

## **141<sup>st</sup> Synod Meeting Highlights**

Commissioners from the five presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario (le Synode du Québec et de l'Est de l'Ontario) gathered on Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Granby, Québec for the 141<sup>st</sup> Synod meeting. The Friday afternoon sederunt and dinner were held at Granby United Church.

The Moderator of the 138<sup>th</sup> Synod, the Rev. John Barry Forsyth, opened the meeting with worship at 2:00 p.m. Friday afternoon, including the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. (The Moderator of the 140<sup>th</sup> Synod was not able to be present). Following opening worship and the constitution of the court, the election of the moderator of the 141<sup>st</sup> synod meeting was held. Mr. Warren Wong from the Presbytery of Montréal was elected and installed.

The business of the court continued with the consideration of various reports. The Commission Report re the corrective case from the Presbytery of Ottawa was received and the Commission dismissed.

The Committee on Business presented several recommendations, with the remaining held for consideration at a later sederunt.

The Treasurer presented the 2014 Financial Report, the reviewer's report, a 2015 year to date financial statement as well as a projection until the end of the year. The 2016 budget of synod expenses, 2016 presbytery assessments, and a five year forecast, were then presented for consideration. Discussion on the Finance documents resumed on Saturday.

Following a break for dinner the synod moved its meeting to the Hôtel Castel & Spa Confort, located just down the road from Granby United Church. The guest speaker was Dr. Glenn Smith, executive director of Christian Direction, an urban ministry in Montréal. His theme address was entitled "Christian witness in the context of global upheaval". Dr. Smith addressed three areas of global upheaval impacting the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that of poverty, human trafficking and massive secularity. In the face of global upheaval, the local congregation must help guide the neighbourhood in which it is situated in, to understand the changes in light of the gospel message. As the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:31 replied to Philip, when asked if he understood what he was reading, "How can I unless someone explains it to me?" so the local congregation must be a place where the neighbourhood can engage in conversation and transformation. The local congregation is the entity that interprets the triune God to the neighbourhood. Guided by the Spirit, it must bear witness to the God of Jesus Christ and all his teachings. As the church witnesses, it must be engaged with the neighbourhood and live out the good news of the gospel through spiritual formation and discipleship. Though there are challenges, we face them with hope and with prayer.

On Saturday morning reports were received from the Synod Webservant, the Synod Historian, and the WMS Synodical. The Mission Committee recommended that four ministries / projects receive money from the Robert fund: Camp d'action biblique, la mission Siloé, Église St-Luc, and the Comité francophone of the Presbytery of Montréal.

Reports from the two camps within the synod bounds were received. The Presbytery of Ottawa reported on the Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre, and the Presbytery of Québec reported on Camp d'action biblique (CAB). Janet Ham, co-executive director at Gracefield, and Randy Johnston, executive director at CAB, were both present.

The Synod also heard from two speakers on Saturday morning. First, the Rev. Dr. Dale Woods, principal of The Presbyterian College, spoke about theological education, the care of leaders, and what congregational leaders feel the church needs from its colleges. 2015 marks The Presbyterian College's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the college has developed a strategic plan that will result in transformational and effective leaders for the church and for the world. Dr. Woods shared with the Synod information about the plan, including the Leadership Centre which mentors men and women to become effective leaders in their communities: the church, the workplace, the world.

The second speaker was the Rev. Samy Said who addressed the synod on the ministry to refugees undertaken by the Arabic Church of Montréal. He shared a power-point presentation which included some history of the congregation and its present outreach ministry. At the 2015 General Assembly the following recommendation was adopted: "That the 141<sup>st</sup> General Assembly urge individuals, congregations and presbyteries to respond to the pressing need for resettlement of vulnerable refugees through sponsorship." The commissioners were urged to keep the refugee crisis in prayer and to bring the desperate need for action before their respective congregations and presbyteries.

After the lunch break the remainder of the Committee on Business recommendations were considered and adopted. In addition the financial documents were adopted. The Synod named Gordon Walford convener of the Finance Committee.

The Synod agreed in 2012 that it would meet every third year as a full court in a conference style. The first conference was held in 2013 in Cornwall. The second conference will be held in 2016.

The synod adjourned at 2:20 pm. The 2016 Synod meeting will be a full court and include a conference portion. The dates were set for Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup> and Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 with the meeting location to be at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Carp, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Ottawa.

The thanks of the Synod are extended to the Presbytery of Québec for graciously hosting the 2015 meeting.