

**DIOCESE OF ONTARIO
SYNOD COUNCIL
TUESDAY, November 24th, 2020
ONLINE ONLY 6pm
MINUTES**

Present: Bishop Michael Oulton, Alex Pierson, Wayne Varley, Heather Grimshaw, Maureen Butler, Robin Jones, Lynn Mitchell, Trish Miller, Viren Oogarah, Bill Clarke, Valerie Kelly, Joseph Burnham, Nancy Beale, Michael Read, Anne Patterson, Katherine (Kate) McLean, Garth Allen

Regrets: Peter Cory,

Absent: Shane Mackay, Don Bailey, Pauline Eskerod

Opening Devotions: Michael Read

Michael offered an Evening Liturgy, acknowledging St. Andrew (feast day Monday, Nov 30). Expose on St. Andrew's life, an apostle and Galilean fisherman. One of Jesus' twelve apostles. Like us, he was called into the story of salvation. Michael led Council in the liturgy and prayers.

Agenda Review and Adoption Chair

Chair's Remarks and Bishop's Update Chair

-the Bishop noted the death of Allie Hendra, wife of Archdeacon Gordon Hendra, on Nov 19th; funeral details yet to be announced; the Bishop has extended his sympathies to her children

-Ministry Development Reviews have begun with full-time diocesan clergy

Approval of Minutes – October 2020 Meeting Chair

MOTION: LMitchell/Jburnham

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Minutes of October 2020 be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes Chair

-none

St James Parham Bishop

In June 2020 a fire destroyed the church, while completely demolished, there was no loss of life. A special Vestry was called and the vote was to dis-establish the congregation. The Bishop informs Synod Council and notes that in due course the church's ministry will be formally acknowledged.

COVID-19 Pandemic – Status Bishop, DEO, AMP

-the bishops and diocesan executive officers continue to meet regularly in the ecclesial province

- as we continue through the pandemic - in 2nd wave – the diocese continues to be diligent with the guidelines and protocols bearing in mind that many of our parishioners are in the high-risk category - --- the Bishop has resumed of parish visits adhering to the guidelines
- Alex, in conjunction with the view of the WHO, believes the vaccine will not likely be available until April 2021
- up-dated Amber guidelines will be released soon as additional information on the virus is now available, such as, aerosols spread the virus as they hang in the air longer therefore if more than 5 people in the church building at one time, only one singer may sing at a time; for recorded session, no more than 5 people allowed in the building at one time, otherwise to follow the red guidelines; singers must be masked; outdoor caroling is not encouraged as crowd management may become an issue; no indoor sales (i.e., bake, Christmas bazaars) due to being in enclosed spaces, with close contact and people are crowded
- the Canons & Governance Committee to meet with regards to how to hold annual vestry meetings
- Wayne spoke with respect to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario, everything remains the same; encourages any clergy leading a funeral to be in regular contact with funeral homes; as well as Wayne encourages all Christmas worship services, if in-person, to ensure reservations ahead of time, and to consider alternate liturgical services
- the bishop and Alex led a discussion on implementing a temporary exemption on capacity in the church building for the Christmas services. After considerable discussion the decision was made to not move ahead with offering the exemption.
- Bishops, DEOs & Epidemiologists' have discussed the possibility of a third wave in April/May 2021; noting the fourth wave is mental health as there is considerable stress on families, businesses and individuals, need a strong ministry of supportive presence

Finance

Alex presented the charts which were e-mailed to members prior to the meeting pertaining to the following:

Remuneration Rates for 2021

The following motions are presented to Synod Council against the background of the guidance and direction previously provided. Our policy has been to use the year over year increases of the CPI from January to January. The reported overall year to year increase in the province of Ontario for January 2020 compared with January 2019 was 2.1% overall and 2.8% for Housing. This forms the base which has been used to present the stipend/salary grids for the year 2021.

MOTION:

RJones/MRead

BE IT APPROVED THAT the Clergy Stipend Grid and the Grids for Diocesan Centre Staff for 2021 be set at 2.1% over the 2020 levels.

CARRIED

Comment: The 2021 recommended grids are attached. It has been established as diocesan policy that all clergy stipends for the following year increase by not less than the percentage by which the clergy grid has been increased and that no clergy stipend should fall below the minimum established for their

equivalent years since ordination. Parishes are encouraged to ensure their incumbent does not fall below their vertical grid position held in previous years. It is also policy that diocesan staff be moved horizontally on their respective salary grid in the same manner as clergy.

MOTION:**TMiller/LMitchell**

BE IT APPROVED THAT 2021 travel reimbursement rates for incumbent clergy and full-time diocesan staff not be changed from 2020 levels that is: \$0.61 per km. for the first 18,000 kms. and \$0.24 per km. thereafter.

CARRIED

Comment: An appropriate reimbursement rate also depends on the type of vehicle being driven and an organization's expectations regarding size of vehicle and distance travelled. It is recommended that reimbursement rates for 2021 remain the same as the current rates. We regularly review data published by the CAA and CRA in order to maintain a reimbursement strategy that reflects, as closely as possible, a reasonable estimate for out of pocket expenses that include the cost of ownership and ongoing operations. This rate remains above the CRA level.

MOTION:**JBurnham/NBeale**

BE IT APPROVED THAT housing allowances for 2021 be increased by 2.8%. As the general rate for clergy, the guideline for 2021 will be \$27,040 (an increase of \$735).

CARRIED

Comment: The January 2020 CPI (Ontario) rate increase of 2.8% for accommodations is being used for this recommendation. According to Canon, housing allowance is based on fair rental value including utilities of a three-bedroom home with garage in the applicable parish community.

MOTION:**RJones/TMiller**

BE IT APPROVED THAT the Sunday Supply rates for 2021 be set at:

\$ 82.00 for the first service without a sermon

\$ 164.00 for the first service with a sermon

\$ 42.00 for each additional service on the same day and travel allowance applicable for

Sunday Supply service be \$0.41 per km. For administrative and pastoral work by Interims the hourly rate for 2021 will be \$30

CARRIED

These items were discussed on the November 19 Financial Update and 2021 Guidance for churches diocesan online call. The presentation and the recording can be found on the diocesan website. The diocesan executive officer will issue the detailed financial planning guidance next week.

- **2021 Budget**

MOTION:**MRead/LMitchell**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the 2021 Diocesan Budget be adopted and approved as presented.

CARRIED

The Bishop expressed his gratitude to those involved in the immense amount of work and commitment required to prepare the budget, including Alex, the Finance Committee and the Diocesan staff. Their work is very much appreciated.

-Alex then outline the variables that went into planning and noted that spending remains flat, CEWS remains neutral to the budget and will be carried in 2021 as Restricted Fund, and not part of diocesan operational budget. The next step will be to present a detailed budget.

- **2021 Benefits & Insurance Updates**

DEO

-Alex spoke to the insurance updates for 2021 and reminded Council of the ConEd increases [the Pension Committee doubled the amount of ConEd to \$900, the amount was raised to \$600 last year from \$450, and increased to \$750 this year; the church's increase will be 1/3 of the cost)]

-Alex noted details of the insurance on property and liability, replacement costs, premiums, liability

-the diocese has been given guidance by AON that property and liability Insurance rates will rise significantly in 2021. This information was also covered on the November 19 online meeting.

Synod 2021 Planning

Michael Read

The 3 options noted in previous Council meetings continues to be considered. The regional model is also being considered for the purpose of regional discussions. A hybrid model is likely going to be option considering the long term and indeterminate situation with Covid.

The Bishop thanked Michael and the planning team for their on-going attention and deliberations

Stewardship Update

Trish Miller

Trish noted that the second webinar on wills & legacy, funeral planning was held; another webinar coming in early 2021.

Refugee Program Update

Wayne Varley

-Wayne met today with Mimi Merrill, coordinator of DOORS, which partners with the Archdiocese of Kingston; Wayne reminded Council that the Diocese is only sponsorship agreement holder between Belleville & Brockville and to the northern portion of the diocese

-over the past five years the numbers Mimi is working with for resettlement have increased and at present there are 75 "slots"

-Wayne noted that Mimi is working with 17 constituency groups, not necessarily parishes; many parishes supported refugee resettlement in 2016-17. In today's climate, there are fewer resettlement and support countries involved but Canada continues

-between January and Mar 2021 DOORS will undergo a review of its goal which will involve consultation with parishes about possible commitment to the future. DOORS would like to expand and is recruiting new members. A Spring report to Synod Council can be expected.

Consent Agenda

-none

Other Business

-Lynn Mitchell spoke on behalf of the Diocesan Worship Committee, the bishop requested a Diocesan Lessons & Carols (virtual) service which will be held on Dec 20th at 4pm. This is an ecclesial province-wide service to include four deaneries, 4 parishes in each deanery. The Worship Committee is also developing a diocesan worship resource section and anticipate developing home liturgies to use during the pandemic. With the up-coming (2021) Synod, the Worship Committee looks forward to collaborating with the Synod Planning Committee.

Bishop Michael extended his appreciation for the efforts of the Worship Committee.

January 2021 Meeting – Input on Agenda Items for the Regular Meeting – input is welcome

Meeting Evaluations – are available

Adjournment & The Grace – Michael Read moved adjournment at 7:47pm. The meeting concluded with the Grace.

Date of Next Meeting: TUESDAY January 26th, 2021 - 6 pm - Online Only

Devotions: Wayne Varley

Bishop Michael Oulton

Rev. Canon Valerie Kelly, Clerical Secretary

Date