**Prov I Fall Synod**

**November 12, 2015**

Present: The Rt. Rev. Stephen Lane (Pres-ME), The Rev. Kit Wang (V Pres-ME), Rich Stein (Treasurer-CT), Julie Lytle (Executive Director-MA), Dick Rosene (ME), The Rev. Lee Crawford (VT), The Rt. Rev Tom Ely (VT), The Rev. Gail Avery (NH), Becky Alden (MA), The Rev. Nancy Webb Stroud ( W MA), The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher (W MA), The Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas (CT), and The Rt. Rev Nicholas Knisely (RI).

8 a.m. - Welcome and Opening Prayer - Steve

8:05 a.m. - Introductory remarks and budget presentation - Steve

* There is one item of business for today’s web conference: review and adoption of the 2016 budget which was circulated prior to the call with our Treasurer’s comments
* The proposed budget is a “flat budget” which maintains the same as 2015 budget and expectations.
* The budget can be considered as a “shut down” budget unless we as dioceses and synod make another decision about the future of the province. It continues life as we have known it through 2016 and will draws down the reserve to $9000 at start of 2017 (The current and proposed budgets include transfers of $20,000 each year to balance the budget). Also, the church wide budget reduces its allocation to Provinces in 2017 from $10,000 to $5000 and eliminates it in 2018.
* The budget circulated is an “overview” budget. It does not include the income from programs and events that offset most expenses (participant lodging, meals, etc.). It does not list the individual Sowing Seeds grants but does show amount available.
* Income from diocesan assessments is $73,528, from church wide office is $10,000 and reserve is $20,000. No questions about income.
* Expenses are basically unchanged from 2015. Compensation for the Executive Director is unchanged; IRS does not recommend a cost of living increase for 2016 because inflation is low. Healthcare is through the Diocese of Maine and has not changed. Sowing Seeds is $20,000 and Provincial Programs is $10,000.

8:15 a.m. - Questions/responses - Steve, Julie, Kit, Rich

* Tom Ely commented that we are basically covering Sowing Seeds Grants via Reserve – each are $20,000.
* Ian Douglas asked if the full Sowing Seeds budget will be spent in 2015 and if we anticipate folks will use it in 2016.
* Julie Lytle replied that there are two grant applications that have been approved but not yet distributed for 2015 which will utilize the full budget. There are already two or three likely projects for 2016. After four years of encouragement, more people/groups are aware of the grants and are applying for them. It is likely that the full amount would be distributed in 2016.
* Nick Knisely clarified that there is $20,000 for Sowing Seeds in 2016 and, with current projections, half of that would be available in 2017. If we start promoting that that money is going away, we could get to a sustainable level (assuming that all the dioceses can continue at the current level of assessment). Rhode Island is ok with continuing their current level of commitment. Nick acknowledged that he was not aware of how other dioceses are faring. Asked if we have been telling people that we may be backing off of the seed money?
* Steve Lane noted that we really have not had the conversation about what we want to do. With declining funding from the church wide level and reserve draw down, we cannot sustain current level of spending. The Province needs to have a conversation about how to adjust budget going forward: program reduction, executive direction position, etc. Have delayed some decisions like updating/upgrading website and have not asked for more in assessment because not sure of direction from Province. Need to make some decisions about direction in 1st quarter 2016 so can get into diocesan budget planning for 2017.
* Nick Knisely asked if we have designed a process to make decisions about direction for Province.
* Steve Lane identified the complexity of the decision making process. Dioceses need to address the question of what funds are available – with Bishops as an important part of that; the Provincial Synod needs to decide the direction once that is clear. We need to have conversations at both the diocesan and provincial level. If there is no funding, the Synod will have to cut things.

8:20 a.m. – Vote on Proposed Budget

* Unanimously adopted as proposed by Executive Committee

8:25 a.m. – Concluding remarks

* Steve Lane thanked Rich Stein for his time of service to the Province. Provincial books have been transferred to the Diocese of Maine who will administer funds until direction is clarified.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 am

Respectfully submitted by Julie Lytle, Executive Director