

Mountain Sky Conference Board of Laity Zoom Meeting  
March 15, 2022

Present: Co-Lay Leaders Nancy Flint, Gayla Jo Slauson, and Barry Welliver, members Michelle Aldrich, Cheryl Brown, Sandy Brown, Jerry Clare, Mark Cumming, Linda Cockett, Curtis Gay, Ken Hazlitt, Christina Ostendorf, Joan Richard, Cindy Snodgrass, Susan Wheeler, and Sue Yeager, plus Kaitlin Kahrs ( conference office) and Debbie Peterson (guest).

The meeting began at 6:05 p.m. Sue Yeager introduced guest Debbie Peterson, who is scheduled to be her replacement as Western Colorado Sub-District Lay Leader. And she also validated Cheryl Brown, who was attending her first BOLM meeting as Utah's Sub-District Lay Leader. Both were to be elected in their district gathering on March 19. (Note: They were elected!)

The icebreaker question for the meeting was: “What do you do when everything in your life seems to be upside-down?” Answers included the following thoughts: run, dig in the earth, walk, take a bath, paint, slow down by doing things like laundry, find something to focus on, go to the gym, pray, write, take rides, do something good, hide and stew, eat carbs, read, read comic strips, and pitch manure.

The January minutes were approved, once Joan Richard's name was added to the list of those present.

Gayla Jo Slauson reported on strategies for upcoming “events.” With General Conference (GC) postponed now until 2024, there are many questions. Comments included the following:

- It is assumed that the delegates that have been hanging in limbo since 2019 will be kept on until after GC 2024.
- The Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) has been waiting to leave the United Methodist Church (UMC). The group already has their Book of Discipline written, and have announced that they will begin operating as a church body on May 1. However, there are still some unknowns about this action. E.g. The Judicial Conferences are still figuring out answers to topics such as whether retirement funds can transfer to the WCA.
- Jurisdictional Conferences will be held in July or November.
- An important question for the BOLM is how are we going to help things to go forward? Our leadership is very important right now.

Barry Welliver mentioned that a group has been discussing issues of those who are “left behind”, and in developing a church lifeline. Jeff Rainwater has some information coming out, and details will be shared in the next couple of months.

Nancy Flint said the conference committee vows to have a place for everyone - a church or even just for one person who is looking for a church home.

Annual Conference (AC) Registration information for BOLM members:

- The code for BOLM members is BOLM (updated 3/21 to BOLM22 for Helena attendees.)
- One-hundred percent of the registration fees are taken care of by the BOLM.
- The BOLM reimburses fifty percent of each board member's hotel room fees. (So, if a board member shares a room with another board member, the room is paid for.)
- There is a mileage reimbursement for those who drive, and the more voting members who ride together, the higher the percentage of reimbursement.
- For those who fly to Helena, a maximum of \$150 will be reimbursed for ticket expenses.

Other AC tidbits:

- What started out to be a BOLM retreat has become a BOLM dinner meeting for Wednesday, June 15. It will be a team building event, with plans to work on guiding principles.
- Most AC legislative work will occur in the October meeting, but the need for four new bishops in Western Jurisdiction may lead to nominations being made in June and, therefore, some legislative action.
- Voting for the one new BOLM Co-Lay Leader position will be in June. Applications are being accepted until April 30. There is a link to the application form in the Co-Lay Leader page on the [mntskyumc.org](http://mntskyumc.org) website. Please advertise this election at all district gatherings!

Kaitlin Kahrs shared her screen and took the board to the website. She showed several new features she had developed. The laity portions are looking up-to-date (and much better.)

Nancy also talked about the three co-lay-leaders having engaged with the cabinet recently. Both “groups” listened to one another, and have agreed that the BOLM leaders will check in with the cabinet on alternate months.

Nancy also reported on Lay Servant (LS) training. One theme is Our Wesleyan Heritage. Gene Haning is teaching two classes – one in Lakeside, Montana and one from Trinity District.

Curtis Gay followed up by reporting that our conference has a Lay Servant connection with the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. The Pacific Northwest has not had an LSM program, so this is a start-up program for them. He later mentioned that some people want Lay Servant Ministries to have an affiliation with the WCA.

Nancy also mentioned a topic from the board's previous meeting: having the district lay leaders meet with the co-lay-leaders. She asked for comments. Some expressed agreement with the idea. Part of the rationale is that the other attendees at BOLM meetings do not have the same issues that district lay leaders have. Therefore, if the lay leaders met together, then the broader topics would be covered when the full board meets.

Mark Cumming and Sandy Brown shared some thoughts from some Montana district meetings. They want a clear idea of what direction we're heading. It was noted that Vital Conversations are close to what we are talking about. It might help to check the website: [laity@mntskyumc.org](mailto:laity@mntskyumc.org).

## Reports

United Methodist Women, now United Women in Faith: Linda Cockett reported that some women were caught off guard with the name change. The UMW name is in the Book of Discipline, and is still the official United Methodist Church women's organization, but the organization thought it was time for rebranding. The main reason for the change is that the new name is more inclusive of more people, e.g. individual units, and women who may not come from a Methodist background who are looking for the fellowship, spirituality and commitments for women in faith.

Linda also announced that the spring Spiritual Retreat information is available to all on the [mntskyumw.org](http://mntskyumw.org) website. The retreat dates are April 1 and 2.

Quiet Disciple: Susan Wheeler announced that the past action of having a QD representative from each

sub-district be honored at the Laity Luncheon at Annual Conference will NOT occur this year. There will be no Laity Luncheon! Instead, she proposed to include ALL recipients' names on sub-district power point slides, which will be interspersed in a larger display of district laity activities.

Discussion concerning the Quiet Disciple program continued. The comments included the following points:

- Small churches have already given the award to all of their members.
- Montana has no QDs this year. They are not used to this program. Perhaps they will work harder on it next year.
- “Just take the award down to the local level.”
- We need to talk about this program again.

In closing the meeting, Barry summarized this meeting as one of good discussions. Perhaps this type of agenda - with no formal programs – is a good fit at this time.

Barry also suggested that each person write to the three co-lay-leaders with their thoughts about the meeting.

Various people recommended changes to the manuals, to allow for each district to have its own autonomy, to put a proposal together for district lay leaders, and also to formulate a job description.

Barry then reminded the board of the importance of light of any size, and to follow the age-old thought: “This little light of mine, LET IT SHINE!”

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Yeager, Secretary