

The following is a selection of questions and answers from the Pre-Synod meetings, held in October. For more information about Synod, visit the [Upcoming Synod page](#).

Financial Overview and Budget Presentation

Q: Why is there an increase of \$15,000 to the national church?

A: The Diocese does not pay its full allotment to the national church, so this helps to make up the shortfall. It should be noted that the Diocese helps the national church in many other ways, including providing expertise in areas such as stewardship, etc.

Q: Funding for theological colleges hasn't increased in several years. It still remains at \$60,000. Why hasn't it increased?

A: The College of Bishops has ongoing conversations about our funding for theological colleges. In addition to the \$60,000 that the Diocese contributes annually, the Our Faith-Our Hope campaign provides grants to the colleges for innovative education programs and to people who want to further their theological education.

Q: It was said that the Cemetery Fund increased from 2013 by \$92,000. Is that correct?

A: The Cemetery Fund's net gain for 2014 was \$925,000, which was slightly down from 2013.

Q: What percentage of our revenue is from investment?

A: In the operating statement, investment income represents 10% of the income.

Q: Curacy grants are being increased by \$108,000. How many of those curacies will be in Trent-Durham, and can we set up an area fund to train curates?

A: The \$108,000 is to fund curacies that are not eligible for grants from the York Rectors fund, which provides support for incumbents within the York Rectors' boundaries. Any area can raise funds for curacies in their area.

Q: In the budget, what does "equity allowance" mean?

A: This is for when the Compensation Working Group recommends an adjustment in salary for Diocesan Centre staff. Occasionally the Compensation Working Group determines that some salaries are not as far along the salary grid as they should be. Equity allowance provides for any adjustments.

Q: What percentage of "equity allowance" will be used for increases in salaries?

A: \$85,000 is the total allowance, which includes a cost of living adjustment of \$55,000 and equity adjustments of \$30,000. Further work is required before the equity adjustment will be allocated.

Q: \$30,000 is for the election of a bishop in 2017. Will there be one or two bishops elected?

A: There is no guarantee that there will be an election in 2017. This is just a budget placeholder, in case there is an election. This amount will cover the costs of holding an electoral Synod and running an election, if there is one.

Q: Is there any thought to increasing staff support at the Diocesan Centre for real estate and property issues?

A: We're holding the budget static at this point because we'll soon be starting a strategic planning process.

Q: How will we have input into the strategic planning process?

A: Stakeholders will be consulted, but how has not yet been determined. Our first priority is to send out an RFP, and then information about the process will be shared as it develops.

Q: Will the strategic plan call for an investment in communications technology in the diocese, in light of how difficult and time-consuming it can be to drive to meetings in the Diocese?

A: The current budget supports only the existing technology. However, it is possible that this topic will be discussed as part of the planning.

Q: When will real work be done in the area of multicultural ministry, as opposed to just forming groups to talk about it? Also, why not put money in the budget to support lay leadership as well as clerical leadership?

A: The Our Faith-Our Hope campaign provides millions of dollars in grants to support lay leadership. Recently, OFOH gave a grant to Wycliffe College for an innovative online course for lay people and volunteers. The Diocese's multicultural ministry group recently sponsored an anti-racism workshop, and we have engaged a consultant to further the work of multicultural ministry.

Q: How is the information in the parochial returns consolidated, how is it reported to Synod and how will it be incorporated into the Strategic Plan?

A: Since 2009, we've been using the statistics in the Parochial Returns to help the bishops plan mission and ministry in the episcopal areas.

Q: Trent-Durham will receive \$13,000 to increase its office capacity. Does York-Simcoe need to do the same?

A: No, that is not needed at this time.

Q: When will our Diocesan Centre staff get more than Cost of Living increases?

A: The Compensation Working Group meets on an annual basis to review salaries, and their recommendations get fed into the budget process.

Q: Is the formula for parish assessment being changed?

A: No.

Q: What's in the Strategic Plan?

A: The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to develop a document that will guide the organization's direction over the next three to five years. We hope to have a draft of the plan ready by October 2016. We have sent out an RFP and are receiving proposals.

Q: What is the Diocese doing to follow through on the TRC recommendations?

A: The budget covers the costs of the Diocese's Ambassador of Reconciliation, the Rev. Riscylla Walsh Shaw, and has created the Robert Falby Endowment for Aboriginal Ministry.

Proposed Changes to the Canons and Constitution

Q: Under the proposed changes, the membership of each regular session of Synod will include four assistant curates. This means that some assistant curates might not attend a regular session of Synod for several years.

A: Anyone can attend Synod as an observer, to watch and learn what is happening. Due to budget restraints, we will not be able to provide meals and accommodation for them.

Q: If Synod approves the changes regarding the removal of mandatory retirement for clergy, when does that go into effect?

A: Immediately.

Q: Will retired clergy be able to attend Synod Forums?

A: Anyone can attend Synod Forums.

Q: I'm in a three-point parish. In addition to choosing one Synod member, can we elect multiple substitute members?

A: Yes, you may elect as many substitute members as you like.

Q: What is the theological rationale for the proposed changes?

A: Please see the "[Constitution and Canon Changes](#)" and "[Working Group on Synod](#)" reports for the rationale.

Q: If the motion by the Rev. Kyn Barker to increase the number of deacons at Synod is approved, when will it come into effect?

A: Because Diocesan Council sent it on to Synod without comment, the motion would need to be passed by two regular sessions of Synod. It would need to be passed by 60 per cent at each Synod.

Q: What about multi-point parishes? Will they only get one lay member of Synod?

A: Yes. Lay membership will be decided by the average Sunday attendance of all the churches in a multi-point parish.

Q: Can Honorary Assistants vote in episcopal elections?

A: Any active cleric holding the Bishop's license can vote in an episcopal election.

Q: Can people with courtesies of the house attend Synod?

A: Yes, if they give advance notice that they are coming. Depending on the level of interest, the Diocese may need to place a cap on the number of people extended courtesies of the house.

Q: What about "clusters"? How many clergy can they send to Synod?

A: For Regular Sessions of Synod, each parish, designated ministry or mission can send one cleric.

Q: Under the proposed changes to committee membership, will Lutherans be eligible?

A: Yes.

Q: How many parishes would get a higher number of lay Synod members if eligibility was based on average weekly attendance, as opposed to average Sunday attendance?

A: It would be unlikely to increase the numbers for any parish.