo Slauson, and Barry Welliver; members Michelle Aldrich, Sandy Brown, Linda Cockett, Curtis Gay, Gaylene Maka, Peg Plimpton, Joan Richard, Cindy Snodgrass, Susan Wheeler, and Sue Yeager; clergy Annie Arnoldy, Tezenlo Thong, and staff member Kaitlyn Kahrs.

The meeting began at 5:35 p.m.; Gayla Jo Slauson asked the group to recall when someone invited each of us to do something in a way that you really wanted to do it. Members gave examples of being praised for their skills, being flattered, being asked with no forewarning, and noting how good it felt to make a difference. In summary, the group agreed that it is nice to be asked.

In 1 Peter 2:9 we are reminded that all of us belong to God. And laity are servants of God. We are chosen people. In the New Testament there are no priests, only people of God.

Each BOLM member will be receiving a copy of the book, *Synergy*, by Ann A. Michel. Gayla Jo highlighted the concept of ministry as service, which is taken from Chapter 3 of this book; the opening prayer followed.

REPORTS:

Linda Cockett advertised the Mountain Sky UMW Annual Conference on October 8 & 9. It will be a virtual meeting for all.

Sandy Brown (Montana East) had no activities to report, but noted that she is trying to get names of local lay leaders. This is a difficult task, since district superintendents don't have the names either.

Peg Plimpton (Montana West) has sent some letters out requesting lay leader information; there has not yet been any response.

Michelle Aldrich reported that Wyoming has all circuit leader positions filled. Their state has one meeting per month via zoom; and Michelle meets with her district superintendent (D.S.) once a month.

Joan Richard (Peaks/Pikes Peak) noted that the Quiet Disciple program is a positive concept. Not much is happening right now except district meetings.

Cindy Snodgrass (Trinity) talked about a petition that is circulating for Annual Conference consideration; it concerns how insurance for rural churches is calculated.

Susan Wheeler (Peaks/Pikes Peak) is still in touch with local lay leaders. The Colorado Springs/Pikes Peak people hustled to put UMCOR relief kits together when they learned that one of their people was going to the UMCOR depot. They also made a concerted effort to have one lay servant course per month for the people working on their lay speaker certification. It worked well until the last course, for which no one registered. It is assumed that burnout was the main culprit, since they covered eight other courses in eight months! They will continue to offer courses this year to increase the number of lay speakers in the area.

Sue Yeager (Western Colorado) asked for the minutes of the March meeting to be approved. Motion

passed. (Brown/Aldrich)

She also voiced her concern that the laity voices have become fewer, communications within the conference [for laity] are very poor, and she wonders what we should be working on.

Tezenlo Thong reported on Cabinet activities. They are getting ready for charge conferences. On September 22 the Boy Scout court decision was handed down, which has brought forth many questions about whether which Methodist churches will need to pay damages claims and how much they will be asked to pay. He also mentioned that it is hard to hire full clergy for shrinking congregations.

Annie Arnoldy presented a general picture of the upcoming Annual Conference. It will be online only, on October 22 and 23, except for the laity session, which will be from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on October 21. The Mile of Love (tug-of-war) offering is being reworked for the online venue. It was a good fundraiser last year.

The Nominations team has new policies. The team will work with district roundtables to find possibilities for lay and clergy. The team would like the information to be on the website around October 1.

Gaylene Maka (Ethnic Coordinator) reported that Bette Nguyen visited their area and took pictures of their Tongan dinner. They should provide excellent advertising opportunities!

Gayla Jo Slauson explained that she is the de facto head of the legacy Rocky Mountain General Conference delegation. The delegation is still having difficulties receiving all the information that is being sent out. General Conference may not be held in 2022. And Western Jurisdiction is also chaotic.

Kaitlyn Kahrs is busy identifying leaders. She guided the board through the website, through the new format and specific sites she has posted.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

Discussion reverted to Annual Conference, to the laity session. The options presented to the co-lay leaders were: Thursday night, Sunday, or another time not attached to Annual Conference. It seems that the best option is Thursday night, although some members are fearful that it will not be advertised well enough. One possible positive outcome could be that some clergy will attend the laity session.

Nancy Flint and Ken Hazlitt are the co-coordinators for the laity scholarship. Discussion included ideas for how to advertise the scholarship. The scholarship may be used to attend an educational workshop/ activity of some sort, but it may not be used to attend Annual Conference or for professional licensing. Further discussion of acceptable activities for using the scholarship continues in the following paragraphs.

The psychological evaluation required of all clergy candidates and certified lay ministry (CLM) candidates has been changed. The new one is more expensive, and, consequently, is more controversial. The portion to be paid by the CLM candidate is now \$500. Although the laity support the need for the psychological evaluation, some people are concerned that the burden is too heavy for the candidate, and the small churches (to which CLMs are most often assigned) cannot afford to help defray that cost. It has been determined that the laity scholarship may not be used to pay for the CLM psychological evaluation. So the question remaining is: how can the laity help defray the cost of the psychological evaluation?

Breakout groups (of ten minutes in length) were formed to discuss the above question. Suggestions included were:

- let the fee be part of the church budget, and start planning early;
- split the AC laity session offering into the lay scholarship fund and a new CLM fund.

This topic will be discussed at future meetings.

To be discussed later is the topic of district lay leader elections.

Curtis Gay provided a written copy of the activities of the Lay Servant Director and associates. It will be sent with this document. The board members recognized Curtis for the good work and many course offerings that came forth in the last year. And he was successful in joining forces with the Pacific Northwest and Oregon/Idaho conferences so that we all could enjoy the same zoom courses.

Note: Gayla Jo mentioned the need to begin the nomination process for co-lay-leader elections at AC next month. I (Sue Yeager) have embellished her statement with what I hope is an understandable overview below of the whole process. We should be discussing the process again SOON!

At AC 2022 there will be an election for one of the three co-lay leader positions. Gayla Jo Slauson is in her third year; each co-lay leader position is a four-year position, with the possibility of serving two terms. Regardless of whether Gayla Jo opts to run for a second term or not, an election must be held. Our regulations state that one year before the actual voting (2021 for the 2022 election), nominations must be open from the floor during the Annual Conference Laity session. Those people who are nominated are invited to learn more about the position of conference co-lay leader in the months preceding the election.

In February of 2022 (I don't know the exact date) the Conference Co-Lay Leader Application form is posted on the conference website. That application MUST be filled in and returned to the conference office by April 10, 2022. At AC 2022, each candidate will be allowed to speak for a limited amount of time (usually 3 minutes), and there is usually a hard copy of remarks which they turn in for the conference program booklet. Otherwise, there is no campaigning allowed, and no further interviews take place before that actual voting process, and there are definitely no nominations accepted from the floor in 2022!

The meeting concluded with prayer by Gaylene Maka. Adjournment was at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Yeager, Secretary