

## Report: Synod Life Committee

Since the inspiring 2012 Annual Meeting, the committee has met twice in Dunedin. The Executive has met five times, including three meetings with the Otago Foundation Trust Board. In addition, we corresponded by email when the need arose. It has been another busy mission focused forward looking year that we believe will bear good fruit for the church in the Synod area, now and in the future.

### Annual Financial Statements

The audited financial statements and notes are presented for approval.

In the Statement of Financial Performance Cash expenses in total decreased this year mainly due to committee costs being much lower than last year. In the previous year the Executive sought legal advice on Insurance matters which was not needed this year. The Ministry Resource Committee made fewer allocations too.

In the Trust Funds Statement of Financial Performance Samstock was underwritten to \$5,000 from the Jubilee Fund and we received \$2,737 back from the previous year's underwriting of the event. \$7,414 of allocations not fully used up were returned to Synod by the beneficiaries so that money has helped to increase the money available for allocation this year.

### Auditors for the 2013 Financial Year

During the year Polson Higgs advised they had sold their audit work to Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), Dunedin and some staff would be transferring to the new firm. We decided to go with the new firm as did the Otago Foundation Trust Board. Their work has been found to be very satisfactory. We recommend that the Synod appoint the same auditors as the Otago Foundation Trust Board, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), Dunedin.

### 2013 Budget

The following budget is presented for approval:

	2012 Actual	2013 Budget
<b>Income</b>		
OFTB – Refund Expenses	209,739	235,000
Synod Allocations for Synod Staff	289,770	274,000
Refunds and other Income	770	800
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	500,279	509,850
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>General Administration:</b>		
Accounting Assistance to Parishes	5,316	6,500
Annual Meeting Expenses	11,859	12,400
Audit Fees	3,503	4,000
Insurance	2,812	7,500
Postage, Stationery etc	1,048	1,300

Rent	20,843	21,000
Salaries and Expenses	362,517	349,000
Sundry Costs	2,311	3,900
Telephone Tolls etc	3,229	3,500
Treasurer's Fees	2,457	2,500
Website Fees	992	1,500
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	416,887	413,100
<b>Committees of Synod:</b>		
Ecclesiastical Fund	1,644	2,750
Educational Fund	2,608	4,450
Executive	24,029	37,900
Ministry Resource	10,321	23,400
Mission & Evangelism	3,216	3,900
Moderator	202	2,000
National Commitments	550	850
Property Commission	2,005	4,100
Synod Life	1,585	4,000
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	46,160	83,350
<b>Other</b>		
PCANZ	8,589	13,500
Depreciation	9,033	10,000
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<b>Total Expenses</b>	480,669	519,850
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<b>Nett Surplus/(Deficit) For Year</b>	19,610	(10,000)
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The budget includes an allowance for increases in costs as well as known planned additional expenditure. Budgets are a best estimate at the time and circumstances can change during the year. The Ministry Resource figure assumes allocating the maximum \$20,000 which they rarely do. Where there has been one off costs in 2012 that are not expected to be repeated in 2013 allowance has been made for these. During last year the church insurers discovered we were not insured for professional liability. That is why our insurance expense has risen significantly. Committee costs are budgeted to increase as we hope to have all the vacancies filled so will increase travel costs. The Executive is budgeting for further legal costs as the Synod Regulations are rewritten and advice from the Structural Engineer is sought on structural matters. PCANZ expenses this year will include hosting Council of Assembly in Dunedin as we have been doing every second year.

### **Otago Foundation Trust Board Financial Statements**

The Board kindly provides financial statements for Synod's information, and we annually send greetings and an appreciation for the work the Trustees and staff do to earn the net income that is available to the Synod to spend. They continue to be excellent stewards of the resources entrusted to them especially in these

more difficult economic times. This year the income available for distribution was down almost \$160,000 compared to last year.

### **Joint Meetings of the Executive and the Otago Foundation Trust Board**

For a number of years the Executive and Trust Board have met several times a year to inform each other of what they have been doing, what plans they have and discuss any matters of mutual interest. These are very pleasant, amicable meetings and we conclude by having lunch together. Relationships between the two groups are excellent which makes the work of both groups and their interactions run smoothly.

### **Economic Outlook for 2013 Calendar Year**

The Trust Board have advised us that income available for distribution may be similar to this year. However, in uncertain economic times we can't be sure what might happen.

### **Moderator Designate**

From the initial round of nominations for Moderator Designate from parishes there were two nominations received. When the two nominees were approached one was willing to accept nomination. Although other prospective candidates were suggested by various people no other people were available to stand for nomination when approached. Therefore the name of the Rev Chris Burgin is being brought to the AGM as the nominee for Moderator Designate. His profile is at the end of this report.

### **2014 Annual Meeting**

The recommended date for the 2014 meeting is Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April, which does not clash with Easter or Anzac Day ... or duck shooting opening day! It is a week earlier than usual to avoid all these clashes.

### **Retirements from Synod Committees**

Allan Paulin, Convener of the Mission & Evangelism Fund is the only convener due to retire this year. We thank him for the outstanding leadership he has given over the ten years he has been the convener and prior to that as a former Moderator and the first paid Mission Advisor in the Synod area as part of the National Mission Resource team. His knowledge of the church and mission in general has been very helpful in leading the committee in its work. His contribution to other Synod committees has also been very much appreciated along with his wise advice and guidance.

We thank those retiring committee members who have concluded their appointment terms or have resigned during their terms, for their valuable service to the Synod. We appreciate the time and effort that goes into serving the Synod and are very grateful for their contributions.

Ecclesiastical Fund: Netta Noone.

Educational Fund: Graeme Munro, Sue Thompson.

Mission & Evangelism: Liz Christenson.

Ministry Resource: Jill Tapper.

Synod Life: Bobby Kusilifu, Wayne Harray.  
Property Commission: Loris King, Wayne Harray & David Mackie.

### **College Fund Applications**

An application was received for \$50,000 to assist with the replacement of the Salmond College Boiler. We seek ratification below.

### **Insurance**

This year has been a slightly better one as the insurance market adjusts to the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquake. Premiums were on a par with last year rather than parishes having to fund another significant increase in premiums. The PCANZ Council of Assembly Insurance Task Group continues to review the past and look forward to see what could be done in the future. The Work Group are looking at a variety of options and some structural and legal changes but have not reached any final conclusions yet.

### **Synod Earthquake Prone Building Policy**

In September 2012 the PCANZ came up with a policy that they were going to send to all parishes. After reading it we decided to make our own policy that more suited our circumstances. Our policy was prepared with advice from Graham McDougall (Structural Engineer) and other people with some knowledge about these matters and was made on assumptions about what local councils, the Royal Commission on the Canterbury Earthquake and Government might eventually decide.

Since then and still now various matters are still coalescing into something we can all work with. In that regard we are aware that local councils are looking more favourably on timelines to get reports prepared, and get structural strengthening and repair work done. **As a result we will be looking to amend our policy when these matters are more certain.** In the meantime we encourage parishes to get reports done and consider the implications of those reports for the future mission of the parish and discuss these matters with Presbytery and Synod. This policy was developed primarily to assist parishes to meet their legal obligations and to help further God's mission through the use of buildings in the Synod area. We are trying to help not hinder! Parishes are probably working through their Building stocks and BMC's reports may help crystalize difficult decisions.

### **Structural Engineer's Reports on Earthquake Risk of Buildings**

To assist parishes to meet their legal obligations we have come to an arrangement with Graham McDougall of BMC Structural Engineers of Wanaka to be available to every parish to provide appropriate reports on buildings. Parishes are free to engage BMC or their own Structural Engineer to prepare these reports. Synod Executive looked at funding these reports but decided the total cost was too large and would have left little or no money for Ecclesiastical Fund allocations. BMC are offering a heavily discounted rate so we encourage parishes to use them if they have not made other arrangements. We have provided this to help parishes meet their legal requirements. An initial programme

of inspections has been circulated but has slipped. BMC are going to circulate a new timetable and in addition will advise Parishes specifically to confirm actual visit dates at least one week prior to the visits.

To give people attending the Synod AGM an opportunity to discuss matters in relation to the Synod Earthquake Prone Building Policy and the Structural Engineer's Reports on Earthquake Risk of Buildings, Graham McDougall and Fergus Sime will be holding a meeting during lunchtime at the AGM. If any matters arise from that discussion that need discussion and/or decision by the AGM they can be brought to floor during the afternoon session.

### **Synod Website**

The website is running very well. Much information can be found on it. Contact Bruce Fraser if you have any problems or want to put something on it. The address is: [www.synod.org.nz](http://www.synod.org.nz)

### **Campsites**

The Synod Life Committee has received a brief report on each campsite after a visit from Gillian Vine. This information will be useful as, together with Presbytery, we work out how best to support campsites now there is one Presbytery.

### **Synod Mission Advisor**

The Executive receives regular reports from Bruce about the work he is carrying out and hears many very good reports from individuals and parishes about how helpful his work has been. Bruce is appointed to work with parishes, so please take the opportunity to make use of his expertise.

### **Synod Regional Youth Co-ordinator**

Stephanie Redhead returned from maternity leave and decided she should resign to spend more time with her young family. We will miss her as she has done a great job over the years she has been in this role. We wish her God's blessing for her future. The process has begun to find a replacement.

### **Synod Kids Friendly Advisor**

Cheryl Harray has had a very good year working with parishes and other groups. She is very keen to help with any children's work. Please contact her if you need her services.

### **Synod Mission Educational Consultant**

John Daniel had been employed for one year to write up the valuable material that he has as we believe it will be of practical use to the church especially in our area. Further details will come in the next few months about how the material can be accessed. It is in draft form awaiting feedback from proof readers.

### **Samstock Music Festival**

We agreed to be this Christian music festival's parent organisation for three years with a review to take place after the third year's festival. This year's festival was

the third and appeared to be successful. A review will be done shortly before a decision is made as to whether we will be its parent organisation in the future.

### **Resource Group Visits by Moderator & other Synod People**

Very few visits have happened this year, partly due to Graham Hill's health and Stephanie being on maternity leave. We do encourage Resource Groups to invite Synod representatives to resource your groups on a regular basis. We will also contact you too to see when we can come and provide resources. We look forward to being of assistance in mission in this way.

### **Synod Representation on national church bodies**

Our representatives as associate members on the Council of Assembly, and the Council's two subcommittees, continue to provide useful input and feedback. The representatives are: Lyn Murray (Council of Assembly), the Rev Ken Harray (Leadership Sub committee), Fergus Sime (Resource Subcommittee). During the year we were invited by the Church Property Trustees to have an associate representative on their committee. Lyn Murray is our representative.

### **Hosting Council of Assembly**

For a number of years now Synod has hosted the Council of Assembly November meeting every second year in Dunedin so Council members can see first hand the national church enterprises that are in the Synod area. We find the time very valuable and we believe the Council does too. We will be doing this again in November this year.

### **Press Go**

Lyn Murray represented Synod at a meeting in November last year. We will continue to work with them as required.

### **Building up the Capital of Synod Funds**

Due to the current economic climate it was decided not to proceed with this at present. However, we will be publishing information shortly about how you can leave a bequest to the Synod. Further information can be obtained from the Executive Officer.

### **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Synod 2016**

We will be 150 years old in three years time!! What should we do to celebrate? Yvonne Wilkie has been commissioned to write a history of Synod, particularly on the period since the last history was written in 1991. We are exploring with Council of Assembly whether we could host General Assembly 2016. A Kid's Friendly party sounds like a fun idea, especially if we could have haggis on the menu!! Capital fundraising is a possibility. We could have a longer AGM say a 2 – 3 day conference looking at the past (Presbyterian heritage especially in the Synod region) and visioning forward in mission. We could invite an inspiring overseas speaker to be our guest speaker at the AGM and go around the regions leading seminars etc. We could commission a play like "Stuart" at the Otago Anniversary 150<sup>th</sup>. Please give your good ideas to Lyn Murray or Fergus Sime.

### **Synod Regulation Review**

Our Lawyers, Frazer Barton & Helen Scott are well underway with this task. The matter needs careful consideration so it will take some time before a draft is available for comment by Synod members. They are trying to deal with problem areas in current regulations so that there might be fewer problems in future.

### **Role of Synod and the Southern Presbytery**

The relationship continues to work well. The Presbytery Moderator is an ex-officio member of the Synod Executive and the Synod Executive Officer is an ex-officio member of the Presbytery Council. This is proving a valuable link. Some joint groupings may be the best way forward in the future for some matters such as Campsite oversight and support, and strategic property reviews as a result of the Structural Engineer's reports.

### **Thanks to Committee Members**

I would like to thank all members of the Executive and Synod Life Committees for their contributions to the work of the committees this year. There are plenty of challenges and mission opportunities ahead of us as we look to the future development of the Presbyterian Church in the Synod area. Please continue to pray for the work of all Synod Committees, as we need God's guidance for the work ahead.

In conclusion, I would like to especially thank Fergus Sime once again for the willing and efficient way he does his job, including the preparation of this report. I reiterate the comments I made last year in that we are most fortunate to have someone as well versed in, and passionate about, the work of the Synod. This is reflected in the amount of time he spends on the phone, replying to emails, the visits he makes and the visitors he gets in the Office, dealing with the many issues which arise in the Synod area.

D Lyn Murray  
Convener