



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

PRE-SYNOD MEETING REPORT

October 21, 2023

The following is a report from the Pre-Synod meeting for the 162nd Regular Session of Synod of the Diocese of Toronto. The meeting was held online on Oct. 21, 2023.

Welcome

Bishop Riscylla Shaw welcomed everyone to the Pre-Synod Meeting of the 162nd Regular Session of Synod. Bishop Shaw chaired the first part of the meeting and Bishop Kevin Robertson chaired the second part.

Bishop Shaw gave the Land Acknowledgement and opened the meeting with a prayer. She said the purpose of today's meeting was to help prepare Synod members, so that when they arrive at Synod they have a better understanding of the items that will be on Synod's agenda. Today's meeting was recorded and a copy of the meeting slides will be made available on the [2023 Regular Synod webpage](#).

Synod Council's Report to Synod

Sheila Robson gave Synod Council's Report to Synod. The report covers Synod Council's activities from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. She highlighted the Cast and Learn grant program and the master agreement that sets out a process and fee structure and defines the framework for working with Kindred Works. Synod Council's Report to Synod can be found in [Section B of the Convening Circular](#). Bishop Shaw asked if there were questions. There were no questions.

Cast the Net

The Diocese's visioning and strategy process, Cast the Net, was presented by consultants Canon Ian Alexander, Dr. Anita Gittens and the Very Rev. Peter Elliott and by the co-chairs of its steering committee, the Rev. Dr. Alison Falby and Dave Toyce, ODT. Their presentation began with a Bible study focusing on John 21, and then Synod members broke into small groups to discuss the second part of John 21. After the small-group discussions, there was a brief recap and overview of Cast the Net, which began more than a year ago and has held listening sessions with over 1,000 clergy and laity



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in the Diocese. “What we’re bringing to this Synod is the heart and soul of the work – the Vision and Calls,” explained Canon Alexander. “If Synod endorses them, we’ll know we’re on the right track, and can proceed to work with Synod Council on a final report, which we’d plan to complete in the first quarter of 2024.”

Dean Elliott gave an overview of Cast the Net’s Vision and Calls. He showed a graphic of the Vision, at the heart of which is **The Good News of Jesus Christ**. *We are disciples of Jesus Christ, whose Good News is the joy and challenge at the heart of our common life.* Surrounding the core are four other aspects of the Vision:

- **Renewing Spirituality.** *We are renewed daily in our spiritual lives and share our faith with others.*
- **Inspiring Faith in Action.** *We seek justice for all, walk alongside those in need, and respond with loving service and prophetic advocacy.*
- **Reimagining Ministry** – both lay and ordained. *We support and encourage faithful and fruitful ministry by all who serve the life of the Church.*
- **Transforming Diocesan Culture.** *We live and work as the Body of Christ, each member connected to the whole, and each valued for their unique gifts.*

Dean Elliott said the Vision and Calls can be summed up in one line, which is both invitational and imperative: *Followers of Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, serve the world God loves!*

Canon Alexander noted that the Calls are to all parts of the Diocese, not just the Synod Office or the parishes. The Vision, Calls and other information can be found on the [Cast the Net webpage](#).

At the end of the presentation, Synod members were encouraged to ask questions and comment. The questions and comments will be sent to the Cast the Net steering committee for its consideration. Here are some of the questions:



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Q: I don't see the role of finance in our mission, in the same way that I see the role of property in our mission. How can we use our finances and our financial investment policies to enhance our strategic plans? How can we bring those together?

Q: With respect to the comment "one church, one priest is a thing of the past," I wonder if the committee has considered ways of harvesting retired clergy more assertively?

Q: How are we getting discipleship resources together so that people know about them and we can all participate in this important plank of the project? How does Cast the Net align with a strategic plan on church planting, grafting, rebooting and intentional palliative care?

Q: What exactly was meant by having the congregation be representative of the community?

Q: Is the need for mental health underscored somewhere and our need to support that?

Q: I'm not sure what is meant by "liturgical innovation." It can mean so many things. I'd like to see more clarification of that.

Q: What about the ministry of evangelism and inviting people? How are we helping people love Jesus first and then going out into the world?

Q: Could someone comment on the relationship between our calls for discipleship and volunteerism?

Q: How are you going to prioritize the structural changes that the Diocese needs to make in order to do the fundamental change that is called for in Cast the Net?



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Q: What will Cast the Net do to help asylum-seekers integrate into Canadian life?

Overview of Synod

Synod members watched a video to help them prepare for Synod, which will be held Nov. 17-18, 2023 at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North in Richmond Hill. For information about Synod, including the Convening Circular, visit the [2023 Regular Synod webpage](#).

Notices of Motion

Chancellor Marg Creal gave a presentation on Notices of Motion. “As of today, Oct. 21, we have not received any formal Notices of Motion for Synod,” she said. “However, we are aware of one Notice of Motion that is in the process of being formulated. If you anticipate delivering a Notice of Motion, you should know it must be in writing and delivered to Pamela Boisvert, the Secretary of Synod. It is possible to do it from the floor of Synod. However, the Chancellor team urges you to do so in advance of Synod so that a thorough review can be carried out on how other Canons may be unintentionally impacted.”

Bishop Shaw asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

Governance Review

Chancellor Creal made the following presentation about the Governance Review:

“For the benefit of new Synod members and also as a refresher for returning members, I am going to provide you with a timeline of our Pilot Governance Project. It has been a lengthy journey, as we have been at this for seven years.



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“In 2017, the Governance and Decision-Making Working Group was established under the then strategic plan called Growing in Christ 2016-2021. The Working Group’s report and recommendations were considered by Synod in 2019. After more than an hour of discussion, Synod approved a motion to receive and approve the pilot project in principle; the motion needed a simple majority (50 + 1) to pass. However, the motion to change the parts of the Constitution dealing with the pilot project was defeated. The motion required 75% approval in each of the houses of clergy and laity to succeed. It was approved in the house of laity but received 74.3% in the house of clergy. Since the motion failed, the matter was referred to the next Regular Session of Synod.

“In 2021, Synod approved motions dealing with the Constitution and Canons that will allow changes to be made to the Diocese’s governance structure. The changes to the governance structure were undertaken during a two-year pilot project. The changes included:

- Diocesan Council and Executive Board were amalgamated into one body called Synod Council.
- The size of Synod Council is 25-27 members.
- Five committees were established: Audit Committee, Finance Committee, Property Committee, Human Resources Committee, and Risk and Governance Committee.
- Existing committees were amalgamated.
- The committees have decision-making authority delegated to them with parameters established by Synod and Synod Council.

“On Jan. 1, 2022, Synod Council was established and soon after all five committees were up and running. At its February 2022 meeting, Synod Council approved a policy that defined the decision-making authority of Synod Council together with the authority that Synod Council delegates to its committees. The policy gives a committee the ability to approve certain items, recommend them for approval or report up to Synod Council.



“In June 2022, an evaluation of the governance structure was initiated by Joy Packham, ODT, a member of the regional ministry of St. Margaret, Barrie, Trinity, Barrie and Good Shepherd, Stayner, and Robert Hart, ODT, a member of St. James Cathedral. The findings showed that the majority of responses were positive and showed support for the new Synod Council structure, which is considered timely and efficient, fair and transparent, and representative of the overall Diocese. A few responses indicated that it was too soon to tell.

“In November 2022, Synod received the Governance Review report. In May 2023, Joy Packham and Robert Hart submitted a further Governance Review on the new Synod Council structure. It recommends that Synod Council be made permanent, pending fulsome, directed communication to the Diocese, about its structure and the structure and mandate of each the committees. The report, including an Executive Summary, can be found in [Section F of your Convening Circular](#).

“Synod will be asked to consider Motion #4. The motion reads: It will be MOVED and SECONDED that Synod receive the Governance Review report dated May 12, 2023.

“In terms of final steps for the Pilot Governance Project, Synod will be asked at the upcoming meeting to make necessary changes to the Constitution and Canons to make Synod Council permanent. I will speak to these in the Constitution and Canons changes report.”

Bishop Shaw asked if there were any questions. The following questions were asked and Chancellor Creal answered them:

Q: Has there been any coordination with the Cast the Net folks? How are these two important projects interacting?

A: Council has been informed as part of the discussions with Cast the Net, alongside these proposed changes and discussions with respect to the governance structure. We heard from the Cast the



Net report that there was a need to make the structure more nimble and flexible and have the ability to change with circumstances so that there didn't have to be amendment to the Constitution and Canons at every session of Synod.

Q: In the report on governance review, it notes a suggestion to reduce the number of Synod Council meetings so that Synod Council meets quarterly – February, April, June and September. At present, high-risk licensing agreements need to go through both Risk and Governance and be passed by Synod Council. Meeting quarterly dramatically impacts the ability of a parish to proceed on high-risk licensing agreements. Are there any plans to mitigate this?

A: The four meetings stipulated are a minimum, and in point of fact Synod Council meets more regularly. Also, Risk and Governance is enabled to act and review high-risk issues as they come along and report them to Synod Council.

Q: Just for clarification, Synod Council reviews rather than gives the final approval?

A: Synod Council accepts the reports and reviews the decisions of the Risk and Governance Committee.

Q: So theoretically there should be no delay in a parish putting forth a high-risk licensing agreement using the monthly meeting of the Risk and Governance Committee?

A: Yes.

Missional and Outreach Moment

Synod members watched a video about an outreach initiative at St. John, East Orangeville called “Abundant Garden.”

Musical Reflection



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Synod members watched a video of the choir of St. Mark, Port Hope sing Fairest Lord Jesus.

Constitution and Canon Changes

Chancellor Creal made the following presentation about changes to the Constitution and Canons:

“The Constitution and Canons Committee considers amendments or revisions to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese as they arise and reports on how best such revisions or amendments may be incorporated into the Constitution and Canons.

“The Committee submitted its report to Synod Council on Sept. 28, 2023. The changes discussed here today were recommended to Synod for approval by the Synod Council and is included in [Section E of the Convening Circular](#).

“A further report was made to Synod Council at its Oct. 19, 2023 meeting. This information will be available in a Supplementary Convening Circular.

“I will explain all the proposed changes to the Constitution and Canons and then we’ll take questions at the end.

“Changes to The Constitution s. 15(4) and Canon 13 s. 4(6)(a) are being made to add the Executive Director as a secondary signing officer when the Treasurer and Director of Finance is unavailable. There is also a housekeeping change in Canon 13 to replace “Area” with “Suffragan”.

“There are two motions with respect to these changes. They are displayed on your screen. The first, will be **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that Synod approve the changes to The Constitution, as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular. And the second motion will be **MOVED** and



SECONDED that Synod approve the changes to Canon 13 as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.

“The next motion deals with the governance-related changes that I discussed earlier today. It will be MOVED and SECONDED that Synod approve the changes to The Constitution, s.35, Canons 2, 5, 31, 36, 37, 39, and delete Canon 3 in its entirety, as they relate to implementing the new governance structure, as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.

“Finally, as our Diocese grows into its new structure, comprised of five archdeaconries instead of the traditional four episcopal areas, there are a couple of instances where we need to modify sections of The Constitution and suspend certain Canons to allow for the flexibility.

“Therefore, Synod will be asked to consider a motion that will be MOVED and SECONDED that Synod approve the changes to The Constitution, s.3(17) and suspend Canons 43 and 44 until the next Regular Session of Synod, as they relate to areas and area council, as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.”

Bishop Kevin Robertson asked if there were any questions. The following questions were asked and Chancellor Creal answered them:

Q: There was a comment regarding moving the requirement for an audit. Can I get the specifics of that?

A: It increases the threshold for an audit for those parishes with an annual revenue of \$500,000, and I believe that accords with provincial legislation.



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Q: Where might we access the actual changes that are proposed in the canons?

A: In the Convening Circular.

Q: You mentioned a change in governance or a change to the auditing practice and increasing the ceiling that parishes will need to have before they are required to be audited. I want to clarify that any parish that requests a grant or support from the Diocese – does that mean they will not need an audited financial to provide or they will still need an audited financial to provide, even if they are under that \$500,000 threshold?

A: I will get back to you on that.

Missional and Outreach Moment

Synod members watched a video about the ministry of St. George, Allandale.

Financial Overview

Patricia D'Souza, the Diocese's Treasurer and Director of Finance, gave a financial overview of the Diocese. Bishop Robertson said that at Synod there will be two motions related to the Financial Overview. Firstly, it will be **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that Synod receive the Audited Financial Statements for the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto and the Cemetery Fund for the year ended Dec. 31, 2022. And secondly, it will be **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that the firm of Grant Thornton LLP, Chartered Accountants, be appointed to conduct the audit of the Financial Statements of the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto and, on behalf of unitholders, as Auditors for the Cemetery Fund for the year ended Dec. 31, 2023, at a fee to be approved by the Audit Committee. Synod Council forwards both motions with the recommendation that they be adopted.

Bishop Robertson asked if anyone had any questions and Patricia D'Souza answered them:



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Q: What are CTF balances?

A: CTF is the Consolidated Trust Fund of the Diocese. It's the repository where we hold all of the parish and diocesan investment funds.

Q: Could you give me more details about the air rights over the Marriot hotel?

A: The amount from the hotel for 2022 was about \$884,000. We are in a 99-year lease with the hotel and I'm not sure if that can be amended. We get a base rent of \$500,000 each year, and then a percentage of their sales.

Q: How is our support for the national church changing? Are we able to increase our support or is it decreasing? Is that an emerging problem?

A: We get an assessment amount from the national church that the Diocese pays each year to support the national church.

Q: Does the national church require a higher amount from us to enable their work?

A: Every year, we provide an assessment based on our financial statements – our revenue and expenses. It's based on our capacity to pay them.

Q: Have the audited statements been sent out?

A: They're on the website.

Q: The capital investments flow directly into the balance sheet every year so that if the capital goes down, our revenue goes down. Is that correct?

A: Yes

Q: Is that something we've always done and is that in accordance with GAP?

A: Yes, that's something we've always done. The Consolidated Trust Fund is not a separate entity, it's part of the Diocese, and so



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at year end we provide updated financial statements in accordance with GAP.

Q: So in bad years, when the markets go down, our investments net out in our own operating budget in a negative way. Is that correct?

A: Yes.

Q: Does that mean we're having to subsize or constrain our own activities? We don't make any operational decisions based on whether the markets are down, is that what you're saying?

A: No, we don't do that. We continue our operations according to our regular practices.

Q: I would like some clarification as to what consideration goes into renting properties, such as we did with the Marriott hotel, which gives income over a significant period of time. Also, what consideration is given to when we put in housing that a place for worship is maintained in such buildings? How are these decisions made?

A: Synod Council makes the decision if we should sell properties. With regard to a place for worship, that's definitely a metric that's monitored by Synod Council – for example, if there is another parish in the area that is providing worship services. These are taken into account by Synod Council before it makes a decision. (Bishop Robertson added the following comment:) The Property Committee of the Diocese is grappling with some of these very things that you've raised, so it's happening at the Property Committee level as well, in addition to the Synod Council level.

Q: Under the statement of revenue and expenses, under "other income," I see it's over a million dollars higher than it was the previous year. Is that due to the change regarding the Marriott hotel?

A: Yes.



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Q: Are any of the holdings in the CTF investment in REITS (real estate investment trusts)?

A: Not by the Diocese but some parishes have.

Priorities and Plans

Synod members watched a pre-recorded presentation of the Diocese's Priorities and Plans for the next two years and the Financial Budgets for 2024 and 2025. Information can be found in [Section D of your Convening Circular](#). The Synod Council forwards Motion #8 with the recommendation that it be adopted. It will be MOVED and SECONDED that Synod receive the document entitled Priorities and Plans 2024 & 2025 and approve the priorities and the financial budget contained therein and that Synod Council report back to Synod on this plan. It will be further moved that Synod approve that the Assessment Rate, as defined in Canon 4, remain at 24.7% for 2024 and 2025.

Bishop Roberston asked if there were any questions and Patricia D'Souza and Rob Saffrey, the Executive Director, answered them.

Q: Why is there only a part-time staff person to be hired to help facilitate anti-racism and anti-bias work, and what is that person's connection to the Social Justice and Advocacy Committee?

A: We recognized that we do need a staff person but we are also challenged financially with the budget, in terms of lower overall revenue, so we try to balance that as best we can. The person will work closely with the Diversity Officer. The Diversity Officer works closely with all of those other groups, but the direct report is to the Diversity Officer, who currently is Bishop Riscylla.

Q: Where's the priority for youth ministry in the Priority and Plans?

A: The Youth Apprenticeship Program has been a part of the budget since 2022 and it's still part of our budget, so there is support for youth ministry. It's difficult preparing the budget so far in advance, and part of what is going to come out of Cast the Net, the



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budget and resources will have to adjust to. So we're going to have to catch up to Cast the Net.

Q: With the deficits projected for the next couple of years that will presumably be paid off with some funds we've already got, how do we plan to move forward once that money is spent?

A: Hopefully with the rent increases and the work that's being done with the Property Committee, we can erase the budget deficits.

Q: I don't see any support for parishes in relation to LGBTQ2S+ ministry, which is growing in importance.

A: (Bishop Robertson answered this question.) The work you've just identified has always been under the umbrella of our diversity work since we started it. Our efforts will continue to be on those communities.

Q: The work of equity diversity and anti-racism is really big, and to find a person for a half-time position is going to pose challenges. To find the right person to do this job at a part-time level is going to be very challenging because this is a full-time position.

A: (Rob Saffrey answered.) The work is incremental and the first step is to have somebody there to facilitate the work and I do see that we will have to find other resources to boost the work.

Q: Will there be a separate funding option for Cast the Net, so when you're making a donation to FaithWorks, could Cast the Net be a different option? It seems like such a massive undertaking that it will need special support.

A: There are funds set aside for A Season of Spiritual Renewal, outside of the operating budget. Part of the challenge coming out of Cast the Net is how are we going to support that work, both through the operating budget and we may need to go out and ask for additional funds.



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Q: I wanted to have a better understanding of the remaining Our Faith-Our Hope funds and the curacy grant and what are they intended for?

A: (Patricia D'Souza answered.) In 2022 we had \$400,000 allocated for the curacy program, which is part of the operating budget, and \$200,000 for 2023. Because we ended 2022 with an operating surplus, we did not dip into those funds, so we have that \$400,000 and we have a portion of the 2023 amount, so it totals up to be \$506,000 in total, which we're going to allocate to fund the deficit relating to that program in 2024 and 2025.

Q: What does the curacy program do?

A: It helps fund our curacies – the curates that we place in parishes.

Musical reflection

There was a brief musical reflection brought by St. Mark, Port Hope.

Closing

Bishop Robertson thanked everyone involved in organizing and taking part in the Pre-Synod meeting and ended the meeting with a prayer.



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