

The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron

POPULAR REPORT
SYNOD 2009

The One Hundred and Sixty-Seventh Session of the Synod of the Diocese of Huron convened in the See City of London, Ontario on Sunday, May 24, 2009 at 5:00 pm.

The Opening Service of Synod began with the traditional procession of clergy and dignitaries. The Right Reverend Robert Bennett, presiding over his first Synod as Bishop of Huron, charged the Synod in a wide-ranging address. Bishop Bennett introduced the theme of Synod; “Your Kingdom Come” from Matthew 6:10.

Under the title of “Transitions and Welcome,” the Bishop talked about the changes since the last Synod with the retirement of Bishop Bruce and two elections; first himself as Bishop of the Diocese in October and early in the new year with Dean Terry Dance as Suffragan Bishop. The Bishop commented on how he is looking forward to Terry’s Ordination as Bishop on June 6th. Speaking about “Life in the Synod Office,” Bishop Bob spoke glowingly of the work of all those at Church House and how good work has been done during this time of transition.

Under the subject of “Strategic Planning,” a brief introduction was made for the “Who Is My Neighbour Report,” completed by consultant Marlyne Boken and the formation of a long-term strategic planning task force under the direction of the Suffragan Bishop-Elect.

Bishop Bennett drew attention to the marvellous work being done by Bishop Mark McDonald as he spoke next on “Indigenous Ministry” in our midst. The Bishop suggested strongly that this work, focused on a national level, is having profound influence on our efforts locally as well. Under the topic of “Partnerships,” the Bishop noted how two of our agreements have been expanded. The Companion Diocese relationship with Mthatha in South Africa has been extended for five more years. Bishop Bennett pointed to the wonderful and growing relationships between the two Dioceses and expressed the desire for mutual learning to continue. Here in Canada, the relationship between the Diocese of Brandon and the Deanery of Essex has also been extended and, in fact, the Bishop expressed the desire to find new ways to share in this agreement.

Bishop Bennett then turned to what he calls the two biggest files on his desk. Under “Human Sexuality”, Bishop Bob chronicled the events since last Synod when a motion was passed asking the Bishop to consider approving a liturgy for the blessing of same gender couples already married in a Civil ceremony. He says that after much thought and prayer and a sense of where he believed the heart of Huron to be, he has asked the Doctrine and Worship Committee to “develop appropriate protocols, guidelines and evaluative tools to enable us to move forward with appropriate liturgies to celebrate the love, mutual fidelity and support that gay and lesbian Anglicans model every day for the church and wider community. I envisage that the framework

for this would be Eucharistic in nature with approved intercessory prayers but with no nuptial blessing.” When that work is complete, he is willing to give those who request permission to go ahead as we await General Synod of 2010.

The second heavy file is “St. Aidan’s, Windsor.” Due to the ongoing court case, the Bishop stated there were limits to what he could and couldn’t say. He wanted Synod to be aware that Huron was standing with those who remain part of Huron at St. Aidan’s and encouraged everyone to hold this situation in prayer.

The Bishop spoke briefly on the financial position of the Diocese, noting the economic recession that has impacted our Diocese, sharp declines in the investment market, a flattening of apportionment receipts and unbudgeted litigation costs has impacted our financial results.

The Bishop also announced the appointment of The Rev’d June Hough, as Archdeacon of Erie, to replace the retiring Archdeacon Ken Anderson and also announced a change, in part, to the way Canons are appointed. Putting his own stamp on this ministry, Bishop Bennett appointed five Canons with specific responsibilities and five Canons to the Cathedral Chapter.

Retitled:

Canon Historian: The Reverend Canon Dr. Doug Leighton

Canon Precentor: The Reverend Canon Bill Cliff

Appointed as:

Canon Theologian: The Reverend Dr. Todd Townshend

Canon Pastor: The Reverend Marian Haggerty

Canon Missioner: The Reverend Richard Jones

Canons:

The Reverend Allan Livingstone

The Reverend France Ouimet-Wilson

The Reverend Tanya Phibbs

The Reverend Tony Bouwmeester

The Charge to Synod concluded with what the Bishop gleefully called “Signs of Vitality.” From a major church expansion, to being welcomed to a confirmation service with African drumming, the Bishop said confidently that Huron is alive and well and striding into the future.

Suffragan Bishop-elect Terry Dance was invited to share some reflections at Synod on Monday morning. He suggested this is not the church of our parents and that it was, in fact, time to go forward. Chancellor Lindsey Elwood reminded delegates of procedures during our Synod and also confirmed that all motions required the concurrence of the Bishop.

Bishop Drainville addressed Synod as the Theme Speaker, in the first of two sessions. Bishop

Dennis spoke on the Kingdom or Reign of God, spending some time on the meaning of the original Greek words and then, using the Gospel of Luke, pointing to Jesus ushering in the Kingdom of God in the sense of both speaking to the oppressive community of Jesus' day and calling us to understand a Gospel message of justice today. Bishop Drainville concluded the first session with a small group discussion on the Song of Mary, the reading of the Isaiah scroll and the Lucan version of the Beatitudes. Building on his work from Luke in the morning address, he centred in on Matthew 25 as he continued to discuss the coming of the Kingdom of God and the reign of God. Bishop Drainville suggests that then, as now, the coming in of the Reign of God comes in the removal of the oppressive social and/or justice boundaries that are in place. Only when we stand together, as one across those lines of oppression, will we truly see the Reign of God.

The Vice-Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (A&F) Ms. Wendy Whyte, led a presentation on the current financial situation in the Diocese, reporting that A & F has had two extra meetings this Spring to deal with this matter. Paul Rathbone reported to Synod that at the end of 2008, the Diocese faced an accumulated deficit of nearly \$69,000. (The year began with a surplus of nearly \$32,000.) The projection for the end of 2009 is an accumulated deficit of \$150,000, based on current, reduced expenditures and flattening apportionment revenues. While the A&F Committee discussed various scenarios and possibilities, a recommendation to suspend Regional Funding came before Synod, in a motion. After discussion, the motion was defeated.

The Chancellor, Canon Lindsey Elwood, explained that the Constitution and Canons Committee is performing a thorough review of the present Canons and Constitution which will be presented to Synod in 2010. Two similar motions before Synod, regarding the manner by which information is provided to delegates for Episcopal elections, were referred to this committee. Synod spoke about wants and desires as to how candidates might be presented in advance of elections; such as use of new technology for web casts and video phone contact, through to in-person meetings on a Deanery-wide basis.

Resulting from the Bishop's Charge, a motion was passed, that in accordance with the five marks of mission, a ministry group be established from each social justice group in the Diocese, to determine ways that we can embrace the call to be "repairers of the breach – restorers of streets to live in." (Is.58:12)

A second motion from the Charge, which passed, requests every congregation in the Diocese of Huron to undertake a process to examine the five marks of mission to affirm current ministries, explore opportunities to partner with social service agencies or organizations in their communities, initiate new ministries as a faithful response to the Gospel imperative to build the Kingdom of God and report their progress on these initiatives to their respective Deanery Councils.

A motion was passed from Youth Synod that, beginning in 2010, all parishes allocate a minimum of 1% of their budget to youth ministries. Parishes without active youth programs are encouraged

to designate these funds for local youth evangelism or youth outreach.

Another motion from Youth Synod, that passed, requests the Diocese begin to develop a youth mission fund (16-26 yrs old) to match funds raised by youth applicants interested in outreach ministries. The Diocese will allocate 1% of the Diocesan Budget in 2010, 2% in 2011; ultimately reaching 2.5% in 2012. Such ministries might include: work in our Companion Diocese, outreach ministries in developing nations, or travel to work/learn with/from our brothers and sisters in other parts of Canada.

A third motion received from Youth Synod and passed by Synod asked for a task group to be formed to research the potential for sponsoring seminary students from our Companion Diocese in South Africa to come to Huron University College to obtain a Master of Divinity degree which will enable them to pursue priestly ministry in Mthatha.

The Enviro-Action Committee reminded us all that we are stewards of the earth and that we, as Christians, must take seriously a call to action on the Environment. The first Enviro-Action awards were presented to the following:

- St. John The Evangelist, Kitchener (bronze)
- St. Thomas, Owen Sound (bronze)
- St. Thomas, Seaforth (bronze)
- Holy Trinity, St. George (bronze)
- St. Edmund's, Tobermory (bronze)
- St. Mark's, Brantford (silver)
- All Saint's, Windsor (silver)
- And two Environmental Achievement Awards were presented to: St. Mark's, Brantford and Mr. Bob Killby, property manager of Christ Church, Chatham.

The Very Rev'd John Wright, Director of The Anglican Foundation, made a presentation to Synod on the wonderful and inspiring work that is being done across the entire country by the Foundation.

It was announced to Synod that our new Group Benefits supplier, effective October of this year, will be Great West Life. This change will not mean any significant level of change in benefits provided, but was motivated by a desire to improve service and administration.

Guilia Marchesan, Richard Doyle and The Rev'd Gerry Adam spoke to Synod about the Huron Church Camp for the coming year. Guilia, Chair of the Camp Committee, outlined the financial campaigns that are being conducted, including a decision to do a Fall follow-up on the capital campaign. Money raised for the Camp is holding somewhat steady, but there is always need.

There are openings in most programs for this summer and Guilia urged everyone to promote HCC.

Richard Doyle spoke about his relationship with the Camp. He said to Synod that he is not a public speaker, but he proved the complete opposite as the distance runner spoke with poise and humour about raising money for HCC by running in the Boston Marathon. Richard also spoke about the tremendous difference HCC has made in the lives of his children. Camp Director Gerry,

always the story teller, used the tale of the little girl tossing one star fish into the ocean at a time to save them, as a way to understand how sending one child to camp at a time can make a huge difference and encourage others.

The Rev'd Georgina Foster-Haig presented a report, speaking eloquently on PWRDF's hope that, in this their 50th year, they could host 50 refugee families across the country. Georgina told delegates of the nearly 10,000 refugees a year that Canada receives and the conditions from which some of these families come. Georgina urged all parishes to consider sponsorship, and if that isn't possible, to investigate other ways to provide help to those making a new start in Canada.

The presentation by the Rev'd Sue Malpus and her team was a whirlwind of activity, literally. After sweet treats reigned down upon us from the sky, Sue and others shared the many exciting things ongoing in the area of children and youth ministry. They spoke with great expectation about a tool to help in evaluating and developing ministry in a parish that will be available by the Fall. We learned about a joint Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) conference to be held right here in London next year. There was a report on the great things happening through Youth Synod and how exciting it is to see the church taking shape through these young men and women. Using a video clip from the Life and Faith television program, we relived the spectacular U2charist held at the Cathedral and learned of the follow-up called Crash the Cathedral and other ideas that will soon break forth.

The Rev'd Eleanor Caruana and her team wowed the House when reporting that, in 2008, through general offerings, Anglicans in Huron donated \$17 million dollars in total. That's right, \$17 million dollars! With those numbers still swirling in our heads, we heard team members give thanks to God for experiences of joy, hope, abundant life, living a Disciple's Life and a Legacy of Commitment.

The Ad Hawk group presented a report of the nearly decade- long work of this committee. This group was formed to discuss the ongoing issues around indigenous ministry in and for the Diocese and is a group that wishes to share it's knowledge. The committee advised Synod that they are happy to respond to any invitations to bring information and discussion to congregations and parishes.

Ms. Fiona Brownlee brought greetings and thanks from the Council of the North, especially in light of the Amazing Grace Project, which raised close to \$100,000 across the country. Fiona gave Synod an overview of ministry in our north (which isn't as far north as we might think) and the struggles they face due to lack of funds. Suicide remains one of the major heart-breaking issues in the north, often something clergy must deal with on a monthly basis. Some of the funds from the Amazing Grace project will go to programs in this area.

Bishop Ed Leidel spoke to Synod of a plan to get everyone to give two hours service during the last week of this Christian year leading up to The Reign of Christ. Watch for more details.

The Rev'd Canon Greg Smith spoke of his trip to Cuba earlier this year to meet with other PWRDF partners. He spoke with passion about the dangers and challenges these people face everyday to carry out their mission and ministry and how enormously important the support of the PWRDF is to them. Marque Smith and Angus Sinclair gave a live review of their new CD, "Love", which is in support of the Huron Hunger Fund. Offerings from congregations at the Synod service was \$49,500 and this year's HHF goal is \$350,000.

The Rev'd Ken Brooks and his team gave a wonderful update, via a questionnaire, which allowed us all to test our Safe Church IQ. By the fact Synod spoke with one voice to answer most questions, it became apparent that delegates had a good knowledge of the workings of this vital ministry.

Bishop-elect Dance and members of the newly-formed Long-Term Strategic Planning Task Force of the Diocese spoke with passion as they presented the task ahead. The Boken Report has given us much to think about and has shown us clearly that there are many people we have not reached yet. With one voice, the Task Force stated that we need to go forward, that we must risk, that if we are not willing to speak, then who will. The Task Force will be adding new members in the future and Bishop-Elect Dance would be interested to hear from those who might like to serve.

Mike from Camlachie:

Mike introduced the love of his life, Lorna from Leamington, and pointed out how it was all the result of change; change he initially wasn't willing to accept. By trying something new on his tractor jaunt to Leamington to see his old Rector, Mike found romance and produced a music video. Lot of laughs, with some learning tossed in for good measure.

Archdeacon Jim Dugan presented an update on the work done around the role and number of Bishops in Huron. Jim provided a survey form to members of Synod seeking further input from all delegates.

Bishop Ed Leidel presented an update on his work as Congregational Coach. This ministry has grown to involve a number of people from various areas of the Diocese who meet on a regular basis and are now ready to "spread" the word of this process which is bringing new life into the Diocese.

Following the Synod Banquet, tribute was paid to the retirees: The Ven. Ken Anderson, The Rev'd Bob Skelding, The Ven. Dr. Gordon Simmons, The Rev'd Faye Willsie and The Rev'd Kate Hathaway. With the aid of several speakers and a wonderful musical presentation from Denise Pelley and Steve Holowitz, the ministry of our friend, Bishop Bruce Howe, was held front-and-centre. Our Primate and Metropolitan sent greetings and Bishop Bruce himself paid tribute to his wife Jane, his family and his love for Huron in an emotional address before he was sent off to enjoy Blue Jays baseball and movies.

On the final morning of Synod, election results for Diocesan Council, Provincial Synod and

General Synod were announced. The new members for Provincial Synod, this coming October and General Synod, in June 2010, are as follows:

Provincial Synod:

Lay

Paul Rathbone
Joe Wooden
David Embury
Ray Hinton

Clergy

Tim Connor
Kim Van Allen
Tanya Phibbs
Rob Towler

General Synod:

Lay

Paul Rathbone
Joe Wooden
David Embury
Ray Hinton
Pam Walters
LAIC Rep.-
Norman Jackson

Clergy

Todd Townshend
Tim Connor
Jane Humphreys
Kim Van Allen
Rob Towler
Richard Salt

The Synod adjourned on Tuesday at Noon with a blessing from The Rt. Rev'd Robert Bennett.