

Synod Council Retreat Talking Points

September 13-15, 2018

Mulhurst Lutheran Camp, Pigeon Lake



Even though snow was falling throughout the weekend we enjoyed the expanded main lodge for our meetings and the new rooms for our sleeping accommodations. Our Anglican representative to Synod Council, the Venerable Alan T. Perry, served as our chaplain and lead us through Dwelling in the Word and Eucharist each morning and Holden Evening prayer each evening. Cathy Kochendorfer served as our chef and treated us to delicious meals and snacks. We also welcomed Rev Anna Thede from Hosanna in Edmonton as our Synod secretary, Paul Ellison as our Synod Treasurer, and Rev Daranne Harris as our rostered representative from the Southwest Area to their first Synod Retreat. The Area Deans were able to join us for some of the retreat as well, so we thank Rev Trish Schmermund, Rev Julianna Wehrfritz-Hanson, Rev. Kathy Calkins, Rev Jeff Decelle, and Rev. Kevin Powell for their participation.

1: On Friday evening we had the opportunity to thank the Reverend Dr. Julianne Barlow for the work she has done on missional formation across the Synod. Julianne has resigned her position as Assistant to the Bishop for Mission and has been appointed to intentional interim ministry in Calgary; she is looking forward to this new opportunity. We had the opportunity to affirm Rev Julianne's important work with and among us with an 'imaginative roast.' We also accepted, with much thanks, the resignation of Darla Wildfang who has been the Executive Assistant in the Synod Office. We wish Darla well in her retirement. Gifts from the Synod will be presented to Julianne and Darla at a later date.

2: Part of our time together was to review the roles and responsibilities of being on Synod Council. The governance manual policies relating to our roles were reviewed and discussed. We also discussed in a brainstorming session: 'Equip 2020', a possible synod gathering on the year when there is no synod nor national convention; governance manual review given the move to a 3-year convention cycle; finances and planned giving; and communication strategies.

3: Rev. Dr. James Hendrickson is our rostered representative to National Church Council. He brought greetings from that body and shared the following information with us:

- a: National Bishop Susan, and the four other Synodical Bishops welcomed a new bishop to the ELCIC. Reverend Jason Zinko has been ordained as the MNO Bishop following the retirement of Bishop Elaine Sauer.
- b: the 4 pillars of the National Church strategic plan and how they were being addressed was shared. The four pillars are:
 - Reconciled Relationships
 - One Body Working Together
 - Courageous Innovation
 - Empowered Disciples
- c: information on the JALC committee (Joint Anglican Lutheran, Commission) focusing on Common Word Alberta was shared.
- d: the National Convention will be held in Regina at the University of Regina next July 11-13, 2019 under the theme *Called to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation*

e: the Women of Faith Fund (established when the Evangelical Lutheran Women disbanded) distributed over \$46,000 to the 27 applications received to this fund.

4: Synod Treasurer, Paul Ellison, provided Synod Council with a draft compensation package and benefit guidelines for rostered ministers for 2019. These were approved as presented and can be found on the Synod website. Also presented, was the operating budget for 2019. This was discussed thoroughly and was approved by Council. The operating budget can be found on the Synod website as well.

5: Synod Council spent much time discussing the comments received from Synod Convention. Two questions were asked repeatedly throughout convention. Delegates were invited to share their ideas on the two large sheets of paper placed on each side of the convention hall. The two questions were:

a: I am hearing God say to us

b: I sense that one of the places the Spirit is inviting our Synod to join with God in God's work is

Lead by Rev. Dr. Julianne, Council spent some time thinking about what those comments might mean for us as a Council and for us as the ABT Synod as we listen to and seek to discern how the Holy Spirit might be leading us for the future. Synod Council also considered the two motions brought forward through the Committee on Reference and Counsel at Convention. Bishop Larry reported verbally for Wendy Christenson, our Synod Convention Manager, on the results of the convention. We will finish very close to budget and most of the results from delegates were very positive on many aspects of the convention. We thanked Wendy for her wonderful work as convention manager.

6: The Constitution Committee presented their report to Council. They outlined the work being done on existing church constitutions and shared that an easy-to-follow form has been developed to assist congregations working through the new model constitution. This can be found on the Synod website and can simplify what needs to be addressed by congregations in the new constitution.

7: Council also approved a full list of delegates to the National Convention. Some delegates were elected at the Synod Convention in June at Camrose, but more names were needed in order to fill the slate of delegates. We now have a full slate of delegates consisting of 15 lay delegates, 11 rostered delegates and 2 youth delegates for a total of 28 ABT delegates to the National Convention in July 2019. Thank you to those willing to serve as delegates!

8: Bishop Larry shared some growing concerns he has had regarding the workload and accompanying stress and pressure on our rostered ministers. He asks that all members and church congregations pray regularly for our pastors and our Bishop as they seek to meet the growing needs of their congregations.

9: The new joint venture called Holy Trinity in Edson was celebrated. The Anglican parish of St. Catherine's and former Lutheran parish of Grace now serve as the joint Anglican/Lutheran parish of Holy Trinity. A sentence from their website sums up this new venture very well: "This Ecumenical community strives to be an inclusive, safe and welcoming worship community recognizing strength in diversity, togetherness in adversity, and that God's grace, mercy and love are better when shared." This might be a good model for churches to consider in the future.