

### **144<sup>th</sup> (2018) Synod Meeting Highlights**

Commissioners from the five presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario (le Synode du Québec et de l'Est de l'Ontario) gathered on Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 within Knox Presbyterian Church, Vankleek Hill, Ontario for the 144<sup>th</sup> synod meeting.

The Moderator of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Synod (2017), the Rev. Dr. Katherine Burgess and the Rev. James Douglas, host minister, opened the meeting with worship at 2:00 p.m. Friday afternoon, including the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Moderator's message was entitled "Holy Ground".

Following opening worship and the constitution of the court, a memorial time was held recognizing the teaching and ruling elders from the five presbyteries whose death occurred since the synod last met.

The business of the 2018 synod continued with the election and installation of its Moderator, the Rev. Samer Kandalajt from the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry. Beyond the consideration of reports, the synod meeting included times for education, fellowship and worship. On Saturday morning the synod moderator led worship which included a message entitled "The God of heaven will give us success...".

The synod was blessed to hear two speakers as part of the 2018 annual synod meeting. On Friday evening the Rev. Shahrzad Kandalajt, minister at Barrhaven Presbyterian Church in the Presbytery of Ottawa, spoke on Fresh Expressions. It is a movement that aims to reach out to unchurched people in a unique and new way. The movement is undergirded by prayer, on-going listening, and works alongside the existing church. Fresh Expressions' method of making and nurturing disciples is by speaking the language and culture of our world today, while being rooted in Scripture, orthodoxy and tradition. The process involves: listening, loving and serving, building community, exploring discipleship, forming church, and doing it again – people who from the beginning see themselves one day beginning multiple new forms of church.

On Saturday morning and afternoon, the Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, professor of Church and Society at Knox College in Toronto, spoke on the theme "Being effective churches in the new reality". Dr. Macdonald is the co-author (with Brian Clarke) of *Leaving Christianity – Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*. Christians in Canada today find themselves living in a reality very different from what many imagine. In the two presentations, Dr. Macdonald explored what has changed in Canada's religious environment since 1945 with the themes of (1) understanding our culture (2) worship that makes sense (3) education – learning the faith and (4) evangelism – sharing the faith. The Saturday morning address focused on sharing findings from the book *Leaving Christianity*, with the afternoon session exploring ways in which congregations can effectively meet the challenges of ministry today.

The business of synod was accomplished with the receipt and consideration of reports during our time together on both Friday and Saturday. The Treasurer presented the 2017 Financial Report, the reviewer's report, a 2018 year to date financial statement as well as a projection until the end of the year. The Finance Committee presented the 2019 budget of synod expenses, 2019 presbytery assessments, and a five-year forecast.

Reports were received from the Committee on Business (the synod council), the Synod Webservant, the Synod Historian, and the Regional Resourcing Committee. The synod was updated on Regional Resourcing and the funds available to the synod of \$61,986.00 for the year 2019. The synod is also responsible for the disbursement of grants from the Robert Fund, which was established in 1951 from the estate of Mr. William Robert and his sister, Sarah, for the purpose of assisting “religious and charitable schemes within the Province of Québec”. In 2019 two projects will receive grants: \$6,000.00 to Camp d’action biblique and \$3,606.55 to Église St. Luc in Montreal.

Within the bounds of the synod are two camps – Camp d’action biblique (CAB) located near Richmond, Québec and Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre, located in Gracefield, Québec. The synod received positive reports from both camps. Bruce Howard, Executive Director at Gracefield, was introduced and shared a few words of reflection on his time at Gracefield since his appointment as of October 1, 2017.

At the 2017 annual synod meeting, the synod council was tasked with considering and reimagining the role and function of Synod, and to develop a plan to accomplish the goals of synod with reduced resources and report back to the 144th meeting of synod in 2018, including input and feedback from presbyteries and sessions. The synod council presented their report for the synod to consider. Time was spent in discussion on both Friday and Saturday, and following due consideration the synod agreed to:

From this point forward to meet in regular session every 2 years.

The synod also agreed that synod business will no longer be undertaken by standing committees, but will be overseen by the synod council, with a convener for each area of work. The synod also agreed that the standing orders in their totality will be reconsidered.

Prior to adjournment, the financial documents were adopted including the 2019 expenditure budget of \$105,174.00. In light of the resolve of the synod to begin meeting biennially, it was agreed that the synod council will set the budget for 2020 based on the figures in the 5-year forecast.

The synod adjourned at 3:30 pm. The synod will meet next on Friday and Saturday, October 16 and 17, 2020, with the location to be set by the synod council.

The gratitude of the Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario is extended to Knox Presbyterian Church in Vankleek Hill for graciously hosting the synod meeting of 2018.