



**DIOCESE OF ONTARIO**  
The Anglican Church of Canada

## Your Synod Council at work

An online virtual meeting of the Synod Council of the Diocese of Ontario was held on Tuesday February 23, 2021. Highlights of the meeting include:

- Council has invited each of the program groups in our diocese to attend a meeting and provide an update on their work, successes, challenges, direction and support required. This meeting saw the Green Group make their presentation—highlighting their work for council, including the resources that are available on the diocesan website and the Green Group Facebook page. They are looking to actively engage with each church/parish in the diocese as well as individuals around creation care and climate change. The group presented four areas where they requested support:
  - Support for a motion at our planned 2021 Diocese of Ontario Synod.
  - Support in establishing a “Green Group” in each church of the diocese.
  - Endorsement and facilitation in the distribution and completion of the Creation Care Survey (found on the webpage).
  - Study around the feasibility of providing the bishop with an electric car for his use in travelling the diocese.

The Green Group will continue updates to Council on their progress and work with diocesan staff and with churches to drive these initiatives.

- The PFRT (Pandemic Financial Support Team) presented their update and recommendations. There were 11 churches identified that met the first two criteria for consideration to support. The first was reduction in net income (income reduction from March-December 2019 to 2020 less the amount of the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) received by the church). The second criteria was the ability for the church to sustain that loss (financial assets available). These churches were then invited to complete a Ministry and Mission Survey, which was reviewed by the PFRT and the bishop. Nine of the eleven churches have completed the survey. The other two are in progress. Council approved support for the nine churches that have completed all three steps of the process. These churches will be credited a subsidy which totals \$58,633. The remaining two are expected to come to Council at the March meeting. These 11 churches together account for 90% of the overall net income reduction across the diocese from March to December 2020. These subsidies are funded by the Pandemic Church Support Fund which was setup using the CEWS money received for the diocesan staff. The fund also provided the Insurance Interest forgiveness, Matching Tech Grants for online worship and cleaning/disinfecting “Starter Kits” when churches re-opened in the fall.
- The Executive Board made a presentation on the work it has done on a grant program to support new ministries in the diocese (churches and groups). This program would be funded by the New Ministry Fund, which holds the funds from de-consecrated buildings and dis-established congregations. The concept of ‘Reach Grants’ that would be a lower amount and a

fairly simple, 'light weight' application process. 'Stretch Grants' would be put in place to take successful Reach Grant ministries and grow them further. Council heard the update from the Executive Board and accepted the conceptual framework. Work will now begin on the details of the program, forms, process and criteria. The Board will return to a future Synod Council meeting with the full package for approval.

- Council heard from the Synod Planning Committee regarding Synod 2021. Given that it would not appear to be advisable to proceed with a plan for a 200 plus person gathering in one place, the intention is to go with a 'hybrid' Synod which would have smaller regional centers fully connected and integrated with audio, video, media sharing, etc. More info to follow.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of Synod Council will be Tuesday March 23, 2021 at 6pm. This meeting will be online only.

The approval of the minutes of the February 23 meeting are pending. For questions about Synod Council, please contact Alex Pierson, Diocesan Executive Officer, by email at [apierson@ontario.anglican.ca](mailto:apierson@ontario.anglican.ca) or by phone at 613-544-4718.