

Synod of Lakes and Prairies **meeting summary**



Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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May 11, 2016

Spring Meeting - Synod of Lakes and Prairies - Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center - Farmington, Minnesota - May 1-3, 2016.

The Synod Meeting Summary is an unofficial report of synod actions published shortly after each meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Comments regarding the publication or requests for copies should be addressed to dsweep@lakesandprairies.org.

Synod installs 3 leaders during spring meeting

Fern M. Cloud, a ruling elder from the Presbytery of Dakota, and Greg Braatz, a ruling elder from Winnebago Presbytery, were installed as moderator and vice moderator when the Synod of Lakes and Prairies met May 1-3 near Farmington, Minn.

The synod also installed the Rev. Pam Prouty, a teaching elder from the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, as its stated clerk.

Cloud is a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Oyate and a great-great granddaughter of TaOyateDuta, better known as Chief Little Crow of the Dakota people.

She has served as a commissioned ruling elder at Pejuhutazizi Dakota Presbyterian Church, Upper Sioux Community, in Granite Falls, Minn., since March 2004.

Braatz, a 30-year member of Memorial Presbyterian Church in Appleton, Wis., serves on Winnebago Presbytery's permanent judicial commission.

Braatz retired last year after spending 29 years with Kimberly-Clark Corp. in various marketing and sales-support roles. He currently serves part time with Memorial Presbyterian as a commissioned ruling elder for spiritual formation and outreach.

Prouty, who also serves as the stated clerk for the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, began serving as the synod's stated clerk Jan. 1, following her election last fall.

Prouty brings 15 years of past and current experience as a stated clerk, is a member of the national Association of Stated Clerks, and has served as a General Assembly committee parliamentarian for the 2012 and 2014 Assemblies.



Fern Cloud



Greg Braatz



Pam Prouty

Find synod info online

You can find the Synod of Lakes and Prairies online at lakesandprairies.org and you can also find the synod on Facebook. If you use Twitter, please follow [@lakesandprairies](https://twitter.com/lakesandprairies).

SDOP issues \$15,000 grant to Bountiful Gardens

The Self Development of People Committee of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies awarded a \$15,000 grant to a north Minneapolis project.

The grant supports The Bountiful Gardens, a community garden that creates fresh produce for consumption and saleable cosmetic products for a cooperative of women.

The SDOP committee is preparing to participate in a recertification training session this summer. Certification is a three-year cycle that authorizes SDOP committees to receive, review and approve funding to community groups. The synod committee has invited SDOP committees from the presbyteries of Northern Waters, Minnesota Valleys and Twin Cities Area to participate in the recertification training.

Synod PW gathers in Sioux Falls this summer

The Gathering of Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies takes place June 15-18 in Sioux Falls, S.D.

For those who haven't received a registration booklet — which contains all the necessary registration information — it is available on the synod's website.

Commissioners introduced to new synod employees

Two new synod employees were introduced to commissioners during the spring meeting — Deb DeMeester and Alex DeVeyra.

DeMeester, introduced as the acting director of leadership development, was later voted to become the full-time director of leadership development when the synod's personnel committee made that recommendation.

DeMeester, a teaching elder, served many years as associate executive presbyter for leadership development for the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and has led a graduate leadership program at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

She began her part-time service with the synod in February and will begin serving in a full-time capacity no later than June 15.

DeVeyra, who began serving Feb. 1 as the synod's director of financial services, brings extensive accounting experience to the position. He most recently worked at the Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center in St. Paul, and he has also worked for Boeser Inc. of Minneapolis, a private corporation in the manufacturing sector.



Deb DeMeester



Alex DeVeyra

Synod issues \$3,000 grant to 'Faith and Friends' program at St. Cloud church

Acting on a recommendation of the synod's Ecclesiastical Relations Committee, commissioners approved a \$3,000 grant for First Presbyterian Church in St. Cloud, Minn., that will fund a UKirk project at St. Cloud State University.

In applying for the grant, First Presbyterian noted the church "seeks to transform its Faith and Friends college outreach program ... into a significant UKirk program."

UKirk is the revisioned collegiate ministries program of the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Lindh tells of Pres Homes' mission, growth

Dan Lindh, president and CEO of Presbyterian Homes and Services of Roseville, Minn., looked back on 60 years of history when he addressed the synod during its spring meeting May 2.

Lindh said Pres Homes served nearly 26,000 older adults during 2015 — more than 13,000 "under roof" — and plans to "double in scope and reach of services" in the next 15 years.

Pres Homes is in covenant with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

Synod budgets more than \$270,000 to presbytery support

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies committed more than \$270,000 in its 2017 budget for Comprehensive Presbytery Support, and slated an additional \$23,165 to support the mission and ministry of Dakota Presbytery.

The budget for Comprehensive Presbytery Support is split evenly among 15 of the presbyteries that make up the synod. Each is budgeted at \$18,225.

The synod's support budget for Dakota Presbytery is different because it has been declining 15 percent annually based on an action by the synod in 2009. For 2017 the budget for Dakota Presbytery support is \$23,165.

The synod's Program Coordination Committee, which annually develops the synod's budget, noted in its report, "Our conversations centered around being intentional about what we are doing and how we are spending our money, and not just continuing past practices."

Synod raises per capita by 5 cents

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies approved a 5-cent increase in its 2017 per capita apportionment. The increase will raise the synod's share of per capita to \$5.30.

The per capita apportionment is based on the funds needed to carry out "essential ecclesiastical" work and church membership within the synod.

Declining membership across the synod contributed to the need to increase per capita. The 2017 per capita amount sought from each presbytery will be apportioned based on the total membership as of Dec. 31, 2015.

Finance Committee notes grants, loans

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies affirmed the work of its Finance Committee regarding loans and grants, and approved modifications to several loan terms. The synod approved ...

- a grant of \$4,750 to the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley for a presbytery-wide project titled "Church Vitality Program."
- an emergency assistance grant of \$3,888.88 for the Korean Presbyterian Church of Omaha, Neb.
- a six-month moratorium on loan payments for Presbyterian Church of the Master in Coon Rapids, Minn., and also approved a reduction in the interest rate to 3.8 percent
- a synod loan of \$125,000 for Discovery Presbyterian Church in Omaha. The loan will be amortized over 20 years at 3.8 percent interest for the first 10 years.
- a one-year moratorium on loan payments for Presbyterian Church of the Apostles in Burnsville, Minn.
- an addition to the synod loan of First Presbyterian Church of DePere, Wis., in the amount of \$50,000, amortized over seven years at 3.8 percent interest.
- an extension to a 30-year term, from a 20-year term, on the synod's loan for First Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Racial-Ethnic Ministry Committee issues scholarships, provides tribal college grants

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies through its Committee on Racial-Ethnic Ministry issued \$17,500 in student scholarships last fall.

Scholarships supported 10 students, representing seven colleges and universities.

Three seminaries were represented among the scholarship recipients.

Eligible scholarship recipients must be racial ethnic students whose permanent residence is within the bounds of the synod, active members in a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), enrolled at least half-time and in good academic standing, making progress toward a degree, and able to demonstrate financial need.

In addition, the committee issued \$200 grants to each of 10 tribal colleges: Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College of Cloquet, Minn.; Fort Peck Community College of Poplar, Mont.; Cankdeska Cikana Community College of Fort Totten, N.D.; Nebraska Indian Community College of Macy, Neb.; Oglala Lakota College of Kyle, S.D.; Sinte Gleska University of Mission, S.D.; Sisseton-Wahpeton Community College of Sisseton, S.D., Turtle Mountain Community College of Belcourt, N.D.; White Earth Tribal and Community College of Mahanomen, Minn.; and Lac Courte Oreilles Community

CREM approves up to \$10,000 for immigrant network training

The synod's Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry will partner with the national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Immigrant Issues to be hosts to an event for immigrant network training.

The training will provide Presbyterians who are working on or interested in immigration advocacy the opportunity to build connections to strengthen a denomination-wide network.

Slated Sept. 8-10 in St. Cloud, Minn., the conference will follow the guidelines of the national office to invite workshop leaders, agency advocates and planners.

The Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry has approved up to \$10,000 to support the conference. The financial support will be added to \$1,600 pledged from the national office.

Support from the national office will cover a portion of expenses, tools for coalition building, presenters and some staff support.

Street-Stewart reports on policy review, upcoming General Assembly

Synod Executive Elona Street-Stewart quoted from Galatians 6 when she presented her wide-reaching report to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at its spring meeting.

Galatians 6:9-10 states, in part, "So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith."

"Working together can be hard work," she said. And her report noted, "Our large synod provides service and support for ministry around the region and beyond. The review of the synod's policies and procedures reflects a significant effort to combine polity, talent, values, energy and vision in a group homework assignment."

Each synod committee has been assigned specific policies and procedures to review and rewrite as necessary, and Street-Stewart's report advised synod commissioners, "The clearer you can be about the issues, expectations, assumptions and effectiveness of the text, the more comprehensive the revision process will be for both the reader and practitioner."

All committees participating in the process are expected to have their revisions and rewrites completed by the fall meeting.

Street-Stewart also reported on the synods response to General Assembly's call to reduce the number of synods across the denomination, attaching the "all-synod final report" to the Assembly.

That report notes, "After careful and faithful consideration and research, the synods ... concluded that larger structures will have little, if any, positive impact on mission, ministry and partnership between presbyteries. It was also determined that the sheer enormity of such expansive synod boundaries as those being proposed would not facilitate the work of mid-councils, and would further restrict and limit the involvement and voice of racial and ethnic Presbyterians working with the current synod structure.

"It therefore is recommended that no changes be made to synod boundaries at this time."

An executive summary of individual synod responses to the General Assembly notes in the Lakes and Prairies section, "Two common areas of ministry in which the synods could be strong and effective working together are strengthening small and rural church ministry and engaging in issues of racism, oppression, [and] disenfranchisement of racial ethnic communities."

Those two areas of ministry and mission are also elements of a covenant among the synods of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails and Mid-America. The three synods approved that covenant last fall.



Elona Street-Stewart