



**March 31, 2022**

## **Saskatchewan Synod Council Meeting Notes**

Synod Council was hosted by Luther College, and Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry led opening worship in the Chapel. It was the first 'public' worship the Chapel had hosted since COVID began. A thoughtful, prayerful beginning to our deliberations and the Lutheran snack pack communion experience as well.

We were masked as per Luther policy; with Pastors Sean Bell and Ali Tote attending electronically. Seat and voice were granted to National Council member John Nilson, Luther College President Marc Jerry, Assistant to the Bishop Dennis Serfas, and Executive Assistant Judy Parker.

Bishop Sid's report focused on the Vision 'Creatively Transforming How to Be Church', and the two priority areas.

### 1. Expand leadership capacity:

- ❖ Communication via email and website is a never-ending challenge to keep it current.
- ❖ Bishop Sid has been able to travel again but also had a COVID break.
- ❖ There have been 7 retirements this past year with only 3 students graduating from Lutheran Theological Seminary.
- ❖ Call processes are in process: Assiniboia, Estevan, St. Paul/Melville, Neudorf/Lemberg, Swift Current, part-time St. Paul/Edenwold and Inglis/Russell. We have 20 + congregations that have been vacant for some time.
- ❖ Viability discernment resources: two documents have been developed for congregations in the midst of closure discussions – a guide for discernment and a workbook for closure. Although the resources are in use, they are not yet on the website.
- ❖ Various fine tuning of agreements and Synod support: Luther Care relationship, LCBI legislative act and constitution, Kinasao Memorandum of Understanding; Lutheran Campus Ministry financial administration support; documentation of support for LuMinHoS; Prairie Centre for Ecumenism Board request for an additional member (rostered or lay); Candidacy Committee is receiving SharePoint assistance.

### 2. Courageous Innovation: COVID kicked us through this door.

- ❖ Lutheran Theological Seminary: 3 seminaries in one building.
- ❖ Joint Fall Leadership with Diocese of Qu'Appelle and Sask Synod Roster.
- ❖ LAURC; Lutheran, Anglican, Ukrainian and Roman Catholic Covenant stalled due to COVID.
- ❖ Certified Lay Ministry: Dr. Ann Salmon is developing a draft program which should be available this year.
- ❖ Admin team: is the equivalent of 1.5 full time with Anna-Marie Skogsrud, Judy Parker and Monica Johnson. Rev. Michael Diegel is the volunteer Synod Archivist. Finance Manager Monica is moving to two days a week, and will be able to provide more support to congregations in the post-pandemic environment.

- ❖ Pastoral Team: Jerry Borkowsky has retired from his ¼ time position and Dennis Serfas will be finished his ¼ time position the end of April. An offer for a full-time Assistant to the Bishop has been extended. Funding comes from National Church funds granted to Synods for mission.

The Bishop's Report concluded with motions passing the changes to the roster.

Dr. Jerry presented on Luther High School and College. There have been significant challenges related to COVID, but Luther is looking forward to the new normal in the fall. Student numbers have been impacted by the ability of foreign students to attend as there is an extreme delay in processing their study visas. Luther did significant capital work in the year when it wasn't possible to have students in residence. For example, the meeting classroom provided to the Synod was upgraded to have blended attendance of in person and electronic. Luther is committed to continuing innovation, excellence and fiscal responsibility.

John Nilson spoke to the activities at National Church Council. The 2022 convention will be virtual, and it is hoped that we can join our Anglican partners in person next year. The 2022 convention will do the business necessary to fulfill constitution and bylaw obligations. The delegates will be considered as delegates for 2023 as well unless their circumstances change. Note: the roster of delegates for SK Synod is not complete so another call will be going out.

Task force reports were received: Addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia; Addressing Ableism; Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Injustice; and Carbon Neutrality.

The Faith, Order and Doctrine committee report on Online Communion was adopted and will be circulated throughout the church.

The newly adopted 2022-2025 National Church Strategic Plan areas are: striving to be a Healthier Church, seeking to cultivate Effective Partnerships, encouraging Relational Leadership, and leading with Compassionate Justice.

Cheryl Bauer Hyde presented the Canadian Lutheran World Relief report. The Ukrainian and Lenten Appeals are in process. CLWR is conducting an anti-racism audit, with staff and board receiving EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) training.

The next meeting of the Synod Council will be in October in Saskatoon. Deep gratitude was expressed by both the Bishop and Council for the work of Jerry Borkowsky and Dennis Serfas. Thanks to Sean Bell for extending an invitation to meet at Luther, and the Luther College Staff for their hospitality.