

2020 NEW ENGLAND SYNOD COUNCIL UPDATE

Greetings in the name of Christ!

This is not an “official” report from the Synod Council, just my reflections on the past year as a member.

In December 2019, Bill Jackson Vice President of the Synod Council tendered his resignation effective January 1. At the February meeting of the Synod Council, I was elected to that position. That February meeting was the last time we all met in person at the Synod house. Right after that the pandemic struck and everything was shut down. I’m reasonably sure the two are not related. When I look back at the agenda and minutes from that meeting, I’m filled with a sense of sadness at what the synod, and I mean the synod as a whole not just the council, was unable to accomplish. A disaster relief trip to Puerto Rico had to be cancelled. And of course, the annual synod assembly in June was ultimately cancelled as well.

Since that time the council has been meeting remotely via Zoom and still conducting the business of the synod. Our meetings don’t cover as much as we can when meeting in person but we are still engaged. There are ministries still working hard to adjust to the restrictions of the pandemic. The minutes of March meeting reflect those changes but are also filled with hope and confidence that God will see us through.

In the absence of full Synod assembly in June, synod council voted to elect new members to the council with the plan that these elections will be ratified at the 2021 assembly. All candidates that were on the slate submitted by the nominating committee were elected, including me as Vice President. The council also received a report from the Bishop concerning how congregations can continue to worship and remain active both within the congregation and in their communities. It’s a bit heartbreaking to look back and think that at that time there was still hope in reopening soon.

One of the great things about serving on synod council is hearing about ministries and teams working in New England and beyond. We continue to hear from Calumet and the Global mission team. In September we heard from the Mosaic ministry which serves as a ministry for the disabled as well as the New England Anti Racism (NEAR) Core team sharing information and resources on dismantling social racism. Pastor Emily is a member of this team so please reach out to her if you want to know more about this very important work.

The council has voted to hold the 2021 Synod Assembly remotely from Worcester. Obviously, it will be a very condensed version given that it was scheduled for three days and will now just be one day. There will be elections for voting members to the ELCA Church Wide Assembly in 2022 in Columbus, Ohio. I was a voting member at the 2019 CWA and it was a great experience to gather with Lutherans from all over the country

and hear about some very exciting ministries and programs. If you are interested in this opportunity, please reach out to me. I'm happy to talk more about it.

Please keep Bishop Hazelwood and his staff in prayer during these times. They are all working very hard to adapt themselves and to help congregations and ministries adapt as well.

Yours in Christ,

Donna Kerry