

**DIOCESE OF ONTARIO  
 SYNOD COUNCIL  
 TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 23rd, 2021  
 ONLINE ONLY – 6pm  
 MINUTES**

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

**Guests:** Green Group: Mary & Don Raddon, Paula Walker, Ian Ritchie; Ministry Board: Doug Green

**Opening Devotions:****Lynn Mitchell**

Lynn reminded Synod Council of the up-coming feast day (Feb 26<sup>th</sup>) of Rev. Florence Li Tim-Oi – born in 1907 in Hong Kong, the first woman to be ordained to the priesthood in the Anglican Communion, on 25 January 1944. It was to be 30 years before any Anglican church regularised the ordination of women. Due to controversy, she resigned her license (though not her priest's orders) in 1946. The Communist government in China closed all churches from 1958 to 1974. She came to Canada in 1983 and was appointed an honorary (nonstipendiary) assistant priest in Toronto. She died 26 Feb 1992. Lynn closed with the Collect for the day.

**Agenda Review and Adoption****Chair**

The consent agenda was approved.

**Chair's Remarks and Bishop's Update****Chair**

- See pandemic up-date below

**Approval of Minutes – January 2021 Meeting****Chair****MOTION****BClarke/APatterson**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Minutes of 26 January 2021 be approved as presented.**

**CARRIED****Business Arising from the Minutes****Chair**

-None

**COVID-19 Pandemic – Status****Bishop, DEO, AMP**

- Bishop Michael reminded Council of the Diocesan decision to close church buildings on Dec 24, 2020 due to the up-coming Province of Ontario 28-day shutdown on Dec 26<sup>th</sup> to help reduce spread of Covid-19. The Province of Ontario returned to Green Level on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>. Two health units - KFL&A and Hastings, Prince Edward - returned to the Provincial Green Level on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, Leeds & Grenville & Lanark will return to Green next week. The Diocese returns to the Amber Stage; local decisions are made around parish re-opening. One variant of covid-19 was identified in KFL&A, well monitored and under control. Bishop Michael asked for continued adherence of the guidelines and thanked the teams and parishes for their commitment and dedication moving through the pandemic. Bishop Michael noted that the Ecclesiastical Province experiences different circumstances therefore different decisions around opening and/or in-person worship services.

**Green Group Update****Green Group**

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.

Wayne introduced and welcomed the presenters of the Green Group. Paula thanked Synod Council for the opportunity to speak and reminded Council of the group's beginning in 2006 when Debra Fieguth invited Steven Lewis to speak. At present, there are approximately ten members on the group and collaborate broadly [with the Sisters of Providence JPIC and the Anglican-Roman Catholic group, Justice and Peace]. Covid has forced virtual meetings which continue monthly with a current focus on creation care and climate change. Resources and information sharing are available through social media: Diocesan e-news and website, Dialogue, Green Group Facebook page. The Group is looking to actively engage with each church/parish in the diocese and individuals. 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.

As part of the presentation, Ian is planning a webinar for parishes on cold weather heat pumps which would reduce carbon emissions in buildings. The Bishop thanked the Green Group for their presentation and for their virtual attendance.

**Finance 2020 Audit Update****DEO/CFO**

Alex noted the Audit Committee has met with the auditors and they are working their way through the audit. He anticipates the consolidated audited financial statements to be presented at the March meeting of Synod Council.

**Pandemic Financial Response Team****Bishop/APierson/WVarley**

Bishop Michael reminded Synod Council of the three “gates”/criteria [details below]. In considering how the Diocese can support parishes, he invited parishes to share their hopes and dreams, and in doing so learned of their considerable faith and energy.

Alex continued the up-date with a flow chart which outlined the details and background of the process. There were 11 churches identified that met the first two criteria, “gates”, for consideration to support. The first was reduction in net income (income reduction from March-December comparison of 2019 to 2020 less the amount of the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) received by the church in 2020). The second criterion 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 churches are in the process of completion. 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 survey results are expected to come to the March Synod Council 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/sanitizing “Starter Kits” when churches re-opened in the Fall.

Wayne spoke to the third “gate” or stage, the Ministry & Mission Survey. Wayne and Canon Michal Read have met with the churches most negatively impacted by the pandemic. He remarked on the congregations’ adaptability & creativity to date.

**MOTION****RJones/MRead****BE IT RESOLVED THAT SYNOD COUNCIL**

- 1. Accepts the Report of the Pandemic Financial Response Team**
- 2. Directs that the Diocesan Account for each of the nine churches be credited by the approved amount (Total of \$58,633)**
- 3. Will await approval of the remaining two churches until their Ministry & Mission Survey submission and PFRT review is complete**

**CARRIED**

The PFRT is looking at ways to continue to provide support if the decline of financial difficulties continues for those parishes struggling because of the pandemic.

**New Ministry Program Proposal**

Executive Board

Member of the Executive Board, Robin Jones, presented the ministry program proposal up-date – a grant program that had been initiated just prior to the pandemic (March 2020) 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 disestablished congregations.

The first of two types of grants is the Reach Grant: up to \$5,000; to further church ministry in a meaningful way; four pillars: reconciliation, lay leadership, evangelism, creation of a culture of gratitude. Application would be made to a panel with two annual intakes: May and November. The second type is the Stretch Grant: up to \$20,000; a continuance grant for a successful Reach Grant ministry that is moving to the next level.

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

The Bishop thanked Robin, Alex and Doug Green for their work, commitment and presentation.

**Synod 2021 Planning Update**

Michael Read

Michael indicated the Organizing Committee had met with the primary agenda item: how Synod 2021 might take place. 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.

Bishop Michael acknowledged the challenges before the Planning Committee and thanked them for their on-going work.

**Worship Committee Update**

Lynn Mitchell

Lynn indicated the Worship Committee met today and discussed worship material for Synod; worship will be on-line. Lynn also reminded Synod Council of the building worship resource material available on the Diocesan website, and a Diocesan calendar of special days is being established.

A note of thanks to Lynn and the Committee was extended by the Bishop.

**Stewardship Update**

Trish Miller

Trish highlighted a parish development resource (Diocese of Ottawa) that contained helpful vestry zoom information. She offered assistance to any parishes wanting stewardship help and/or tools to assess where they are in congregational development. Wayne will follow-up with Trish on this matter.

Bishop Michael was grateful for this information.

**Program Update**

**AMP**

Mostly PFRT related

**Consent Agenda** – nothing

**Other Business** - nothing

**March 2021 Meeting** – Input on Agenda Items for the Regular Meeting

**Meeting Evaluation:** are now available on the SharePoint. The Meeting Evaluation can be found at:  
[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=gbVB\\_wMMtEKfK94Z0ekn4EZephkV\\_0xPo1Ry0jXtcy9UQzJNMTJHSTU2MVhJN1JPOFITskJSWkZHMIQIQCN0PWcu](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=gbVB_wMMtEKfK94Z0ekn4EZephkV_0xPo1Ry0jXtcy9UQzJNMTJHSTU2MVhJN1JPOFITskJSWkZHMIQIQCN0PWcu)

**Adjournment & The Grace** James Young moved, seconded by Peter Cory adjournment at 8:05pm.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

TUESDAY MARCH 23rd 2021

6 pm

Online Only

**Devotions:** Bill Clarke

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Bishop Michael Oulton

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Clerical Secretary, Rev. Canon Valerie Kelly

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Date