

2021 Synod Highlights

1. Synod Conference

Climate Change: What Can I Do? – Christian Caring for Creation

78 participants from across the synod and from other places across the country gathered online for an informative conference focusing on the important issue of Climate Change. The conference keynote speaker was Dr. Norman Wirzba, author, academic, caring Christian and Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Guided by Norman Wirzba, the aim of the conference was to encourage participants to engage in the theme of climate change from a Christian perspective and together to seek ways to respond to the crisis while cherishing the planet God created for us all.

To encourage registration, leading up to the conference a promotional video with clips from the speaker was shared with congregations and posted on the synod website. Registration was done through eventbrite and included two levels, basic at \$25 and premium at \$50. Both levels of registration include a receipted charitable donation to PWS&D of \$25. The premium level also included a copy of Norman Wirzba's book "From Nature to Creation" and an accompanying Study Guide prepared by Dr. Gerbern Oegema of McGill University.

The conference was held over three days with three 1½ hour plenary sessions and a Town Hall gathering:

- Thursday evening, October 14: "What kind of world are we in?"
 - introduced the idea that the world is God's creation and what difference it makes to think this way
- Friday afternoon, October 15: "What is the point of the world?"
 - even if the world is God's creation, we must still wonder about its point, meaning, and purpose.
- Friday evening, October 15: Climate Change Town Hall
- Saturday morning, October 16: "Eating our way to heaven"
 - through the use of food systems and eating practices, the two previous plenaries were brought into a more precise focus.

The Friday evening Climate Change Town Hall panel was moderated by Thomas Mulcair, with panelists Norman Wirzba, David Heurtel, former Quebec Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Dr. Jessica Moerman, environmental scientist and Dr. Caroline Begg, ecological agriculture professor, and included thirty minutes of Q & A from the audience.

The host for the plenary sessions and Town Hall was the Rev. Meg Patterson. Technical support was provided by James Laurenson and Stratsimir Dimitrov. The conference was recorded and will be made available to participants and the synod, with a target date of the end of November.

Thanks are extended to the conference planning team, convened by David Christiani.
The conference was supported in part by a grant from The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

2. Synod Business

The Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario met online on Friday morning October 15, 2021 in full session with 37 members present. In the absence of the Moderator, the Rev. Samer Kandalaft, due to recent surgery, the past Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Katherine Burgess, moderated the meeting and led in opening worship including the celebration of the Lord's Supper. A memorial time was held recognizing teaching and ruling elders that have died since the Synod last met. The Synod elected and installed the Rev. Shahrzad Kandalaft as Moderator.

The following resolution was adopted:

That the thanks of the Synod be extended to the Rev. Samer Kandalaft for serving as Moderator for three years and his leadership during that time, including overseeing the production of two online worship services during the pandemic that were shared with congregations in the bounds and provided worship leaders a Sunday of respite from preparing and recording on-line worship.

Three requests for Regional Resourcing funding were approved for submission to Canadian Ministries for their consideration. The amount available in 2022 is \$61,000.00, and the agreed upon breakdown is as follows:

- the Presbyteries of Ottawa and Seaway-Glengarry: \$30,500.00 for a Presbytery Ministry Animator
- the Presbytery of Montréal: \$23,900 for a Mission Promoter
- the Presbytery of Québec: \$6,600.00 for the Camp d'action biblique Executive Director

Reports were also received from the Synod Webservant, the Mission / Robert Fund, Camp d'action biblique, and the Presbytery of Ottawa on their oversight of the Gracefield Christian Camp and Conference Centre.

The synod continues to look for a person to take on the role of Synod Historian. The main focus will be overseeing the gathering of oral histories of people who have, or are, serving the church, including but not limited to: ministers, elders, mission workers, church school teacher, etc.

The 2022 budget and presbytery assessments were adopted.

Marilyn Repchuck, chair of the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre Advisory Committee, shared a power-point presentation on the new centre and the "Our New Home Campaign" to raise \$200,000. (pcheritagecentre.ca)

The synod adjourned at 12:36 pm. It was agreed that the synod would meet next in regular session in a conference style format on Friday, October 14th and / or Saturday, October 15th, 2022, with the location and time to be set by the synod council.