



February 2011

Some Mohr Jottings

BC Synod Bishop's Letter

Special Interest Articles:

- Financial Update
- Renewal and Re-development Workshops!
- ELCIC Re-structuring Process

Individual Highlights:

Renewal and Re-development	2
ELCIC Re-structuring Process	3
UBC Campus Ministry	3
A Story of Compassion and Love	3
Bishop's Schedule	4

Discernment of Roles and Synod Office

One of the major changes in the Synod this past fall has been that of staffing arrangements. As presented at the 2010 Synod Convention, the synod's financial picture left no option but to eliminate the Assistant to the Bishop position. This action obviously presents tremendous challenges for us to properly attend to the things we need to attend to. However, that is the situation before us,

and we will do what we can, by God's grace.

One of the things we identified at the fall Synod Council meeting was the need to establish a small task force to assist me in reviewing core ministry areas, and critically reflecting on the priorities, challenges, hopes and dreams of the synod. All of this is to enable us to determine what aspects of the bishop's or synod's

ministry needs to be set aside and which need to be strengthened or attended to in a different way, all within in the context of no longer having the assistant to the bishop position. Three very gifted and experienced lay people are working with me on this task and will be providing an interim report to Synod Council at its February meeting.

Financial update

Many people have been asking, "How are we doing?" Not unexpectedly, there is good news and there is some not so good news.

The December 31st financial statements (representing the first half of the synod's fiscal year) show that the changes we have made in our structure have made a tremendous difference. The 6-month report indicates a positive balance for the first time in a long time. (That is good news!) Thank you to all who have increased their benevolence gifts to the ministry of the Synod (and hence to the National church, the seminary, and

our international obligations). It is important for parishes to regularly review these gifts, asking, "What is our faithful share?"

The not-so-good news is that we are still running a significant **accumulated deficit**. However, if the gifts received from parishes continue at their current rate (and particularly if they increase!) then we can gradually replenish the funds needed to cover the designated funds, as well as establish a reserve fund once again.

The Treasurer of the synod has revised the benevolence reporting form

and has begun to provide these to congregations and ministries on a quarterly basis. Not only does this form help your treasurers and councils to double-check the accuracy of the figures, but such a form also helps you to reflect on the question regarding benevolence and our shared ministry.

Renewal and Re-Development

One of the primary goals we will be addressing over the coming years pertains to the renewal and re-development of congregations. One of the things I would like us to implement is the establishment of a group of approximately 10 lay and clergy who will be trained in various aspects (such as mission development, visioning processes, human resources, stewardship and volunteerism, the missional church, outreach and ministry) and who would then serve as consultants to congregations. Depending on the situation, two or more of these consultants would then work with the congregation for 1 to 2 years, assisting the congregation in designing and implementing a course of action.

Renewal and Re-Development Workshops!

In keeping with this need for renewal and re-development in our congregations, two events are being planned in the coming months and all congregations and ministries are invited to participate. These events will help us explore what it means to be renewed for mission in the 21st century.

We encourage congregations and ministries to send a group of people to each of these events.

The **FIRST** event is sponsored by the Greater Vancouver and Lower Fraser Valley Conferences. However, they also extend an invitation to all congregations outside the lower mainland to join them for this event:

Saturday, March 5

Transfiguring Mission: Coming Down from the Mountain

Location: King of Life Lutheran Church, Coquitlam (1198 Falcon Drive)

9:30 am to 3 pm

\$50 per congregation *plus* \$10 per person for lunch

Rev. Ali Tote (Resurrection, Saskatoon) is the guest speaker for the day. He brings his lifelong experience of being in mission and ministry here in Canada and in Cameroon. I will also be addressing those gathered, speaking about the implications of the Transfiguration story and what it means to “come down the mountain.” Such a story has much to say to us regarding our ministry in this 21st century.

There will be several times in the day when people will gather in small groups and discuss the quintessential Lutheran question: “What does this mean for us?”

A **SECOND** event occurs in early May and will take place in both Kelowna and the Vancouver area.

Friday, May 6

evening

Kelowna

Saturday, May 7

daytime

Vancouver area

Equipped or Renewal: The Inviting and Welcoming Church

(Locations and times to be announced)

Guest speaker is Michael Harvey, a layperson from England who started the “Back to Church Sunday” initiative in 2004. Michael will be on a speaking tour of Canada among Anglican dioceses and ELCIC synods. He is an engaging speaker and is passionate about helping the church.

He will address the topics of “The reasons we don’t invite our friends” and “Becoming an inviting and welcoming church.” He will also talk about the simple but profound method that is at the heart of the Back to Church initiative. The Eastern Synod conducted a pilot project among 8 congregations this past fall, using the Back to Church program. 1 congregation did not have any visitors with them that Sunday morning; a couple had a few visitors attend; some saw increases of 10 to 30% in their attendance; and one congregation doubled its attendance.

Michael is quick to point out that “success” is not how many visitors attend. Success is when one person invites another.

Again, I encourage you to send a team to this event so that you can more readily engage conversation back in your own parishes. However, even if there is only one person from a congregation – please – still come.

ELCIC Re-Structuring Process

A presentation on re-structuring was made at this past year's Synod Convention. The committee has since received feedback from all five synod conventions as well as from individuals who wrote in or participated in the online survey. Attentive to this feedback, they have continued to work hard on the proposals for re-structuring.

The committee will present "broad brush strokes" to the National Church Council and the bishops when they meet in April. From there, it will be brought to the National Church convention in July. The convention will consider this outline and will then vote on moving certain items from the constitution to the bylaws to make it easier for the implementation of the proposed structure should it be adopted by each of the five synods at their conventions in 2012.

UBC Campus Ministry

A motion was passed at last year's Synod Convention that a task force be appointed to examine the possibilities for development at the UBC site and whether this development might also provide revenue for other campus ministry initiatives throughout the synod. The task force has been busy exploring and analyzing the options and a report from them is expected to be received at the upcoming Synod Council meeting (Feb. 17-20).

A Story of Compassion and Love

Many congregations engage in providing food hampers, meals, kitchen pantries and so on. The following story comes to us from Donna Grace (what a great last name for this story!) and the congregation of St. Paul's, Maple Ridge. Donna granted me permission to share it with you:

It has been (over) two years now that St. Paul's, Maple Ridge, has participated in the local street ministry and it has been an overwhelming response by the congregation. There are so many stories we hear while doing our soup and sandwich ministry. A couple of things stand out in my mind:

1. We had a couple who came to the truck late every Saturday night to take home some soup and sandwiches. He eventually was able to secure employment. However, they were struggling to make ends meet. After a few months they came by one evening with a bag of clothing and as they handed it to us they thanked us and mentioned how much they appreciated what we were doing to help those in need and that they wanted to give back.

2. One night, a couple of young girls came by and asked if they could have something to eat. After they ate, they were walking by the open front door of the truck and one of the girls saw a little teddy bear sitting on the dashboard. She grabbed it and ran off before we could stop her. About 15 minutes later, she and her friend came back and she said her friend told her that we are there to help people and that what she did was wrong. She handed the teddy bear back and apologized for taking it in the first place.

Many times when the truck pulls up there are many people waiting for the soup, sandwich and coffee. They love to help us set up. I think it makes them feel good to be able to help. This is a heart-warming service we do yet it is very heart-wrenching to see so many people in need. At the end of the night when we get to go home to our warm houses and beds, we can only imagine what it is like for the people on the streets.

*May God bless everyone.
Donna Grace*



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Bishop's Schedule for WINTER and SPRING 2011

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| Jan | 9 | Worship, Gloria Dei, North Vancouver |
| | 11 | Meeting with interns from the four western synods |
| | 13 | Officers' meeting |
| | 13 | Task Force reviewing ministry of Bishop/Synod |
| | 16 | Worship, Redeemer, Vancouver |
| | 20 | Worship, Simon Fraser University campus ministry (cancelled due to SNOW!) |
| | 23 | Worship, King of Life, Coquitlam |
| | 27 | Task Force reviewing ministry of Bishop/Synod |
| | 29 | Stewardship Committee telephone conference |
| | 30 | Worship, Mt. Olivet, North Vancouver |
| Feb | 2 | Guest speaker, Confirmation class, Shepherd of the Valley, Langley |
| | 3 | Officers' meeting |
| | 4 | Sechelt, meeting with council |
| | 6 | Worship, First, Vancouver |
| | 17-20 | Synod Council |
| | 18-19 | Committees meet with Synod Council |
| | 23-25 | Western Synods Examining Committee (colloquy exams for 4 th -year students) |
| Mar | 2 | Sechelt, meeting with council and call committee |
| | 3 | Task Force reviewing ministry of Bishop/Synod |
| | 5 | Renewal Event: "Coming Down from the Mountain" |
| | 6 | Worship, Peace, Vernon |
| | 10 | Matsqui Correction's Institution |
| | 15 | Guest at Provincial House of Bishops, Anglican |
| | 23 | Lenten service presenter, First, Vancouver |
| | 24 | Officers' meeting |
| | 27 | family baptism event, King of Life, Coquitlam |
| | 27-30 | Study Conference for Rostered Ministers, CTEL students, lay professionals |
| Mar | 31-Apr 3 | National Church Council meetings, Toronto |
| Apr | 3-4 | Conference of Bishops meeting |
| | 10 | Worship, Christ, Kelowna |
| | 21 | Greater Vancouver Conference ministerial |
| May | 1-3 | Board of Governors, Lutheran Theological Seminary |
| | 6/7 | Renewal Event: The Inviting and Welcoming Church (Kelowna and Vancouver area) |
| June | 5 | Worship, Matsqui, 108 th Anniversary celebration |
| | 10-11 | Peace River Conference annual convention, Mackenzie |
| | 12 | Worship, Peace, Fort St. John |
| | 26 | Worship, Faith, Powell River |