

"Quo Vadis" – Report from Synod Council

"Quo Vadis" – how's your Latin? These words ask the question, "Where are you going?" In part, your Synod Council attempts to answer this question between Synod Conventions. So where are we going as a synod?

First, though, what is Synod Council? Imagine that our synod is a congregation. Bishop Ron and Assistant to the Bishop Larry are the pastors. Synod council is the congregation's council. As in congregational councils there is an executive. Ours includes a Secretary, Brenda Visser, a Treasurer, Stephen Wildfang, and a Chairperson, Rev. Tim Posyluzny. Similarly council members are elected. Our council members are elected at Synod Conventions and represent each of our conferences. They are from Northern Conference – Norm Olson and Rev. Marcus Wilhelm, East Central – Marilyn Murray and Rev. Paul McCormick, West Central – Gail Berg and Rev. Gary Aicken, Southwestern – Jennifer Laurendeau and Rev. Julianne Barlow, Southern – Wayne Street and Rev. Julianna Wehrfritz-Hanson. There is also a Full Communion Partner Representative – Rev. David Holmes (Anglican). Like any congregational council the ongoing responsibilities revolve around providing care and support to the staff and maintaining the "work" of the congregation.

Now back to the question, "Where are we going?" There is no single answer to this question but I will highlight three.

First and foremost, we are preoccupied with moving forward our mission objectives which are: 1. Support leaders in the Synod, 2. Support ministries (local, national, and international and of the ELCIC), 3. Provide direction and leadership, 4. Initiate and maintain key linkages (communications between congregations, conferences, NCC and beyond) and, 5. Communities are created and maintained (relationships that express the reconciling and welcoming love of Jesus Christ). Our Synod council is all about bringing Christ's gifts of grace to a world desperate to hear and experience good news.

The next two answers are more specific and are offered in light of our National Convention held this past summer.

The motions around human sexuality have set us on a new road-a road that we know will be, for many, difficult to travel. Synod Council, with Bishop Ron's guidance, will support congregations in the decisions they are called to make. Sadly, some of our congregations will decide to leave; others will be making decisions on how to remain within the ELCIC while not agreeing and still others will decide to enact the changes afforded by convention vote (conducting same-sex marriages/blessings and calling gay/lesbian pastors). Synod Council will work to maintain a spirit of unity within synod gently called for in Bishop Ron's pastoral letter as he writes, "Now, more than ever, is a time to bear one another's burdens – to practice extraordinary kindness and patience toward one another."

Finally, Synod Council will begin discussions around the ramifications of the restructuring of our Church. For us as a synod the two most pressing matters are 1. The probable merger of our synod with B.C. Synod and 2. Moving from a larger conference model to a smaller area model. It is important to note that these changes are not just financially driven but are aimed at enabling congregations and special ministries to deliver a more co-operative and vital front line Gospel witness, encounter, and community.

"Quo Vadis? A lot of good places.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Tim Posyluzny
Chairperson