

**Sask Synod Council Meeting Notes**  
**March 30 – 31, 2023**  
**Luther College, Regina and Zoom**

Synod Council met for worship at the Luther College Chapel before beginning their meeting. Most of Council were physically present with 3 attendees on Zoom.

Since our last meeting, Rev. Dr. Ali Tote has been in place as the Assistant to the Bishop. He and Bishop Sid have been increasing in person support to the faith community with many visits to congregations. A call process has been completed for Resurrection, Saskatoon, and processes have been started in Messiah, Prince Albert; Augustana, Saskatoon; St. Paul, Melville; All Saints Anglican, Melville, Neudorf and Lemberg. Rev. Tote's work with congregations is focusing on short, medium and long term needs; supply preaching; call processes; and lay ministry. He has also attended clergy clusters, connecting them back to the Synod through a rostered co-ordinator, and providing support and connections for a roster that has been severely affected by COVID. Rev. Tote is also the Sask Synod representative to the National Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) Committee.

This added capacity at the Synod has given our Bishop time to catch up and almost keep up with the email that comes his way. Over his two terms Bishop Sid has accumulated study leave weeks and synod council has approved a six-week study leave/sabbatical this spring. With Rev. Tote now well into his work, the timing is good for Bishop Sid to take a break and get some fresh perspective.

The supply of pastors has not increased, and all our churches are trying to recover from COVID. Lay leadership and house church options are increasing in importance. The Lay Leadership program can offer certificates in Worship Leadership, Preaching, Christian Education and Community Caregiving.

Many people connected to the Synod volunteer on various committees to help connect the Synod to the work and support of the church. This gift helps the Synod in many ways, not the least being freeing up the Bishop and staff. We give thanks for the creativity and commitment of our volunteers. We are presently looking for a CPA to join our Finance and Audit committee, and a new SK Synod member will be appointed to the Canadian Lutheran World Relief Board later this year. Reports and updates were provided by Council Committees and Stakeholder groups: Officers, Finance & Audit Governance, Compensation Guidelines, Congregational Constitution, Candidacy, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Examining, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, LutherCare Communities, Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, Kinasao Lutheran Bible Camp.

Children and Youth Ministry: working with Kinasao with consideration for at least one annual youth event to connect this important work across our Synod. The Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering is in Waterloo this August, with some participation from our Synod.

Men's Ministry and Women's Ministry: reviewing what form this may take going forward.

Truth and Reconciliation Committee: an Indigenous Advisory Council is being established to respond and report on the Calls to Action of the TRC report.

Scholars of the Church: Rev. Chad Moir is connecting to our scholars to see how their work can inform and contribute to the life of the church.

Global Companion Partner: Rev. Greg Kiel has been asked to revitalize this relationship, and the

Argentinian (IELU) Church President will be invited to attend the Synod Fall Rostered Leadership gathering.

Black History: a town hall Zoom meeting with Regina and Saskatoon Chiefs of Police was very well attended with 70 on the call. Many thanks to David Kirton for chairing.

Finance and Audit: Last year, we incurred a net loss in the operational fund of \$42,880 with expectations of a similar loss for this year. Benevolence giving has not recovered from COVID and expenses have certainly gone up on all fronts. Insurance costs have increased and with the change of moving our investments to ELFEC, management fees are directly expensed where before they were taken off the returns. In the office, our Finance Manager is reducing her time to 1 day a week from her former 2 days. Other cost saving measures are being looked at and certainly Zoom meetings relieve mileage and accommodation expenses. Those of us who have had too many Zoom calls know that many decisions are arrived at through social inter-action and sharing that happens at coffee break and meals, so we are not quite ready to abandon all in person meetings.

Wishing all of the Synod a Blessed Easter!