

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Thursday, March 12, 2022

Members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) gathered together at 10 a.m. ET, either in person at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ont. or online via Zoom.

Worship

The Rev. Karen Egan led opening worship.

Opening Formalities

CoGS voted to approve the agenda for the meeting.

Dismantling Racism Task Force

Members of the Dismantling Racism Task Force presented the draft recommendations resulting from their research into the experiences of racialized groups within the church. Irene Moore-Davis, a member of the task force, began by noting that this process was just beginning: "Dismantling racism doesn't happen overnight."

The Task Force presented the following recommendations to CoGS

1. Establish a permanent National Advisory Council on Dismantling Racism
 - a. To conduct an initial and ongoing review of church structures, culture, policies and practices pertaining to racism and anti-racism
 - b. To develop and implement a national action plan to move from promoting diversity to living out full inclusion, equity and belonging at all levels of the church (in both membership and

leadership)

- c. Whose membership reflects the communities of the church most impacted by racism, namely BIPOC and those with experience in anti-racism ministry and leadership. The Advisory Council would strive for geographic, gender, ethnocultural, lay and clergy representation to the degree reasonably possible and delineate appropriate supportive roles for white allies on the Council
2. With input from the National Advisory Council, conduct consultations with BIPOC Anglicans to gather information on a national, diocesan and local level through
 - a. Establishing virtual and in-person (if possible) safe space gatherings for various demographic groups (representing different backgrounds of race, gender, clergy/lay, etc.). Participants would share their hopes for the Church and concerns regarding racism within it. They would also share how they envision the Church dismantling racism (locally and nationally)
 - b. Compiling this research into reports that can be considered and acted upon by diocesan and national bodies of the Church.
3. Create a full-time position at the

national level to animate diocesan and national anti-racism activity, including

- a. Assisting dioceses in finding regional consultants to help inform and manage the direction of the work to encourage broad collaboration where beneficial
 - b. Supporting existing affinity groups/internal stakeholders committed to racial justice to engage in this work more effectively
 - c. Identifying and facilitating possible external funding sources and providing administrative support towards anti-racism efforts across the whole church
4. Coordinate anti-racism education and training for the committees, councils and staff of General Synod
 5. Develop a process/framework to examine and support the further development of anti-racism curriculum in seminaries and other theology programs while compiling supportive resources that can be used broadly on other formation contexts (i.e. Sunday schools, lay training programs, seasonal programs, youth ministry, etc.)
 6. Develop a Dismantling Racism Grant for innovative projects to meet local diocesan needs.
 7. Form an online resource hub for anti-racism educational and liturgical resources (i.e. Sunday school, worship, annual celebrations and commemorations, etc.)
 8. Encourage all dioceses across Canada to engage with the full historical realities of the Anglican Church's involvement in slavery, residential schools and other forms of racial injustice (per TRC Call to Action #59) as well as its historical work in striving to dismantle racism.
 9. Continue to walk with, support and

engage in ongoing dialogue with the Self-Determining Indigenous Church while encouraging all institutions, policies, programs and practises to comply with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* per TRC Call to Action #48

CoGS then broke into small groups to discuss the recommendations. Comments included hopes that the church would adequately promote participation in anti-racism programming not just at the national level, but down to the dioceses; encouragement to build programming that includes methods and structures familiar to Indigenous Anglicans; and questions about which theoretical frameworks for anti-racism would be applied—and which ones would be discarded as inappropriate.

Green Shoot Moment

The primate shared a “green shoot” story from the diocese of Brandon in western Manitoba, which is beginning to resume its program of welcoming new Canadians and permanent residents. After having reduced service during the Omicron wave, the diocese is cautiously re-expanding its program of Bible study and worship for a congregation of people from Africa and South America.

The primate's reading included a request for CoGS members to pray for diocese of Brandon clergy, including Don Bernhardt, dean at St. Matthew's Anglican Cathedral, and Bishop William Cliff as the ministry continues.

Members took a break for lunch from noon until 1:30 p.m.

Bible Study

Small groups read and reflected upon Luke 24:21a-35.

Faith, Worship and Ministry

Eileen Scully, director of Faith, Worship and Ministry presented a series of motions which were previously intended to be recommendations for resolutions at the 2022 General Synod. With General Synod now postponed to 2023, CoGS voted on them directly as actions of the council itself.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General Synod approve the ... Revised Terms of Reference for the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee to replace that which appears in Appendix B, Page 147 of the 19th Edition of The General Synod Handbook.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General Synod

1. extend its deep gratitude to Anglican youth ministry leaders for their essential ministry to young people in the midst of their many challenges, including psychological struggles, even when these ministers are themselves exhausted and under-resourced
2. encourage dioceses to meet these expressions of gratitude by committing to engage their own discernment of the concrete ways in which they can listen to young people and youth ministry leaders in order to support local youth ministries in concrete ways
3. encourage dioceses to implement structures that support the mental well-being of all leaders, with a focus on those who minister with young people
4. encourage dioceses to commit to regular and intentional practices of upholding young people in prayer
5. direct the Faith, Worship, and Ministry committee to oversee the creation of a national Cycle of

6. Prayer for Youth Ministries, direct the Youth Secretariat to work with dioceses to work towards the implementation of youth mental health resources, including professionally accredited youth mental health training

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General Synod

- a) direct the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee and FWM staff to undertake a theological and methodological review of the existing Anglican Church of Canada Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue (1988) for the purposes of updating and expanding said guidelines such that they continue to reflect the increasingly diverse multi-faith context of Canada and are understood as connected to the Anglican Church of Canada's wider work of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and seeking right relationship among all people of faith in Canada.
- b) And further direct that this review be done in consultation with appropriate international Anglican, Indigenous Anglican, full communion, and ecumenical partners in order to seek relative consistency and common vision in this area
- c) Communicate the updated and expanded guidelines to dioceses and other relevant networks throughout the church to promote awareness and engagement.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General Synod authorize the following texts from the English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988, for trial

use and evaluation for a period of one year, where permitted by the Ordinary:

- Gloria in Excelsis
- The Nicene Creed
- The Apostles' Creed
- Agnus Dei and Alternative
- Te Deum Laudamus and Versicles and Responses
- Benedictus and Alternative
- Magnificat and Alternative

Resolution

Be it resolved that his Council of General Synod

- Receive the document produced by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada entitled *Walking Together in Canada* (2021) as an ecumenically agreed response by the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in Canada to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III) and its 2018 published text *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church – Local, Regional, Universal*
- Commend the *Walking Together in Canada* document for study and consideration by Canadian Anglicans engaged in review of models of synodal governance in the Anglican Church of Canada as a potentially useful ecumenical resource in support of that work.
- Direct the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee to see to the forwarding of *Walking Together in Canada* to ARCIC III, the Anglican Communion Office, and the Anglican Consultative Council as a contribution to the work of international ecumenical reception.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of

General Synod forward the following motion to the next session of the General Synod:

Be it resolved that this General Synod

- receive the Final Report (2017-2020) of the Anglican-United Dialogue of Canada, including the appendices Sharing Ministry Ecumenically and A Ministry of Unity
- commend these materials to the church for wider study
- direct the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee to continue research and work on the dialogue's recommendations for encouraging and supporting Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) partnerships between Anglican and United Church of Canada congregations and non-congregational ministries at the local level
- continue to pursue with the United Church of Canada the recommendation first affirmed Resolution A141 of General Synod 2016 to "establish a national coordinating committee for unity and mission between at least our two churches."

In-Camera Session

CoGS members went in-camera again for 1 hour to continue discussion of the #ACCToo open letter.

Members took a break from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Strategic Planning Working Group

Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) session 2 began with discussion and reactions to the Transformational Aspirations, with the majority of feedback from council members expressing a positive response, although some members suggested that the aspirations were somewhat vague.

The SPWG responded by encouraging members to view the aspirations as a compass, not a roadmap.

CoGS then discussed questions around the exact phrasing of the aspirations, particularly surrounding the phrasing of the affirmations of commitment to “dismantling racism and colonialism” and “justice for all people.” Members suggested adding specific mention to gender-based discrimination and whether it was redundant to include “justice for all” in the statement on stewardship as well as having a separate statement on equality.

In response to that discussion, CoGS and SPWG members amended the following motions to accept the aspirations as drafts, leaving their specific wording open to further discussion.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod affirm the five draft Transformational Aspirations as the guiding principles for the work of the Council and Office of the General Synod until the next session of General Synod.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the General Secretary be asked to:

- communicate the draft Aspirations across the church and
- invite ideas for tangible next steps; and
- identify ways to use the draft Aspirations to guide the work of the Office of the General Synod.

Resolution

Be it resolved that CoGS, through SPWG, use the next year to articulate an appropriate purpose and role for

the Office of the General Synod, reflecting current and future contexts, based on the draft Transformational Aspirations and a new “Listening 2.0” process.

Resolution

Be it resolved that CoGS, in consultation with Sacred Circle, invite the whole church into a broad conversation on effective structures, governance and use of resources, leading to recommendations to the next session of General Synod.

Announcement of Josie De Luca’s Retirement

CoGS honoured Josie De Luca on the occasion of her retirement from the position of travel & event planner.

Evening Prayer

The Rev. Louise Peters led the council in evening prayer.

Council members at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre enjoyed a trivia game and evening social from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.