

For website and email:

Synod of Mid America Announcement

April 2021

Greetings Siblings in Christ,

At a recent Synod Assembly meeting, your Transitional Synod Executive Nominating Committee presented the search and discernment process that led to the introduction of Ruling Elder Luis Antonio (Tony) De La Rosa. While his work formally begins on May 1, 2020, we wanted to take the time to introduce him and thank the Assembly for the honor and faith you placed in us. We truly appreciate it.

Read here if you would like to read the full Report of the TSENC to the Synod Assembly. <[link to report](#)>.

Our process will, in many ways, seem somewhat familiar. We drafted the position description, posted our Ministry Information Form on the Church Leadership. The MIF as well as the Position Description was also emailed to all the Synod Leaders in the PC(USA) as well as the Office of Equity and Representation for dissemination. We wanted to be sure we could have as full and diverse a search as possible.

We held second round interview questions with both of our top two candidates and with much prayer and discernment and discussion the TSENC emerged with a majority front runner. Ruling Elder De La Rosa brought with him a wealth of experience, compassion, understanding, and grace. His energy and enthusiasm for God's call in his life is fully apparent and his ability to walk faithfully and with empathy and understanding with God's people shone through in his time with the TSENC.

The committee invited Tony to join us for a virtual "in-person" third interview which consisted of a gathering with the Presbytery Leaders, a gathering with the Stated Clerk and the Committee Chairs, and a virtual coffee hour where our committee sent coffee and goodies to our invited guests. With the vastness of the geographical bounds of the Synod, the virtual format worked well for introducing Tony to the leadership of the Synod without scaring him with our crazy weather. (Though, Tony has lived in Louisville, KY whose weather isn't completely different from Kansas and Missouri.)

After this experience, the committee spent intentional time in prayer and discernment making sure that we were following where God was leading us and not just following our own humanity and enthusiasm. With a weekend dedicated to prayer, the committee reconvened to share our experiences and to officially vote.

As SoMA continues to celebrate the work that was accomplished with the faithful leadership of Rev. Landon Whitsitt, we are excited for this time of visioning and transition as we lean into whatever God has next for the Synod and the continued ministry and mission to which we are

called. Tony's leadership and experience inspires confidence and joy within us as we begin this time together. The TSENC is going to continue walking with Tony as a Transition Team through this time as well and are truly honored to have the opportunity to continue to cultivate this relationship.

It is with great joy that we introduce to you to Tony and seek for you to work faithfully with him as we, the SoMA, follow God's vision for our future. Thank you for entrusting us to the task of being your nominating committee and for praying with and for us during this time. It has been and continues to be an honor.

Blessings,

The SoMA TSENC

Rev. Dr. Rachel Dannar, TSENC Moderator
CRE Patrick Yancey, Secretary
RE Jennifer Keim
Rev. Julie King
RE Cecil Wood
RE Reina Dalenske



Ruling Elder Tony De La Rosa is the former Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A). His duties included program oversight of ministry areas in international mission, social justice; racial/ethnic & women's ministries; and theology, formation and evangelism. His service included acting as President of the "A" Corporation, the secular corporate expression of the denomination providing administrative oversight of its financial, legal, personnel, communications, and funds development functions at the national level. His tenure saw a stabilization of agency revenues following decades of decline and the production of a new online video series, "*Keeping Faith*," for mission promotion and support for use throughout the Church.

In 2014-2015, Tony was the Interim Lay Pastor and Head of Staff at Newport Presbyterian Church in Bellevue, Washington, a vibrant congregation of 350 members actively engaged in social mission and community service programs in the greater Seattle area.

From 2010 to 2013, Tony served as Interim Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New York City. During his three-year term of service in New York, Tony successfully led the Presbytery to adopt unified financial planning and a reconfigured staff design that led to balanced budgets and stable operations throughout his tenure. An experienced California

attorney, Tony used his legal skills to complete a thorough revision of the Presbytery's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, as well as other components of the Presbytery's Manual of Operations. He also directed the Presbytery's initial disaster relief response to Hurricane Sandy in 2012 by making use of online technologies for remote teleconferencing and funds development.

Prior his church executive experience, Tony served as the Associate Counsel and Director of Board Administration of L.A. Care Health Plan, the nation's largest public HMO, with over 1.2 million Medicaid, S-CHP and Medicare members. In the 1990s, Tony was the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice, legal services agency dedicated to addressing pressing advocacy needs for the predominantly Latino communities of East and Northeast Los Angeles.

Tony received his Bachelor of Arts, Master of Divinity and Juris Doctor degrees from Yale University. He and his husband of five years, Michael Bendgen, are originally from Los Angeles, California.

For social media:

The Synod of Mid America affirmed Ruling Elder Tony De La Rosa as the Transitional Synod Executive to begin work on May 1, 2020. Help us to welcome Tony to SoMA and [click here](#) to read more about the nominating committee's process.