A People Called

Twelfth Biennial Convention of the Saskatchewan Synod of the ELCIC

Attendance at 8:30 am Saturday: 75 lay delegates; 83 rostered delegates; 47 visitors

"No One Goes Home The Same Person"

Convention Delegates Become 'The ELCIC Nation'

Following supper on Friday night, the convention was invited to participate in an "Enrichment Experience". Lyndon Linklater, from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and bandmember of the Thunderchild First Nation, used music, storytelling and an engaging sense of humour to introduce a different perspective on First Nations treaties. During the evening, we became the "ELCIC Nation" and were invited to sign a "treaty" with a powerful, alien force that threatened our entire way of life. We reflected on what such a treaty should include.

"When treaties were made, both sides benefited. We were understood to be siblings… walking side by side in a country that belongs to all of us," Linklater concluded.

The evening continued with a heartfelt presentation by Pastor Jason Johnson of St. John's Lutheran in Laird. Last year, members of St. John's participated with the local Mennonite church and the Young Chippeyawan First Nations community to commemorate the signing of Treaty Six. They gathered at Stony Hill, originally part of the reserve land provided to the Band, and now the site of St. John's Lutheran Church. In a short, well-produced video, Pastor Jason showed highlights of the ceremony, acknowledging the history of the Young Chippeyawan Band and looking forward to a spirit of cooperation and harmony. Pastor Val From, chaplain at Saskatoon Lutheran Native Ministry brought greetings and reflections about the various "solitudes" experienced in Saskatoon. Randi Arnot, a member of Messiah Lutheran in Prince Albert shared of her experiences growing up in Saskatchewan with aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, "walking together in humility and joy."

Harry Lafond, from the office of Treaty Commissioner concluded the evening. He noted that the treaty relationship is "about God, who participates with us, sanctifying our relationships" and he challenged us to make that relationship come alive in our communities. Lafond also spoke about the symbol of the circle, and how the circle is foundational to our identity. The circle, Lafond says, illustrates "what we believe and how we live and how we want to be related to everyone in the treaty relationship."

At the conclusion of his presentation, Lafond invited the entire assembly to stand in a circle and say the Lord's Prayer. Earlier, Lafond had noted that our relationships are transformative, and in such encounters "no one goes home the same person." That was certainly the experience of many who attended the enrichment experience.

Canada Lutheran welcomes stories and photographs about the people, events, and outreach activities in your congregation. Send your material to Saskatchewan Synod Section, Kerilyn Voigt, Editor, 126 Davidson Crescent, Saskatoon, SK, S7L 4A3, email CanadaLutheranSK@gmail.com, fax 306-979-2290 or call 306-664-1056.

Synod Council Vote

Nail-biter decides LTS Board of Governors Vote

When the ballots had been counted for the vacant position on the Lutheran Theological Seminary Board of governors, Reverends Dan Haugen and Pat Simonson had each polled the same number of votes at 79. A run-off ballot produced a narrow win for Rev Pat Simonson.

Here are results of the Synod Council elections:
•Kathy Buckingham, Prince Albert Conference, four-year lay term
•Kathy Birg, Saskatoon Conference, four-year lay term
•Rev Amber Hoffman, Swift Current Conference, two-year clergy term
•Barbara Weiss, Swift Current Conference, four-year lay term
•Rev Kathleen Schmitke, Weyburn Conference, four-year clergy term
•Neil Kemp, Weyburn Conference, two-year lay term
•Rev Lori James, Yorkton Conference, four-year clergy term

New Governance Model a Success

"Effective, efficient and respectful to the offices and the persons involved in the process" is how Synod Council Chair, Murray Walter, describes changes in the governance model for the Synod.

The new model was developed by Reverend Les Stalke of LCC to clarify the roles of bishop and council members so roles, limits and authority are better defined.

In essence, the news governance model streamlines the process of management and sees the Synod Council directing the bishop in the area of governance, giving the bishop responsibility to delegate management authority and making the bishop the only one responsible directly to Synod Council.

Murray told the convention the main focus of the model is on strategic planning: what services the synod delivers to what people, in what places the services are to be delivered and in what order so.

Simply put, Council makes policies and the bishop is responsible for executing those policies. The Synod of Alberta has already changed its constitution and bylaws. In April at its convention, the MNO Synod had first reading of constitutional changes similar to those in Saskatchewan and the National Church is starting to revisit its governance procedures with an eye on the Saskatchewan model.

Murray concluded his presentation on the new model with a firm endorsement of it: "It is my opinion and, I believe, the opinion of Council, that the governance model has been effective. Considering the newness of the process, I feel it has been efficient."

Bishop Cindy Halmarson reported that some parishes are examining the Synod model with a view to implementing some aspects of it at the congregation level.