

SYNOD COMMISSIONERS REPORT

November 2018

The Synod met November 2-3, 2018 in Toledo, Ohio. Johanna Jozwiak presided. The Rev. Aaron Meadows was elected Moderator and the Rev. Pat Megregian, Vice Moderator for 2019.

Synod Executive the Rev. Rafaat Zaki reminded us that we are focusing on being a Just Peace church. During the last year, we hosted International Mission Partners (IMPs), voted to welcome all refugees (not just those from Syria and Iraq as before), hosted 30 Mobile Health Fairs that served over 1000 people, and focused on Muslim-Christian relations. We have a \$100,000 budget, allocated in 2015, for welcoming refugees. \$100,000 was allocated for grants and scholarships to college and seminary students.

Special speakers at the meeting from the U.S., Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka gave a seminar on Muslim-Christian relations. We were reminded that there are more Muslims in Indonesia alone, the largest Muslim country, than in the entire Middle East. Indonesia also has the most Reformed Christians in the world. American Bernie Adeney-Risakotta, who teaches at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, and his wife Farsajana Adeney-Risakotta, faculty member at Duta Wacana Christian University, talked about their work among women and farmers. Indonesians, they said, believe that all religions believe in the same God. They wrote a Christian-Muslim Tool Kit for Presbyterian Women.

Dr. Nosheen Khan, the first female seminary president in over 100 years in Pakistan, said the church is not allowed to proselytize. Accusations of blasphemy occur. Her seminary is closed right now due to threats. Most church members are in the Punjab and are former Hindus.

Rev. Samaan Perera heads a theological college in Sri Lanka, a majority Buddhist country. Muslim-Christian relations there are not a big issue. However, in times of tension, minorities are often targeted.

Rev. John Hira said Christians comprise only 1% of Bangladesh's population. Christians are sometimes targets of fundamentalist groups.

Next year's focus of Synod meetings will be on Africa.

Synod Stated Clerk David Bartley reported that the Synod is developing a child and youth protection policy.

Synod finances are in good shape despite declining revenues. Synod staff will receive a 2% increase, the first in several years. The Per Capital rate, per a Synod vote remains the same for 2019.

Our presbytery received a \$10,000 New Covenant Funds grant for Radical Hospitality to the Chronically Homeless. We were not aware of the exact ministry being served or applicants. See next page.

This is important for the effective operation of the Presbytery of Mackinac.

Lois Aroian and I attend the recent (Nov 2-3) Synod meeting and were blind sided by a request from the Presby of Mac. for a \$10,000 grant from the Synod's New Covenant Grants for:

Radical Hospitality for the Chronically Homeless (Mackinac Presbytery)	\$10,000
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Lois and I were asked what was" Radical Hospitality", etc.,,, neither of us had a clue... and we are the duly authorized commissioners to Synod.

The Grants and Scholarships Committee gave the Mac. Request favorable response and the assembly accepted the report.

**At Today's (11-3) meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee, Presby. of Mac. No one knew of this \$ request, who, what, paper work, etc?
(Council's minutes show nothing of this request).**

And I assume the funds from Synod's check will come *directly* to the Presby office and be recorded as *income* from Synod for this cause?

I also assume that *disbursements* to this cause flow through the proper Committee and their budget line items?

I have ask the Synod treasurer / committee head to forward to me, and Chair Rev Dr Hebert, the application for the Grant.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Aroian, Clergy Commissioner

Michael Stoll, Elder Commissioner