British Columbia Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

BC Synod Council is our BC Synod Bishop, elected rostered leaders, and elected lay people from around BC who meet in spring & fall and these highlights have been prepared to be shared widely around BC.
As you are reading these highlights consider three other people with whom you could share this newsletter.

BC Synod Council Highlights - Fall 2022 Meeting

This was the first opportunity for the BC Synod Council, 10 women and 2 men elected in October 2021, to meet in–person after having to meet on Zoom. The comment of "I thought you were shorter/taller" was heard several times with smiles. We worked well together with laughter and good conversation around the table, attending to a tremendous amount of business since we hadn't been able to meet prior to the summer.

We began our Synod Council meeting with "Dwelling in the Word" sharing the biblical story of creation. Creation became a theme together with "Ten Fingers for Climate Justice" by Cynthia Moe-Lobeda for devotions at start and conclusion of each session.

In the fall BC Synod Council meeting, we:

- tabled necessary discussion of Synod Office future staffing to an online Zoom conversation;
- discussed that the role of treasurer is becoming more challenging in general; some work to be done to look at supporting congregations' treasurer needs;
- affirmed support for Matsqui Lutheran, Matsqui following the challenging experience with a group of 'new' attendees wanting to move the congregation out of the ELCIC;
- received correspondence from congregations written as long ago as March of this year and were able to respond to some requests made (had to table some correspondence to a subsequent meeting);
- spoke about workplace safety and employer responsibilities after hearing of a few dangerous incidents for pastors in congregations;
- determined to assist Faith, Kelowna as they continue to rebuild and recover from the fire;
- approved extra funding and subsidies for the rostered leaders study conference to allow an extra day so rostered leaders can bring their children/spouses along. This is a vital time away for everyone and a chance to provide support and encouragement to all;
- made a commitment to engage in anti-racism, anti-oppression, SOGI, etc. training as BC Synod Council at every meeting;
- had discussion about the reform of the episcopal election, sparked by correspondence received. Received information from other synods who have been doing this work;
- committed to doing research to draft guidelines for part-time ministry to ensure the well-being of both congregations and leaders;
- heard about the Orange Shirt Youth reconciliation event in Kamloops; the CLWR funding for a resiliency centre and grocery cards for those still out of their homes due to last year's flooding; the hope for some synod wide learning events including congregational work with Susan Beaumont; a resumption of the work with Karoline Lewis on sexism in the church and a synod side conflict skills development workshop with mediator Julia Menard;
- received a proposal for hiring a missioner to experiment with new ways of gathering as church;
- spoke about the bishop's upcoming sabbatical;
- prayed and worshipped together.

Rev. Aneeta Saroop was acclaimed Vice-Chairperson of BC Synod Council, she is the first woman of colour to be elected to BC Synod Council!

The Climate Justice Action Group provided materials for use by Synod Council and to be prepared for distribution to BC congregations for support in addressing matters of climate justice

We received reports from Council Committees:

- Communications
- Governance
- Constitution

Noted that the committees have not all met and that constitutional changes for congregations have been tabled to next meeting

In devotions, reflecting on care of creation, the idea of having a home bidet was suggested as a means of decreasing dependence on toilet paper.
(Check out hellotushy.com)

We received Rev. Nicolas Alexander on the BC Synod Roster as Newly Ordained

Synod Council heard that the work of our Interim Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Rebekah Swanson has focused on-

- *establishing BC Synod archives;*
- *researching website needs;*
- *looking into future congregational training opportunities;*
- *addressing projects as needed.*

We welcome to the BC Synod Rev. Barbara Groote who had been serving in the Synod of Alberta and the Territories.

BC Synod Council is planning a retreat in the New Year. We invite continued prayers for the work we do together as a synod.

We look forward to the June 29th - July 2nd 2023 Special National Convention in Calgary

With the BC Synod Treasurer's report, we noted:

- there have been funds being set aside for ministry opportunities; through pandemic times these have not been accessed. Synod council will be preparing policies and application forms to encourage communities to apply. These will include establishment of an Emergency Response Fund & Campus Ministry opportunities;
- that the BC Synod has assisted congregations with two rounds of COVID relief grants over the period 2020 to 2022;
- there will be an increase to pulpit supply and salary guidelines in 2023. The pastoral supply rate had not been adjusted in ten years;
- the cost of living increase for salary guidelines, based on Consumer Price Index, is 7.7%;
- our collective gratitude for the tremendous gifts that Mt. Olivet, North Vancouver and Good Shepherd, Victoria gave to the BC Synod from the sale of their buildings as they were closing their congregations. These gifts will provide support and funding to seed new Lutheran ministries across BC.

Gathering for the first time as BC Synod Council, we were warmly welcomed to meet at Mount Olive in Surrey. A shout out to Mount Olive for hosting us! We greatly appreciated your hospitality! Woo hoot!

Members of BC Synod Council 2021-2024 include:
Bishop Kathy Martin; Rev. Eric Krushel, Chairperson (Coquitlam); Rev. Aneeta Saroop, Vice-Chairperson (Vancouver); Tarynn McKenzie, Secretary (Victoria);
Jerry Nieman, Treasurer (Coquitlam); Robin Dielissen (Prince George); Rev. Jane Gingrich (Kamloops); Karen Lee (Vernon); Rev. Brenda Nestegaard Paul (Port Alberni); Cathy Preibisch (Chilliwack); Lisbeth Scott (Comox);
Rev. Kristen Steele (Langley)

Thank you for sharing these Fall 2022 BC Synod Council Highlights widely!