RCN minutes 6/1/16 Conference Call

At ELCA Headquarters were Mark Yackel-Juleen, Alvin Luedke, Gil Waldkoenig, Dave Ruesink, by phone was Judy Hill and from 10:30-11:00 was Carl Ellis

**Opening Prayer** Alvin Luedke

A Quorum was pronounced by Chair

**Reports**

**Chairperson**

-Connecting with folks who have been part of RCN in past. Many have moved on and have not been replaced.

-Networking by attending certain gatherings to lift up RCN.

-Understanding more about work at Wartburg and outreach with RCN.

**Executive Secretary report**

Activities since last report:

-Contacted faithful contributors by phone about continuing support then following up with email and invoice.

-Rebuilt RCN mailing list after loosing it again.

-Provided instructions to Webmaster for changes as needed for the website information.

-Monitored emails regarding social and economic information related to rural concerns and forwarded those deemed appropriate for the RCN mailing list.

-Responded to inquiries related to RCN possibilities.

-Added new folks to RCN mailing list as requested.

-Received contributions and sent the checks to the bank with copies to Lon Oliver.

-Worked with RCN President to establish venue and procedures for spring meeting.

**Treasurer’s report** (was traveling, but sent this report)

Current amount in treasury is $3,259.45 with $2,40 outstanding bills of $1,200 for Executive Secretary and about $600 for more Executive Secretary expenses and Webmaster support to get through 2016.

**Minutes from December, 2015** meeting as found on the website were approval by common consent.

**Old Business**

**Website** needs new pictures to freshen front page. Mark will look for some and Lon said some time ago that he could find some pictures to send to Jake, the Webmaster.

Need better links to related organizations that are doing rural work. Thanks Jake for willingness to continue.

**New Business**

* Upcoming Events of Note:
  + Rural Sociological Society Meeting—August 7-10, 2016, Toronto—Understanding Rural Social Class in an Era of Global Challenge—Mark will moderate one of the sessions on Agriculture and Food.
  + Rural Chaplains Association Focus Event October 24-28, 2016 Brockville, Ontario, Canada
  + Rural Ministry Conference, March 5-7, 2017, Wartburg Theological Seminary
  + Check out the offerings and program of the **Lay Academy of Rural Church Ministries** [www.larcm.org](http://www.larcm.org) headed by the Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis who was at General Conference and now at own Annual Conference.

-Has been invited to Zambia and Zimbabwe early next year.

Here is his report:

What is and how to partner with RCN and how RCN resources could be of benefit.

-Looking at people’s gifts like all mainline denominations are doing. Struggle to find local pastors. Course of Study for summer and some extended work.

-Objective is to find people to serve churches of 25 or less.

-How to resource local church leaders and how to find help and where to go. For many it is an 8-hour trip for meetings that start at 5:00 pm on Friday through lunch on Saturday. Now using electronics to reach the audience. Has IT person with templates to get information to students. Rural people need this type help. Story about one farmer who had webinar on planting so could not join one of the electronic sessions.

How to partner 1?

Are there workshops where folks could interact. Heads nodding around table for flexible learning systems to be available in context without making sacrifices of time.

How to partner 2?

Can RCN help promote this program? Open to suggestions. There are a number of denominational programs for training. Right now the program is in beginning stages. Help understand the rural areas and how it impacts ministry. Have workshops around small groups. Many times there is more in common with others around the country rather than those close by. Denominational lines are less important than used to be. Doing workshop in Missouri to look at Walmart model. Put churches where there is a Walmart and people could travel to different communities than where live. Not sure this is right.

Target audience for on-line courses is still with lay people who feel call to ministry, but not secure in that call. It is mostly with lay people. There is little support from Denominational Executives who are running their own programs. Courses are very basic and include certain things to do in order to serve a church. Researching the Bible, reading commentaries, how to put a sermon together. In trouble if not do basics first. Get a hunger for and thirst for knowledge then touch base on how to expand service. Have seen very fine preachers try to teach others to preach. Problem is they know how to exegete a passage and preach without undergirding. It is a problem when one gets in a new church, but does not know the social dynamics of church and community. Need to know what is happening that is different from living in a metropolis.

How to partner 3?

Might link on our website as one avenue to get connections at [www.larcm.org](http://www.larcm.org).

How to partner 4?

Should continue to be in conversation and when RSSE is being developed, Carl could be another set of eyes.

**ELCA National Research** on Multi-point Ministry as reported by Gill, Mark, and Alvin:

Gil reported on ELCA study on Supply and Demand for clergy. Key finding one in seven pastors involved in multi church calls. In 2017 it is expected there will be one in five and there will be 2,000 vacancies. New awareness that multi-church ministry is in the future. Want to put in hands of Bishops and pastors being assigned. Will create a book as baseline and further study for best practices to be next step.

Looking for way to have four chapters\

What is context

Variety of models used now

What are challenges and rewards for such combinations eg history, leadership and what need to be aware of and address for context

Need help about who to talk to in other denominations about similar arrangements. Some may be there because of ecumenical agreements. The ELCA Director needs help to identify someone in UMC. Judy Matheny may be someone who did similar study several years ago. Judy will be with a staff member of GBGM next week and will do some research about who else in the UM Church might have information. Team to write report within 12 months.

**Report on RSSE Redevelopment**

Have first module on rural community ready to look at. Looking for appropriate platform. Moodle is being considered and another one will be addressed this afternoon.

At point where see what it looks like with an appropriate unit. Will need Gary Farley’s work in proper form to be user friendly for on-line.

Target audience—Those serving in rural areas and for seminaries that send graduates to rural settings for either continuing education or seminary course.

**Elections**

Gil moved to temporarily suspending by-laws to allow extending Article 6 Section 2B for a period of two years. Approved.

Gil and Judy moved to approve for Alvin’s continuance for two years as VP. Approved

Mark and Judy approved Dave Ruesink as Executive Secretary. Approved

**Next Meeting time. October 18, at 5:30 for conference call**

**Spring, 2017** will be decided later.

**Closing Prayer** Judy Hill

Adjourn at 11:50 a.m.