



The executive council of the Ohio Mission Region met at St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City on Saturday, August 29, 2015.

Attending were: Don Allman, Don Karger, Paul Larson, Dan Powell, Paula Caso, Bill Maki, Jim Patrick, Bob Quaintance, and Paul Gruetter.

Ethel Briggs was not present, because her husband Chuck is quite ill. Paul Larson led us in prayer for Chuck and Ethel.

Convener Don Allman led devotions from Jeremiah 1-2. As Jeremiah is called to speak to God's people, the message God gives him includes the threat of destruction. Yet God is filled with hope and grace, as he remembers the days when God's people still put their trust in Him.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Gary Pecuch gave us an update on his work with youth ministry, on behalf of St. John's and the NALC. More information is available at www.faithwebbing.com. The site has about 5 pages right now. Developing soon will be a log-in section for your own access to resources.

Treasurer Don Karger gave the treasurer's report. As of July 31, our checking account balance was \$29,294.12. Year-to-date income (including the time we were still the Ohio Mission District) was \$7,062.91. Expenses for the same period were \$13,720.94. This includes the \$2,000 given to each of the new Mission Districts at their inception.

Bill Maki moved, Paul Larson seconded that the treasurer's report be approved. Motion passed.

Don Karger reminded us that congregations are to be sending their checks to their Mission District, not to the Ohio Mission Region. He is still receiving a few checks.

News from the Mission Districts was shared:

North Eastern Ohio Mission District

The District now has a checking account set up.

Heidi Holst will be ordained on Sunday, September 6 at 4:00 p.m. at Trinity, Ashland. Clergy are invited to vest and process. (Color of the day is red.)

North West Ohio Mission District

The District has completed the process of being legally established, and has a checking account set up.

Dean Bill Maki has been in conversation with a potential seminary student.

The District will be experimenting with online meetings for the district council.

North Central Ohio Mission District

Pastor Mike Greenler has accepted the call to serve St. Paul's, Bucyrus. He has already arrived, and will be installed in October.

Dean Paul Larson met with the Call Committee of Good Shepherd, Vickery. They discussed several options for the future of their ministry.

Southwest Ohio Mission District

Two congregations have recently installed pastors.

A Leadership Conference is scheduled for the Mission District this fall. Goals are to get acquainted, and to strengthen leadership in congregations. There will likely be break-out sessions on particular areas of ministries, as well as sharing of resources that are available to help with the challenges that congregations are facing.

As an example of shared ministry, Grace (Springfield) has purchased a Bible study series for women's ministry; it is available for use by the congregations of the district.

Dean Dan Powell commented that there is much mystery about what Deans do, what they are expected to do, and how they relate to congregations. He may write some web page articles for clarification.

The District Council will meet soon, and draft a working budget.

Southeast Ohio Mission District

Dean Don Allman expressed frustration at trying to organize and fill positions on the Southeast executive team, and what seems a lack of response from the pastors.

We shared reflections on the recently-completed NALC Convocation in Dallas. Among the comments shared were:

- The airport location kept us all in the hotel. The advantage of this was in fellowship, but the disadvantage was the inability to get around.
- We could have used more free time in the evenings.
- Could the Ohio people sit in the same area of the meeting room? Maybe one possibility would be to use a meal time for Ohio fellowship.
- The Wednesday agenda was listed on a different page, so it was easy to miss.
- With the martyrdom speakers, there is great value in bringing awareness for the situations they described. But they didn't give us any action steps. What can we do about it?

Our 2016 Convocation for the Ohio Mission Region will be on Saturday, May 7. The theme we had discussed at our last meeting was "Cross Fit – Making a Difference", based on Ephesians 4:23.

Free-flowing discussion followed, as we tried to hammer out theme and program for the day.

As assigned, Paul Larson contacted Pastor Dave Keener. He can provide information about how to revitalize struggling congregations. He now has a book out on this subject. Dave has to get back to us, about his own availability to speak at Convocation.

What different models are available for congregations of different sizes?

Possible focus on community: If you are focused on something outside yourself, you are most likely to be passionate about ministry in all places, including your own congregation.

Each person in your church can make a difference, and should be making a difference. What is your congregation being called to do? What is your specific ministry? We could ask each congregation to bring answers to these questions when they come. Congregations with common interests could be connected to one another.

How do we take good ministries, and make them better?

Dan Powell recommended the book, "Simple Church". Tom Brodbeck, associate pastor at Grace, Springfield has a 4-hour presentation that he can give on this topic.

The question was raised, do we really need a keynote speaker? We might spend that time on workshops and making connections. (In that same conversation we were re-thinking our choice of theme verse.)

What is our identity? Think about famous logos. What comes to mind when you see the golden arches? What comes to mind when you see the cross?

Don Allman pointed out that three main themes seem to be surfacing in our discussion: Discipleship, Identity, Making Connections.

"Re-born Identity" – possible name for a workshop.

Navigators is not yet well-known among Ohio congregations. Perhaps we should offer a workshop by/about them.

We are not yet sure about inviting Dave Keener as keynote speaker. Our interest is very tentative at this point, and Paul Larson will keep Dave apprised of where we are at.

Related thought: We could bring in Dave K. for a separate event, totally funded by the Mission Region, specifically designed to support struggling congregations in Ohio.

Could we provide guided table-group conversations? What is one thing your congregation does well? It's something that we can celebrate, something we can be thankful for. Maybe we shouldn't limit that to one thing! Maybe we ask, what do you feel your congregation is being called to do? What are you passionate about? We could assign this as homework for congregations, prior to the Convocation.

Action step for next time: Every one of us comes back with ideas on what the workshops could be.

Don Allman distributed a list of congregations participating in the Navigators process. Paul Larson moved to give treasurer Don Karger authorization to pay \$500 subsidy to participating congregations of the Ohio Mission Region in Navigators, upon their written request. Subsidy is to congregations, not participating individuals. Seconded by Dan Powell. Motion approved.

We discussed the possibility of having assistants to the Dean. Bob Quaintance quoted Bishop Bradosky as suggesting that we work toward the training up of new leaders, and he gave as an example raising up assistants to the deans.

By consensus, this council agreed that the deans of each mission district have the freedom to appoint assistants to the Dean as they see fit.

Bill Maki pointed out that when a pastor submits paperwork to be available for a new call, there is no mechanism for the NALC staff to notify the Dean of that pastor's Mission District. It is up to that pastor to tell the Dean.

The NALC Deans have a meeting scheduled for November.

The next meeting of this Ohio Mission Region council will be on Saturday, November 14, at First English, Mansfield. We will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end by 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Gruetter, secretary