

## Report of the Diocesan Synod Council

This report summarizes the actions of Synod Council from November 2022 through October 2023. The requirement for at least six meetings to be held, as set out in Canon 1.9 (9), was met with eight meetings duly convened during this period.

### Election and Appointments

- Approved the election of the following directors to serve on the board of 2498317 Ontario Inc, the corporation established to oversee diocesan development projects, for the year 2023 or until their successors are duly elected: The Right Reverend Susan Bell, Kemi Okwelum, The Venerable William (Bill) Mous, and Canon Terry Charters.
- Appointed the following as signing officers, the Right Reverend Susan Bell, diocesan bishop; the Venerable William (Bill) Mous, executive officer and secretary of synod; Kemi Okwelum, treasurer and director of finance; and Jane Wyse, executive assistant to the bishop.
- Elected Rod McDowell, Rob Towler, Amy Collard, and Janice Whiteley to the Synod Council Coordinating Team.
- Elected Rob Towler, Eleanor Clitheroe, Marshall Horner, Jeff Ostic, Howard Davis, Pamela Guyatt and Mark Young to the Financial Advisory Committee, for a two-year term.
- Elected Peter Barr, Eleanor Clitheroe, Brock Mason, and Mark Young to the Investment Advisory Committee, for a two-year term.
- Elected Nicolas Choules-Burbidge, David Eccles, Deanna Lusby, Greg Cook, Tony Denning, and Leslie Gerlofs to the Audit Committee, for a two-year term.
- Elected Neil Culp, Sheila Van Zandwyk, and Tim Tiernay to the Human Resources for Ministry Committee, for a two-year term.
- Appointed Victor Kischak for a two-year term as a diocesan representative on the Cathedral Place Property Management Committee.
- Elected Rob Towler, Amy Collard, and Janice Whiteley to the Synod Council Nominations Committee, for a one-year term.
- Elected Winston Tinglin, Peter Scott, Eleanor Clitheroe, and Anne Gould to the Missional Budget Planning Committee, for a two-year term.
- Acting as the General Membership of the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara,
  - Elected Jodey Porter and Elizabeth Wensley as directors of the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara, for a three-year term.
  - Elected Tony Denning to the office of president and Jodey Porter to the office of vice president of the foundation, to serve until the next annual general meeting.
  - Appointed KPMG as the auditors for the fiscal year 2022 and, later, for 2023.

### Policy Matters

- Acting as the General Membership of the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara, confirmed, ratified, and approved the updated by-laws for the foundation.
- Approved the updated terms of reference for the Human Resources for Ministry Committee, effective January 17, 2023.
- Approved the revised Sabbatical Leave Policy, effective February 28, 2023.

- Approved the revised Anglican Foundation Endorsement Process.
- Approved the revised regulations pertaining to Canon 4.6, effective June 20, 2023.
- Approved the procedures and regulations proposed by the Nominations Committee for the election of provincial synod delegates in 2023, and subsequently amended those regulations to allow for the bishop, in consultation with the Synod Council Nominations Committee, to appoint members of Synod to serve as substitute delegates, as needed.
- Approved a five-year refugee sponsorship agreement with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada.
- Revised the membership requirements for the Walking on Water (WOW) Grants Committee to include a representative from each region of the diocese, as appointed by the bishop, as well as the parish development missionary and the community missionary.

### **Parish Matters**

- Approved the request of St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington for a loan from their rectory fund, in the amount of \$50,000.
- Approved the request of St. Paul's, Westdale for a loan from their rectory fund, in the amount of \$50,000
- Authorized Church of the Ascension, Hamilton and St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls to hold their annual vestry meeting not later than March 5, 2023.
- Authorized St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton to hold its annual vestry meeting not later than March 27, 2023.
- Approved the submission of an application for an Anglican Foundation grant, in the amount of \$13,455.47, by St. James Anglican Church, Dundas for the installation of heat pumps.
- Approved the merger agreement between St. Elizabeth's Anglican Church, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, and the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.
- Approved the submission of an application for an Anglican Foundation grant, in the amount of \$15,000, by St. Luke's Anglican Church in Smithville for accessibility improvements.
- Affirmed the strong witness to the Gospel expressed by the people of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Shelburne for more than 150 years, lauding the sacrificial giving and the spirit of fellowship that marks the ministry of St. Paul's, commending these Christian disciples to the parishes they intend to join, and expressing gratitude to the parish's lay and ordained leaders as they have faithfully walked a difficult but faithful path of discernment as they prepare to voluntarily disestablish as a parish, effective January 21, 2024.

### **Property Matters**

- Assumed responsibility for the property costs of St. Elizabeth's, Burlington, as of May 1, 2023, the informal date of their merger with Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Burlington.
- Authorized the officers of Synod Council, or their designates, to apply for a demolition permit for the hall located at 454 John Street, Hamilton.
- Approved the parish of All Saints Church, Dain City to make a demolition permit application for a garage located on its property.

- Approved the sale of a parcel of land (totaling 0.00593 acres) located within an existing hydro easement on the property of St. Luke's, Palermo to the Regional Municipality of Halton, to create a transit stop, and directed the proceeds from the sale to be applied towards the parish's outstanding diocesan mission and ministry contributions from prior years.

### **Financial Matters**

- Approved up to \$54,000 from the Walking on Water (WOW) fund to be made available in 2023 for grants, as recommended by the diocesan treasurer.
- Approved the 2022 audited financial statements of The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara.
- Authorized a payment from the Legal Reserve Fund to resolve a matter related to the care and maintenance of the York Cemetery.
- Acting as the General Membership of the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara, received and accepted the 2022 audited financial statements of foundation.
- Directed an unrestricted gift of \$100,000 to St. Matthew's House, in support of the 412 Barton Street initiative as a tangible expression of the diocese's ongoing commitment to the work of healing and reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada, from funds related to the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.
- Directed \$400,000 in principal payments towards the vender take-back mortgage associated with the sale of the Speedvale Avenue property in Guelph to be allocated as follows:
  - \$150,000 invested in the Differentiated Curacy Fund;
  - \$125,000 invested in the Church Planting Reserve Fund;
  - \$75,000 invested in the Legal Reserve Fund;
  - \$30,000 donated to the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine's Capital Campaign; and
  - \$20,000 invested in the Property Renewal Reserve Fund.
- Directed the remaining \$1,200,000 from the Speedvale Avenue vender take-back mortgage to be used for cash flow purposes to fund the expected 2024 budget deficit and costs associated with the proposed capital campaign, and directed the treasurer to provide a report before the end of 2024 about the use of these funds, including, if appropriate, recommendations related to the reallocation of any unused funds.
- Approved a mandatory 3.0% cost of living adjustment in 2024, in addition to the year of service increase factored into the grid, to the Minimum Stipend Scale for 2024.
- Recommended a 3.0% cost of living adjustment in addition to a 0.6% year of service increase, for a total increase of 3.6% in 2024, for stipends for clergy and licensed lay workers currently making over the minimum stipend amount.
- Recommended to parishes a cost-of-living adjustment for all housing allowances of not less than 3.0% in 2024.
- Recommended that salaries of non-licensed lay employees be increased by not less than 3.6% (comprising a cost-of-living adjustment of 3.0% and a year of service increase of 0.6%) in 2024.
- Commended the 2024 diocesan budget for approval by the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara.

Respectfully submitted,

The Venerable Bill Mous, Executive Officer & Secretary of Synod  
Ms. Hannah Keller, Administrative Assistant