



## MNO SYNOD REPORT TO CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETINGS JAN 2022

Grace, mercy, and peace to you in the name of Christ our Saviour.

I am so thankful for our partnership in ministry across the MNO Synod. It is my privilege to see how God works through the disciples in MNO to reach out to the world in faith and hope. Our synod has been richly blessed through the ministry of our leaders, ministers, and congregations.

The following is a snapshot of some of the work that the synod office staff have been doing to further the ministry priorities that Synod Council developed in 2018.

<http://mnosynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2019-MNO-MinistryPriorities.pdf>



**EMPOWERED  
 DISCIPLESHIP**

- + Participation in the ELCIC preaching series during Epiphany and summer
- + Youth and Young Adult worship and gathering opportunities as permitted. We provided several online experiences

including Easter Vigil, paint nights, etc.

- + Faith Formation Toolbox webinars for leaders
- + Resource Round-up webinars for family ministry leaders
- + Lent devotions via Instagram for young adults
- + Started what we plan to be an ongoing series of seminars reflecting on social justice issues through a theological lens
- + Small group ministry leader training – 2nd cohort is in process, with a 3rd cohort planned for spring 2022



**MUTUAL  
 SUPPORT**

- + Renewed contract with the EELC (Cameroon) to support the Kids in Cameroon project. The EELC elected a new National Bishop. Regular meetings with ELCA partners in dialogue with EELC
- + Working more closely than ever

with ELCIC bishops and synod leadership

- + Connecting with deacons and Lutheran/Anglican youth leaders across the church to expand network of support and resources
- + Meetings with youth leaders to strengthen, support, and network
- + Weekly Zoom meetings with actively serving clergy for information, discussion, and support. Bi-weekly meetings with retirees
- + Improved communication through newsletter, social media, and email. Website being redeveloped
- + Curated faith formation resources for congregational leaders



**COMMUNITY &  
 CONNECTIONS**

- + Finalized designation as a 'Reconciling in Christ' Synod with Reconciling Works. A sub-committee is being formed to help the synod live into these commitments
- + Support for emerging online ministry
- + Continued participation in the Winnipeg Indigenous Accord, and exploring other avenues to engage in reconciliation. Promotion of National Indigenous Peoples Day
- + Continued coordination of First Call Program for new pastors that includes all ELCIC synods
- + Developing closer working relationship with the Diocese of Rupert's Land, including joint planning and delivery of events
- + Redeveloping the Canadian Mission Committee to have more specific focus on social justice
- + Participation on Spiritual Care Team at University of Manitoba



**FAITHFUL  
 TRANSFORMATION**

- + Increased collaboration between congregations and pastors
- + Planning a series of training and support for congregational lay leaders
- + Visioning workshops with congregational councils to explore purpose and identity
- + Faith formation Toolbox training on Intergenerational ministry
- + Redeveloped the MNO granting process to make accessing funds easier and to allow better use of our resources
- + Provided board member training for Synod Council (roles and responsibilities)
- + Small group ministry to offer a new way of growing in faith and building relationships

In addition to the work that addresses our priorities, I want to expand on a few things from the previous year, and some plans for the year to come.

### Blessings

A new ministry took shape this past year. ***Spirit of Life Ministry*** is the name of a new parish, formed under a formal parish agreement between Prince of Peace and Abundant Life Lutheran Churches. God has been leading them to work together for years, and now they are partnering in ministry in a deeper way.

We have put energy and resources into ***Small Group Ministry***. SGM is an opportunity for our members to engage in relationship building, connection, and faithful conversation. It can impact our faith growth in a way that is different from just Sunday morning attendance, and it can be possible when large group gatherings are challenging. If you want to know more about small groups, we have an online information session planned for **February 17, 2022**, with our 3rd cohort of leaders being trained in March and April. I strongly encourage you to consider this ministry model to build our spiritual formation and community connections.

### Challenges

The ongoing pandemic regulations have kept me from visiting many of our congregations in person. I have missed the opportunity to meet and worship with our members, and hope to see you in person soon.

***St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church*** in Winnipeg will be closing its doors this year. We give thanks for the faithful ministry that has happened there over the years and pray God's blessing on their members as they find new church homes.

It is becoming more difficult to find part-time and interim pastoral support for congregations. It is important to contact the synod office early if you expect any changes in your ministry in the near future.

Like several of our congregations, financial support to the Synod has been challenged these past two years. We appreciate the financial support we receive from congregations and encourage all congregations to be generous in their support for the coming year so that the synod staff can continue to provide ministry and support to our congregations.

The ministry we do together could not happen without our faithful and dedicated rostered and lay congregational leaders. You continue to grow and thrive in the ministry you have been called to. I am so grateful that you have responded to God's gift of grace through your service to our congregations and synod.

I want to thank our MNO Synod Council for supporting and resourcing the synod office staff, for focusing on our priorities and direction, and for carrying on the work of Synod Council in new ways. Nearly one year after their elections, we have yet to meet together in person, and yet they have found ways to work together as a team.

I also want to thank each of you, members of our congregations and ministries. I appreciate your generosity, your time, your gifts for ministry, and your partnership in sharing the Good News wherever we are.

Yours in Christ's Service,



Bishop Jason Zinko  
Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Thank you for your continued prayers. We appreciate and need them in our ministry. Please continue to pray for:

#### Synod Council

Dallas Kostna  
Dan Brunet  
Rev. Courtenay Reedman Parker  
Martin Kruse  
Jan Schulz  
Sylvia Nilsson-Barkman  
Michelle McConomy  
Heather Werboweski  
Rev. Jennifer Marlor  
Rev. Michael Kurtz

#### Staff

Donna Jackson  
Deacon Michelle Collins  
Bishop Jason Zinko

Synod Committees, and partners