

# 160th Regular Session of Synod

November 25-27, 2021

## PRE-SYNOD MEETINGS REPORT

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Pre-Synod meetings were held virtually for all four episcopal areas. The Pre-Synod meetings for York-Simcoe and Trent-Durham were held on Oct. 2, and the Pre-Synod meetings for York-Scarborough and York-Credit Valley were held on Oct. 23. Bishop Riscylla Shaw presided at the meetings for York-Simcoe and Trent-Durham while Bishop Kevin Robertson presided at the meetings for York-Scarborough and York-Credit Valley. The following is a report on all four meetings.

## **Opening**

The Bishop welcomed Synod members and thanked all those who helped to organize the meetings. The meetings opened with a land acknowledgment and a prayer.

## **Area Representatives on Diocesan Council**

The Bishop explained that each Episcopal Area elects one clerical and two lay members to Diocesan Council for a two-year term. If Synod approves the Governance Pilot Project, members elected at these Pre-Synod meetings will not serve on the new Synod Council. Instead, there will be five clerical members and five lay members elected at Synod. Only voting members of Synod may be nominated, and only members of Synod may vote.

Diocesan Council generally meets on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August) for three hours, from 4-7 p.m. During this time of pandemic, Council has been meetings on Zoom. Members hear recommendations from various committees, making final decisions based on understanding the Diocese's mission and its budgetary constraints. Membership is an opportunity to serve the Diocese by participating in its governance and enabling its mission. Each elected Area Rep may serve up to three consecutive two-year terms for a maximum of six years.

The results of the elections for Diocesan Council were announced near the end of the meetings.



## **Overview of Synod**

Pamela Boisvert, the Secretary of Synod, presented a video that provided an overview of the upcoming Synod, which will be held virtually on Nov. 26-27. For general information about Synod, see [Section A of the Convening Circular](#).

## **Since Synod in 2019**

A presentation was held in two parts. First, the meeting heard from the Honorary Clerical Secretary and then the chair of the Investment Committee.

The Rev. Andrew MacDonald, the Honorary Clerical Secretary, spoke about what has happened since our last Synod in 2019. A great deal has happened, but the particular information needed for Synod's corporate purposes in the upcoming Synod is covered in Diocesan Council's Report to Synod, which is in [Section B of the Convening Circular](#). This report contains a list of members, Council's response to COVID-19, and a summary of policy items and other major matters, together with a summary of diocesan grants, loans and other funding.

Also, returning Synod members will remember that in 2019, Synod approved three motions brought before Synod by members with respect to single use plastics, developing a diocesan environmental plan and affordable housing. Updates on all three of these topics are included in the Reports to Synod in [Section B of the Convening Circular](#).

In the second part of the presentation, David MacNicol, chair of the Investment Committee, presented a video on socially responsible investing.

## **Diocesan Council's Report to Synod**

The Bishop reminded Synod members that they would not be voting on any motions at the Pre-Synod meetings. The following motion will be considered at Synod:

Diocesan Council forwards this motion with a recommendation that it be adopted:

“It will be MOVED and SECONDED by the Honorary Secretaries that Synod receive the document entitled Diocesan Council’s Report to Synod.”

### **Missional and Outreach Moment**

Synod members watched a video from the people of St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope. The Rev. Jesse Parker spoke about St. John’s spiritual garden, which has been leveraging connections within the congregation and with the local community in Port Hope. The Bishop thanked the people of St. John’s and the wider community for their work, and also thanked Ecclesiastical Insurance for making the Missional and Outreach Moments possible.

### **Governance Working Group**

Mark Hemingway, co-chair of the Governance Working Group, and Chancellor Clare Burns provided an update on the Governance Pilot Project.

Mr. Hemingway explained that in June 2020, Bishop Andrew Asbil reconstituted a Governance Working Group (GWG) consisting of the Rev. Robert Mitchell, the Rev. Jesse Parker, the Rev. Canon Nicola Skinner and Gail Smith. It was co-chaired by the Rev. Canon John Anderson and Mr. Hemingway. The GWG was resourced by Robert Saffrey, Executive Director, Pamela Boisvert, Secretary of Synod, and Livia Assuncao, Administrative and Synod Assistant.

The mandate of the GWG was to review the governance proposal presented at Synod in 2019 and recommend changes for a revised proposal to be presented at Synod in 2021.

Mr. Hemingway said it is important to be reminded of the current governance model of Diocesan Council. The role of Diocesan Council is to act as the ‘Synod between Synods’. That is, to focus on strategic matters, seeing through what Synod had adopted, and focus on policy development. Through surveys, working groups and studies, a common theme emerged

that the existing structure of Diocesan Council was too unwieldy, with an incoherent decision-making structure, and that it is difficult to navigate matters and issues through the process.

Mr. Hemingway spoke about the original proposal for Synod Council membership. At Synod 2019, the following proposal was put forth:

- Diocesan Council and the Executive Board be amalgamated into one body called Synod Council.
- The size of Synod Council be reduced so that there be a maximum of 25 members.
- Six committees be established, each of which would report to Synod Council: Audit Committee, Finance Committee, Property Committee, Human Resources Committee, Programs Committee and Risk and Governance Committee.
- Existing committees be amalgamated.
- Members of the committees would not necessarily be members of Synod.
- The committees would have decision-making authority delegated to them with parameters established by Synod and Synod Council

He said that the following issues with the proposal were raised at 2019 Synod and thereafter:

- Appointed members of Synod Council and chairs of Committees were not required to be members of Synod.
- Elections to Council at Area Pre-Synod Meetings were often acclamations, and as a result, the process did not always ensure it was representative of the diversity of the Diocese.
- If the Areas of the Diocese were reconfigured, the system of electing members of Pre-Synod may no longer be relevant.
- The way in which committee chairs would be selected was not defined.
- The bishops and those whom the Diocesan Bishop would appoint to Council would together hold a majority of votes (60%).
- The proposed Program Committee was too broadly defined to be manageable.

He said the 2019 Synod approved a motion – Motion #7A(ii) – 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 – Motion #9B – 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 only 74.3% in the house of clergy. Since the motion failed, the matter was referred to this session of Synod.

Mr. Hemingway said the GWG has developed the following revised proposal for Synod Council membership. This proposal addresses the issues raised at 2019 Synod, as follows:

- All members of Synod Council will need to be members of Synod. If not currently, the Bishop can make them members of Synod as per s. 3(4) of the Constitution of the Diocese of Toronto, provided they are qualified as per s. 3(1)(a)(b)&(c) of the Constitution.
- All elected members of Council will be elected at Synod, rather than at Pre-Synod meetings.
- A carefully considered slate of nominees will be presented by the nominating committee, ensuring robust elections and a diverse group of candidates.
- The proposed model addresses possible changes in episcopal leadership and Episcopal Areas of the Diocese.
- The committee chairs and up to 5 others will be appointed by the bishop, taking into consideration skills, abilities, and the diversity (geographic, gender, age, theological, and BIPOC) of the Diocese.
- The bishops and those whom the Diocesan Bishop would appoint to Council would together not hold a majority of votes (45.83%) with three bishops; 48% with four bishops; 50% with five bishops).
- The Program Committee will be abolished and the work of the various committees that previously were amalgamated into the Program Committee will each continue to report to Synod Council.

Mr. Hemingway showed a slide that showed the proposed governance structure. He noted that it addressed changes in the number of bishops and areas, and that committees such as Audit, Finance, and Risk must adhere to provisions as set in the Constitution and Canons.

## **Governance Pilot Project**

Chancellor Clare Burns said that, as Mr. Hemingway explained, the Governance Pilot Project was approved at Synod 2019. It required a 50% plus 1 vote, and Synod approved it. In the context of the pilot project, the Diocese needed to make changes to the Constitution and Canons, which are the legal framework that govern the way the Diocese works. That required motions first to amend the Constitution (Motion #10A) and then to lift the operation of certain Canons during the operation of the pilot project. Those motions required 75% to pass. The motion to amend the Constitution failed, as it only achieved 74.3% in the house of clergy.

Under our Constitution, the motion now comes back to Synod, and it only requires 50% plus 1 to pass. That is the first motion members will vote on at Synod. The second motion will be the canonical changes. This is coming for the first time; Synod did not vote on them last time. This motion will require 75% plus 1 to pass in both houses – the house of the clergy and the house of the laity.

Chancellor Burns went on to explain: “Because the pilot project passed originally and we are obliged to bring Motion 10A back to Synod, what’s not incorporated in those motions yet are the changes that the Governance Working Group is now proposing to the Governance Pilot Project, to take into account the issues raised at Synod in 2019.”

She continued: “Therefore, the Agenda Committee and the Bishop are committing to Synod that if the Constitution and Canons changes are passed this time at Synod, the next motion will be 10C and it will be constructed to take account of the pilot project amendments. There is no wording for that motion yet because we are taking feedback and comments from the Pre-Synod meetings in response to the Governance Working Group’s report back to draft a motion that will go to Diocesan Council at its Oct. 28 meeting. There will be a Supplementary Convening Circular posted on the Diocese’s website in early November.”

For more information, see [Section G of the Convening Circular](#).

## Questions & Answers

Following the Governance Pilot Project report, these questions were asked and answers were given:

- Q: How long will the pilot project be in place? How will the feedback/debrief take place and who will be involved?
- A: It is envisioned that the pilot project will go for two years. Under the terms of the Constitution and Canons, there will have to be a check-back at the next Synod. It is currently thought the next Synod will be next year because canons can only be lifted until the next regular session of Synod. In terms of who is going to evaluate the pilot project, that would be Synod Council and the College of Bishops, and then they will construct a process for getting feedback from the Diocese at large as to how the pilot project is working.
- Q: I like the Program Committee from a governance point of view. How many different committees now will be reporting outside of the committee structure directly to Diocesan Council, and how will that be streamlined or governed going forward?
- A: There are currently four committees that were originally envisioned to be encompassed back into the Program Committee. They have very diverse terms of reference, so I think the model is, it will stay as it is, and we will think about whether there is a way to streamline any of that.
- Q: I wanted to ask a question around the second reading of the governance changes. When the governance changes were discussed at the May town hall meetings, the question was asked whether the changes being proposed were substantially different from what was proposed in 2019 and so would require the 75 per cent threshold (to be approved), the vice chancellor indicated that the answer was yes. We hear today that it's being considered for second reading and yet the details are substantially different than in 2019. I'm raising this as a constitutional and canonical point for clarification. As I read Canon 1, it says a motion to enact, amend or repeal the Constitution and



Canons, it doesn't refer to any capacity within that to make a substantial change to the motion. This is a new motion. I don't see how it can be justified as a second reading.

A: No one is suggesting that motion 10C is anything other than a new motion. It is a new motion and it requires 50 per cent plus 1 to pass.

Q: This is not changing a canon?

A: No, the canonical changes are in motion 10B, which is coming back for second reading. The constitutional change motion is coming back for second reading and it requires 50 per cent plus 1 and is not changing at all. The motion with respect to the changes to the canon was not put to a vote last time and will be voted on for the first time, its wording is precisely the same as last time as well. Because it was not voted on last time, it requires 75 per cent plus 1. The amended pilot project is an approval-in-principle and it only requires 50 per cent plus 1.

### **Constitution and Canons**

Chancellor Burns continued with the Constitution and Canons Committee report. She said the Constitution and Canons Committee meets between Synods to look at what other changes may be needed. This time, there is a single change that the Committee is recommending to Synod. The change relates to Canon 15 – Churchwardens.

Canon 15, as it is currently worded, provides that Churchwardens paying any amount greater than \$20 must do so by way of cheque with two signatures. She said this ignores the reality of 21st century parish administration because it does not reflect the options of electronic transfers nor the option of credit cards. The committee has redrafted this section of Canon 15 to take into account those forms of payment so that everyone will be in compliance going forward. There are still checks and balances in terms of multiple signatures. For more information, see [Section F of the Convening Circular](#).

## Questions & Answers

Following the Constitution and Canons report, these questions were asked and answers were given:

- Q: What is the maximum amount that is governed by this change to Canon 15?
- A: There is no maximum amount. The process has to be followed for any amount of money.
- Q: In regards to the e-transfers, it states there would be checks in place to make sure. There is concern at the parish around the double signatures and how you do that with an e-transfer?
- A: Different banks have different platforms. The documentation that you prepare for an e-transfer is exactly the same as you do for a cheque. You would have double signoff on the documentation prior to making an e-transfer. Some platforms allow for double authentication within the system and that would be the ideal way to do it so that each warden would, in essence, go into the bank, approve, and until the second approval is received, the money would not be transferred. If that's not possible, what we would then reply on is the proper documentation and a robust reconciliation process regularly done by the treasurer on a monthly basis.
- Q: This question is about parish credit cards. It was always my understanding that parishes were not allowed to have credit cards under their own name, and I was wondering if you could clarify if the ruling on that has changed at all.
- A: We are aware that some parishes do have credit cards. With the appropriate checks and balances, that is permissible if this change gets approved at Synod. Currently, it's not technically allowed under the Canons but if Synod votes in favour of this change, it will be permissible.

## Area Elections to Diocesan Council

The following were elected or acclaimed in:

### York-Simcoe:

- The Rev. Matthew MacMillan (acclaimed)
- Laura Walton, ODT (acclaimed)
- Richard Lachapelle (acclaimed)

### Trent-Durham:

- Major the Rev. Canon Brad Smith (acclaimed)
- Marion Thompson, ODT (acclaimed)
- Sharon Jones (acclaimed)

### York-Scarborough:

- The Rev. Graham McCaffery (elected)
- Chris Ambidge, ODT (acclaimed)
- William Beatty (acclaimed)

### York-Credit Valley

- The Rev. Johanna Pak (elected)
- Heather MacGregor, ODT (elected)
- Dave Toycen, ODT (elected)

## Financial Overview

In a video, Patricia D'Souza, the Diocese's Controller, provided a financial overview of the Diocese. For more information, see [Section C of the Convening Circular](#).

Diocesan Council forwards the following motion with a recommendation that it be adopted:

“It will be MOVED and SECONDED by the Honorary Secretaries that Synod receive the Financial Report for 2020 from the Interim Director of Finance.”

For more information, see [Section C of the Convening Circular](#).

## **Audited Financial Statements for 2020**

Diocesan Council forwards the following motion with a recommendation that it be adopted:

“It will be MOVED and SECONDED by the Honorary Secretaries that Synod receive the Audited Financial Statements for the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto and the Cemetery Fund for the year ended December 31, 2020.” For more information, see [Section C of the Convening Circular](#).

## **Appointment of Auditors**

Diocesan Council forwards the following motion with a recommendation that it be adopted:

“It will be MOVED and SECONDED by the Honorary Secretaries 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 ending December 31, 2021 at a fee to be approved by the Audit Committee.” For more information, see [Section C of the Convening Circular](#).

## **Priorities and Plans 2021-2022 and Budget for 2022**

Executive Director Robert Saffrey and Controller Patricia D’Souza spoke about the Diocese’s Priorities and Plans 2021-2022 and the Budget for 2022. For more information, see [Section D of the Convening Circular](#).

Diocesan Council forwards the following motion with a recommendation that it be adopted:

“It will be MOVED and SECONDED by the Honorary Secretaries that Synod receive the document entitled Priorities and Plans 2021-2022 and the Financial Budget for 2022 and approve the priorities and the financial budgets contained therein. It will be further moved that Diocesan Council report back to Synod on this plan.”



## Assessment Rate for 2022

Diocesan Council forwards the following motion with a recommendation that it be adopted:

“It will be MOVED and SECONDED by the Honorary Secretaries that the Parish Assessment Rate, as defined in Canon 4, section 2, be set at 24.70% for 2022.” For more information, see [Section E of the Convening Circular](#).

## Questions & Answers

Following the Priority and Plans presentation, these questions were asked and answers given:

- Q: The slide for approving the deficit for 2022 included a projection for 2021 that was about half a million dollar deficit, but in the verbal remarks we seem to be running at deficit, so I wanted a clarification in terms of the likely results for 2021 that we’re expecting, and second, what is the current assessment rate to compare it to the 24.70 rate for 2022.
- A: At the end of September, we were in about a \$400,000 surplus position. I don’t anticipate it will be quite that large by the end of the year but I do believe we will end in a surplus position. What that means, is that in terms of the split, we would be funding more of the deficit from funds from the sale of the properties and less of it from accumulated capital. The answer to the second question is that the assessment rate is unchanged from last year.

## Notices of Motion

Chancellor Clare Burns spoke about Notices of Motion. She said there are two kinds of motions that come to Synod. There are motions that come from the internal processes at the Diocesan Centre and the Committees of the Diocese, and there is also the opportunity for members of Synod to bring motions directly to Synod.

Chancellor Burns said, “As of Oct. 13, 2021, we have not received any motions directly from members of Synod. If you are thinking of bringing a motion, you must know that it has to be done in writing, and has to be

delivered to Pamela Boisvert, the Secretary of Synod. It is possible to do it from the floor of Synod, but please, on behalf of myself and the Vice-Chancellors, if you are planning to do a motion, please do so in advance. We would be happy to help you draft it and think through all the implications.”

### **Motions from Diocesan Council**

Chancellor Burns said there is a motion from Diocesan Council coming to Synod. “I would like to take a minute and explain it to you,” she said. “It relates to our tithe from the Ministry Allocation Fund. We decided a long time ago as a Diocese that we would take 10 % of the Ministry Allocation Fund and contribute it on a rolling basis to projects or ministry in an area geographically outside our Diocese. This motion is also a little different because it contains recitals, which is the story of how the motion came to be. I will walk you through it.”

She read the following motion:

### **Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and Communities**

The Diocesan Council forwards the following motion with the recommendation that it be adopted:

It will be MOVED and SECONDED that:

“Whereas the Diocese of Toronto is committed to the work of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and Communities;

“And Whereas the Diocese has made a series of investments in the work of such reconciliation by among other things:

- Providing through The Diocese of Toronto Foundation an annual grant through the Robert Falby Memorial Endowment for Aboriginal Ministry;
- Providing through FaithWorks ongoing annual support of the Toronto Urban Native Ministry (TUNM);
- In 2021, approving through Diocesan Council a tithe from the Ministry Allocation Fund (MAF) in the amount of \$300,000 to the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre to support the “Spirit Garden” project;
- In 2018, approving through Diocesan Council a tithe from the Ministry Allocation Fund (MAF) in the amount of \$250,000 to the Anishnawbe Health Foundation to support the new “Anishnawbe Health Toronto” project; and

- In 2014, granting an Our Faith-Our Hope grant of \$500,000 to the Council of the North.

“And Whereas the Diocese wishes to engage in a process of formation to better understand how it can further support and engage in the work of reconciliation in an intentional and fruitful way;

“Now therefore the Diocese of Toronto, commits for the period between now and Dec. 31, 2026, to making such formation a financial priority of the Diocese by spending up to the current balance of the MAF tithe (on a rolling basis) for this purpose. For greater clarity, this motion is not intended to fetter the discretion of Diocesan Council to authorize spending internal to the Diocese from other sources for this purpose.”

### **Missional and Outreach Moment**

The second Missional and Outreach Moment was a video from the people of Grace Church, Markham. The Rev. Canon Nicola Skinner shared their experience with the development of a community garden and a recording studio. She also told how the church worked with the Markham Vaccinates program to help elders get their vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ecclesiastical Insurance was thanked for making the Missional and Outreach Moments possible.

### **Thank you to our Sponsors**

The Bishop thanked all of the sponsors of Synod:

- Burgendy Asset management Limited,
- Canso Investment Counsel Limited,
- Ecclesiastical
- AON
- Trinity College
- Wycliffe College

### **Closing**

The meetings concluded with prayer.

