

Fulfilling our Synod Vision and Goals March 2005 Update

It is almost one year since our synod adopted a series of goals to fulfill its vision. Here is an update on just some of the work that is being done to fulfill these goals:

MISSION GOALS

Establishment of All Saint's Lutheran in Kelowna - This has been a priority for our synod. We are very proud of the work that has been done and the signs of progress to date thanks to the hard work and dedication of mission developer, Pastor Keith Peterson. The mission has also depended on synod financial support & directed givings through the synod Partners in Mission appeal. The appeal has received \$50,502 in total to date. All Saint's Mission is embarking on a new stage of its life with the retirement of Pastor Keith at the end of this month. A call has been extended to Rev. Tyler Gingrich to lead this mission forward.

Campus Ministry - The Taskforce on Campus Ministry was formed to develop a clear vision and implement an action plan for Campus Ministry. Roland Stieda, (Church of the Cross, Victoria) chairs this taskforce. Its first goal has been to specifically address long-term funding and revitalization of UBC Campus Ministry. The Taskforce prepared a report for Synod Council last November in which it requested that Synod Council mandate the taskforce to seriously consider the following:

- Establishing a UBC Ecumenical Chaplaincy and Student Centre
- Establishing a Lutheran/Ecumenical Center and Chaplaincy within a redevelopment
- Establishing an Interfaith chapel and Chaplaincy Centre

As well, the taskforce recommended that the Synod appoint and fund a Chaplain for three years. This recommendation was also made through the Bishop's report, resulting in a motion which authorizes Synod officers to call a part-time chaplain for UBC for a three year term.

Strengthen the Synod's prophetic voice & public witness as advocates for justice:

The Synod Faith & Society Committee leads the effort on a synod-level to engage our church in issues of justice & peace. Here are a few examples:

- Last fall the committee, in a motion to Synod Council, asked that our Bishop write a letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin on behalf of Synod Council protesting Canadian involvement in the proposed US Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense system. The Canadian government recently announced that it would not participate.
- The committee has distributed a "Kairos" (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) petition to congregations, which calls for changes to the appeal process for refugees
- The committee encourages congregations to raise awareness of the tragic AIDS crisis in South Africa. Congregations were encouraged to raise money for GHDA's South Africa Appeal during Lent and to purchase "Beads of Hope" to help Aids-stricken communities in Africa financially as well as raise awareness at home.
- The committee continues to encourage greater ecumenical cooperation on justice issues through Kairos and other joint ventures. In the Vancouver area, our synod continues to work closely with the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster, and is also represented on an Anglican Provincial Synod committee that deals with justice & peace issues. Plans are underway for a joint event on Restorative Justice next October.
- Individuals interested to keep connected with others who have a passion for justice may join the synod discussion list 'justicetalk'.
- The committee has encouraged involvement in the "Nine Days of Prayer and Action for Justice in the Americas," March 16-24, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador.
- Members of the committee have worked with a Vancouver Kairos group to prepare a statement which raises societal concerns that it feels need to be addressed during the upcoming provincial election campaign. The Faith & Society Committee has endorsed this statement.

Implement the commitments of our companion synod covenant with the Peruvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (ILEP)

The World Missions subcommittee is responsible for leadership regarding our relationship with ILEP. Individual congregations have played an important role through the establishment of sister congregation relationships, making trips to visit and witness the life of the Peruvian Lutheran churches, as well as inviting members of ILEP to BC. The World Missions committee will continue to raise awareness through annual "Companion Synod Sundays" - The next one take place on May 29th! Watch for information!

Being an Inclusive Church where all are welcome

The Taskforce on Homosexuality and the Blessing of Same Sex Unions was established. This taskforce has organized a Synod Study Day on April 23rd in Langley. It is open to all ELCIC members - lay and clergy. In conjunction with this event, there is the opportunity to participate in two "Caring Conversations". Taskforce members have ensured that these events reflect all sides of the issue.

Communications Enhancement

A Taskforce on Communications has been formed to develop a comprehensive communications strategy. Action plans include: creating a website that is regularly updated, identifying communications liaisons in each congregation, developing a synod brochure and Power Point presentation for next fall's parish visits, and facilitating greater sharing of congregation ministry stories & resource ideas.

Shepherding Congregations and Rostered Ministers

"Shepherding" is understood as leading and making suggestions, as well as providing resources and support. The areas that have been identified are:

Resources for lay people and new members that will provide a deeper understanding about what it means to be "Lutheran". Congregations have been encouraged to implement a study program on the book "Reclaiming the 'L' Word - Renewing the Church from its Lutheran Core" by Kelly A. Fryer. Kelly Fryer will be the presenter for the Bishop's Study Conference for Clergy and Lay Professionals this April.

Stewardship as a Way of Life - our Stewardship Consultant, John Wolff, has been doing presentations for congregations on 'year round stewardship' as well as a new workshop called "Apple Tree - A Vitality Process for Busy People" which focuses on personal management of time and resources. Ms. Shirley Magel, lay leader at Faith Lutheran in Kelowna, has also been trained in the Apple Tree workshop, and is now available & eager to offer workshops!

Encourage identification of candidates for ordained and lay diaconal ministry

The recent national church program - It's Your Call Sunday - has encouraged congregations to identify individuals in their midst who they consider potential candidates for ministry. Our Committee for Theological Education and Leadership continues to support and assist candidates from their first expression of interest through to ordination/consecration.

Creative Models of Ministry

The Missions Committee is establishing a taskforce to research different models & approaches to ministry.

Synod Governance

The Synod is moving forward with its goal to carry out a synod governance review under the guidance of consultant, Les Stahlke. Mr. Stahlke made an initial presentation to Synod Council in November 2004. He will begin the formal review process with a full day work session with Synod Council scheduled for April 9th 2005th.