

July 6, 2017

TO: All Entities and Individuals of the Presbytery of Mackinac

RE: Information about Synod Action

As moderator of the presbytery, one of my goals has been and continues to be that the presbytery is informed of what is happening. My goal is that my actions as moderator, and actions taken that affect the presbytery, are clearly understood by the presbytery.

On June 13, 2017, the Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of Mackinac was informed that the Synod of the Covenant had called a special assembly, to be held by conference call on June 28, 2017, in which to consider a motion to put an Administrative Commission in place of the Coordinating Council. This assembly and motion were in direct response to 4 or 5 letters the synod had received from members of our presbytery. The call to the assembly stated, "there has been expressed concern about the functioning of the Council, the ability of members to work together, changes in leadership including the recent resignation of the Presbytery Treasurer John Fought, loud outbursts, aggressive behavior and threatening emails".

The Coordinating Council held a previously scheduled called meeting on June 20, 2017 and Chair Steve Asher invited Synod Executive Rev. Raafat Zaki to attend. During this meeting, many members of the council expressed great concern over the synod's actions and sought greater clarification from Rev. Zaki. Also, at this meeting, the council elected me, as the moderator of the presbytery, to be their representative during the upcoming conference call.

On June 28, 2017, the Synod of the Covenant met by conference call and while not approving the motion to put an AC in place of the Council, did approve the following motions:

MOVED: That the Synod of the Covenant establish an Administrative Commission with the following charge:

1. To inquire into allegations of disorder in the Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of Mackinac, and to settle the difficulties therein, to include:
 - a. Investigating allegations of disorder in the Council and Presbytery, providing all parties fair notice and opportunity to be heard on the matters at issue;
 - b. Exercising administrative review over any irregularities in the work of the Coordinating Council or the Presbytery that may be discovered in the course of the investigation;
 - c. Recommending to the Coordinating Council, the Presbytery, and/or the Synod changes and steps that may be necessary toward furthering the peace, purity, and unity of the Church, and to ensure the health and functionality of the Coordinating Council and Presbytery;
 - d. Assisting the Coordinating Council in discerning future directions for the Presbytery that will assist and support "the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness" (G-3.0301).

2. To make determination and recommendation to the Synod whether to assume full or partial original jurisdiction of Presbytery, if after a thorough investigation, it concludes that the Presbytery or its Coordinating Council is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs.

MOVED: That the members of the Administrative Commission be:

Ruling Elder Ruth Azar, The Presbytery of Detroit;
Teaching Elder Margie Osborn, The Presbytery of Lake Michigan;
Teaching Elder Jim Pollard, Presbytery of Lake Michigan;
Teaching Elder Dan Saperstein, Presbytery of Lake Huron;
Ruling Elder Andy Thorburn, Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

It will be staffed by Synod Stated Clerk David Bartley and Synod Executive Raafat Zaki.

This Administrative Commission has been officially formed and charged with the work they are to do. Now, you may be wondering what happens next. As this point, we continue to function as the Presbytery of Mackinac, moving forward with our mission and visioning discussions and what our goals are for the coming years. The answer to what comes next is the responsibility of the newly formed Administrative Commission. We will continue our work as we wait and see what unfolds. All Coordinating Council members will be kept fully informed of all communications between the presbytery and the synod regarding this matter. As moderator, my goal is to keep the presbytery fully informed as major steps are taken along the way. This may include but will not be limited to: information on meetings and reports that are filed, where we are at in the process, and how things will continue to move forward. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or e-mail me or the Stated Clerk Kay Morrill. Our contact information is included at the end of this letter.

I understand that your first reaction to this news may not be pleasant. It is a difficult situation but is in order with our Presbyterian polity. It is my hope that you will support me, Vice-Moderator Richard Wissell, Council Chair Steve Asher, and the entire Coordinating Council, as we work through this process. I firmly believe that God continues to be with us and guiding us in our discussions and decisions. I ask that you keep the presbytery, the synod, and the Administrative Commission in prayer. We are all working together to seek resolution to this situation.

Grace and Peace,

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