

Synod Council Meeting Highlights

March 13, 2015

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer

Synod of Alberta and the Territories



Worship and Prayer

Chaplain at our Synod Council meeting, The Rev. Ann Salmon, led Council in the Gathering, Word (Dwelling on the Word using Matthew 14:22-33), Meal (National Bishop Susan Johnson presided) and Sending (Affirmation of Christian Vocation) during the course of the agenda.

Guests

Guests to our Synod Council meeting were National Bishop Susan Johnson and two of the three of our Synod representatives on our National Church Council (NCC): The Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry and Allyn Langager, who is completing his term on NCC.

Synod Council expressed thanks to Allyn for his ministry with and among the National Church Council.

Several highlights from the recent meeting of the NCC were shared: The upcoming National Convention in Edmonton (July 9-12), "Liberated by God's Grace," include the recommendation for adoption of an ELCIC Reformation Challenge 2015-2017 – a commitment as individuals, congregations, specialized ministries, and synods, to: 500 new refugee sponsorships, 500 new bursaries for students in schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, 500,000 trees to be planted in Canada and around the world, and \$500,000.00 to be raised for the Lutheran World Federation Endowment Fund.

NCC endorsed the decision of the Church Extension and Capital Fund Advisory Board to provide a total of \$200,000 of national initiative funding to each synod over two years (2015 and 2016) in support of Canadian mission initiatives to participate in God's mission in our changing context.

NCC is recommending to the National Convention a policy regarding the provision of Word and Sacrament ministry in under-served areas: Policy Regarding Authorized Lay Ministries.

Spirit-Led Leadership – Mission Priority

Participating in Hope

The Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, reviewed the Participating in Hope initiative (April/May 2015 Every Church Council Conversation). Synod Council members, Deans and Synod Executive Officers, will gather geographically close church councils for the purpose of: listening to their stories of mission - of God at work, fostering the faith and ministry of the congregational leaders, thanking them for their past partnership in ministry, and inviting them to participate in God's hope-filled future, in partnership with the Synod and each other.

Ministry of the National and Synodical Bishops and our Council meeting Chaplain

Thanks was expressed for the faithful witness and leadership of National Bishop Susan Johnson, Bishop Larry Kochendorfer and Council meeting Chaplain, The Rev. Ann Salmon.

Hope-filled Discipleship – Mission Priority

Missional Formation

Wayne Street (Synod Council member) and The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen (guest), reported on behalf of the Synod's Missional Formation Team (also The Rev. Bill Weigert; The Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow; and Bishop Larry). After hearing what have been some of the learnings of the rostered

participants and the lay guiding teams from congregations, councillors were invited to consider Council's participation in missional formation – listen, discern, experiment, reflect, new experiments. At its next meeting Synod council will consider what might be its adaptive challenge and experiment.

Innovative Tradition – Mission Priority

Dwelling in the Word

Councillors expressed appreciation for the growing use and focus on Dwelling in the Word at every gathering of God's people.

Collaborative Partnerships – Mission Priority

Companion Synod

While we were meeting our Companion Synod Partner, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia (IELCO), was meeting for its national convention. Councillors approved a motion to extend our Companion Synod Covenant to 2020 pending approval by IELCO. The decision of Synod Council was shared via email to IELCO following our meeting.

Augustana Lutheran – Edmonton

With the sale of the congregation's church and property members of Augustana gifted our Synod with \$100,000 of benevolence support and \$100,000 for a Synod-wide Mental Health Initiative. In addition to many one-time grants in-perpetuity grants were named including our Synod's Lutheran Campus Ministry and Synod missions – *In Mision con El Salvador – In Mission with El Salvador*. Councillors expressed thanks for these gifts of generosity.

Synod Budget and Staffing

Synod Treasurer, Stephen Wildfang, reviewed the 2014 Year End financial report. We are thankful that our financial position has enabled expanding the position of Assistant to the Bishop for Mission to a full-time position effective January 1 2015. We anticipate that the current position of Administrative Assistant will be expanded to full-time Executive Assistant effective September 1 2015.

Promoting and Renewing Right Relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples.

Bishop Larry has endorsed the formation of a Coordinating Committee made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples (rostered and non-rostered) and ecumenical partners, to encourage education, advocacy, and service so that all of the synod's members and congregations can be involved in the process of building right relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

Synod Youth Gathering.

A Synod youth gathering is planned for May 29-31 at Mulhurst Lutheran Camp. This year the gathering is a joint event between with the Synod and Mulhurst, Kuriakos and Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camps.

General Comments

Councillors expressed appreciation for the opportunity for discussion and conversation, and that we are learning to listen to each other in new ways. Anglican Representative, The Rev. Canon Erin Phillips shared that Anglicans and Lutherans are talking about the same issues, and that she appreciated the missional focus of our Synod Council's planning and conversation.