

Council of General Synod
Friday May 31 to Sunday June 2 2024
Report to the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada
John Watton

Greetings all

As you might know, Council of General Synod members are chosen by election at each General Synod. In essence, these people serve between Synods as the executive body of General Synod.

Membership:

Its membership is made up of the Primate, the Prolocutor, the Deputy Prolocutor, the Chancellor, bishops, clerical and lay members of General Synod elected by the General Synod on the nomination of the Provincial Caucuses, one youth member of the General Synod from each ecclesiastical province elected by General Synod on the nomination of the Provincial Caucuses, one member nominated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and two members nominated by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. The General Secretary of the General Synod is an ex officio member of the Council of General Synod without voting privileges.

As well, we remember that members of COGS, are not present to specifically represent a particular Diocese or province, but to take council for the whole of our Church in Canada and through the world.

I provide you here with the daily reports that were prepared by the media that were present. I have merged all into one document for your convenience.

I ask that you consider that a report such as this does not reflect the meetings, discussions, interactions, prayers, and dynamics of people being together. There are many discussions at COGS; many are healing, hopeful and realistic about the changes we are facing as a church, and how we need to adjust what we do and how we do it in the midst of a radically changed theological, cultural, social and financial landscape.

As you read through the report, highlight anything of interest to you, and feel free to invite me to have a discussion.

+John Watton

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Friday, May 31, 2024

Members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) gathered at 9 a.m. EDT at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ont.

Opening Eucharist

National CoGS held an opening worship service and Eucharist in the chapel.

Results of Email Votes

Deputy Prolocutor the Ven. Tanya Phibbs presented the results of two motions CoGS had passed via email since the last meeting. The first was in January and saw CoGS vote to appoint four members to the Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Commission until General Synod 2025. The second approved and adopted terms of reference for the General Synod Planning Committee.

Primate's Report

Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, said since the last CoGS meeting in November, she had visited the Territory of the People and the dioceses of Kootenay, Islands and Inlets, Athabasca, Brandon, Ottawa, Montreal and Huron.

Nicholls had attended the Anglican Primates' Meeting in Rome, during which she and other primates of the Anglican Communion met with Pope Francis at the Vatican on May 2. The pope had invited questions from the floor. "It's clear that he has a warm friendship with the Archbishop of Canterbury and he was very welcome to us as the primates," Nicholls said. She offered an update on ecumenical dialogue through the Anglican-Roman Catholic

International Dialogue (ARCIC), having been a member for many years. Nicholls attended ARCIC's most recent meeting in Strasbourg, France. She said the dialogue was working on a final document and hoped to conclude its work next year.

Closer to home, the primate had met with the board of the Anglican Foundation of Canada and attended the synod of the ecclesiastical province of Rupert's Land, which on June 1 officially changed its name to the ecclesiastical province of the Northern Lights. Nicholls said the new moniker represented the geography, people and experience of this part of Canada, which stretches from the Prairies to the Arctic, as well as the metaphorical nature of being the light of Christ. The primate said it was a joy to attend the provincial synod and the vote to adopt the Northern Lights name. "When the vote came in unanimously, everyone just cheered and cheered," she said.

The primate had attended a meeting of the House of Bishops at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre that began on April 8, the same day as a total solar eclipse. In her journeys across the church, Nicholls said, while she had seen many concerns and struggles from Anglicans, in every diocese she saw members focused on the central transformational commitment made at General Synod, of "inviting and deepening life in Christ." Some are using existing programs, such as Alpha or Cursillo. But all are working on deepening the formation of existing church members and inviting others in. Nicholls had met non-stipendiary and voluntary clergy and

lay leaders giving time to the church and helping needy neighbours.

Touching on justice work, Nicholls highlighted advocacy around current events in Israel-Palestine, following the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and Israel's assault on Gaza. When General Synod in the summer of 2023 passed its motion calling for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine, she said, it had no idea what the area would be facing in the coming months. "It has been incredibly painful to watch what is happening," the primate said. She displayed a new painting by Bishop of Central Newfoundland John Watton portraying the devastation of Gaza.

The primate said while the church has no direct influence on the government of Israel, it does have influence on its own government in Canada, which has been the impetus for participation in Gaza ceasefire pilgrimages with other churches. "We continue to be in a conversation with our government about how the influence that it may have might be brought to bear to bring about a ceasefire, the release of the hostages, an end to the war, the provision of humanitarian aid and somewhere in this, a solution to this intractable problem that seems to just keep recurring," Nicholls said.

Members took a break from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m.

Engaging the Diaconate

Dean Emerita Ansley Tucker, director of deacons in the Anglican diocese of Islands and Inlets, and Canon Maylanne Maybee, a deacon in the diocese of Montreal and the longest-serving deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada, presented a report on the Diaconate Writing Group, of which they are both members.

Anglican Deacons Canada established the writing group in 2023 following consultation

with Faith, Worship and Ministry. The Diaconate Writing Group's mandate is to produce a brief theological statement on the theology and ministry of the diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada for adoption by General Synod in 2025, as well as a range of recommended best practices stemming from this statement that General Synod will commend to dioceses.

Tucker and Maybee presented short videos of three deacons across Canada introducing themselves and their various ministries. These included Canon Claudette Taylor, permanent deacon at Epiphany and St. Mark Anglican Church, who serves as an ambassador of reconciliation in the diocese of Toronto; Maybee, who has served as a deacon for 46 years and worked as an educator, theologian and in urban ministry; and the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss, deacon at Christ Church Cathedral in the diocese of New Westminster and director of development and communications at the Crisis Centre of B.C., which focuses on mental health support and suicide prevention.

Members broke for lunch from noon to 1:15 p.m.

Liturgical Advisory Committee

The Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, director of Faith, Worship and Ministry, directed CoGS to surveys designed by the Liturgical Advisory Committee around liturgical experience, practice, worship and leadership across the church. These includes surveys designed respectively for bishops, diocesan executive officers, parish leaders and cathedral deans. She asked CoGS members to each find time to do their respective surveys.

Primate's Commission

The deputy prolocutor presented a motion to move to an *in camera* (private) session in order to discuss the work of the Primate's Commission tasked with reviewing church structures. "Any discussions about the future of

the church and particularly of General Synod may touch on matters that directly affect the staff of General Synod who are present with us today,” Phibbs said. “They may be unsettling for the staff to hear and difficult for people to speak openly about with the staff present.”

CoGS adopted the motion and moved to an *in camera* session for council members only—making an exception for Archbishop Anne Germond, who will become acting primate in September after Nicholls retires.

Members broke from 2:45 to 3 p.m.

Bible Study

The Rev. Carrie Irwin, chaplain to CoGS, led members in Bible study focusing on 1 Samuel 1:1-20. The passage tells the story of Hannah, one of two wives of Elkanah. Hannah is childless and prays to God for a son, eventually giving birth to Samuel.

Financial Update and Audited Statements

Amal Attia, treasurer and CFO of General Synod, presented the Financial Management Committee report and audited financial statements. Total revenue for General Synod in 2023 was \$9.4 million. In terms of expenses, the church had budgeted for slightly over \$11 million, but came in slightly lower at \$10.6 million. The resulting deficit before transfers was \$1.2 million. However, with \$1.6 million in transfers from reserves, investment and depreciation, General Synod was left with an overall surplus of \$391,000.

Proportional giving from dioceses had experienced a steep decline over the years, with Attia presenting a graph going back to 1998. After a period of stability from 2014 to 2017, giving had seen a straight drop down. During a discussion, the primate said the rapid plummet in proportional giving had been accelerated by COVID and changes in dioceses. There had

been a delay in feeling the impact, Nicholls said, because many dioceses and parishes had the support of government funds during the pandemic. However, this funding had now completely stopped and Anglicans had had a full year of trying to get back to regular activities in parishes. “Parishes can’t give what they once gave to dioceses,” the primate said. “Dioceses can’t give what they once gave to the national church.”

Work on the budget would start now and be presented to CoGS for its approval in November, Nicholls said. She said CoGS needed to form a process for thinking about options before then, whether for increasing revenue or decreasing expenditures. Attia presented two motions to CoGS related to finances, which passed.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approve the audited Consolidated Financial Statements of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada for the year ended December 31, 2023, including the net transfer of \$914,621 from Unrestricted Net Assets to Internally Designated Net Assets.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approve the audited financial statements of the Anglican Church of Canada Consolidated Trust Fund for the year ended December 31, 2023.

Pension Committee

Rekha Menon, executive director of the Pension Committee, and General Synod Pension Plan trustee Bob Boeckner presented three motions

related to pensions. All carried.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the recommendation of the Pension Committee to provide a 3% increase to all active members, inactive members, and retired members effective July 1, 2024, in respect of accrued pensions as of December 31, 2023.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the recommendations of the Pension Committee to amend Schedule A of the Regulations of Canon VIII by adding Section 13 as follows: [text of amendment on bonus addition to accrued pensions as of December 31, 2023.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the recommendations of the Pension Committee to amend Schedule A of the Regulations of Canon VIII by adding Section 13 as follows: [text of amendment on bonus addition to accrued pensions as of December 31, 2023.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approve the recommendation of the Pension Committee for the amendment of Section 1.6 of Regulations of Canon VIII as follows [text of amendment].

Members broke for hospitality and dinner from 5 to 7 p.m.

Planning and Agenda Team Terms of Reference

Phibbs introduced a motion for new terms of reference for the Planning and Agenda Team, which carried.

Resolution

That this Council of General Synod approve and adopt the revised Terms of Reference for the Planning and Agenda Team.

Strategic Planning Implementation Group Terms of Reference

General Secretary Alan Perry introduced terms of reference for the Strategic Planning Implementation Group. A motion to adopt the terms carried.

Resolution

That this Council of General Synod approve and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Planning Implementation Group.

Reflections on the Primacy 2019-2024

Canon (lay) Ian Alexander facilitated a session in which CoGS members were invited to ask Nicholls questions reflecting on her primacy as she prepares to retire. Nicholls said she felt better about retirement the closer it approached. When travelling, the primate said, she is surprised how often people bring up her online ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic and that it gave them a sense of connection and hope. She highlighted the work of the Strategic Planning Working Group during her primacy and saw the five transformational commitments being lived into. The five transformational commitments would be at the

centre of the church's work going forward, she said, while the Primate's Commission would have an impact on what structures of the national church will look like.

Nicholls thought the House of Bishops had worked hard on its relationships over the years, in particular learning how to live with difference. Her experience coming out of General Synod 2023 was very difficult, Nicholls said. The following autumn, the House of Bishops had done reflection without her present and then asked how General Synod had affected her, personally and vocationally. In a private conversation with the bishops, Nicholls said she had provided honest reflection in response. At the end of that day, the House of Bishops took time to say farewell, which Nicholls described as very moving.

Asked about the role of a primate and what qualities should be sought for someone in that office, Nicholls said the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada is unique in the wider Anglican Communion, since the primate does not have a diocese and must act for the whole church. "When the primate turns up somewhere, people feel like they've been visited by the rest of the church," Nicholls said. "I have always found that a joy and delight and surprise when I turn up and people are so grateful that the rest of the church cares and is there with them. The primate carries the stories of one part of the church to another part of the church." Aside from embodying the church's presence in a way that has nothing to do with them as an individual, Nicholls said, the primate must have the ability to write quickly: writing sermons, letters to government, columns for the *Anglican Journal* and so forth.

On whether she had any regrets from her primacy, Nicholls cited unfinished business such as not being able to complete the apology on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada to

survivors of Ralph Rowe, a priest and Scout leader who abused hundreds of Indigenous boys. A class-action lawsuit recently reached a settlement and included as one of its stipulations that the primate would make an apology to survivors. "We've been working on how that apology can be best made to be meaningful and appropriate," Nicholls said. A meeting would be held soon with some survivors. However, the primate said she trusted in her successor to complete unfinished work.

Nicholls spoke about the role of women in the church and her own status as the first female primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. She noted that women had moved steadily into leadership roles since the Canadian church allowed the ordination of women in 1976. Across the Communion as a whole, she found even those opposed to the ordination of women were polite and respectful. The primate spoke about working ecumenically with many other women leaders such as Carmen Lansdowne, moderator of the United Church of Canada, and National Bishop Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. When Nicholls has found herself in conflict with others, she said, she attributed that not to gender but to a difference of views which hopefully they could talk about.

Finally, Nicholls said that it had been a wonderful privilege as primate to be a guest of Indigenous Anglicans at Sacred Circle. "When I'm there, I'm very aware that I come as a settler, I come as someone who has been invited," the primate said. "My role there is to listen and to learn, and to carry the story of that Sacred Circle to others who may not have that privilege of being there." She expressed admiration for the Covenant and Our Way of Life in how they centre the gospel and said she was honoured by the respect Indigenous people give the primate in Canada even though the church has been responsible for much pain. She regretted

not being able to visit Indigenous communities as much as she would have liked during her primacy, in part due to COVID.

Evening Prayer

Irwin led CoGS in evening closing prayer.

Council adjourned for the day and held an evening social from 9 to 11 p.m.

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Saturday, June 1, 2024

Members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) gathered at 9 a.m. EDT at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ont.

Gospel-Based Discipleship

National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper and Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) co-chairs the Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still and Rosie Jane Tailfeathers led council in gospel-based discipleship.

Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples

Harper introduced two new staff members of Indigenous Ministries: the Ven. Rosalyn Elm, who takes over the role of Indigenous Ministries coordinator; and Krista Pura, who started as program associate April 15. Noting that Harper had been travelling across many dioceses presenting a vision of mutual interdependence and walking together, Elm said she was pleased to take that vision and put it into play. She said she was excited to be working with elders including Still, Tailfeathers and other members of ACIP whom she described as “holders of knowledge and wisdom.” Elm told CoGS members, “I believe in this church and I believe in all of you.”

After a video documenting Sacred Beginnings, a gathering of young Indigenous Anglican that took place in Beausejour, Man. at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, Harper presented an update on Indigenous Ministries. Since General Synod 2023, ACIP has had a successful in-person meeting in Leduc, Alberta and expanded the Our Way of Life document. Currently ACIP is in the process of determining timelines and

scouting locations for the next Sacred Circle. The second annual Sacred Beginnings gathering took place this year. Indigenous Ministries is looking to expand the influence of its youth ministry as well as to increase the visibility of its suicide prevention programs.

For its in-person meeting in April, ACIP had extended an invitation to Bishop of Edmonton Stephen London and met with him in his diocese. Harper hoped this goodwill on both sides would help facilitate future meetings in other dioceses. The Ven. Travis Enright, archdeacon for reconciliation and decolonization in the diocese of Edmonton, also joined ACIP the same day and talked about uniting Indigenous traditions with Anglican liturgy.

The latter part of the April meeting saw members propose four internal committees of members working in different areas to report back to ACIP, with the goal of laying foundations for future ministry. ACIP will finalize these committees at its next meeting. Proposed committees included governance, glossary of terms and languages, policies and procedures, and finance and budgeting.

Tailfeathers said ACIP had been working to connect with Indigenous peoples in countries outside Canada, such as the Sámi peoples in the northern Scandinavian Peninsula. It has discussed expanding the presence of non-Indigenous leaders in its proceedings and the possibility of using sponsorship proposals to facilitate funding, though this is still in the

preliminary stages. Still spoke more about Sacred Beginnings, which he described as a “reclamation of our youth’s traditions” inspired by the apology for spiritual harm by former primate Fred Hiltz. Harper also touched on plans for Indigenous Ministries to increase its online presence on social media including Instagram and Facebook, as well as a podcast and the redesign of its website.

Members took a break from 10:42 to 10:47 a.m.

Anglican Healing Fund

Martha Many Grey Horses, coordinator of the Anglican Healing Fund, spoke about the history of her family’s relationship with the Anglican Church—going back to when Christian missionaries first came into her home territory in southern Alberta, where her maternal great-grandfather was head chief and signed Treaty 7 with the Canadian government.

She spoke about her father, who did not attend residential school and spoke Blackfoot all his life; and her mother, who attended residential school but in a rare experience was able to have her grandparents set up their teepee encampment on the residential school grounds, allowing her to see them. “I think about that experience and wish it was like that for every one of us that went to residential school,” said Many Grey Horses, who attended the same residential school as her mother. Both her parents valued education, both were leaders of their traditional societies and there was no conflict between their traditional ways of life and Christianity, Many Grey Horses said.

That history formed the background to her work in the Anglican Healing Fund, which began more than five years prior and included a range of grants and contracts. Many Grey Horses described the creation of a healing lodge centre in Dawson City, Yukon, spearheaded by local grandmothers who had approached their chief

and council in 2019.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 greatly affected healing fund projects, she said, as safety measures became a priority for all projects and the number of participants declined. The healing fund saw fewer applications and projects took longer to complete. Many communities expressed a desire to go “back to the land” and the healing fund shifted to land-based projects. In 2021, the discovery of the remains of 215 children buried on the former grounds of Kamloops Indian Residential School further shook many Indigenous communities.

Many Grey Horses described various initiatives supported by the Anglican Healing Fund such as summer healing camps helping connect people to their traditional knowledge; and a Mohawk music project that aims to teach and revitalize the Mohawk language through sacred songs and connecting people to their traditional lands.

Introduction and Remarks: Archbishop Anne Germond

Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan of Ontario and bishop of the dioceses of Algoma and Moosonee, spoke to CoGS about her plans as acting primate following the retirement of Archbishop Linda Nicholls, current primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, in September. Germond said as acting primate, she will do everything possible to support CoGS and other groups in the church.

Referring to a statement by Nicholls that the next primate would need to be a “change agent”, Germond said she did not see her role as acting primate that way, but rather as a bridge—between Nicholls as 14th primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and whoever would become the 15th primate. Given her responsibilities as a metropolitan and bishop,

Germond said it would not be possible for her to act as a full-time acting primate. While stressing that she was not abandoning her work in Algoma and Moosonee, Germond was in conversation with retired bishops to ask for their assistance in these dioceses so she can give attention to her role as acting primate. Nicholls, she added, had been helpful in outlining priorities for the eight months between September 2024 and June 2025, when General Synod will elect a new primate.

Members broke for lunch from noon to 1:15 p.m.

Anglican Foundation of Canada

Executive director Scott Brubacher gave a report from the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC), having just returned from its board meeting in Edmonton. Recent highlights of the foundation's work had included the launch of a new strategic plan, more accessible grants and the establishment of a new Community Ministries Fund with initial funding of \$2 million. In 2023, the AFC had seen a record-breaking year by providing \$1.5 million in disbursements, with grants to 28 of 30 dioceses.

In his two and a half years since taking over as executive director, Brubacher had looked at how the AFC compares to similar organizations such as the United Church of Canada Foundation, the Episcopal Church Foundation and the Presbyterian Foundation. He described a shift in the AFC away from a "donor-centred" to "community-centred" philanthropy, which seeks to provide not just charitable relief but system-level changes that will eliminate the problem charity is trying to solve.

Brubacher invited CoGS to respond to three discussion questions to help guide the foundation in its work going forward:

- What roles can/should the Anglican Foundation of Canada play in the

Anglican Church ecosystem?

- How can the Anglican Foundation of Canada work strategically with General Synod and with dioceses as a community-centric philanthropic partner?
- What are the pros and cons of the "peanut butter approach" (spread too thin)?

Addressing Microaggressions in Faith Communities

Irene Moore-Davis, an educator and member of the church's Dismantling Racism Task Force, led a workshop on how to address microaggressions in faith communities. Moore-Davis said that diversity and inclusion are complementary but distinct. She referred to a quote by authors Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy: "Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard."

Moore-Davis described diversity, inclusion and belonging as moving toward equity: fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all while eliminating barriers that have prevented full participation for certain groups. She encouraged CoGS to view this process as an opportunity and a blessing, not a problem. "Cultivating an inclusive culture is good for our communities," she said, which enables participants to thrive individually and to bring out the best in each other. Part of integrating these values into practices, Moore-Davis said, involves examining one's implicit or unconscious bias.

The concept of microaggressions, she said, refers to "everyday, commonplace verbal and nonverbal indignities, insults and slights that communicate hostile or negative messages to members of a stigmatized, underrepresented or marginalized group" and which repeat or affirm stereotypes. People may target others with

microaggressions because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, disability, weight or age, among other factors. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional, Moore-Davis said, but it is the impact that matters.

CoGS learned about how to address microaggressions whether as a perpetrator, target, observer, or leader. In discussion, members highlighted the importance of listening, constructive criticism, taking responsibility, apologies and continual education.

Members took a break from 3:20 to 3:50 p.m.

Partner Reflections #1

Liza Anderson, representative to CoGS from The Episcopal Church (TEC), offered a partner reflection for her last council meeting in this role. Having worked at multiple seminaries, parishes and monasteries that closed, Anderson spoke about her recognition that institutions, like people, are not permanent.

"Institutions die," she said. "But the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't die." As church people, she said, Christians can often fall into the trap of equating the gospel of Jesus Christ with the institutions to which they have dedicated their lives. She described TEC as currently in a process that many organizations engage in before collapse: adding more and more bureaucracy, such as the addition of dozens of new task forces.

In becoming acquainted with the Anglican Church of Canada, Anderson said she was "enchanted" by the fact that the Canadian church does strategic planning, which TEC does not. She had told TEC they might try doing that. But after completing an MBA, Anderson said she was now more skeptical, because strategic plans rarely work and are almost never

implemented by any organization.

Being a Christian is so counter-cultural today, Anderson said, it is more akin to the life of a monastery than other ways of being church. Even for those born into a particular faith, "at a certain point you have to decide whether or not you're all in on this." She compared church institutions to the institution of marriage which statistically often fails, yet people continue to get married. Recent experience has made church members more aware of the ways their institutions have failed, yet they love and commit to them anyway.

"A lot of the deep existential work our church is doing is not just navel-gazing, but the equivalent of psychotherapy for institutions, where we're trying to be really honest about ourselves," Anderson said. She also described despair as a way of preventing people from doing the work they need to do. Anderson concluded by telling CoGS members it had been a privilege and joy to share this journey with them.

Guidelines for Confirmation in Shared ELCIC/ACC Ministries

The Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman, animator of ecumenical and interfaith relations for the Anglican Church of Canada, spoke about proposed new guidelines for confirmation in shared ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Anglican Church of Canada, who are full communion partners.

Church unity, Sharman said, doesn't mean everyone being the same. He described the underlying principles as "reconciled diversity" and "differentiated consensus", with confirmation being an example. Where Lutherans have viewed the local pastor as the appropriate minister to conduct confirmations, Anglicans have seen that as the bishop's role. Since the establishment of full communion, this

issue had come to a head in local ministry where Anglican and Lutheran congregations or ministers are working together, such as joint congregations—perhaps with shared clergy or joint services. Lutheran congregations might be served by an Anglican priest, or vice versa.

After years of discussing who the appropriate minister is in such contexts, representatives from the ELCIC and Anglican Church of Canada had put together proposed guidelines in a new document. Nicholls said the methods outlined in the document are often influenced by geographical considerations, such as the availability of a certain cleric in a given local context. The proposed guidelines were as follows:

For confirmation in shared ministry parishes, with the permission of the diocesan and synodical bishops, the congregation may choose to use an Anglican rite, a Lutheran rite, or a blended service confirming the two traditions.

For confirmation in single-tradition congregations:

- 1) In a Lutheran congregation, the local cleric confirms all candidates, whether Anglican or Lutheran.
- 2) In an Anglican congregation, a bishop, whether Anglican or Lutheran, confirms all candidates.

For confirmation in a joint Anglican/Lutheran parish with candidates from one or both traditions, the bishops, in consultation with the congregation, shall choose one of the following options:

- 1) All candidates shall be confirmed by a bishop and the local cleric by the joint and concurrent laying on of hands.
- 2) All candidates shall be confirmed by a bishop, whether Anglican or Lutheran.
- 3) Anglican candidates shall be confirmed

by a bishop, whether Lutheran or Anglican, and Lutheran candidates by the local cleric, whether Anglican or Lutheran.

These proposed guidelines, Nicholls said, had come through consultation with various groups including the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order. The primate noted that Anglicans are the only denomination that still only allows bishops to perform confirmations.

Sharman, as the Anglican Church of Canada's ecumenical officer, cited three rationales in why he felt the new guidelines were appropriate: the expanded and growing nature of congregational full communion shared ministries, multi-denominational belonging as a sign of the future Church, and the Anglican ecumenical concept of "bearable anomalies".

During discussion of a motion to approve guidelines for confirmation, Bishop of Qu'Appelle Helen Kennedy asked whether the guidelines might be amended to say "bishops, priests and pastors" rather than clerics. Nicholls said they could ask Lutherans if it would be possible to amend the guidelines accordingly. Murray Still, having served in a joint Anglican-Lutheran congregation, spoke in favour of the motion, which carried.

Resolution

That this council approve the guidelines for Anglican and Lutheran bishops, priests and pastors regarding confirmations in shared ministry congregations for use where permitted by the ordinary.

Evening Prayer

CoGS held evening prayer in the chapel.

Members had a banquet dinner from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Primate's Farewell

Recognizing the primate's love of music, council held a farewell programme of hymns for Nicholls, who was attending her last CoGS as primate before retirement. Dean Peter Wall served as master of ceremonies and a vocal soloist. Vocal ensemble OPUS 8 sang a set of Nicholls' favourite hymns, with Adam MacNeil providing keyboard accompaniment. Speakers including the Rev. Cynthia Haines-Turner, Bishop David Lehmann, Canon (lay) Ian Alexander and General Secretary Alan Perry shared memories and paid tribute to Nicholls. Perry presented the primate, an avid outdoorswoman, with the gift of a canoe paddle bearing her name and the Anglican Church of Canada logo.

The primate thanked CoGS. She said that hers had been an incredible journey of ministry and she would pray for those who took on church leadership in these times. "God's church will survive," she said. Nicholls introduced members of her family to CoGS. The programme concluded with OPUS 8 singing "Amazing Grace".

Council members held a reception from 9 to 11 p.m.

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Sunday, June 2, 2024

Members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) gathered at 9 a.m. EDT at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ont.

National Advisory Council Terms of Reference

Dr. Ryan Weston, lead animator for Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice, presented draft terms of reference for a National Advisory Council on Dismantling Racism. General Synod in 2023 passed Resolution A200-R3, which directed CoGS to establish this permanent council in close consultation with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples.

The mandate of the National Advisory Council on Dismantling Racism, as described in A200-R3, is to “conduct an initial and ongoing review of church structures, culture, policies, and practices pertaining to racism and anti-racism”; and 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).”

After feedback from CoGS members, Weston prepared to amend the draft and return later in the day with a motion for council to vote on.

Anglican Voices for Just Peace: Palestine and Israel

Dr. Andrea Mann, Global Relations director, offered a prayer for people of all faiths including Jews, Muslims and Christians in the midst of pain, trauma, violence and fear in the

Holy Land. She provided an update on the church’s efforts to seek peace with justice for all in Palestine and Israel. Both the Anglican Church of Canada and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) had reaffirmed their commitment to this goal at the 2023 Assembly by passing Resolution A160.

In the midst of ongoing violence in Gaza, Mann said Anglican voices around the world and in Canada are calling for a just peace for Palestinians and Israelis. Whether through solitary prayer, prayer in parishes and wider communities, or participation in ecumenical and interfaith gatherings, Anglicans are “calling through solidarity and advocacy: enough. Stop the killing. Release the captives. Feed the hungry. Heal the sick and the maimed. Bury the dead with dignity. End the illegal occupation.” She referred CoGS to resources for action from the Canadian Council of Churches, KAIROS Canada and the Canadian Companions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Mann thanked council for their willingness to pray and to walk in the Gaza ceasefire pilgrimages. Part of a worldwide ecumenical movement calling for just peace in Israel and Palestine, the pilgrimages encourage groups of Christians to collectively walk 41 km—the length of the Gaza Strip—while calling for an enduring ceasefire in Gaza, immediate flow of life-saving humanitarian aid, release of all captives, ending all arms transfers to Israel and ending the occupation. “I thank you,” Mann said to all who had prayed and walked the Gaza ceasefire pilgrimage that weekend. “The people

of Gaza thank you.” She shared photos from the Anglican-owned Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, located in northern Gaza, to make the call for a ceasefire less abstract and show the real people and ministry affected.

Resolution A160 included a call for the Anglican and Lutheran churches to provide safe spaces for conversation in pursuing truth and working for a just and lasting peace in Israel and Palestine. A question of critical importance in this work, Mann said, concerns how Anglicans act in public conversation and advocacy. She quoted a statement by Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, from the Gaza ceasefire pilgrimage in Ottawa: “To do nothing is to be complicit.” How can the church hold Israel and Hamas accountable for their war crimes, Mann asked, knowing this will be shamed as antisemitic or Islamophobic? Mann asked CoGS for recommendations for those tasked with the pursuit of a just peace in Palestine and Israel.

In responses after table group discussions, Bishop of Qu’Appelle Helen Kennedy pointed to the benefits of having a contact person in the region, offering the example of her email correspondence with the Anglican Church in Jerusalem. Bishop of Central Newfoundland John Watton recalled Archbishop Hosam Naoum of the Episcopal Jerusalem, who asked for prayers for healing and reconciliation. The primate again recommended a book she had mentioned at the last CoGS meeting, *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don’t Want to Know About Each Other* by Raja Khouri and Jeffrey Wilkinson. She stressed the need to view the violence in Gaza through the lens of “both/and” rather than “either/or”.

“Even if there’s a disproportionality that breaks our hearts, there’s suffering on both sides,” the primate said.

Partner Reflections #2

The Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still, CoGS representative to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church (TEC)—the latter’s equivalent of CoGS—shared his experiences of the U.S. church’s members and governance. He described much opportunity to connect with Episcopalians of Indigenous heritage and noted that all business in TEC’s Executive Council is conducted in both English and Spanish, including worship. Many of the conversations he heard in TEC intersected with the experience of the Anglican Church of Canada, Still said.

In a reflection at the end of his second Executive Council meeting, Still had provided an update on what is happening in Canada with Indigenous communities, noting the avid interest of TEC in these journeys to self-determination. He also had good conversations about peace and global conflict with Episcopalians and sat in on a finance conversation around the Episcopal Church of Cuba, which was readmitted as a TEC diocese in 2018.

Members took a break from 10:15 to 11 a.m.

Eucharist

CoGS held a closing Eucharist in the main chapel.

Members broke for lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

Partner Reflections #3

Dorothy Patterson, CoGS partner to the ELCIC, spoke about her background. Born and raised in the Six Nations of the Grand River and still a current resident, she is a former nurse and nursing instructor. In representing CoGS to the ELCIC, she was grateful for the leadership of the primate and ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson in their respective churches. Nicholls and Johnson “continually exude grace,” Patterson said, praising their knowledge and

integrity. She saw the Anglican Church of Canada and ELCIC collaborating in major justice issues, such as their support for peace in Gaza and for better palliative care.

Patterson attended her first meeting with the Lutherans in March, finding they let her into the fold comfortably and quickly. She found one feature distinguishing Lutherans from Anglicans was the former's propensity to erupt into joyful, spontaneous singing during their meeting or on breaks. "They're not long hymns, just joyful words and they all seem to know it," Patterson said. "That's one thing I really found inspiring." She was also surprised when Lutherans asked her to be a member—not just to sit with them, but to participate fully and vote, for which she was very thankful. Though still on a learning curve at her last meeting, she said, she hoped to contribute more next time.

The Rev. Chris Bishopp, ELCIC representative to CoGS, thanked council for making him feel welcome and said Lutherans "are tremendously enriched by this full communion partnership." He described his whole experience at CoGS as a "time of God filling me with renewed hope." One of the first ways he noticed this at the current CoGS was through humour, when he found himself assigned to a table group with National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper. "Someone seated Chris Bishopp with Bishop Chris," he said to laughter from council.

Bishopp said he found hope listening to discussions throughout the weekend at CoGS, many of which are also familiar to the ELCIC. Examples include discerning the nature of diaconal ministry and responding to financial challenges. He found hope in how the broader Anglican Church of Canada is growing into a richer relationship with the Indigenous church, as well as the prospect of "Indigenizing Christianity". He found hope in Anglican work on dismantling racism and learning to become

a place of diversity and inclusivity. Bishopp expressed thanks and appreciation for Nicholls and the primate's support for Johnson, who herself would be retiring the following year.

Liturgical Advisory Committee (cont'd)

The Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, director of Faith, Worship and Ministry, presented a snapshot of results from the survey she had asked CoGS to fill out on behalf of the Liturgical Advisory Committee. The 23 respondents shared experiences such as their own jobs, the spoken languages and racial makeup of their local and worship communities, the liturgical texts they use to worship, whether their parish has a worship planning team, who is seen most regularly in worship leadership as officiants/presiders, and their top priorities for national liturgical development.

National Advisory Council Terms of Reference (cont'd)

Weston returned with an updated draft of his terms of reference for the National Advisory Council on Dismantling Racism and a motion to adopt them, which carried.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approve the terms of reference for the National Advisory Council of Dismantling Racism.

Financial Planning Process

Prolocutor Canon (lay) Ian Alexander, Deputy Prolocutor the Ven. Tanya Phibbs and the Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields presented a document offering some thoughts towards a proposed process for the 2025 budget and beyond.

They proposed creating a cross-sectional working group of CoGS and Financial Management Committee members to develop a

three-year financial plan for 2025 through 2027. This working group would report regularly to the Planning and Agenda Team (PAT), Financial Management Committee and CoGS; include key staff people and ensure connections with other relevant groups, such as the Primate's Commission.

They also suggested possible specifications for the plan, a possible work plan—specifying that working group consultations would begin immediately, working online—and tentative ideas for who might become members. The working group would then present a report to CoGS at its next meeting in November. A motion to adopt the proposal carried.

Resolution

That the Council of the General Synod form a working group of CoGS members and Financial Management Committee members to develop a multi-year financial plan for the Office of the General Synod, with scenarios and options, that seeks to further the goals and aspirations of the Anglican Church of Canada, in the context of our best and evolving understanding of all available resources, along the lines laid out in Document 029-09-24-05, and bring a report to the CoGS meeting in November 2024.

General Secretary's Report

General Secretary Alan Perry offered a quick report to CoGS, noting that members had previously asked in feedback to PAT for "fewer talking heads and more engagement." As a result, the planning team had set new expectations for presenting. Perry saw that the presenters had responded well and hoped CoGS members felt their concerns had been responded to effectively.

Perry recalled a conversation during Bible study at the current meeting on the distinction between good news and bad news. While the church proclaims the Good News about Jesus Christ, he said, members are also good at preaching bad news, often viewing the glass as "half-empty" when he believes the church is called to see the glass "half-full".

Though the church had heard some bad news at the present meeting, such as difficulties in the financial state of General Synod and not being as inclusive as it wished to be, Perry thought the church had also heard some good news. "Yes, we can do some work on our financial situation," the general secretary said, noting the proposal CoGS had approved minutes earlier. "And we will keep doing it. Yes, we can do some work to continue to dismantle racism and to work at being self-aware about our own complicity in microaggressions and learning strategies, both for helping ourselves to stop doing that and to intervene when we see it elsewhere around us."

He ended on a note of hope and encouraged council members to take back home the good news from CoGS, including memories of joy and celebration in the way it had honoured its departing primate. He thanked Nicholls for her leadership and CoGS for bringing their skills, talent and hope to the meeting of council.

Taking It Home

CoGS members discussed what they would bring back to their own communities from the meeting. Main points included:

- Plan to communicate to each province
- Being clear about financial situation and why General Synod is worth investing in, connecting it to sense of hope felt at present CoGS meeting
- Anti-racism work
- Relevance and authenticity of church for

others to hear

- Daily highlights published on Anglican Church of Canada website

Closing Remarks and Prayer

The primate said in her closing remarks that it had been a very good CoGS meeting. She thanked council for how it had engaged with the work, citing the way it had responded to new financial information and created a process to address the situation. "That's what CoGS is about," Nicholls said. "It's a working body. It's not just a 'listening to reports' body." She noted that General Synod empowers CoGS to be its voice between sessions; to act on its behalf and to take recommendations back to the next General Synod, where there are strategic decisions only the higher body can make.

Nicholls described a spirit of collegiality, friendship and working together at the present CoGS, along with the worship and music. She thanked CoGS for being church leaders in a challenging time. The primate said she left with a great sense of hopefulness for the church and what it can become under the leadership of whoever takes it forward: first Archbishop Anne Germond as acting primate until the next General Synod, then the new primate, working in partnership with the metropolitans and National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper.

After Nicholls led a closing prayer, Bishop of Central Newfoundland John Watton invited council to gather and lay hands on the primate for an additional prayer and blessing.

Council adjourned at 3 p.m.