

Minutes for the First Regular Synod of the Missionary Diocese of the Central States of
the Reformed Episcopal Church
25 September, 2008

The Rt. Rev. Daniel Morse, Missionary Bishop, Presiding
The Venerable Douglas Mills, Archdeacon
The Rev. Canon Scott Houser, Canon
The Rev. Franklin Sanders, Treasurer
The Rev. Daniel Thomas, Secretary

Bp. Morse opened the meeting with prayer.

Bp. Morse began his opening remarks by saying he has not done these kinds of meetings before and may leave things out. He will try to cover the bases, but if he forgets, he asks that someone please raise their hand and remind him. He is not following Robert's Rules of Order. He is, however, trying to be efficient.

Bp. Morse introduced the visitors to the Synod.

Bp. Morse went over the schedule for the meeting.

For the first order of business, Bp. Morse gave the Bishop's Report (which see).

He gave a report on the purchase of his new house (which see) located at 511 Rochelle Dr., Nashville, TN 37220.

Bp. Morse next introduced Fr. Randy Uselton, newly ordained, who will pastor the Cathedral in the Nashville area.

Bp. Morse said one of his main concerns has been to bring in new churches in Virginia into the Diocese so he has made numerous visits there. He said he was saddened to have had to close Christ Church in Abingdon, VA. The assets of the church have been given to the Diocese to be used as needed. The former pastor, Chori Seraiah will be the new vicar of St. Michael's REC Mission.

Bp. Morse next made some book and movie recommendations (which see). For Books, he recommended: the *Space Trilogy* by C.S. Lewis; *Richard Hooker: Anglican Prophet*; *How To Become A Bishop Without Being Religious* by Smith; *Genesis Beginning Wisdom* by Kass. For movies, he recommended: *Tender Mercies* and *The Apostle* with Robert Duvall; *Heavens Above* and *Being There* with Peter Sellers.

Bp. Morse followed this by reading a letter from Fr. Robert Neeb. He could not attend the Synod due to his wife's ill health. Bp. Morse wanted to have prayer for Fr. Neeb and his wife. He also had a letter from Canon Frye, whose wife has not recovered from surgery and will have another as a result.

Bp. Morse led in prayer for these needs.

This concluded the Episcopal Report.

Motion made to accept it. Motion carried.

Bp. Morse next read greetings from the Rt. Rev. Royal U. Grote.

The next order of business was to elect a secretary. The motion was made by Fr. Douglas Mills to elect Fr. Daniel Thomas. The motion was amended by Fr. Scott Houser to make

this a permanent position. The motion carried. Fr. Daniel Thomas will be permanent Secretary of the Diocese.

The following order of business was to adopt the minutes of the last, and founding, meeting. The motion was made to adopt the minutes without being read. The motion carried.

The next order of business was the Finance Committee Report (which see) by Fr. Peter Manto. He requested to finalize the budget for 2009 and send it by email. He stated the Committee will be ready by the Synod from now on, but only had 9 months this time.

He said he would not go line by line through the report.

Each parish must give a 10% tithe to the Diocese as this is the life blood of the Diocese. He asked that giving be monthly.

It is the responsibility of the parish to pay for Episcopal visits. The Treasurer can send the parish a bill after the visit.

Fr. Franklin Sanders, the Treasurer, went over the Profit and Loss Statement for October 2007 through September 2008. He stated that many of the expenses were non-recurring because they were incurred during the setting up of the Diocese.

The Diocese gets about \$7,100.00 per month in tithes on average, thus far. This is lower than the expectations of the Council of Bishops. There is a \$1,500.00 shortfall for September.

The checking account for paying the Insurance Company has not been set up and the checks for the Bishop's insurance bounced. This has been rectified as churches responded with donations. Christ Church will have given \$20,000.00.

The budget will be about \$85,200.00 per year, as of now. The money will come from the tithes and the \$16,000.00 REC Sustentation.

He stated this is not a reckless budget and he will give a final budget by December via email.

Parishes that do not tithe 10% will not be allowed delegates.

The Question was raised by Fr. Longmire as to whether there were any recommendations. Fr. Franklin stated that we only needed to adopt the budget.

Fr. Longmire made the Motion to adopt the recommendation and report and that this council authorize the Standing Committee to adopt a budget on its behalf. The Motion was seconded and carried.

Motion was made by Fr. Mills to adjourn for lunch. Motion carried.

The Trustees met and state that they feel we should adopt the budget as presented. The amount of expenses will probably be less.

Fr. Franklin Sanders made a Motion that we adopt the budget presented. This was seconded by Fr. Scott Houser.

The question was asked if it is only the budget. The answer was affirmative.

Andy Figueroa recommended adjusting the budget based on Fr. Sander's best judgment. Fr. Sanders replied that the only way was to increase income. It was recommended that we adjust the budget so there is no deficit, not an actual deficit, but

only an operating deficit. Andy Figueroa said it is not a good precedent to start with a planned deficit.

The Motion was made to amend budget with an additional income line for \$10,000.00 from funds. The vote was made by raise of hands. The motion failed by one vote.

The vote was taken on the budget as presented. The budget passed.

The next order of business was Fr. Rodney Longmire on the adoption of the Canons.

Floor was opened for discussion on the Constitution and Canons. Fr. Houser stated it seemed that mostly redundancies that were stricken out. Fr. Longmire responded in the affirmative adding “mostly.”

The question was asked if Bishop Suffragans and Assistant Bishops were members of committees and the Council. Fr. Longmire replied that they are since all bishops are suffragan but the Ordinary and all are presbyters.

Page 4: It was pointed out that there needs to be a complete sentence. Perhaps we need to add “may elect...” and add “shall be seated as voting members of the Council.”

Fr. Mills asked where the section on delegates to the Synod is. Andy Figueroa responded that Synod is synonymous with Council.

Regarding page 4, Fr. Longmire stated that each parish will have two delegates until the parish reaches 150 members and then the number will be rounded up to the nearest 100. Therefore, for example, 151 members gains an additional delegate.

Fr. Peter Manto raised a question as to discipline in the Constitution.

The answer to the question of discipline was that it may be made an addendum after some study.

Fr. Mills raised the concern that there needs to be something to safeguard against parishes that are not tithing and appointing delegates. Also, he said new parishes need to know what is expected.

The question was raised as to how we were meeting and the Bishop responded that we were meeting as a Committee of the Whole.

5 of 30, Section 8:

Fr. Daniel Thomas raised the concern about small parishes, which was echoed by Fr. Houser. Fr. Houser stated that 10% might be too much for smaller parishes. He would agree if provision was made for them.

Bp. Morse clarified mission works and those who have lost church status due to decline. These do not need to meet the same standards.

Fr. Sanders stated that to fail to tithe is a lack of faith and borders on apostasy. God said that if we give 10% he will open is storehouse.

Fr. Longmire said provision has been made wherein that if the Bishop is aware of a hardship in a church he can deal with it personally and the parish not loose a delegate.

Fr. Manto stated that if anyone is going to decide how a diocese spends then they must also pay for it.

Fr. Franklin stated that only regular offerings and not special or designated offerings or gifts were to be tithed.

Bp. Morse stated that presbyters are members of the diocese by virtue of being presbyters. It is helpful that the house of clergy are only those active in ministry to avoid having many more inactive clergy determining the direction of the Diocese.

Andy Figueroa said that Section 3 is inconsistent with delegate terminology.

Guy Duke said his parish, St. Simon's, went from 34 adults to 9. He stated their hearts are in the right place and they want to vote, but they cannot afford to tithe normally.

Fr. Longmire stated that was why the language about credentials was made so the Bishop can give credentials to remedy situations like that. There is no law without mercy.

Fr. Houser said there is a problem when a parish that can tithe but doesn't so that provision will take care of it.

Section 3 page 4 needed to have "voting member" inserted.

It was noted that Page 13 of 30 appeared to put committees as that was most consistent. The committee was requested to renumber the canons.

Article 6 page 5: It was pointed out that some employers are required to give employees time off for religious purposes. This section gives employees something to point to so as to get time off from work to come to Synod or Council.

16 of 30: It was needful to appoint delegates to the General Council according to the provisions of the Reformed Episcopal Church since we are a missionary diocese.

Bp. Morse stated that we have 3 delegates.

Skip stated that it did not mean a diocese that had been newly formed from existing churches.

Fr. Camlin said he had been told all of us had been grandfathered in and he had no problem registering his delegates to the General Council.

Bp. Morse stated he was going to appoint 4 lay delegates to represent this diocese since there are currently only 2000 members in the Diocese.

Fr. Longmire clarified that this would be for the General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Fr. Longmire said that when we received the provisional canons, on page 9 the BNCE does not exist any longer so they had to come up with the intent. They did not want to do away with the provision.

Page 27 on the Duty of the Rector to do away with all light and unseemly music: It was asked if it could be clarified what "light" was. The response was, "no."

Andy Figueroa recommended the language about delegates be standardized.

Fr. Longmire said they would do so.

Andy Figueroa pointed out that Canons 3 and 5 the use of Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and Rector's Warden, People's Warden needs to be consistent.

Fr. Longmire said Section D language was meant to be flexible enough so that if parishes have practices consistent with REC practice that this will not interfere with them. This section is merely the default position.

It was pointed out that Title 4:3 page 29, “lay readers” seemed to be redundant.

Skip had a question on Page 8, Section 1, Letter a. He asked why Roberts Rules of Order was for 1876 placed there.

Fr. Longmire said the reason was that the copy right had expired and we can print it, download it for free, and it is short.

The motion was made by Fr. Camlin to receive the Constitution and Canons, with provision that the committee change the language and other amendments. The motion was seconded.

Bp. Morse said to include in the motion a commendation for Fr. Longmire for his hard work.

The motion carried.

Bp. Morse recessed to get set up for Evening prayer.