

# Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

## Board of Directors Meeting

### Minutes for December 5, 2024 at 6pm via ZOOM

Zoom Link for Thursday Meeting only:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82381106642?pwd=XiQ5a9vJCt57OSMGUUSUyuQefkDU7.1>

Meeting ID: 823 8110 6642 Passcode: 10500

Dial by your location +1 719 359 4580 US

Meeting ID: 823 8110 6642

Host: StP Facilitator: Liz Scribe: Michael

Attending: +Kae, Michael, Chuck, Rosean, Tom, Dennis, Jane, Anne, Liz

Excused: Don, Greg, Alice,

Guests: Rev. Dr. Jenny Whitcher

Meeting began at 6:10 pm

#### Regular Business

##### 1. Community updates/prayers lifted

- a. MoM for their grieving as Teri steps down as a regular presider; for the 301 Faith Partners' Advent Wednesday Soup Suppers and their continued collaborations
- b. LOC for Dcn. Mike's internship beginning outreach committee
- c. COB for Alice after the death of her Mom Irene
- d. STP thanksgivings for UCC collaborations; upcoming fundraiser to make building accessible; Council Chair Sue Hester's husband with cancer
- e. CHF gratitude for Ann Grant; challenges of assets and resources to be appreciated as opportunities

##### 2. Welcomed Rev. Dr. Jenny Whitcher who gave presentation of [JUNIPER FORMATION](#)

- a. On-line ecumenical faith community and formation tool "prophetically reimagining the church" developed 5 yrs ago by UCC. Centering the margins of the church, focus is on expanding inclusivity (race, gender, orientation, immigrations status, neuro-diversity ,et al.) Ecumenical leadership; offer congregational support on many levels.  
*When considering voices on the margins, how might our visioning transform church structures, liturgy, ministry, et al?*
- b. **PROPHETICALLY REIMAGINING THE CHURCH**, Conference scheduled for Sept 19-20, 2025
  - i. Conference includes speaker presentations, workshops, on-on-one structured conversations, and resources to benefit our communities.
  - ii. Looking for sponsorships to keep registration at \$100; commitments to level of sponsorship sought before year's end so they can plan a budget for the event.
  - iii. In-person in Denver with remote participation; volunteers able to participate without cost; considering in conjunction with retreat opportunities.
  - iv. Conversation of what we'd like to see that other conferences don't usually offer.
    1. Challenges of full volunteer ministers to those supplemented by other employment.

2. Continuity of communities beyond charismatic leadership.
  3. Virtual communities beyond geographic boundaries.
  4. Concerns for marginalized individuals/communities around the next Administration. How do we support/journey with them; creative partnerships offering protected spaces. Gender-variant lens already part of conference and planning teams.
  5. Hope to have 100+ participants
  6. Opportunities for participating congregations to connect, getting to know each other better and build relationship as follow-up.
  7. Tied into other organizations like Coloradans for the Common Good? Issue is groups seeking to build numbers don't have consensus on marginalized communities' needs.
- v. Jenny is open to further one-on-one convos. [jenny@juniperformation.org](mailto:jenny@juniperformation.org)
3. **Agenda approval/additions**
    - a. addressing board member needs at meetings
  4. **Review and approval of October and November minutes** approved
  5. **Financial report**—no concerns shared. report accepted
  6. **Bishop's report**—see Appendix A. Significant details and action items:
    - a. Interface Alliance *Force For Good* event valuable experience; working on Promise 2025—how interfaith groups work together; addressing hard convos in diverse communities—how do we hear each other and not demonize/dehumanize.
    - b. Governor Jared Polis and others for “Repairing the Breach in a Time of Toxic Polarization”—in the political arena, how do we find common ground
    - c. Compassionate Listening workshop in January or February at COB. Council of Bishopsto address followup on visioning at Synod.
  7. **Vicar's report**—see Appendix D. Significant details and action items:
    - a. NEW OFFICE: 2201 Dexter St, Denver CO 80207
    - b. Board representation needed for ECC replacing Michael
    - c. Gratitude for Michael's service.
  8. **Leadership Council Report**
    - a. void now that Teri isn't on the Council; MaryLu, as a member of the HOL Steering Committee, may be a touch point; are there any published notes that we can access? In the past, Michael gave these reports as PB's Vicar.

### Old/Recurring Business

1. **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service on Tues, Jan 21**—See Appendix B
  - a. Kae, Tom and Jane as planning core (Michael tangentially involved)
  - b. invitation for ecumenical participation in planning included in CCC Newsletter
2. **Regional Synod 2025 Planning Team**
  - a. possible retreat experience in conjunction with any business
  - b. worried about current band-width
  - c. **raise issue with our communities: past participations? what would feed you? feedback brought to January and February board meetings**
3. **Michael's Relocation** (*place holder as reminder to council to prepare; no new developments*)
4. **Continuing Education for Clergy update**
  - a. attempts being made to fulfill Safe Spaces obligations
  - b. convo between Kae/Rosean/ Scott in January about education requirements

5. **Regional Assessments of Bishop/Vicar/RMRC** (Chuck) —See Appendix E  
Three items left to complete this work:
  - a. Date of Kae's **election as Bishop: May, 2021**
  - b. Decide on a due date for the Communities to submit a completed response
  - c. **Michael to expand/clarify Vicar priorities**
  - d. **Council members to expand/clarify RMRC responsibilities.**  
Clarification re: "Acts as Office of the Bishop" was hold over from initial desire for forming a diocese. Does it fit today?
  - e. target date for completion: Jan.meeting, then sent out to Parish Councils and Synod delegates past and current for input
6. **further feedback on ECC 2024 Synod**—See Appendix C
  - a. **needs to be a more public document; permissions needed**
  - b. more gratitude expressed for Tom's work publishing vidoes
  - c. appreciate Carolyn Sue's newsletter summary

### **New Business**

1. Decisions regarding level of participation in Juniper Formation's Conference
  - a. goals of conference—
    - i. inclusion of the marginalized and being Christ in the world is timely;
    - ii. "reimagining the church" exciting;
    - iii. educational opportunity for our clergy and laity about marginalized community inclusion;
    - iv. opportunity to partner with churchs on issues that other organizations don't have consensus about; relationship building important.
  - b. monetary support
    - i. \$500 sponsorship gets name included; money in budget under charitable donations
    - ii. need for more info to know what what we're putting our name on
    - iii. possibility of offering \$250, then balance once program clearer
    - iv. Michael brought up his role as principale advocate for LGBTA+
    - v. Consensus: four 4s, three 2s, two 3s; **more conversation at January meeting (individuals welcome to contact Jenny for clarity)**
2. Jane taking 4-5 month sabbatical from her role on Board.  
Ann will be sole rep of CHF until a second lay person is invited and accepts.
3. Being flexible to make space to listen to/address board member needs during the meeting—Liz's opening this meeting with sharing of needs in prayer was one way of addressing the need. More convos next meeting.

### **Closing Prayer** – Liz lead Regional Prayer

Holy One,  
Enlivening Spirit,  
In the wilderness of new,  
Root the body of Christ  
Fully into our "Yes"

Blooming in your Holy Season.  
Together, Amen!

**Lead Rotation of 2025 RMRC Meetings:** Jan 2–MoM; Feb 6–COB; Mar 6–CoHF; Apr 3– LOC;  
May 1–STP; Jun 5–MoM; Jul 3–COB; Aug 7 CoHF; Sep 4–LOC; Oct 2–STP; Nov 6–MoM; Dec 4–COB

## Appendix A—Bishop Notes: Activity in November 2024

+Kae

### Administration

Ongoing:

- Clergy Ethics/Safety Training:
- Continuing Education: Fr. Scott is willing to assist us by holding this expectation, assisting and conversation with clergy. Rosean would still retain the official records.

### Advocacy/Presence/Consultation

Nov 16: COB hosted the presentation on Jewish and Palestinian conflict by Julia Hallaby. There were 18 present. The zoom was a little unstable. Alice has the recording and it will be unedited with all the breakout rooms, etc., so a good three hours that you can fast forward through. Just let Alice know if you want to view it. We intend to host Compassionate Listening training in late Jan/early July.

Nov 21: Hosted Teri’s doctoral presentation on Virtual Communion at Light of Christ. The recording is available for a small group – contact Teri.

Dec 2: I attended and created the presentation board for Advent to the **Force for Good** reception with Interfaith the Alliance. It was interesting to see all the presentation boards for diverse spiritualities including Winter Solstice, the Ute Tribe, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Obon (Buddhist), Hannukah – festival of Lights, Chines New Year, Ridvan (Baha’i) and more. The keynote was a dialogue of faith leaders regarding Islamophobia and Antisemitism. Very meaningful.

Dec. 3: I attended remotely with Governor Jared Polis and others for “Repairing the Breach in a Time of Toxic Polarization”. The focus was on dignity in conversations. [The Index — The Dignity Index](#). How do we speak to one another? Think about each other? Hold ourselves?

### Clergy support:

Praying with many...

Clergy meetings and phone calls

Weekly Friday clergy gatherings:

### Liturgies/Sacraments:

**\* Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is Jan 18 -25.** We agreed to gather on Tuesday, Jan 21<sup>st</sup>. Jane and Tom and I will set a time to plan : ) Thank you, Michael, for sending out an invitation to other faith leaders to participate. **We need to know by Friday, December 20 if any of our faith partners wish to be involved with “speaking parts” and who will be your speakers from your communities (lay or clergy mix).**

### Formation

Continuing discernment with Jim. Dory has begun discernment for the permanent diaconate at Mary of Magdala

Mike’s discernment team will continue as support.

Support of Christy as she completes her third year of study.

## ECC

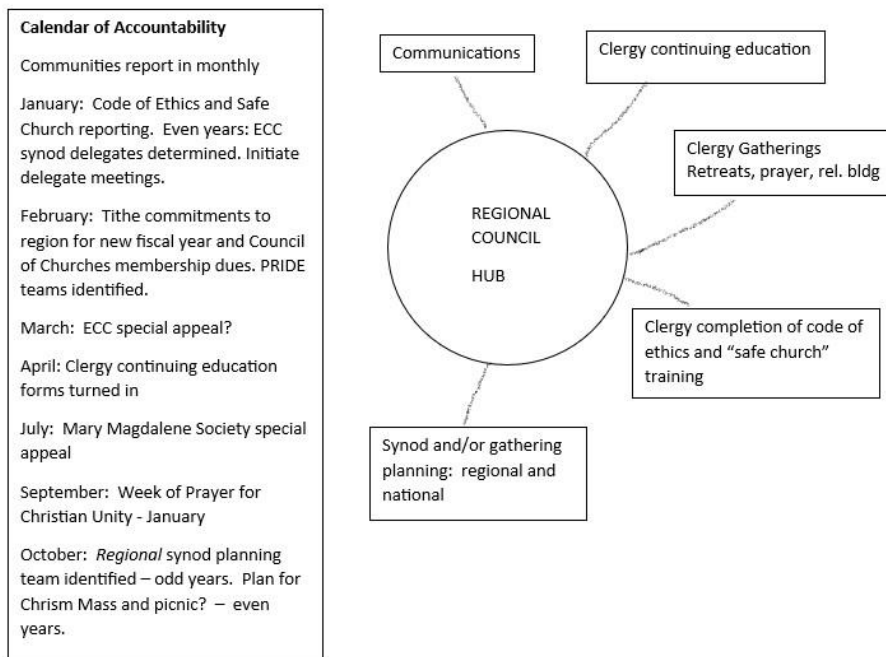
### I attached the take-aways I received about Synod2024...What’s next?

#### Council of Bishops

- Meetings: Call on Nov 11<sup>th</sup> and an upcoming call on Dec 9th

**Consulting with Pablo:** Phone calls and meetings to discuss the current climate and functioning of the ECC, perspectives.

Brainstorming model of administration of the region....



## Appendix B—Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 resources

[Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO WCC NEWS](#)

[Spiritual life](#)

[Faith and Order Commission](#)

For the year 2025, the prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy.

The resources are jointly published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches. The final material is sent to WCC member churches and Roman Catholic episcopal conferences. Persons are invited to translate the text and contextualize or adapt it for their own use.

2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325 AD. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the creed formulated during this council.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 offers an invitation to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians.

The guiding biblical text for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 comes from John 11:17-27. The theme for the week, "Do you believe this?" (v. 26), takes its cue from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus.

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. In the southern hemisphere churches often find other days to celebrate the Week of Prayer, for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the church.

Mindful of the need for flexibility, organizers of the Week of Prayer invite you to use this material throughout the year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

Those interested in receiving the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 resources in advance are kindly asked to send in their requests to the email address [Media@wcc-coe.org](mailto:Media@wcc-coe.org).

## **Appendix C—ECC Synod 2024 Takeaways**

+Kae received a handful of emails with take-aways.

### **Linda and Frank COB delegates on zoom**

Being a delegate/observer on-line gave us a different perspective than those attending in person. We developed a camaraderie with other on-line attendees, especially during a number of the break-out sessions. For instance, we connected with Peter Azinwin a lay Franciscan from Cameroon, Africa. He expressed the need of his small ECC community to share "...the Word and Bible with others." We hope to continue the relationship with him via email. We were also touched by Dr. Chris Pramuk's session when he said that ECC members are Christians of the future for our willingness to be with the difficult and sorrowful moments with others where we are within the gaze of God.

### **Mary Lu LOC delegate**

The Theme of synod this year was, Passing the Torch. All our communities participated in defining what our hopes and dreams are for the future by adding our ribbons to create a rich, full flame; our burning desire to pass on our tradition and lived experience of the gospel.

In one of our talks, they talked about the importance of salt. As we know, salt is the most popular enhancer to improve the flavor of food. Historically though, salt was also used to create chemical reactions in fires that helped produce more heat and flames. Salt doesn't even melt unless it reaches a

temp. of 800 degrees Celsius. ( 1,472 degrees F). When you add salt to the fire, the color of the flame changes! It isn't because the salt is burning, rather the electrons are changed and produce light; thus, the different colors in the fire.

I began to think differently about the torch, the flame. Not so much about later or when I'm gone, but about now.

You see, we are salt of the earth! Our actions are needed in this world where there are many hot spots, many burning desires and many hopes to know something different. We are meant to bring LIGHT. We are meant to BE Light. We will be tested in fire, but we can endure a lot before we melt! Our electrons, our perspective, will change when we reach out and be of service and then we can boldly proclaim we are the Light of Christ.

I came away from synod not only with a richer understanding of being the salt within the flame but seeing the tremendous Light of Christ all around me. Do you know, I counted 35 people from our community who were directly involved in making this happen! We are Light of Christ,

and I am so proud to be a part of this community. Together we enhance the world!

#### **Jean Christen – delegate MOM**

It was uplifting to share ideas and experiences with people from all over the U.S. who have a similar desire for an all-inclusive Catholic church informed by Vatican II. All of us are searching for the spark of the Divine through the principles and ideas of the Ecumenical Catholic Church. I was very impressed by the speakers, especially Chris Pramuk, whose mysticism was evident in his amazing talk in which he said, "Mysticism is the fire of God burning within us. The future Christian will be a mystic." Bishop Pablo did a great job of getting us to mingle, get to know someone new, and share our spirituality. He also showcased some of the positive things happening in the ECC. Fr. Ricky Manolo gave very practical ideas on improving our liturgies through media. I very much enjoyed the morning and evening prayer sessions, and the Sunday Mass was amazing. Through this experience as a first-time delegate I realized how messy this whole process of birthing a new church can be (we are clumsy midwives), and our future is not a given. Although we have many of the same ideas, we also have many divergent ideas. How do we come together to keep the balance between what we agree on and still allow the autonomy of each group? I felt privileged to be a delegate to the House of Laity, vote on the budget, and get a glimpse of how the HOL works (although I understand it was very different this time). I was hoping for some real concrete ideas of how to grow our church membership, but it seems no one has any answers right now. I believe we must pray and rely on the Holy Spirit. All in all, it was a very positive experience, and one I hope more people get a chance to attend in the future.

#### **Tom Moos – delegate MOM**

Physically, the setting couldn't have been more beautiful, surrounded by mountains and God's glorious creation. Though I loved the opportunity for short walks outside between events, I heard a few comments that the Y campus may not have been ideal for attendees with mobility issues – something to consider for future venues. The 2 keynotes presented by Chris and Ricky were a strong plus for me. I

think Chris wonderfully stated our best goals, behaviors and aspirations as an ECC. As George von Stamwitz commented, Chris eloquently put into words who we are and continue to become. Fr Ricky gave me some practical tips for improving the virtual liturgical experience for our Mary of Magdala zoomies – his presentation may have appealed more to me than some others given my role at MofM. +Pablo’s opening remarks were a good review especially of his travels and visits to various ECC parishes but he could have done more to address the ECC crises since last Synod: Mid-America diocese and Peter’s departure from the ECC – both mentioned almost in passing but not getting much attention. I thought the “saint buddies” exercise was a brilliant way to engage someone we potentially didn’t know and many commented on the value of that conversation and sharing. The process of finding our buddy took way too long though – especially given that many folks were tired from a long day of travel. Rob’s visioning exercise felt poorly planned and ad-hoc, probably due to being thrown together very late. I felt bad for Rob but think he handled it well, especially as different folk’s monologues about the survey went off-topic. We didn’t get as far as we might have liked in prioritizing our values but the session produced a ton of raw data that can be leveraged into next steps. It’s unclear to me what we will be doing next on that. Most of my detailed feedback on the Synod pertains to A/V. In fact, I met with Teri Harroun on Oct 22 for an A/V deep dive incorporating her thoughts and mine into a 3-page report that I will make available to future planners. While A/V provided an opportunity to be of service, unfortunately, for various reasons, it limited my participation in things like prayer or the table talks in lower Long’s Peak – opportunities I really missed. Another take away: if the virtual attendees have to pay the same registration fee, I think they really need to be able to access almost everything (e.g. committee reports, house meetings – even as observers) The highlight of the Synod for me was reconnecting with so many folks from around the country and forming new relationships: I made a very conscientious effort to sit with “strangers” and leave the table as “friends” and was very rewarded for that effort.

For +Pablo: Thank you for convening this Synod and your extensive efforts to bring a unifying presence to the Communion through your visits around the country. May God bless and keep you as you continue to serve the Communion.

#### **Maureen – observer COB**

As a newcomer I wanted to attend the Synod to see if Church of the Beloved was unique or if the larger Communion was also welcoming, inclusive and seeing equality. (You see I have been around the block a few times and I know that individual communities can be welcoming, inclusive and stress equality, but the larger Church does not), What I discovered in attending the Synod was that Church of the Beloved is not unique. I met people from all over and found that the Ecumenical Catholic Communion is welcoming, inclusive and seeks equality among all people.

#### **Fr. Len - observer**

Follow Up "Going Forward" to the 2024 Synod

Much gratitude to the Synod planners and volunteers: the organization, flow, and social flavor of the Synod was excellent.



Bp Pablo did an excellent job of manifesting a presiding bishop who is a "servant" of the community;

Pablo's Friday evening presentation, was a beautiful illustration of the use of technology, good invitational inter-action exercises, spiritual ritual that heals and inspires.

The standing ovation given to Chris Pramuk spoke volumes; his inspirational presentation, reflections and literary style of teaching touched many of us at the heart.

He reminded us that the spiritual and mystical path is the center of our life, and reminded us this is the essential core of our ECC life, to be shared with others.

Of the many rich insights Chris shared, his image of the ECC as "**midwives**" was both an **affirmation** and a **call** to discover how to live this call.

Both Bp Pablo and Chris helped us to recognize (as did the exhibits, reports. HOL and HOP meetings) that we are doing real ministry, and have so much to share.

The social times we had were uplifting and community building and a healthy balance to our serious and dedicated ministry side.

I so enjoyed the Coffee House time, and the All Communion liturgy, with the shared homily style being the highlight, and of course the excellent music.

Pablo continued to exemplify our unity at the altar and our unity in all our gatherings, nourished by equality, inclusivity, and dialogue.

Unfortunately, the tool used for the survey leading to the Visioning Conversation, did not work well, and we learned together, that the questions within the survey were not in my view, the ones on our hearts - and ones to best serve our "visioning". This process was redeemed however by the open conversation and group process.

The variety of responses to that process tells us **our process of choosing priorities for "future visioning" needs more attention**. Our leadership can collate and integrate the diverse *foci*, and I suggest perhaps a **one day or two-day Zoom retreat**, to actually conduct this process more thoroughly. My practical suggested steps follow:

Is the fundamental Question for us: **How Do WE Pass the Torch to the Next Generation**, given that many of us are aging, given the need for ongoing renewal?

I have chosen some new wording to summarize what my small group, and I personally feel might be a trifold focus (which we can work from).

(This is an attempt to adjust our language for future members and new members, and to be in sync with those with us, those joining us, and a future ECC.)

I picked up on the three terms someone used to describe who we are, what we do, and what we have to share. My suggested (brainstorm) for new language is:

**SHARING THE GOOD NEWS** (this is our preaching and teaching our "catholic" tradition, standing on shoulders of those before us, manifesting the Gospel)

**PRAYING TOGETHER** (this is all of our liturgies, prayer services, mystical and other spiritual practices.) Note here: I think we expect our Mass, as we know it, to be a strong attractor; but is it for those not steeped in this eucharistic tradition and its meaning, are I fear who are slow to join us. This needs re-examination. Either way, relationship, and what someone said about forming connections with other believers, comes **first - We must go to them** (not expect them to come to us). If I might put it this way:

**First Step**, is outreach, outside of our comfort zone; **Second Step** is: Invitation and an experience of how we pray and serve; **Third Step**: is possible membership and cultivating the our Communion of diverse, inclusive believers, "the Beloved Community".

**SERVICE AND SOLIDARITY:** This is all the ways we do social and peace and justice ministry, with others and together throughout a given period, and through most of all personal one-to-one service, pastoral care, and a welcoming-inclusive embrace. We already do this well once folks are in our door, but can we do it through a form of outreach that might reach alienated, marginalized Roman Catholics - Lutherans - and all of the others.

This brings me to my final suggestion and reflection, *all subject of course to the discernment of our leadership led by the Holy Spirit.*

I summarize in this brief, to short, unnuanced way: We will grow, I suspect smaller in numbers as our aging population changes, and while we have such a "great set of treasures to share" from the Christian-Catholic imagination and this form of church, to be a "church" for all who might be moved to join us, we need:

A consultation (I suggest a two hour Zoom, e.g. with someone like the consultant I met in Santa Fe) to teach us how to create our "branding", or Tag Line, and explore how to reach the many out there who are longing for spiritual community, sustenance, and yes, a new experience of a kind of "church for many", in Christ.

The sound of the brainstorm that Sunday afternoon, would give one the impression that only some elements of our "catholic" tradition need to be priorities (like, only doing justice and peace ministry, for example); The "Catholic" charism is an integrated whole which (in short) includes: our history and traditional values; a gospel centered and eucharistically nourished bodies who are "church"; and post Vatican II - a contemporary open, inclusive psychology and mystical forms of prayer, relationship and mutual service. The ECC in its 20 years history has done this well to get us where we are; now the question is How to share our charism...our Catholic expression of an ecumenical Christianity. And...build or continue, a lightly structured, institution or "communion" that grows, nourishes, and attracts those searching for Christ, and love.

### **Jim Berry**

The best part of the Synod was the mass. It brought us all into communion with each other. It wasn't until then that I was able to lean into the whole experience.

The survey didn't work for me. The questions that were asked weren't really pertinent. Especially the question about the Trinity. Why was it asked? We are a trinitarian people. A question on my mind is:

When new people walk into our sanctuary do they see Catholic? When I walk in I see Protestant. If we wish to attract, say, young, fallen away Catholics who want to experience a non-weaponized version of Catholicism but still love the traditional version of the liturgy, but walk into our space and don't see a crucifix, what do they think?

I think that we need to walk the walk when it comes to the ECC Mission. Are we ant-racist? Then let's make a statement for the world to see. Are we pro-choice? Then let's make a statement. The ELCA has a thoughtful, nuanced statement about abortion that I think is worth looking at.

### **Linda Joyce LOC**

Good experience for a newbie (someone who has not been to Synod). This experience gives me a bigger picture of the ECC.

Lots of diversity in churches and people - great to hear the discussions.

Learned how ECC is structure and works, although this session did not have any legislation to review.

Speakers were great - the diversity of topics was very good - some spiritual and some pragmatic.

Thank to Bishop Pablo for leading the effort. I especially enjoyed the 'find your twin' on Friday. I came wanting to interact with people from different churches and areas - but found that a little hard. The 'find your twin' was a fun way to meet a new friend.

**My name is Linda Land-Closson**, and I don't yet know many of you because I am so new to the ECC. Prior to the synod, the couple of times I attended service here and a few conversations with Bishop Pablo were my only knowledge points, so I wanted to know and experience more. What follows are some of my synodal experiences in dialogue with today's readings.

While I read the introductory section to the NT book from which our second reading comes today—the book of Hebrews—I was struck by this description: “The author saw the addressees in danger of apostasy from their Christian faith. This danger was due not to any persecution from outsiders but to a weariness with the demands of Christian life and a growing indifference to their calling.” Best scholarly guesses are that the author of Hebrews was alive around the time of Paul, so not too long after the life of Christ. I find myself astounded that people alive so early in this movement already felt weary about living the Christian life. From almost 2,000 years on, the simplicity and humility called for in the Gospels seem so much closer at hand, so much more accessible than they do now. But clearly they struggled.

Weariness is real. It was real and it is real. This life to which we are called—a life of contemplation, discernment, and action—is hard work. It's holy work, but it's hard, and the rewards seem few and far between. So how and why do we keep going?

The Gospel reading today reminds us that we keep going by retaining our humanity—by making mistakes (like asking to be seated at Christ's right or left side)—and by being together differently. Unfortunately (and fortunately), we have no choice but to keep being our insecure and wounded selves, but through love in these different forms of relationship and community, we can also challenge ourselves to turn our fears and wounds into acts of service instead of defenses. Together we have the

possibilities to face, persist through, and transform (but not transcend) our humanness and the weariness that can come with being human.

During the synod, I witnessed people trying to be together differently. I heard frustrations rise and fingers point during our visioning session, *and* I heard a priest interject a call to grace and generosity by asking that we presume the best of each other. I witnessed iterations of the lived Gospel ranging from small house churches that don't want to grow to large, international and vibrant communities, *and* I witnessed people openly debating whether there are right and wrong ways to live the Gospel in community. I heard fear and confusion about the future of the ECC summed up in the question of whether we are an experiment that has seen its time, *and*, I heard resilience, faith, and commitment in the face of the unknowns. At the synod, I encountered people doing the hard, daily work of being together differently, of living with vulnerability, authenticity, courage, love, faith, and, importantly, imperfection. My post-synod prayer is that the ECC will remain committed to doing this transformational and sacred work, together.

### **Irene Yap LOC**

This was my very first Synod. I really enjoyed meeting ECC folks from all over the country and learning how our communion works. I appreciated both the key note speakers, the round table discussions and the social events.

Did not enjoy the meals in the big dining room. Loved the "private" ECC dinner and wished all meals were like that.

Also loved the evening small group prayers and the "social" events . It was a good experience organizing the on-site transportation, it gave me an opportunity to get to know folks more than just a "hi"

Not sure if I can attend the 2026 Synod. But the 2024 was a wonderful experience for me.

### **Jean Christen MOM**

It was uplifting to share ideas and experiences with people from all over the U.S. who have a similar desire for an all-inclusive Catholic church informed by Vatican II. All of us are searching for the spark of the Divine through the principles and ideas of the Ecumenical Catholic Church. I was very impressed by the speakers, especially Chris Pramuk, whose mysticism was evident in his amazing talk in which he said, "Mysticism is the fire of God burning within us. The future Christian will be a mystic." Bishop Pablo did a great job of getting us to mingle, get to know someone new, and share our spirituality. He also showcased some of the positive things happening in the ECC. Fr. Ricky Manolo gave very practical ideas on improving our liturgies through media. I very much enjoyed the morning and evening prayer sessions, and the Sunday Mass was amazing.

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understand it was very different this time). I was hoping for some real concrete ideas of how to grow our church membership, but it seems no one has any answers right now. I believe we must pray and rely on the Holy Spirit. All in all, it was a very positive experience, and one I hope more people get a chance to attend in the future.

**Linda P COB**

Here are some take aways from my presence at the Synod!

The Synod was opened with the song, "Open my eyes Lord, open my ears, Lord, Open my heart, Lord. open ourselves to see God's Face, open my ears, help me to hear Your voice, open my heart Lord, help me to Love like You. A quote from Cynthia Beaugault in her new book, "Come inside with yourself and be conscious, rather than outside and reflecting on self." For me "Passing the Torch," within the ECC, we are called to open our senses, our hearts and be present to our God within and live our life within and live our life as God sees us and then be God's Love to all we come in contact with. This, for me is passing the Torch.

Dr Christopher Pramuk, spoke of the "Power within our Powerlessness," This is the "Christian of the Future," he stated. Our powerlessness in the world is what opens us to know and live within the Power of God's Love within ourselves and others. By the way, Bartimaeus, after his healing, did not go on his own way, he stayed with Jesus and followed Jesus' Way!

## **Appendix D—Ecumenical Engagement Report for RMRC 12 05 2024**

submitted 12/02/2024 by Fr. Michael Nicosia

### **KEY POINTS and ACTION ITEMS in red below**

#### **REGIONAL & NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS**

Updated Oct. and Nov. minutes with edits

Participated in Regional Pastors' Friday prayers.

Participated in monthly Ecumenical Study Group; seem more open to honoring the diversity of our church roots, i.e., Old Catholic, Vatican II Catholics, Anglo Catholics, et al.

Attended monthly ECC Chaplains meeting.

Holy conversations with Jane and +Kae 11/14.

Initial conversations with Dignity attendee discerning priestly vocation.

Attended Denver's Trans Day of Remembrance Service 11/20.

Attended Teri's Dissertation presentation 11/21.

Composed blurb (with +Kae's edits) for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service for CCC Dec. newsletter per Adrian's request.

Presided at StP 11/9(Zoom),23,30; MoM 11/24.

**COLORADO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES—11/27 meeting**

**GATHERING THOUGHTS: 'Mid demons and angels we give thanks'**

**NEW OFFICE: 2201 Dexter St, Denver CO 80207**

## FUNDRAISING

- Easter Sunrise Service “asks” underway
- Colorado Gives Day, December 10th

## EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

- [C2 Mass Choir for worship service music](#); first time paying musicians, Adrian believing good music elicits more contributions

## PROPOSED 2025 PROGRAM PLAN

Program activities listed below are ranked according to priority during that particular quarter.

### First Quarter

#### Ecumenical

- Absalom Jones Day collaboration with Colorado Episcopal Diocese and African Methodist Episcopal Church (Feb. 15 tentatively)
- Easter Sunrise Service at Red Rocks preparation, fundraising, and hosting
- Lenten—pastor resiliency program, looking into resources
- Denominational Leader Gathering
- Quarterly communications meeting

#### Social Justice

- Voices for Justice primary focus on “Yes in My Backyard” legislation
- Reflection on the first 100 days of Trump Administration—hybrid  
What’s our role if Operation Aurora happens? Denver?  
Who’s being left out? Draw awareness to the most vulnerable.

### Second Quarter

#### Ecumenical

- Church Educator Gatherings—plan for young people event
- Easter Sunrise Service at Red Rocks preparation, fundraising, and hosting
- Lenten series collaboration
- Pentecost video from denominational leaders

#### Social Justice

- Voices for Justice primary focus on “Yes in My Backyard” legislation
- Reflection on the first 100 days of Trump Administration (alternate date)

### Third Quarter

#### Ecumenical

- America 250/Colorado 150 birthday event pre-planning (2026)
- Save Green, Be Green Conference on Energy Efficiency
- Rural Colorado Outreach
- Teen/Young Adult Mental Health Summit—hybrid program

#### Social Justice

- Congregational Housing
- Public Policy Statement re-draft

### Fourth Quarter

#### Ecumenical

- America 250/Colorado 150 event pre-planning
- Caffeinated Church Communications Conference—encourage denominational participation
- Denominational leader gathering
- Eco-Justice Conference—Iliff School of Theology
- Prophetically Reimagining the Church Conference
- Rural Colorado Outreach

- Teen/Young Adult Mental Health Summit (alternate date)
- Social Justice**
- Congregational Housing Outreach
  - Public Policy Statement re-draft
  - Prep for 2026

#### NOMINATE 2025 OFFICERS

- Chair—Roland for 1 yr
- will need nominations for Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary  
**(Michael’s replacement on the Board might consider stepping into a role)**

#### WEBSITE UPDATE

- Board member photos on website?
- Icon review

#### PROGRAM UPDATES

- YIMBY—Yes in My Backyard! Housing Legislation
- WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2025—NICOSIA UPDATE
- GOV. POLIS TOXIC POLARIZATION EVENT ON 12/3
- THISSPACE is folding; not enough buy-in
- [INTERFAITH ENCOUNTER ASSOCIATION](#) EARLY-STAGE ALZHEIMER’S/DEMENTIA

#### NEXT MEETING—DECEMBER MEETING—12/11

## Appendix E—Regional Assessments

*Sample letter to those invited to participate in an assessment in the effectiveness of the Rocky Mountain region of the ECC.*

Dear Leaders of the Ecumenical Catholic Communities of the Rocky Mountain Region,

Over the past five years, our five communities have initiated and implemented significant change. In March of 2020, we affirmed a new constitution and a procedure for calling a local Bishop. Upon that affirmation we immediately began the process of calling our first Bishop, and on (Date) the Reverend Kae Madden was consecrated the first Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.

As a part of the process of calling a bishop, a job description was written. It is a comprehensive list of all of the things a fully staffed Office of a Local Church might be responsible for doing. Due to resource limitations, our first bishop’s role is necessarily limited to part time work with very limited human resource support provided primarily by those on the Rocky Mountain Regional Council and our Vicar for Ecumenical Affairs, Fr Michael Nicosia. So, a big challenge has been one of prioritizing the work to fit within the resources available and assuring that the most critical work gets done.

As Bishop Kae has reached the midpoint of her 6 year term of office, she has asked the RMRC for a simple mid-term assessment. After discussion between Bishop Kae, Vicar Michael and all of the Regional Council members, we determined that the whole construct of Region; Bishop, Vicar, and Council; should be assessed by the communities we support. This assessment consists of addressing three simple questions:

- Are we doing the right things?

- Are we doing them well?
- Are there other important things we are not doing, but should be doing?

Bishop Kae's priorities include the following activities:

- Being a pastor and spiritual leader to the clergy of the region
- Representing the Communities of the region on the ECC Council of Bishops
- Being the regional face of the ECC to political and religious leaders of all faiths; and at times to local media outlets when world or regional events require a statement or response. Examples:
  - Death of Pope Benedict
  - Club Q killings
  - Hamas attack on Israel of October 7
- Ecumenical Engagement \*Bishop Kae has named Fr. Michael Nicosia as her Vicar to address this very large piece of work. Much of this work is with the Colorado Council of Churches and is shared between Bishop Kae and Fr. Michael.
- Being the spiritual and sacramental leader of the region especially in regards to Confirmation and Holy Orders
- Call and preside over local Synods and other gatherings of the people.
- Being friend and special advisor to the Presiding Bishop
- And to always pray for all of the above.

The Regional Council Responsibilities are as follows:

- Represents their local community to the region.
- Informs their community of all Regional activity
- Provides resources when required to support regional events
- Helps plan and execute regional synods
- Acts as an Office to the Local Bishop

The Vicar of Ecumenical Engagement Priorities are as follows:

- Represents the Region and Local Bishop to a variety of Ecumenical Organizations
- Is the Region's registered member to the Colorado Council of Church's (CCC)
- Keeps the Regional Council informed about activities and issues concerning several marginalized groups important to our region and the ECC as a whole.

Your RMRC representative and Pastor are offering you an opportunity to respond. Please provide a written response on the form provided and return it to your RMRC council representative who will consolidate the responses from your community. Your response will be held in confidence. In addressing the questions, we encourage you to expand your answers with qualitative and quantitative comments as appropriate. Providing examples would also be helpful.

We are hopeful to have all the responses by **(due date)**.

+++