

Diocesan Council Highlights February 5-6, 2021

This meeting of Diocesan Council was again held entirely over Zoom. This is proving to be a useful and effective way for council to meet. We are even experimenting with some of the great features of Zoom, including using the breakout rooms to facilitate discussion. Much of the meeting was taken up with reports from staff and from VSSTs, and we used the rest of the time we had to discuss Bishop Sandra's Covenant in Ministry.

Parish Vitality

Lisa Vaughn, the Parish Vitality Coordinator reported to council on the work that she has been doing. Her work has included participating in "The Pew and Beyond: Rediscovering Discipleship", which is a Facebook live broadcast in partnership with the Diocese of Montreal. She has also begun to help with the planning of Vital Church Maritimes, which will be held on October 15-17, 2021. The third round of the Connectors missional leadership learning cohort has also begun, with 11 participants.

Vocations Coordinator

Frances Drolet-Smith reported on her work as Vocations Coordinator. She is currently working with those who are in active discernment toward ordained ministry. There are a number of people who have expressed interest in discerning a call toward the diaconate. She has been working with the Discernment and Formation Task Group to revise the process of discernment for ordained ministry in the diocese.

Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator

Allie Colp, although on maternity leave, submitted a written report. She continues to be the chair of the National Planning Committee for CLAY. As a result of the pandemic, CLAY could not be held last summer as planned. There will be online content in the summer of 2021, and parishes are able to have their home teams sign up for this. She is looking into the feasibility of a diocesan gathering of young people to participate online together. She has also put together a Lenten resource for families, which can be accessed through <https://www.nspeidiocese.ca/events/lenten-letters-in-a-box/2021-02-03>

Diocesan Controller

Glen Greencorn reported as the Diocesan Controller. The expected deficit in 2020 has turned out to be smaller than expected, partly due to savings in a number of places, and partly due to some parishes being able to pay allotment arrears. Glen also reported on the restructuring of work at the Diocesan Office with the retirements of Gordon Redden and Jan Connors. The staff at the Diocesan Office have been working very hard to redistribute work, and make sure that everything that is needed gets done.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Sandra reported on the work that she has been doing. She has been doing a lot of work to get up to speed with many different items, meeting with different VSSTs, and other groups. As a follow up to her report, Council helped to think about what her Covenant in Ministry might contain.

Covenant in Ministry

In our Diocese, parish clergy create a Covenant in Ministry with the parishes. This is a document that outlines the hopes and expectations – not a job description or a list of tasks, but a guide to how ministry can and should be done in that place. Bishop Sandra is working on creating a Covenant with the diocese, as our Bishop. As part of that, Council broke into small groups to discuss the different vows that Bishop Sandra made when she was consecrated.

Synod 2021

Owing to continued COVID restrictions, and in consultation with Chancellor James Travers, Bishop Sandra has determined that there will be no regular gathering of Synod in May 2021, and has informed Diocesan Council. Canonically we are required to hold Synod within two years of the last Synod. Since we held an electoral Synod in the fall, no Synod is required until September 2022. The main reason for the decision was the difficulty of holding a Synod with multiple items on the agenda when large in person gatherings may still not be possible. There is no firm date set for the next gathering of Synod. As we see how the pandemic unfolds, we will have a clearer picture of when we can gather as Synod. It is suggested that parishes continue to elect Synod delegates, just as in normal years with no Synod. If you have questions, please email to bishopsoffice@nspeidiocese.ca.