



Forming Mission Shaped Churches: A second group starts

BC Synod Congregational Renewal Initiative intake dates:
Friday January 24, 2014 (Intake day for Rostered Ministers)
Saturday, January 25 2014 (Intake day for Lay Guiding Teams)

Dear Friends,

While there are many challenges and disruptions facing us as a church, God's Spirit is calling us to something new. In the midst of this disruption, many of us are wondering "What on earth is God up to?" And while some of us may ask this question out of frustration or anxiety – it turns out that "what is God is doing in the world right now?" is a great question for Christians to be asking as they try to find their bearings in this time of disruptive change.

A second question is like it: "How are we going to get involved with what God is doing out in the world right now?"

In 2012, our synod started a process that is helping us begin to answer these two questions. We have been listening to our congregations talk about the gifts that they have received from God through their communities of faith. We have also begun to discern the ways in which God is active within our communities outside of the church, and will soon be starting our first experiments in engaging in new ways of being with the people in our neighbourhoods. Through this process, we have begun to rediscover how God is at work in the everyday, local contexts in which we live, and are coming to a fuller sense of Jesus' call to discipleship.

Our guide on this journey since it began has been Rev. Dr. Alan Roxburgh. Alan is a pastor, teacher, writer and consultant with more than 30 years of experience in church leadership, consulting and seminary education. Alan and his organization "The Missional Network" (themissionalnetwork.com) work worldwide with church organizations, helping them to renew and redevelop their ministries as they adapt to their changing contexts.

This happens in two ways.

- Laypeople from congregations are invited on an EXTREMELY IMPORTANT journey:
 - of disciplined reflection on the scriptures' call to discipleship
 - of drawing out and collecting stories about the ways in which God has brought their congregations abundant life in the past
 - of reflecting with curiosity about the neighbourhoods where our churches are located and the neighbourhoods in which we live
 - of engaging God's mission in our neighbourhoods with simple experiments
 - of reflecting on the outcomes of these experiments, learning from them, and devising new experiments.
- At the same time, clergy are invited to engage in a separate but similar process of leadership development, which is intended to help them grow towards being more effective leaders in times of "adaptive" change – times when many of our former assumptions and strategies no longer seem to be working. This process includes a 360 leadership survey, listening interviews with members of the congregation, agreeing to a set of spiritual practices with peers, reflecting with peers on feedback received from the congregation, the creation of a leadership development plan, and action-reflection learning with the peer group as the plan is implemented.

Twelve clergy and six congregations were part of the first group to engage this process early in 2013. Interest in this process has been excellent and we are therefore delighted to be able to start our second intake earlier than we anticipated.

Orientation and intake events for the second round:

- for Rostered ministers: Friday, January 24th beginning at 9:30 AM, Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2350 - 148th St., Surrey
- For lay guiding teams: Saturday, January 25th, beginning at 9:30AM, Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2350 - 148th St., Surrey

Please read through the accompanying "Question and Answer" section for further information.

I strongly encourage you to participate in this multi-year process. I believe such a process is extremely important for our congregations and synod in this time in which we live. As you enter into this process, we look forward to seeing even more of what God is revealing for our church here in BC.

May God continue to guide and transform us,

Bishop Greg Mohr.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Congregational Renewal Process

What does this process look like?

- This is an organic, bottom-up process that facilitates the discovery of God's missional future among the people of a local church.
- It is an *ongoing* process that will transform our congregations by equipping ourselves with new skills and habits – helping us lean into the challenges of being God's church in the present and future.
- We spend significant time working with Scripture.
- We discern and discover the ways the Spirit is active in our congregations and neighbourhoods.
- It engages our creativity.
- It involves carefully listening to people and learning from their perspectives.
- Groups of 3-7 lay leaders from each participating congregation form "guiding teams". The guiding teams meet with one another regularly and follow a clearly prescribed series of assignments, which send them into their congregations and communities to listen, discern, and devise experiments for engaging god's mission in the community. These experiments are then enacted by the congregation. Guiding teams have the support of several coaches and ongoing help from the missional network throughout this process
- It provides lay guiding teams and Rostered ministers with new adaptive leadership skills and habits that are geared toward helping us with the challenges the church faces today.
- Rostered ministers, have regular (~monthly) meetings with their colleagues, who provide them with accountability, feedback, and peer support for the action-learning components of this process. One or more coaches keep these groups on track with the process. Rostered ministers also complete a 360 survey that helps them to assess their competencies for leading in times of adaptive change.

Who is this for?

- All congregations and Rostered ministers in the BC synod are invited to apply to participate in this process.
- It is recommended that congregations are in a fairly stable position, with their ministers planning to stay for the next two years, and no major ongoing conflicts or active building projects.
- Congregations participate by forming a "guiding team" of 3-7 laypeople from their congregation. A COMMITMENT TO LAY PARTICIPATION IN THIS COMPONENT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT for the renewal of your congregation.
- Rostered ministers may participate even if their congregation does not form a guiding team. The leadership development component will be helpful for a rostered minister's on-going education and practice.
- Congregations may not participate unless their pastor also participates.

What resources exist that can help me explain this process to my congregation?

- There is a considerable and growing archive of information about the renewal process on the BC synod website: <http://bcsynod.org/upcoming-events/renewal-redevelopment/>. Some of the items accessible on the website include:
 - A series of three 10 minute videos has been produced to help explain the process to congregations.
 - A 6 minute video with the early reflections of several current lay guiding team members is available.
 - A video recording of the complete and unabridged 2 hour information meeting held in October 2012 is also available for people who want more detail about the process
 - Handouts and information documents given to participants of the first round are also available to download and read.

When and how will the next group of participants start?

- There will be two intake meetings held for people who wish to participate in this process: One meeting will be for rostered ministers, the second meeting will be for guiding teams from congregations. Important information will be shared at these meetings – it is very important that all participants make an effort to attend.
- **The intake meeting for Rostered ministers** will take place on **Friday, January 24, 2014 beginning at 9:30AM**, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2350 - 148th St., Surrey. Teleconferencing options will be explored if requested, with details to be announced.
- **The intake meeting for lay guiding teams** will take place on **Saturday , January 25th 2014, beginning at 9:30AM** at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2350 - 148th St., Surrey. People interested in being part of a congregational “guiding team” are encouraged to take part in this meeting; church council members are also invited to this meeting. Rostered ministers are also welcome to attend. Teleconferencing options will be explored if requested, with details to be announced.

When does the actual process begin? How long will it take?

- Both components of this process (one for Rostered ministers, one for lay guiding teams) will begin in January 2014, and continue for 18-24 months.
- After the 18-24 month cycle is complete, the process will start again, building on the learning and leadership capacity developed in the first round. Rostered ministers will meet monthly (either in person or virtually) for the full 18 months.
- Congregational guiding teams will gather with other guiding teams one Saturday every 3 months.

Where will meetings take place?

- Some meetings of Rostered ministers and congregational guiding teams will happen face to face. At other times, these meetings will be arranged to accommodate virtual/telephone meetings.
- Strategies are being developed to help people living in remote areas to take part in this process. More details to be determined.

What will participating in this process require of me/us?

- Time. Those involved will be expected to attend and participate at regularly set meetings.
- A willingness to be in dialogue with peers, learn new skills, and engage in self-reflection in order to gain a greater understanding of adaptive leadership challenges.
- There will be additional reading required of participants.
- Those congregations wishing to participate will be expected to make a small, regular monthly financial commitment, based on average worship attendance, as an investment into this process. See the table below for details.

Average worship attendance	Monthly financial commitment
Less than 50	\$50
50-74	\$75
75-99	\$100
100-149	\$125
150 and greater	\$150

- These funds will cover many of the travel costs associated with bringing rostered ministers and guiding teams together, and enable others to participate in this process in coming years.

I have a question that isn't answered here, what should I do?

- Ask one of the congregations or clergy who are participating in this process
- Contact the synod office.
- Send an email to renewbcsynod@gmail.com

How to apply to participate in the process:

To apply to take part in this process, send an email **by DECEMBER 15, 2013** to renewbcsynod@gmail.com with the following details:

Congregation's name: _____

Is your congregation committed to forming a lay guiding team? (Y/N)

Rostered minister's name: _____