



## **Synod Council Meeting Notes March 29 - 30 2019**

The meeting was preceded by the installation of Rev. Iris Kristjansdottir at LutherCare. Synod Council welcomed Cole Guenther and Iris to the meeting as the SK Synod members of the National Church Council, as well as Rev. Paul Gehrs who handles the justice and leadership portfolios at National Church office in Winnipeg.

Chair Doug Schmirler was unable to attend due to parish commitments, therefore Vice Chair Cindy Hoppe chaired the meeting. Tabled business included a discussion on our church magazine, Canada Lutheran. It is a budget item for Synod Council. Paul Gehrs provided an update regarding work begun by Trina Gallop, National Communications Director. National's communication plan includes roll out of an electronic version of Canada Lutheran. Several council members spoke to the need for the paper format for our members and how it has changed communion practices, connected us to the rest of Canada, and highlighted emerging issues in the church.

Treasurer Lyndon Carlson reported that we had a clean audit. Due to the staff turnover last year, there was a lot of catching up to do, but Monica Johnson's experience as a CPA has provided the financial expertise that helped navigate what needed to be done. The Finance and Audit Committee will review the 2018 audited financial statements and 2019 budget, which will then be forwarded to Synod Council for approval.

Committee reports were reviewed. Governance still has work to do to update the manual to reflect the 3-year cycle of conventions. Compensation Guidelines is planning a meeting to look at a 5-year planning horizon so that we can give our congregations more information. To that end, we will be surveying our congregation roster anonymously to get a better idea of what compensation rates for rostered ministers are like. Congregational Constitution has been vetting constitutions and has discovered that there are legislative requirements in Saskatchewan that require different notice periods than as outlined in the national model. A note flagging this will be requested, and the committee will continue to monitor. Convention Planning: the next Saskatchewan Synod Convention will be June 4-5, 2021, in Saskatoon.

Cole Guenther has been the SK Synod lay member on National Church Council for 4 years. Cole has indicated that he will not run for another term on national council due to his increasing family commitments. Council thanked him for his work. Cole has served on the National Constitution Committee and spoke to some of the material coming forward at the National Convention in Regina in July. Areas also being presented will focus on carbon neutrality and greening of the church. Iris Kristjansdottir, rostered minister member, highlighted another piece called 'Reimagining Public Ministry in Our Church.' The convention materials will be available on the national website soon.

Rev. Dr. Bill Harrison, president of Lutheran Theological Seminary, attended our evening session to provide information on the future of the seminary. All seminaries in the Western hemisphere are facing the same challenges of low enrollments and students who cannot afford to uproot their families to spend 3 or more years pursuing their theology degrees. Intensive and distance education delivery is

showing success. Now the Seminary has to match the physical building needs to the actual student needs. President Harrison spoke to being “FAR-sighted.” This means getting the Seminary into a Financial, Academic and Recruiting alignment that works into the future. There may be opportunity to work with Lutheran Campus Ministry, and options will be explored over the next period of time. This is an exciting prospect with implications for the future of the Seminary and the Synod.

Our evening concluded with Bishop Sid showing a few slides of his trip to Argentina with National Bishop Susan Johnson and his wife Kathy last November. It was important for the Canadian church to walk with our global mission companion to ensure learning for all partners. Buenos Aires, the capital city, has several Lutheran schools that are flourishing. The rural areas are struggling to maintain what they had when Rev. Greg Kiel and his family were missionaries there. A devastating flood has damaged one of the rural churches and that has been a severe setback. Bishop Sid and Greg Kiel will attend a global mission meeting in May.

The next morning, our meeting moved to the board room at LutherCare, Stonebridge. We received committee reports from the Candidacy Committee; Mission in Ministry; Lutheran Campus Ministry; Examining Committee; CLWR; LuMinHos; LutherCare Communities; and St. Paul’s home in Melville. St. Paul’s has recently hired a new executive director. Cheryl Bauer-Hyde, on the CLWR board, reported that Global Affairs Canada has recently provided grant funds to support Ethiopian and Myanmar refugees, with future funding potential for vocational schools in Jordan.

The Finance and Audit committee will develop the parameters for a Synod Legacy fund. Donations from closing congregations will be allocated to advancing mission in the Saskatchewan Synod. These generous gifts will provide resources to support on the ground mission for our faith communities in the future.

Rev. Paul Gehrs thanked the Synod for all the support received by National Church from Saskatchewan, and especially the volunteer hours that will be supporting our National Church in Convention in early July.

Synod Council’s next meeting at the beginning of October will include a strategic planning session to begin the renewal of our current strategic plan.