

DIOCESE OF ONTARIO
SYNOD COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022
MINUTES OF MEETING

Attending: Wayne Varley, Pauline Eskerod, Jeff O'Hare, Alex Pierson, Valerie Kelly, Alison Filteau, Joseph Burnham, Trish Miller, Michael Oulton, Maureen Butler, Robert Porter, James Young, Bill Clarke, Barb Gilbert, Noel Henry, Richard Hetke, Sandra Hounsell-Drover, David Selzer, Aveleigh Kyle.

Regrets: Kate McLean, Darlene Cunliffe, Lynn Mitchell.

Opening Devotions

Trish Miller presented a devotion based on resources for the week of prayer for Christian Unity 2022.

Agenda Review and Adoption

The agenda was reviewed with no changes.

Chair's Remarks and Bishop's Update

Bishop Oulton indicated he had completed all his visits to the hubs that arose from Synod 2021.

In discussions Leeds Anglican Ministries felt that leadership modelling in the context of team ministry be clearly understood to be leading together. Accordingly, as of January 1st Rev. Trish Miller will be Priest and Rev. Nancy McLeod will be Priest Associate.

The Bishop stated that Archdeacon Harry Huskins is retiring and a lot of work is going into finding a replacement for him as he moves into retirement. Bishop Oulton has been asked to chair a committee to craft a position description and holding interviews with relative folk across the province as they search for a new Provincial Executive Officer to replace Harry.

A piece of sad news that former Bishop of Moosonee, Tom Corston, passed away. Prior to that all the Bishops were on a Zoom call with him offering support and prayer. Bishop Oulton will be travelling to attend the funeral on February 1st in Sudbury as senior representative of the House of Bishops of Ontario.

The first meeting of the Synod Council Executive Board was held. It deals with matters that come up between Synod Council meetings. The Bishop welcomed questions on his meetings at the hubs.

Approval of Minutes – November 2021 Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes as circulated. So moved by David Selzer, seconded by Jeff O'Hare. Motion carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes was raised.

COVID-19 Pandemic Status

One of the things that will be coming up at the Council of General Synod is related to the General Synod that is coming up in Calgary in July. What type of meeting (in person, on line, or hybrid) is to be decided, or whether or not the meeting should be held or delayed.

Alex Pierson related that there has not been a great a deal of push back with respect to the current restrictions in place. He indicated safety is paramount. Bishop Michael indicated at the end of the first week of February there will be an assessment made as to next steps.

Synod 2021 Minutes

The minutes of Synod 2021 were received. Motion to receive the minutes moved by James Young, seconded by Noel Henry. Motion carried.

Bishop's Synod Summary

Bishop Michael has completed his visits to the hubs and the report he presented to Synod Council can be found on the SharePoint on-line.

Bishop Oulton is hoping to gather in person to have a facilitated conversation with Susan Graham-Walker when protocols permit; in November he was planning for February but covid protocols cancelled that. Susan will assist in the process of clarification and guidance around the process of communication with regards to Synod Council.

Synod Council – Governance & Responsibility

Bishop Oulton indicated that the preceding discussion and presentation also covered this agenda item. He extended his thanks to all who worked on the planning and executing of Synod 2021 including the Synod Planning Committee and the Diocesan Staff. He opened the floor for questions and discussion. Sandra Hounsell-Drover felt it would be “bad optics” if Synod Council met in person with Susan Graham-Walker when our faith communities could not. Bishop Oulton clarified that this meeting would take place in person only when protocols permitted and if our faith communities are open again for in person worship.

Finance

Alex Pierson presented a PowerPoint presentation (find this presentation at <https://ontarioanglican.sharepoint.com/sites/SynodCouncil>) covering:

- 2021 Year End, the Reporting Process and Audit
- Investment Funds Update
- 2022 Insurance
- Process to develop the 2023 Budget
- the 2022 Budget deficit vs. 2021 Budget surplus
- Continuing the Journey with respect to Income, Operating Costs, Expansion of Support, New Ministry
- Summary of how we look at the past, endure the present and plan for the future
- Alex indicated they were considering a 3-year planning horizon as is done in the Diocese of Ottawa, moving away from our current 2-year plan.

Information Technology - 2022 Plans and Security

Alex Pierson presented information on Cyber Security and the Diocese of Ontario (find this presentation at <https://ontarioanglican.sharepoint.com/sites/SynodCouncil>) and indicated that it is not just large corporations

at risk, but now also small organizations in a broader context. Security is a huge factor not only for the Diocese, but also for our clergy, wardens and parishes. At the conclusion of his presentation Alex indicated he was putting forward a recommendation that the Diocese invest \$5-7K in a Consultant to review, detail and build a strategy, roadmap and plan. Alex welcomed questions and asked the Council to consider a motion to go ahead and invest in a consultant.

Alex welcomed questions. Sandra Hounsell-Driver asked if a consultant was really necessary and perhaps the diocese could model after other dioceses. Alex indicated the Diocese of Ontario was ahead of most of the dioceses on this and stated that the best security is layered security; a consultant would provide the necessary expertise. Trish Miller questioned where the \$5-7K was coming from? Alex indicated it is incremental to the budget. IT Expert/Cyber Security w/ Federal Govt, James Young, fully supports this, made recommendations and offered support.

A motion was put forward that "Synod Council approves the recommendation to invest \$5-7K in developing a Cyber Security Strategy Roadmap and Plan for the Diocese. James Young moved, Barb Gilbert seconded. Motion carried.

Stewardship & Congregational Development Update

Trish Miller spoke about congregational development, specifically healthy congregations, healthy clergy. She talked about a Diocese of Chicago initiative "The Mini-Sabbatical." She proposed that a committee be struck to assess the needs of clergy and what benefits we need to look at more closely to support them, so they can be supportive of their own congregations. A letter from the Diocese of Chicago detailing this program is attached to these minutes. Bishop Oulton thought that this might be an appropriate discussion for Clergy Development and the T&D Committee. Nancy McLeod, Wayne Varley, Lynn Mitchell and Sandra Hounsell-Grover have indicated their willingness to work on this topic. Trish also talked about the work she is developing on a donor tracking table.

Worship Committee

In Lynn Mitchell's absence Wayne Varley briefly updated that they will be having their first meeting of the year this coming Thursday. Items they will be addressing are: Service for Blessing of Oils and renewing of Ordination Vows (the Friday before Palm Sunday), continuing work on the Calendar of Special Days, a Liturgy to Celebrate the End of the Pandemic, and finally working on some resources for use when Queen Elizabeth dies.

Ministry & Program Update

Wayne updated the Council as follows:

- 3 Adelaide: There are four groups 2 churches and 2 community groups who are interested in using the building.
- REACH grant applications: Robin Jones currently vetting 2 applications whose pitch will be given on March 2.
- Green Group preparing a communication to parishes as to how parishes and the diocese can live in accordance with the resolution made at Synod 2021.
- DOORS: Mimi Merrill continues to work exhaustively with the help of others. They continue to support some refugees from up to 5 years ago and there are new applications expected in the future. An application has been made to the Canada Youth Employment Program to have funding to hire a student this coming summer to help Mimi in her work.

Proposed Program to Support Air Quality – COVID

Alex Pierson presented “The Swiss Cheese Model” (find this presentation at <https://ontarioanglican.sharepoint.com/sites/SynodCouncil>). He had previously discussed this on his recent call to Church Wardens, Treasurers & Clergy. Specific points were made with respect to Ventilation, Filtration and Purification of the air that would limit the spread of the Corona Virus and how our many buildings and situations present different challenges. He presented a proposed program to support churches who invest in improving their air quality. He indicated funding for this would come from The Diocesan Pandemic Church Support Fund. The floor was opened for questions. A motion was put forward: “Synod Council approves the proposed grant program to support churches in making the air in their buildings safer with respect to Corona Virus/Covid 19.” Moved by Bill Clarke; seconded by Trish Miller. Motion Carried.

Property Update – Listings, Sale of Flinton

An offer was received for St. Paul’s, Flinton, which was accepted, and the final condition has been recently removed. The sale of this property will close at the end of June. A listing for St. Luke’s, Lyndhurst and Camp Hyanto has been suspended. Several offers have been lost due to issues around unclear boundaries. Cushman-Wakefield suggested The Diocese suspend it and are working on a survey which will give clarity moving forward. Alex updated the Council on several other ongoing real estate matters and cemeteries and indicated that the BAO has become more rigorous about bylaws and funds and has hired 50% more inspectors.

Consent Agenda

No items identified.

Other Business

Bishop Oulton announced that Mark Hauser’s mother passed away last night after a time in Palliative Care and asked us to please keep Mark in our prayers.

Input for February Agenda

There will be a representative from the Anglican Foundation, Michele Hauser, at this meeting as well as Susan Graham-Walker, as well as a diocesan group to present on their ministry. Please submit any items for the February Agenda to Alex Pierson.

Online Meeting Evaluations, Adjournment & The Grace

Participants in tonight’s meeting were reminded to fill in the online meeting evaluation form. James Young put forward a motion to adjourn and The Grace was said. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Date of Next Meeting:

February 22th, 2022, 6 pm (On-Line only planned) Devotions: Jeff O’Hare

Bishop Michael Oulton
Diocese of Ontario

Alison Filteau
Lay Secretary

January 29, 2022



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

GROW THE CHURCH + FORM THE FAITHFUL + CHANGE THE WORLD

January 7, 2022

Dear People of the Diocese of Chicago,

News media have recently carried a number of stories about clergy of all backgrounds leaving active ministry or taking early retirement. The data show that church workers – clergy and lay employees – and their families are exhausted, anxious, and stressed. I salute those who are accessing mental health services in record numbers, but not every location offers handy access to needed services. And waiting lists are often daunting, as providers cope with heavy caseloads. The concern about Bishop-elect Paula's health and progress has also been a unique additional burden in our diocesan life.

I am deeply concerned for our clergy and lay employees. I am concerned for the entire human community in their suffering in this pandemic, but clergy and lay employees are the special responsibility of a Bishop. I take that responsibility seriously. I am asking our diocesan community to come together in loving support of our clergy – both deacons and priests — and church workers through what I am calling the “Mini-Sabbatical” program.

This program begins as each congregation/ministry setting identifies a work week in the first quarter of 2022 when meetings, office hours and non-essential activities are cancelled. Of course, pastoral emergencies will be attended to. The Mini-Sabbatical week is chosen entirely at the discretion of each ministry setting. If it is not possible to find a week in the first quarter, strive to find a week within the second quarter.

The Mini-Sabbatical does not count against vacation time, sick time, or continuing education time. Pay and benefits continue. Other dioceses and other religious bodies are doing this kind of thing. It is a strong diocese indeed which chooses to actively support its clergy and lay employees through a plan like this. I have discussed this program with our deans, our diocesan staff, and our Standing Committee, all of whom have been favorable. Our deans will be following up in their regions to offer help and support.

Although it is not my intention to require cancellation of Sunday services, I encourage you to consider doing so, and you will have my full support if you choose this option. This might be a moment to introduce your people to the superb virtual worship services of our National Cathedral (cathedral.org) as an alternative. This might also be an opportunity for any congregation(s) which will offer Sunday worship to offer hospitality to the deanery so that deanery bonding is enhanced.

This is a voluntary program; I am asking, not requiring. But my ask is heartfelt, motivated by my deep concern for the well-being of our clergy and lay employees. I am confident that our love for them will move us to implement this plan. Please reply to this email to let me know when your Mini-Sabbatical will take place, so we can make special prayer intention for you and your congregation as you take this small break before Holy Week and Easter. Please know that I will also take my own advice and observe a Mini-Sabbatical, and will let you all know when that will happen; we are also determining how to extend this to diocesan staff.

I welcome questions about this plan. Many congregations have special circumstances which call for creativity in applying this plan. Don't hesitate to be in touch. Thank you for your consideration. Blessings to you all as the New Year begins.

With my love and prayers,

+Chilton

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