

**DIOCESE OF ONTARIO
SYNOD COUNCIL
TUESDAY MARCH 24, 2020 – 6PM
ONLINE ONLY**

MINUTES

Present on-line: Bishop Michael Oulton, Alex Pierson, Wayne Varley, Valerie Kelly, Michael Read, Bill Clarke, Ada Clifton, Don Davidson, Viren Oogarah, Anne Patterson, James Young, Trish Miller, Pauline Eskerod, Peter Cory, Garth Allan, Heather Grimshaw, Nancy Beale, Robin Jones, Lynn Mitchell, Kate McLean, Peter Case, Maureen Butler

Regrets:

Guest: Jennifer Fisher (Wilkinson Chartered Professional Accountants)

Welcome: the Bishop welcomed us to this evening's meeting, as we experience the COVID-19 virus and social distancing, hence the need for an on-line meeting.

Opening Devotions:

Michael Read

Michael spoke to the Feast of the Annunciation (Mar 25) and acknowledged the 65th anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. Roy Nixon, a priest in this Diocese. Michael closed with a Collect for the Annunciation.

Agenda Review and Adoption

Chair

Chair's Remarks and Bishop's Update

Chair/Bishop Michael

- Planned events are on hold or cancelled at this time including the ordination of Georgiana Stewart; the annual clergy retreat is cancelled; the Bishop and other bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario meet weekly as a means of moving forward together. Up-dates on Holy Week & Easter will be uploaded to the Diocesan website's "Hub" page
- The Bishop noted that changes happen daily; and clarified there are to be no private prayers in church buildings as the virus can last for days and would contaminate the building
- There continues to be a suspension of Holy Communion and that includes virtually.
- The approach taken is, "Fasting on the eucharist; feasting on the word"
- Lambeth Conference has been postponed to 2021
- For planning purposed, there is an 8-week window in place for closures and that includes weddings and funerals unless an extraordinary situation and permission is to be sought from the Bishop
- The Bishop appreciates the creative outreach to parishioners
- Art Turnbull's wife Gordie, severe stroke, and he cannot visit her
- The Bishop makes up-dates available as needed

- The Bishop's idea is for a virtual Easter Sunday liturgy with recorded pieces of the liturgy weaved together into a Diocesan service.
- Annual Renewal of Vows and Blessing of Oils during Holy Week will occur at 7PM Maundy Thursday, on-line
- The Bishop emphasized the need for parishioners/staff to "stay home" and not go into the church to pray or do work unless absolutely necessary; monitoring the physical building needs to continue however the minimum time to do so has not yet been shared by AON Insurance
- The Bishop extended congratulations to Anne Patterson on receiving the Award of Merit, in conjunction with a visit from Archbishop Anne Germond and the Bishop at St. Mark's, Barriefield

Approval of Minutes – January 2020 Meeting**Chair****MOTION:****MRead/DDavidson****BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Minutes of January 28, 2020 be approved as presented.****CARRIED****Business Arising from the Minutes****Chair**

-none

2019 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements**Jennifer Fisher (Wilkinson)**

Jennifer Fisher began by thanking the Diocesan Team for assisting with the audit. Both she and Peter Case (Chair of the Audit Committee) commented on the Audited Consolidated Financial Statements for 2019. 2019 saw the impact of closing the Church Bookroom and the settlement of a lawsuit being offset by gains in the Year End Fair Market Value of the Investment Fund to show a slight surplus for the year. The Financial Statements were received and approved. Synod Council thanked Jennifer and the staff at Wilkinson's, as well as Peter Case and the members of the Audit Committee.

Peter Case (Audit Chair)

Peter thanked Jennifer and her team. He acknowledged oversight of the audit by Canon 26. The audit began in early Dec 2019; several meetings were held with the auditor and diocesan management, the auditor and management. The Financial Statement fairly reflect the audit and statements and Peter recommends approval of the Financial Auditor's report. The audit took longer than expected audit and yet is an appropriate and professional audit. The Bishop thanked Peter and the Audit Committee.

MOTION:**BClarke/APatterson****BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE audited Financial Statements of 2019 be accepted as presented.****CARRIED**

Both Jennifer and Peter departed from the meeting.

CFO

The Diocesan Team extended thanks to Jennifer, Peter and their teams. Alex also commented the ongoing process of improvement adds value and ensures keeping up with standards.

Anglican Foundation of Canada Applications

DEO

Alex presented three applications made to the Anglican Foundation. Being two members of Synod Council are in conflict of interest, both Anne Patterson and Ada Clifton “muted” their on-line presence while discussion of the applications were made. Three applications can be made in one fiscal year from the Diocese with two application deadlines in the Spring and Fall.

Three requests for grants were made by Trinity Church (Wolfe Island), St. John’s (Wapoos) and St. Mark’s (Barriefield). Following considered discussion the following Motion was made:

MOTION:

TMiller/LMitchell

BE IT RESOVLED TO support St. Mark’s (Barriefield) and Trinity Church (Wolfe Island) as two applications for submission to the Anglican Foundation of Canada grant program for the April intake and provide support to Wapoos for their on-going needs.

CARRIED

Discussion ensued to define what support to Wapoos might entail. Suggestions were to apply to the Diocesan Anglican Foundation, the Church Extension Fund and/or apply for a Diocesan capital loan. In conclusion, the Bishop thanked all for their consideration and discussion, and invited Anne and Ada to return to meeting, informing them of Synod Council’s decision. Both Anne and Ada extended their appreciation to Synod Council.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Bishop

- As noted above in the Bishop’s remarks and up-dates

DEO/CFO

PANDEMIC Situation

Following on the bishop’s update around the pastoral and liturgical situation and guidelines around the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Executive Officer/Financial Officer, Alex Pierson, took Synod Council through a summary of the financial situation, the ability to sustain the operations of the diocese, support for parishes and longer term potential impacts. The diocese will continue to process payroll each month for clergy and lay employees as it does now. At this point, there is no intention of layoffs for clergy or lay

employees in churches or at the diocesan level. Churches will need to continue to meet their obligations, particularly for payroll. Given the current financial market situation (the Toronto Stock Exchange is down 35% since the start of 2020), the diocese and churches are asked to keep withdrawals from the Diocesan Investment Fund to the minimum required where at all possible. Wardens will be asked to provide financial forecasts (including withdrawals from the Investment Fund) so the diocese can best manage and deal with individual church situations—especially as the global and local Pandemic situation evolves and changes. The warden & treasurer on-line meeting last week was well attended and a weekly “drop in” on-line session for wardens, treasurers and clergy will be held in order to provide live up-dates, answer questions and engage discussion. The powerpoint presentation will be available on the Diocesan “Hub.”

The Bishop thanked Alex for the presentation.

The Bishop also emphasized the need for on-going communication and encouraged members to visit the “Hub” on the Diocesan webpage: <https://www.ontario.anglican.ca/clergy-parish-resources/covid-19-diocesan-resource-hub>. There is an email for people with questions/concerns: pandemica@ontario.anglican.ca. For phone access: 1-888-299-1889 is available. GoToMeeting is also available and churches are invited to share in the Diocese’s subscription; contact Alex Pierson. The Bishop is also making Sunday worship services available in conjunction with Communications Officer Mark Hauser. Concern was also expressed on how to support clergy. The Bishop highlighted the need to up-hold all in prayer and to be mindful of caring for self and one another during these trying times.

Any changes, up-dates and reviews will be made as required. The Bishop advised Synod Council, as the governing body, it may be required to have a special synod.

Robin Jones extended her thanks to Alex for his contributions and dedicated work.

Consent Agenda

-nothing

Other Business

April 2020 Meeting – Input on Agenda Items for the Regular Meeting – on-line

Meeting Evaluations – were not handed out.

Adjournment & The Grace – Bill Clarke moved adjourned at 7:55pm; the Grace was said in unison [sort of!]. The Bishop extended his blessing to all.

Date of Next Meeting: TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020 – 6PM
Anticipated to be On-line
Devotions: Lynn Mitchell

Bishop Michael Oulton

Rev. Valerie Kelly, Clerical Secretary

Date