

COORDINATING COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT TO PRESBYTERY

September 28-29, 2018

Over the past year, the Coordinating Council worked through a book by Ruth Haley Barton titled *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*. This book helped us begin building a foundation for our discussions and decisions—a foundation that is centered on God's will and not on our own. The book also aided us in discussing how we might function in a healthier way.

This discussion led to a Coordinating Council retreat that was held last May. The result of that retreat is a document titled "The Holy Manners of the Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of Mackinac." This is a covenantal document adopted by the coordinating council that guides how we function together. Each member of the coordinating council has affirmed and agreed to this covenant and it is the expectation that any incoming members to the council do the same. It is a living document and so is intended to be examined, discussed, and recommitted to, each and every year. "The Holy Manners" is posted as a meeting document so the presbytery sees the commitment the coordinating council members are making to each other.

The Coordinating Council has also been diligently working with the Synod Administrative Commission. They led us in discussions and discernment about their preliminary report and then came to the August coordinating council meeting to discuss and answer any questions about the adopted report. The Commission that we worked with has now been officially disbanded by the Synod of the Covenant. However, an Administrative Committee has been formed to walk with the coordinating council and presbytery as we work at implementing the directives and recommendations included in the report. When the report was presented to the synod on August 3, 2018, I, as coordinating council chair, was able to offer a response to the report on behalf of the coordinating council and I want to share some of what I said:

I, and the entire coordinating council, wish to express our deepest thanks to the members of the Administrative Commission. With grace and thoughtfulness, they came into a presbytery in which fear, anxiety, and tension were high. We are grateful for the way they handled the beginning of our relationship together, as they made a vital commitment to communication and openness. They earned our trust. The entirety of the council voted to officially express our support for the process the AC has taken and order the minutes of that meeting reflect that this action was approved without dissent.

The Coordinating Council stands with and supports the work of the Administrative Commission. While individuals may disagree with specific points in the report, the council has found the report to be fair and accurate. It is the council's hope the presbytery will also support the work and findings of the AC so that we all may work together in seeking the way forward.

The Coordinating Council has **two recommendations for the presbytery to vote on:**

- 1 – The Council recommends to the presbytery the changes to the Presbytery's Manual of Operations, 1.05 *Membership of the Presbytery*. These changes are posted as a meeting document.**
- 2 – The Coordinating Council recommends to the presbytery approval for First Presbyterian Church of Boyne City to encumber property up to \$30,000.**

Finally, on a more personal note, I want to express my deepest thanks to all the members of the Coordinating Council for their commitment and work over the past year. Making adjustments, discerning what is next, and seeking the way forward, are not easy things to do and I appreciate all the time, energy, and effort that have been dedicated to those tasks. I also want to say a word of thanks to the presbytery. I continue to be honored and humbled that you elected me to these positions of leadership in the presbytery. It has been a joy to serve with so many of you through these challenging situations and discernment discussions. I will miss seeing where this period of discernment leads you. If you have not yet heard, I have accepted a call to pastor First Presbyterian Church in Corning, Iowa, which means I will be leaving the presbytery. I will continue to hold all of you in prayer. Thank you again for your support and encouragement of my leadership.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jessica Paulsen