



## **Synod Council Meeting Notes March 27, 2020**

The Sask Synod Board, Bishop Sid Haugen, Administration and Pastoral Bishop Team members, and National Bishop Susan Johnson attended an abbreviated version of the March meeting by Zoom. This was a regularly scheduled in-person meeting but was changed to an electronic format as pandemics pose their own rules. Bishop Sid has been in isolation for almost two weeks as he attended a conference of North American Bishops, most of whom flew in about the time that everyone was realizing there was a pandemic. With vulnerable family and friends in his circle, he chose to self-isolate.

Chair Doug Schmirler called the meeting to order. The agenda concentrated on action items. Of note, the draft Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2025 was adopted by Synod Council. A communication piece will be developed to share it Synod wide. We had not anticipated the present circumstances, but various actions outlined are coming into focus quickly with the need to be socially distant and the use of technology.

Synod Council affirmed finalization of the LAURCH covenant. This is an ecumenical sharing between Lutherans, Anglicans, Ukrainian Catholic and the Roman Catholic entities throughout the Synod. It provides a framework to help congregations going forward to encourage sharing and working together.

The Audit was presented and approved. Financial Manager, Monica Johnson was commended on the clean audit letter from Virtus group. The bottom line showed a modest surplus. The Budget was approved. There was discussion about whether to approve the budget at this time, but it was felt that this provided Council and Staff with financial guidelines for 2020, although some activities such as the regional gatherings and CLAY may not proceed this year.

The Governance Committee recommended, and Council approved that the SK Synod Criminal Record Check policy be rescinded as this requirement is now outlined in rostered leader agreements and the Synod Human Resources policies. The conflict of interest policy was approved for all Synod Council, Committees and Ministry Team functions. The draft Code of Conduct was presented and referred back to the Governance Committee as the National Church has revised the underlying document on which the Code is based. This policy will serve as a basis for those congregations which want to adapt it for their local use. Terms of reference were adopted for the Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team and the Global Mission Companion Ministry Team.

The Mission in Ministry Committee recommended, and Council approved the Bread of Life / Edenwold funding application.

The Constitution Review Committee recommended, and Council approved for the congregations of Melville, Good Shepherd; Saskatoon, Trinity; Strasbourg, St. John; Yorkton, St. Paul. LutherCare Communities recommended the following corporate board members for another term: Darrell Corkal, Mike Finney, Karen Harilstad, Linda Moulin, Ben Nussbaum, Al Scholz; and Kelly Macsymbic and Paul Rosten to fill new positions.

Bishop Sid Haugen held six Zoom meetings with rostered leaders this past week with about 15 attending each meeting. One benefit of a pandemic is that everyone was home and able to connect. They were set up to talk about how people are doing, support each other, and hear of the innovative ideas being implemented to keep in touch with parishioners and provide alternate service ideas.

Plans to have administrative days in the north and south to support lay leaders are now cancelled and alternate dates, possibly in the fall, will be considered.

In addition to other roster changes, Council approved Sarah Urano and Ole Schenk for ordination.

Reports/information were also received from: Funding Allocation Committee, Candidacy Committee, Western Examination Committee, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, and the Alberta and Eastern Synod Council meeting notes.

Bishop Sid is asking everyone for their prayers and support during this difficult time. He was thanked by Synod Council members for the letter sent out today to congregations. As well, the announcement by the Prime Minister to support small businesses and charities up to 75% of their staffing costs, applies to our member churches. Monica and the National Church will keep congregational treasurers apprised of developments as the government makes these available.

Although the next meeting of Council is scheduled at a to-be-determined date in June, if additional meetings are needed it will be at the call of the Chair.