

139th Synod Meeting and Conference Highlights

The Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario (le Synode du Québec et de l'Est de l'Ontario) gathered on Friday, October 18th and Saturday, October 19th, 2013 at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Cornwall, Ontario for the 139th Synod meeting and Fall Conference. 62 members attended the synod meeting and a total of 120 people registered for the conference.

The synod met as a full court, consisting of the constituent members of the five Presbyteries. The first sederunt was on Friday beginning at 9:00 am and concluded at 12:30 pm. The second sederunt followed the Fall Conference and was held Saturday afternoon from 1:25 pm to 4:00 pm. The Fall Conference began Friday afternoon at 2:00 pm and concluded at lunch on Saturday. The conference theme was "Sing a New Song – Embracing the Mission of God" with speaker, the Rev. Dr. Gary Nelson, President of Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. The conference was not just for synod members but was open to anyone interested in helping congregations become more engaged in God's mission in the world. The cost of the Fall Conference was covered by a registration fee of \$50 (\$35 Friday only, \$15 Saturday only) and was supported in part by a bequest to The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Worship

The past Moderator, the Rev. John Barry Forsyth, led worship Friday morning and afternoon. Friday evening's worship was led by the Rev. Marilyn Savage and Mrs. Heather Lupick. Worship on Saturday morning was led by Mr. Jeff Earle and Mrs. Kerri Guther. At the conclusion of the Fall Conference, the host minister the Rev. Ruth Draffin and the synod moderator the Rev. Harold Kouwenberg, celebrated the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The worship services were filled with music and the synod was blessed by the offering of musical gifts by many musicians including Marilyn Savage, Heather Lupick, Jeff Earl, Kerri Guther, Thérèse Motard, Ruth Draffin, Geoff Howard and Gary Postma.

Business Meeting

The Moderator of the 139th Synod was elected Friday morning. The Rev. Harold Kouwenberg, of the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry was installed following opening worship. The business of the court included the consideration of various reports including from the Committee on Business, the Finance Committee, the Treasurer, the Mission/Robert Fund Committee, the Regional Staffing Committee, the Youth Working Group, the History Committee and the WMS Synodical. In addition there was a report from the Presbytery of Ottawa on the oversight of the Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre and a report from the Camp d'action biblique camp committee.

A commission was established to consider a corrective case from the Presbytery of Ottawa.

Three Overtures were presented from the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew. The Synod resolved the following:

- 1) That Overture No. 1 from the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew which requests the 140th General Assembly to dissolve the Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario, providing direct accountability between the presbyteries within the current bounds of the Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario and the General Assembly, be transmitted to the 140th General Assembly with the disapproval of the Synod.
- 2) That Overture No. 2, from the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew which requests that the 139th Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario eliminate the positions of Synod Regional Staff within its bounds, effective December 31, 2014, be referred to the Synod Regional Resourcing Committee.
- 3) That the Prayer of Overture No. 3, from the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew which requests that the 139th Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario absolve the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew from any responsibility for Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre it, effective December 31, 2013, be not granted.

The synod resolved to continue funding for Regional Staff to the end of 2014. The Regional Staffing Committee will continue until the end of 2014. A new committee, the Regional Resourcing Committee, was established to work on the details for the change to regional resourcing work in the synod beginning in 2015.

The Mission/Robert Fund Committee received two requests for funds for 2014. The committee was informed by Canada Ministries that \$7,000 would be available and the synod resolved that \$5,000 be distributed to Camp d'action biblique and \$2,000 to the Presbytery of Montréal (in relation to financial oversight of la mission Siloé.)

The Finance Committee presented their report in the first sederunt on Friday, including the budget for 2014 and corresponding presbytery assessments and a five year forecast. The report was duly considered and in the second sederunt on Saturday, the report, as amended, was adopted. The Synod accepted, with regret, the resignation of David Morris as convener of the Finance Committee.

The Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew submitted a letter to the Synod in which they advised that they would not be remitting their full assessment for 2013 and would reduce their assessment contribution substantially for the next three years with no assessment remitted in 2016. In response to the financial concerns expressed by the Presbytery, the Synod resolved: "That for this year only, the Synod forgive 25% of the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew's 2013 assessment." As of the synod meeting the presbytery had only remitted \$6,000 of their assessment. The Synod expressed to the Presbytery the expectation that the new outstanding assessment balance of \$7,550.13 would be remitted.

Prior to adjournment the Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario resolved to meet within the bounds of the Presbytery of Ottawa on Friday, October 17th and Saturday, October 18th, 2014.

Fall Conference

Session 1: Friday 2:30 – 3:15 pm	"It isn't Kansas anymore – or Canada for that matter"
Session 2: Friday 3:30 – 4:15 pm	"Living in the Crossover Time"
Session 3: Friday 7:30 – 8:15 pm	"Living as a Borderland People"
Session 4: Saturday 9:30 – 10:15 am	"Practices of a Borderland Church"

Gary Nelson's talks were live-streamed during the conference and were recorded by James Laurenson, PCC Communications. A link to the recorded sessions can be found by going to the synod website at www.presbyterian.ca/qeosynod/Synod2013-videostream.html

Gary Nelson primarily used the frameworks outlined in two of his books, "Future Faith Churches" and "Borderland Churches". Both of these book focus on the changing world and the church's role of engagement in it. He spoke from a Canadian context and asked many challenging questions, including what kind of church do we want to be? Is our presence in the community defined by our building or by our calling? Are we willing to move beyond our focus on building the church to doing ministry out there? Are we tourists or travelers out there?

The Fall Conference brought people together from across the Synod to worship, to listen, to learn, to share, to pray. We thank the synod conference planning team, convened by the Rev. Dr. Dale Woods, for all their work in pulling together the Fall Conference.

Heartfelt thanks are also extended to the host congregation of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Cornwall. Many hours were spent in preparation for the double responsibility of hosting both the Synod Business Meeting and Fall Conference. The congregation accepted the challenge and worked hard with many hands offering help in numerous ways. We are grateful to everyone who helped provide a warm welcome, delicious food, and overall gracious hospitality.

Synod Meeting Attendance

Presbytery of Québec	3
Presbytery of Montréal	12
Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry	21
Presbytery of Ottawa	20
<u>Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew</u>	<u>6</u>
	62

Synod Conference Registration

Presbytery of Québec	3
Presbytery of Montréal	17
Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry	45
Presbytery of Ottawa	39
<u>Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew</u>	<u>16</u>
	120