

Minutes of the 114th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land
Saturday, October 21, 2017
Douglas Mennonite Church
1571 Rothesay Street

Registration opened at 8 am on Saturday, October 21st, 2017 and closed at 3 pm.

1st Sitting, Saturday, October 21, 2017

The 1st sitting of Synod commenced at **11:30 am with the Opening Eucharist of the Synod**. Within the context of the liturgy The Rev. Heather McCance was installed as Diocesan Ministry Developer. At the conclusion of the Eucharist the 1st sitting adjourned at 12:10 pm. Following lunch and the conclusion of Faith Horizons, the 2nd sitting was called to order.

2nd Sitting, Saturday, October 21, 2017

The 2nd sitting commenced at 3:55 pm with the Rt. Rev. Donald Phillips, Bishop, in the chair. The Bishop issued a welcome to all delegates and new clergy and introduced the head table: Mr. Arthur Braid, Chancellor; Mrs. Mary Williams, Chair, Synod Agenda Committee and Mr. Bob Wedlake, Secretary of Synod.

Report of the Credentials Committee

The Chair of the Credentials Committee, Mrs. Claudine Thagard, reported that as of 3 o'clock, a total of 51 of a possible 86 clergy had registered and 107 of a possible 148 laity had registered, constituting a quorum.

Bishop's Declaration of the Synod

The Bishop declared this 114th Session of Synod to be regularly called and ready to proceed in accordance with the Constitution.

Appointment of Honorary Secretaries

Moved by: Mary Williams

Seconded by: Bob Wedlake

RESOLVED THAT the following be appointed as Honorary Secretaries for the 114th Session of Synod: Mrs. Susan Suppes & Mrs. Patricia Norman.

CARRIED.

Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Mary Williams

Seconded by: Bob Wedlake

RESOLVED THAT the Agenda for Synod be as follows:

Announcements

Questions & Answers for Clarification

Resolution B-1 request for coadjutor bishop

Closing procedures

- Announcements
- Bishop's Concurrence

Closing prayer

Adjournment

CARRIED.

Mary Williams instructed Synod members on how to address the Synod if they wished to speak as well as giving several house-keeping instructions.

At 4:05 pm Bishop Phillips addressed the Synod outlining the rationale for putting the question of the election of a bishop coadjutor to the Diocesan Council, who subsequently recommended to the Synod this be the path for the election of the next bishop for the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

The Bishop explained that every diocese within the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land must follow Provincial Canon 9, and appropriate sections of the Provincial Constitution for the election of a bishop. He outlined the two paths which can be taken for electing a bishop, explaining the time lines which are in place by Canon for each of these different paths.

Path 1 – Current bishop retires and vacates office. The process for electing a new Diocesan bishop cannot begin more than 30 days prior to the vacancy, and not later than 30 days afterwards. Therefore the process must begin within 30 days of the vacancy. The six diocesan members of the Search Committee are elected/selected by the Diocesan Council; the Metropolitan appoints three other members (1 bishop, 1 clergy 1 lay) from among the Provincial Panel. The fully formed Search Committee must meet within 72 days after the vacancy. The Search Committee elects its own chair and appoints a secretary. The Provincial Canon has a strict time line from when the retiring bishop leaves to when the election must be held.

Path 2 – Election of a Coadjutor bishop. If Synod opts to elect a coadjutor Bishop in 2018, the process can begin as soon as the Search Committee is appointed. Many of the time lines in Provincial Canon 9 do not apply. The Diocesan Council can appoint the Search Committee at any time after permission to elect a coadjutor has been granted. The Search Committee can begin its work as soon as the Metropolitan appoints the three provincial representatives to the Committee. The current diocesan bishop is also a member of the Search Committee in this path. Work on the diocesan profile can begin promptly.

Role of the Search Committee: The Search Committee prepares a profile, which is to be distributed 65 days prior to the Synod. The Search Committee receives applications for the position of bishop from a variety of sources and ensures the candidates meet the criteria established by the Provincial Constitution (section 6). They determine what information should be obtained from each nominee, obtain the material of each candidate and present, in a uniform format, the material to the Synod.

Rationale for making the request for a Coadjutor bishop:

Bishop Phillips shared with the Synod his reasons for requesting the Diocesan Council consider asking the Synod to elect a Coadjutor bishop, indicating that by the time he retires he will have served over 18 years in episcopal ministry. He wants to offer whatever ministry and opportunity he can to help us engage ministry in the future in the best possible way we can. Prior to his assuming the office of bishop there was a seven-month gap between Bishop Lee's departure and Bishop Phillips commencing his ministry as Bishop. He felt there was not much positive that came from 'the gap' and in fact some things were not able to be acted upon or were dropped in the gap.

The election of a Coadjutor bishop provides for a smoother process of Episcopal transition. Unlike in parish ministry when an Interim Priest is appointed there is no interim bishop in the 'gap' between the ending of one episcopacy and the commencement of another.

The Bishop announced that he would definitely retire within two months of a coadjutor bishop being in place. He stated he will not meddle in the exploratory or discernment process of the Search Committee, nor will he participate in any area meetings, nor be part of the group that prepares the profile.

At 4:20 pm the Bishop entertained questions for clarification.

Presentation of Motion B-1 – Request for a Coadjutor bishop

At 4:25pm Archdeacon Mawejje moved Resolution B-1 on behalf of the Diocesan Council.

Presentation of Motion B-1 – Request for a Coadjutor bishop

Moved by: The Ven. Godfrey Mawejje

Seconded by: The Ven. Jennifer Sisson

RESOLVED THAT the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert’s Land request permission from the Metropolitan of the Province of Rupert’s Land to elect a Coadjutor Bishop in 2018 prior to the retirement of the current Bishop.

Presentation by the mover:

The Provincial Canons & Constitution provides two paths for Episcopal transition. The first is a retirement and then a process begins. The second path is to elect a coadjutor bishop prior to the retirement of the bishop in the See. The Coadjutor bishop assumes the See upon the vacancy (retirement) of the sitting bishop.

The second path allows the Diocese to continue with a bishop in place, with no gap in Episcopal leadership. Election of a coadjutor gives the diocese more time to discern what the future of the diocese is. This option enables the new bishop briefly to observe while the current bishop is still in place. This option does not disrupt episcopal ministry. This path is proposed after consultation with the Archdeacons and the Diocesan Council of the Diocese. This motion is put to Synod asking it to approve the election of a coadjutor bishop.

Bishop Phillips noted, with some embarrassment, that he did not open this sitting with prayer and consequently offered the prayer for a synod as prescribed in the Book of Alternative Services.

Request for a vote by ballot

Moved by: The Rev. Canon Peter Flynn

Seconded by: Evan Young

RESOLVED THAT Synod vote by ballot.

For: 51

Against: 86

The motion was **DEFEATED.**

Canon Flynn circulated a position paper suggesting that this request for a coadjutor is rushed; that the current bishop should not be part of the search committee, suggesting that the bishop simply being present may be compromising; concern about the extra cost to the diocese in having a second bishop. He suggested that the diocese requires distance and time for reflection and discernment of where we, as a diocese, are going.

Debate on the resolution ensued, and at 5:25 pm, following a period of silence and prayer for the Synod, the question was put.

Resolution B – 1

RESOLVED THAT the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land request permission from the Metropolitan of the Province of Rupert's Land to elect a Coadjutor Bishop in 2018 prior to the retirement of the current Bishop.

For: 82

Against: 57

The motion was **CARRIED.**

The Bishop thanked members for all their comments. The concerns raised were very much appreciated and will be taken seriously as we move through this process. He thanked the Synod for its counsel and guidance.

Closing Procedures

At 5:30 the Bishop offered thanks to the Secretary of Synod, Bob Wedlake; Chair of the Agenda Committee, Mary Williams; Chancellor, Art Braid; the delegates for their time and discernment; as well as the Archdeacons and Diocesan staff.

Bishop's concurrence

The Bishop declared his concurrence with the Act and Resolutions of the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

The Bishop offered a closing prayer.

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Mary Williams

Seconded by: Bob Wedlake

RESOLVED THAT 114th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land be adjourned.

CARRIED.

The Rev. Deacon Lynn MacDonald gave the dismissal.