

148th (2024) Synod Meeting Highlights

The Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario (le Synode du Québec et de l'Est de l'Ontario) met within the bounds of the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Arnprior, Ontario on Friday, October 18th and Saturday, October 19th, 2022 for the 148th meeting. 53 people registered for Synod 2024 (36 members and 17 visitors).

The Moderator of the 147th Synod, the Rev. Sybil Mosley, along with the Rev. Paul Johnston, host minister, led the opening worship at 2:00 pm Friday afternoon, including the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. An offering was received which was given to the Dr. Peter Bryce Indigenous Scholarship in Medicine, an initiative of Knox Presbyterian Church, Ottawa.

The Moderator offered a land acknowledgment.

Following opening worship and the constitution of the court, a memorial time was held recognizing the teaching and ruling elders from the presbyteries within the bounds whose death occurred just prior to or since the Synod last met. The Synod elected and installed its Moderator, the Rev. Gerald Gallant, from the Presbytery of Lanark & Renfrew.

Friday afternoon business

The following reports were received and considered:

- The Committee on Business
- The Treasurer presented the 2023 Financial Report, the reviewer's report, and a 2024 year to date with projection to the end of the year.
- The Finance convener presented the 2025 expenditure budget, presbytery assessments, and a five-year forecast. The Finance report was adopted with an expenditure budget of \$104,044.00.
- The synod webservant shared statistics from the synod website.
- The Regional Resourcing report was presented, and five grant requests were approved for submission to the Life and Mission Agency for their consideration:
 - (1) \$2,840.00 for the Project Manager at Camp d'action biblique
 - (2) \$12,000.00 for the Executive Director position at Camp d'action biblique
 - (3) \$3,800.00 for a Supply Preaching Coordinator in the Presbytery of Montréal
 - (4) \$18,700.00 for a Youth Worker in the Presbytery of Montréal
 - (5) \$23,660.00 for a Ministry Animator for the Presbyteries of Ottawa and Seaway-Glengarry

It was also agreed that from available 2024 funds that an additional \$1,500.00 be given to Camp d'action biblique for the Executive Director position, which amount is the balance of the original request of \$10,000.

It was further agreed that requests for remaining 2024 funds should be submitted to the synod clerk by November 21 for consideration by the synod council.

- The Mission/Robert Fund report was presented. Unfortunately, a financial statement for the Robert Fund was not received from the PCC Financial Services prior to the Synod meeting. It was agreed that subject to receiving a financial statement for the Robert Fund, \$2,500.00 be disbursed to each of the three applicants, namely Camp d'action biblique, the Presbytery of Montreal for Chemins protestants,

and The Presbyterian College, and that the Synod Council advise the applicants that it will subsequently consider further possible disbursements when a more accurate and complete statement for the Robert Fund is received.

It was further agreed that the synod clerk write to the Assembly Council expressing the Synod's strong displeasure that no financial statements were issued to the Synod for the year 2024 for the Robert Fund.

- Reports were received from the Presbytery of Ottawa on their oversight of the Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre; and from Camp d'action biblique within the Presbytery of Quebec.

At 5:20 pm, the stated time arrived to hear from Guy Smagghe, Director of Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). For over 75 years, PWS&D has been working with partners overseas and Canadians here at home to make positive changes in our global village. Information on various PWS&D programs was shared with the court, including facts from the 2023 Impact Report, which is available to download or order for the PWS&D website. In 2023, PWS&D contributed \$10.8 million to programs where most needed around the world – \$3 million in development and \$7.8 million in emergency relief programming. Additional information was shared on specific areas of support including food security, human rights, health, emergency responses and refugee sponsorship. Ways to give to the work of PWS&D were shared, including donations to appeals. Details were shared about the Community and Growing Projects, undertaken in cooperation with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which are local initiatives that have an impact that goes beyond the individual community. Another way to give is by using the Gifts of Change catalogue. PWS&D also produces many advocacy and educational resources available in different formats including video. They also produce the Advent and Lent liturgies for use in congregational worship. Check out more resources and information at the PWS&D website: presbyterian.ca/pwsd.

The synod adjourned at 6:00 pm and reconvened at 7 pm. A time of worship was held, led by the Rev. Shahrzad Kandalaft.

Conference Speaker

Following worship the conference speaker, Carey Nieuwhof, was invited to address the synod. He gave two theme addresses, one on Friday evening and the second on Saturday morning. Each presentation included a time for questions and answers. Each session was recorded and is available on the synod website. The power-point slides are also available for review.

Friday evening theme address

The first address was entitled "Past, Present, and Future Church Trends." Carey shared some of his own story, and then reflected on the changes in the church. He spoke on Historic Christianity, Fiducia (trust) over Assensus (approval), Growing Churches, and Mission over Methods. He stated that "Churches who love their methods more than the mission will die." He also spoke about current cultural shifts and trends: Shift One: A church without a great online presence won't reach unchurched people.

Shift Two: People are longing for transcendence more than immanence. Too often people come to church looking for God and only find us.

Shift Three: People are looking for an alternative to the culture not an echo of it.

Shift Four: In an age where nothing seems real anymore, people are looking for passionate authenticity.

The Rev. Gerald Gallant, Moderator
Mrs. Donna McIlveen, Clerk

www.qeosynodpcc.ca

Trend One: Elevate community and connection over content.

Trend Two: Regularly engage both the head and the heart.

Trend Three: Create more space and moments in your in-person experiences.

Trend Four: Unhealthy leaders lead unhealthy churches...healthy leaders lead healthy churches.

Trend Five: Be more sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Saturday morning theme address

The second address was entitled “Leading Change without Losing It.” Carey spoke on the why, what and how of change. He spoke about the importance of change and the four types of people during change: the early adopters (10%), the early majority (30%), the quiet majority (50%), and the opponents (10%). The opponents might be loud, but they are generally not the majority. Doing the math, there are far more people willing to embrace change than are not.

The importance of choosing a focus was explored. He stated that “You can focus on who you want to let go of or who you want to keep. Is it more frightening to lose a handful of people, or to never accomplish your mission?” Carey then spoke on finding a filter. Without a filter, everything sounds compelling. Next Carey spoke on the importance of attacking problems, not people. And he ended with the challenge to not quit. Unimplemented change becomes regret.

Remaining Business

Two additions to the Synod Standing Orders were approved. One addition authorizes the synod council to prepare a budget in the years the synod does not meet, and the second addition is to the Mission (including the Robert Fund) regarding the amount distributed in any given year. The updated Synod Standing Orders can be found on the synod website, under meetings, documents.

The report on the examination of minutes was also received.

Prior to adjournment, the courtesies report was received. The thanks of the synod were extended to everyone who attended the 2024 synod meeting; to the guest speakers; to the host congregation; to all who had a part in the running of the synod meeting; to all worship leaders and participants; to all who oversee various tasks in between synod meetings; and to everyone for their service to the church at the congregational, presbytery and synod level.

The synod adjourned at 12:10 pm on Saturday afternoon. morning. It was agreed that the synod will meet again as a full court on Friday October 16, 2026 within the bounds of the Presbytery of Québec, with the time and other logistical details to be set by the synod council.