

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Saturday, November 7, 2020

Members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) gathered together online at 11 a.m. EST via Zoom conference.

Opening Worship

The Rev. Louise Peters, chaplain to CoGS, led the opening prayer.

Orders of the Day

Cynthia Haines Turner, co-chair of the Planning and Agenda Team, read out the orders of the day.

Dismantling Racism

The primate brought forward a motion for membership of the Dismantling Racism Task Force, which carried.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod appoint the following members to the Dismantling Racism Task Force established by the Council at their June 2020 meeting:

- Dale Drozda (Territory of the People)
- Brittany Hudson (Diocese of Toronto)
- Aleshia Johnson (Diocese of Toronto)
- The Rev. Vivian Lam (Diocese of New Westminster)
- Irene Moore-Davis (Diocese of Huron)
- Catherine Pate (Diocese of British Columbia)
- The Rev. Canon Norm Wesley

(Diocese of Moosonee)

Pension Committee

Bob Boeckner, trustee for the Pension Committee, said that the General Synod Pension Plan was "very strong", pointing to a notable surplus at the end of December 2019.

He put forward a number of motions to amend regulations of Canon VIII, including for child allowance payments and the long-term disability (LTD) plan. All were carried.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the following recommendations of the Pension Committee to amend:

- Regulation 1 of the General Synod Regulations effective January 1, 2020;
- Regulations 3 and 5 of the General Synod Regulations effective January 1, 2021; and
- Regulation 15 of the General Synod Regulations effective December 1, 2020.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the Endowment Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada Regulation, made pursuant to Section 4 of Canon VIII, for enabling Child

Allowance payments out of the Endowment Fund effective January 1, 2020.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the recommendations of the Pension Committee to wind up LTD—Pre-2005 effective August 14, 2020 and return any money remaining, to the remaining claimants under the Pre-2005 plan and approve the changes attached to this [Pension Committee] report as in Appendix 2.

ACIP/Indigenous Ministries

National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald said that work continued on the development of the self-determining Indigenous church. Since the last meeting of CoGS, COVID-19 had reached into more Indigenous communities, which had created challenges. The pandemic and its impacts, he said, had exacerbated what was already a very stressful situation in many communities.

The archbishop introduced council to the *Sacred Teachings* podcast, a product of Anglican Video and the Office of the National Indigenous Archbishop. Featuring guest speakers and hosts, the podcast would tackle many issues that affect both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and provide insights into Indigenous life. It is meant to promote understanding and reconciliation, showing what is happening across the land. Thus far, five podcasts have been produced. MacDonald played council members a clip from one episode of the series led by the Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor, "Sacred Teachings: Stolen", which included an interview with the Rev. Vivian Seegers.

MacDonald and Sheba McKay, Anglican Council

of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) member for the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh, then read out samples from work of the focus group of ACIP and the Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle related to the self-determining Indigenous church. These samples included work being done on the Covenant and "Our Way of Life", which are comparable to constitution and canons. They are currently in very provisional form and will undergo further revisions. After ACIP finishes its work, the Covenant and Our Way of Life will be passed on to elders and communities across the land.

The presentation by ACIP and Indigenous Ministries concluded with a reminder that the next gospel jamboree would take place on Nov. 28. Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls thanked MacDonald and McKay for the podcasts and presentation and said CoGS looked forward to hearing more about the covenant.

Council members took a break from 12:30 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.

A Searching World—Community

Council members watched another video from the Anglican Foundation of Canada, *We Say Yes*.

They then split into breakout groups to continue their reflections on the triennial theme, "A Changing Church, A Searching World, A Faithful God." Saturday's session included discussion on the second part of the theme, "A Searching World".

Council broke for lunch from 1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Coffee Catch-Up

Members had a chance to socialize over Zoom for 15 minutes before resuming the day's business. They then watched another Anglican

Foundation video, *We Say Hope*.

2021 Budget

Treasurer and CFO Hanna Goschy presented the report of the Financial Management Committee on the 2021 budget. She reported a budget surplus which was almost entirely due to COVID-19. The suspension of all travel for staff in 2020 had resulted in significant expense savings. General Synod had also received two months of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and may be eligible for more. Reductions in staff costs led to additional savings.

Dioceses have been steadfastly supportive of General Synod ministries, Goschy said. She and the primate were in conversation with diocesan bishops early in the year and many had affirmed their proportional giving commitments for 2020.

"I think that speaks incredibly to the commitment and support of General Synod ministries by dioceses across the country," Goschy added. Despite the uncertainty that COVID-19 had created for people across Canada and around the world, dioceses were committing funds close to what they had at the beginning of year before the pandemic.

Goschy put forward two budget motions, which both carried.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approve 2021 Operating Budget with a surplus of \$21,234.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approve 2021 Capital Budget with expenditures of \$42,400.

Council members also voted on a motion for a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MOU) on a possible change of location for General Synod, from 80 Hayden Street in Toronto to sharing space with ecumenical partners.

The primate said that the MOU expressed a desire for due diligence in exploring all possible options. General Synod staff were not fully committed to the option, but interested enough to explore it further. The motion was carried.

Resolution

That the Council of General Synod authorize General Synod staff to enter into a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding with ecumenical partners and to work towards a physical move into shared lease space.

PWRDF

Will Postma, executive director of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), and board member David Harrison gave an update on the work of PWRDF. Harrison noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in particular needs for partners overseas, while travel restrictions had impacted the work of PWRDF staff members. Since the onset of the pandemic, PWRDF had focused on staying in touch with its partners and their needs.

Continuing to support its humanitarian and development work, PWRDF had allocated \$200,000 for partners within two weeks of the pandemic being declared in March 2020. Between April and October it made 29 disbursements, including to new partners and programs in Iraq, Haiti and Uganda. It provided an additional \$120,000 in new funding to partners in Kenya, Bangladesh and Canada, and was working with partners in South Sudan and

Tanzania to reallocate and increase budgets to support COVID-19 programs.

To date, PWRDF has allocated \$300,000 to seven different responses: HelpAge Canada, which delivers food, medicine and other supports to vulnerable seniors across Canada; Village Health Works in Burundi; ACT Alliance global response; Partners in Health global response; the National Council of Churches in Kenya, in their support for the Kakuma Refugee Camp; the Indigenous Birth Centre in Edmonton; and UBINIG in Bangladesh.

PWRDF had also received a \$1.9-million grant from the Government of Canada to extend its All Mothers and Children Count program for maternal and child health in Mozambique, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. The grant will help fund measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including personal protective equipment, handwashing and hygiene facilities and access to reliable health information.

At the end of the PWRDF report, Primate Nicholls shared the news that Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of the United Kingdom, had died at the age of 72. Sacks had spoken at the Lambeth Conference in 2008 and the primate is an avid reader of his works. She highlighted his book on interfaith relationships between Christians, Muslims and Jews, in which Sacks described the three as siblings under God. The primate asked for prayers by the council of "thanksgiving and remembrance for a man of faith."

Council adjourned for the day at 4 p.m.