

Saskatchewan Synod Council Meeting Communiqué October 28, 2022

Synod Council met at the Home Inn and Suites in Saskatoon, October 27 and 28, and via Zoom with special guest, National Bishop, Susan Johnson and Executive Assistant, Judy Parker. We also welcomed Dave Scheirer, new lay board member replacing Lyndon Carlson and Rev. Munye Mtata, replacing Brother Ali Tote, now assistant to the Bishop and on holiday in Cameroon. Thanks to both Lyndon and Ali for their service over the last number of years.

Synod Council Chair, Rev. Doug Schmirler attended the second day on Zoom as he was sick with COVID. Prayers and devotion were provided by Murray Patzwald and Rev. Victoria Mwamasika throughout the two days.

Staff members Anna-Marie Skogsrud and Monica Johnson joined Synod Council for dinner.

Bishop's Report:

- Since our spring meeting, the pastoral team of Rev. Dennis Serfas and Rev. Jerry Borkowsky completed their work as ¼ time pastoral assistants, and Rev. Ali Tote began work May 17 as a full-time pastoral assistant. This is made possible from funds from the National Church through interest earned on the Church Capital Extension Fund.
- Beyond staff, Anno Bell continues contract work as our Canada Lutheran section editor. Rev. Dr. Ann Salmon is contracted as our Lay Ministry Program Developer. Rev. Michael Diegel is our Volunteer Synod Archivist, and Kathy Haugen is our Volunteer IT person.
- Learning to live with COVID, visiting congregations and ministries is the key activity again. Connections to LutherCare Communities, Kinasao Bible Camp, Lutheran Theological Society, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute and Luther College are being strengthened.
- Fall Leadership Gathering: this year, we were for the first time fully in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, and for the first time named the conference: FLAG (Fall Lutheran Anglican Gathering). Over 70 rostered ministers attended Temple Gardens, Moose Jaw with another 12 attending virtually.
- An outdoor ceremony was held on September 10 to mark the initial location of the Lutheran Theological Seminary on Wiggins Avenue. A bronze marker and cornerstone are located at the site, along with two benches. Special thanks to Bishop Allan Grundahl and Obert Friggstad for their work in bringing this project to completion.
- Five call processes were completed to Messiah, Assiniboia: Pastor Sarah Mowat; Peace Parkland (Churchbridge/Langenburg): Pastor Rebecca Graham; Trinity, Estevan: Pastor Sharon Kane; Trinity, Regina: Pastor Diane Nokonechny; St. Olaf's, Swift Current: Pastor Patti Sherk. Four call processes have been initiated: Resurrection, Saskatoon; Augustana, Saskatoon; Messiah, Prince Albert; and a four-point parish consisting of St. Paul, Melville; All Saint's Anglican, Melville; Neudorf, Lemberg.
- Pastoral resources remain a concern with 25 of our 100 congregations without a pastor and a short list of supply ministry available. Weekly sermon resources available from the

Rev. Jane Gingrich in the BC Synod, as well as the 2022 Summer Sermon Series have been very good supports to congregations.

- Work on the Lay Ministry program that will provide Synod certified training for individuals to be Worship leaders, Preachers, Christian educators, Community caregivers and a rostered minister as mentor, continues with Dr. Ann Salmon and Rev. Ali Tote.
- Synod committee work is the backbone of the church. We are looking to find a volunteer board chair for Lutheran Campus Ministry in Saskatoon and are in need of another person to sit on the Synod Finance and Audit committee after Joan Meyer stepped down. We thank Joan for her many years of service to the Synod in many different capacities.
- Bishop Sid acknowledged the toll COVID has taken on the church as a whole with reduced engagement and in person participation. Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) is an example of a program that is struggling to get back on its feet.
- Bishop Sid and Rev. Ali also had the difficult work of presiding at Rev. Lyndsay Hognestad and Rev. Janet Kostyna's funerals, and we mourn their loss.

Synod Council Committee Work:

- The strategic plan was worked on by Synod Council just prior to COVID shutdown and will run to 2025. The Officers Committee will review and bring a revised draft back to Synod Council for our March meeting.
- Project teams (working groups) were proposed to dig into some of the work necessary to remove from the Bishop's desk.
- Governance: reviewed the manual and did an inclusive language audit as well as regular reviews of other pertinent policies.
- Finance and Audit: Jeff Barber has taken over the Treasurer's Role from Lyndon Carlson. Giving is down slightly overall. Most of our investments have been transferred to ELFEC.
- Compensation Committee: recommended an 8% increase to the salary grid for rostered ministers, in line with the 2021/22 cost of living increase, harmonized automobile rates with GSI which will move the rate to \$.61/km. for the first 5,000 driven and \$.55 after; and supply fees to \$225 for first service, \$75 for second.

Affiliated Lutheran Organization Reports:

- CLWR: Cheryl Bauer Hyde shared that her term limit will be reached next September which will conclude her time on the Board. She is currently service as Vice-President. In addition to ongoing programs, CLWR continues to respond to domestic and international humanitarian crises.
- ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson shared highlights from her trip to South America which included our global mission companion Argentina, Uruguay and the synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. Her pictures and stories of what the church in South America accomplishes in the realities of 110% inflation in Argentina for example, help put our issues of 8% inflation into perspective. We are not a small, helpless church

but a middle sized, respected partner who can be depended on to step up when there is a need.

- LutherCare Communities September Board meeting: Officers of the Board appointed: Monica Kreuger – Board Chair, David Kirton – Board Vice Chair, Dennis Serfas – Board Secretary. As recommended, Synod Council approved the following to serve another term on the Board of Directors: Monte Gorchinski, Monica Kreuger, Rowena Materne, Paul Rosten, Dennis Serfas, in addition to Munye Mtata as a new member.
- St Paul Lutheran Home, Melville: Rev. Dawn Myrfield began as Chaplain in June. St. Paul Board Officers are: Bev Kreklewich, Chair; Laurel Moore, Vice Chair; Junette Croissant, Secretary. As recommended, Synod Council approved new board member Rev. Jailyn Corbin, and Rev. Ron Shumba as the Bishop's Representative to the board.

In conclusion:

- A Town Hall (Zoom) for rostered and lay leaders will be planned soon to discuss the compensation increases and other concerns of the congregations and leadership.
- The next in person Synod Council meeting is planned for March 30-31, 2023, at Luther College Regina.
- Bishop Susan led us in closing prayer and a blessing.