

Report: Synod Life Committee

Since the 2011 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 increased this year mainly due to the Salaries and expenses related to the appointment of the Mission Educational Advisor for one year. Committee costs increased due mainly to legal advice being sought by the Executive on Insurance matters and work continuing on the re-write of the Synod regulations.

In the Trust Funds Statement of Financial Position the Rural Conference was held this year and Samstock was underwritten to \$5,000 from the Jubilee Fund.

Auditors for the 2012 Financial Year

We recommend that the Synod again appoint the same auditors as the Otago Foundation Trust Board, Polson Higgs and Co, Dunedin.

2012 Budget

The following budget is presented for approval:

	2011 Actual	2012 Budget
Income		
OFTB – Refund Expenses	190,635	203,400
Synod Allocations for Synod Staff	284,015	288,000
Refunds and other Income	2,484	800
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	477,134	492,200
Expenses		
General Administration:		
Accounting Assistance to Parishes	4,205	4,500
Annual Meeting Expenses	11,577	15,000
Audit Fees	3,052	3,500
Postage, Stationery etc	677	1,000
Rent	20,843	21,000
Salaries and Expenses	355,103	360,000
Sundry Costs	1,971	2,500
Telephone Tolls etc	3,268	4,000
Treasurer's Fees	2,428	2,500
Website Fees	1,075	1,200
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	404,199	415,200

Committees of Synod:

Ecclesiastical Fund	3,750	4,000
Educational Fund	3,580	4,000
Executive	31,881	24,000
Ministry Resource	15,179	23,000
Mission & Evangelism	2,697	3,000
Moderator	462	2,000
National Commitments	687	1,000
Property Commission	5,542	6,000
Synod Life	3,215	3,500
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	66,993	70,500
Other		
PCANZ	8,591	6,500
Depreciation	6,988	10,000
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Total Expenses	486,771	502,200
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Nett Deficit For Year	(9,637)	(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 2011 that are not expected to be repeated in 2012 allowance has been made for these.

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 \$65,000 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. They 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 2012 Calendar Year

The Trust Board have advised us that income available for distribution may be down in excess of \$90,000 compared to 2011 due to interest rates and other investments providing lower returns this year as well as the continuing uncertain

economic conditions the world is experiencing at present. In addition there is also a possibility that there could be a one off reduction in allocation income if the structural strengthening work the Board needs to do on an investment property is funded from income and not capital funds. They are seeking advice on this and will report the outcome in due course. We again ask applicants to be mindful of this as they submit applications. Further reductions in allocations compared with this year may be inevitable.

Moderator Designate

From the initial round of nominations for Moderator Designate there were eight nominations received. When the eight nominees were approached three were willing to accept nomination. These were Mervyn Currie, Bruce Fraser & Alan Richardson. After the final round of Session/Parish Council voting Bruce Fraser received 67% of the votes with the other two nominees receiving 15% each. Based on this result, the Executive brings the name of Mr Bruce Fraser to the AGM as the nominee for Moderator Designate.

2013 Annual Meeting

The recommended date for the 2013 meeting is Saturday 20th April, which does not clash with Easter or Anzac Day ... or duck shooting opening day!

Retirements from Synod Committees

Helen Thew, Convener of the Educational Fund is the only convener due to retire this year. We thank her for the outstanding leadership she has given over the years she has been the convener and prior to that as a member of the committee. Her knowledge of both church and secular education has been very helpful in leading the committee in its work. Her contribution to other Synod committees has also been appreciated.

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: Stephanie Wells.

Educational Fund: Gaye Edwards.

Ministry Resource: Chris Burgin, Graeme Munro.

Mission and Evangelism: Mervyn Currie.

Synod Life: Karima Fai'ai, Mark Heslip, Ella Kell, Stephanie Wells, Martin Williams.

Synod Nominating Committee

We have set out as an appendix to this report our suggested Process for Obtaining Future Nominations for Synod Moderator Designate and new Synod Committee Members. We published the proposal last year for comment and to give people time to think about it. No comments have been received other than minor word changes to assist clarity. We are bringing the proposal to this year's AGM for approval.

College Fund Applications

None have been received this year.

Insurance

This has been a difficult and complex issue during the last year! The Christchurch earthquakes as well as other world disasters have changed the insurance landscape significantly, especially in the level of insurance premium charged! Some clarity around the issue of whether all buildings had to be insured for full replacement and who made such decisions was received when our Lawyers, Anderson Lloyd, gave a helpful paper to us which we distributed in September 2011 advising parishes that it was their responsibility to decide what 'adequate' insurance meant on a building by building basis. For a number of parishes full replacement insurance for natural disasters, including earthquakes, has become unaffordable. Parishes can also choose to insure with the PCANZ Insurance Scheme or seek their own insurance elsewhere. With Ansvar NZ pulling out as the insurer of the PCANZ insurance scheme part way through this year's contract, the PCANZ Insurance scheme had to find new insurers at short notice late last year. The PCANZ Council of Assembly set up an Insurance Task Group to review the past and look forward to see what could be done in the future. Synod Executive was invited to have a representative on this work group and have chosen Fergus Sime. The Work Group are looking at a variety of options but have not reached any conclusions yet. The Synod has a work group looking at insurance matters from our perspective as the rules differ here from the PCANZ.

Structural Engineer's Reports on Earthquake Risk of Buildings

A report was requested and received from a firm of Structural Engineers on how Synod might go about getting reports on all church owned buildings in the Synod area to assess their earthquake risk. The report was very helpful but the total cost of doing this for every building, even at discounted rates, was too large for Synod to fund. We are continuing to work with the firm to see how the work might be achieved because it will need to be done. We will be contacting parishes when we have something to offer them.

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

Campsite Support Group

The group has not met this year because the Synod Life Committee has a review process in place. Campsites are being visited as time permits. The Camp Management Committee at Taringatura has decided they want to finish as break-ins and ongoing compliance issues are causing too many problems. As no other interested people could be found to manage the campsite, the Presbytery Council and Synod Property Commission have decided to sell the property.

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 continues to be employed on a part time basis to develop youth work in the Synod region. She is available to help parishes with youth work so please contact her if you need any advice about youth work. A new policy she adopted this year is approaching people to see if she can help and it has worked very well. She will be taking maternity leave later in the year as she and Marty are expecting their second child.

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 has 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.

Samstock Music Festival

This Christian music festival needed a parent organisation as its previous 'parent organisation' was no longer available to fulfil that role. The Executive agreed to be the parent organisation for the next three years with a review to take place after the third year's festival. It also agreed that the Synod Regional Youth Co-ordinator be our liaison with the Samstock organisers and that we would underwrite the Festival up to \$5,000p.a. from the Jubilee Fund as a sign of support and for the security of the festival. From all accounts the festival was a great success. This year's festival will be the third so a review will be done after that.

Resource Group Visits by Moderator & other Synod People

During the last year, the Moderator and other Synod people visited several of the Resource Groups. With Resource Groups meeting less frequently we are unable to get to each group annually like we did with the former Presbyteries. Responses received indicate these visits have been appreciated. We want to provide some tangible support for Resource Groups and also inform them about what Synod is doing. These visits will continue this year.

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 Alastair Smales

(Leadership Sub committee) and Fergus Sime (Resource Subcommittee). Recently the Church Property Trustees invited us to have a representative on their committee. Lyn Murray has been appointed to do this.

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.

Press Go

When Council of Assembly met in Dunedin Lyn Murray and Fergus Sime met with Ray Coster, Convener of Press Go at his request to discuss matters of mutual interest. This was a helpful meeting and clarified matters for both groups.

Review of Archives Research Centre & Hewitson Library

During the year the Council of Assembly set up a Review Group to review these two enterprises. The Review Group invited us to make a submission which we did. We understand the Council of Assembly will be implementing some of the recommendations and this will now be done as part of the work of the Commission on Knox College.

Strategic Review of Properties

The Synod has been looking into policy on retaining manses. The Presbytery has requested a wider review to look at what property should be considered strategic to retain. Work has commenced on this with the next step being a discussion of ideas by the Presbytery Council. Synod and Presbytery will work together in this area as it is a topic of mutual interest. It will also need a missional component as we look forward to possible mission initiatives in the foreseeable future.

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.

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 Synod Executive meet with the Council of the Southern Presbytery again to further the process of clarifying the two groups respective roles and responsibilities. At this stage of our journey we want to try ideas rather than set them in concrete. We are trialling cross representation where the Presbytery Moderator is an ex-officio member of the Synod Executive and the Synod

Moderator and Executive Officer are ex-officio members of the Presbytery Council. We have also agreed to have the Synod Mission Advisor, Youth Co-ordinator and Kid's Friendly Advisor report directly to Presbytery and they will receive the Presbytery minutes to help two way communication about their work and to be more informed about what Presbytery is doing. Relationships are building well. Further meetings will be taking place.

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. 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, and the visits he makes dealing with the many issues which arise in the Synod area.

D Lyn Murray
Convener

Recommendations

1. That the report be received.
2. That the audited annual financial statements for the 2011 year be approved.
3. That Polson Higgs and Co, Dunedin, be appointed auditors for the 2012 financial year.
4. That the expenditure budget for the 2012 year be approved.
5. That Bruce Fraser be elected Moderator Designate of Synod.
6. That the 2013 Annual Meeting of Synod be held on Saturday 20th April 2013, at a venue to be nominated by the Moderator Designate.
7. That the Synod Life Committee be appointed as a Commission of Synod to deal with matters referred to it by this Annual Meeting, other urgent matters, and recommendations for Round 39 (September 2012) from the Committee on Mission and Evangelism.

8. That Synod sends letters of appreciation to those who are retiring, or have resigned, from committees of Synod.
9. That the committees of Synod for 2012/2013, as set out in the Addendum to the White Book, be approved.
10. That the proposal for the Synod Nominating Committee be approved.