

The Ecclesiastical Province of Canada

Diocesan Report

Diocese : Fredericton

Year: 2008

DESCRIPTION OF THE DIOCESE

Clergy and Parishes

Number of "incorporated" parishes: 84 + Christ Church Cathedral
Current "open" incumbencies: 7 (3 can marginally support a full-time ministry appointment)
Full-time clergy: 54
Vocational deacons: 3 (4 in discernment)
Parishes with shared clergy arrangements: 19
Parishes with part-time clergy arrangements: 36 (supply, part-time or shared)
Parishes in the Diocese are approximately: 40% rural 30% town/suburban 30% urban

Statistical

Number of churches (congregations): 160
Area of Diocese: 28,354 sq miles
Population (Province of NB April 2007): 677,200 (approx 35% French-speaking)
Anglican Census Population (2001): 69,250
Anglican Population reported by parishes (2006): 24,152
Clergy on leave / no parish: 10
Retired clergy: 53
Clergy in special ministries and chaplaincies: 1 (+2 part-time)
Postulants: 3 (ordination September 08?)

Diocesan Staff

Bishop:	The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Claude Miller
Executive Assistant to the Bishop:	The Ven. Geoffrey Hall
Bishop's Secretary:	Mrs. Phyllis Cathcart
Diocesan Treasurer:	Canon Fred Scott
Administrative Officer:	Mrs. Maureen Vail
Communications Officer:	Mrs. Ana Watts
Youth Action Director:	The Rev'd Canon George Porter, DPhil
Christian Ed / Camp Medley Director:	Mrs. Elizabeth Harding
Administration (Casual):	Mrs. Carolyn Turney

GOOD NEWS STORIES /HIGHLIGHTS /INITIATIVES

- 1. General Synod Stewardship Planning Study.** Continuing with the former Letting Down the Nets pilot diocese project, interviews being conducted during the summer of 2008 with a study report expected from General Synod in September. Stewardship is intensely difficult for the Diocese as a whole to grasp. It is hoped that the General Synod expertise in this area will assist us in moving forward in a way that will see necessary attention given to this area of Christian discipline. Financially resourcing both parish and diocesan ministry is becoming increasingly challenging.
- 2. Legislative reorganization and review.** As the project of legislative re-organization and review continues, several current policies have been re-worked and adopted as regulations under Canons over the past twelve months. Much work left to do, especially in the area of episcopal directives.
- 3. Financial administration.** Moving to a software package for accounting from former manual methods continues. "Keeping the lights on" often makes time for reform difficult to find in all aspects of administration.

4. Vocational diaconate. Progress is being made on establishing the discernment and preparation for those called to the diaconate. A possible two additional ordinations expected in the Fall of 2008.

CHALLENGES /ISSUES

1. Diocesan budget funding. Diocesan Synod 2007 rejected the new "Fair Share" plan for diocesan budget support by parishes. An alternative model was proposed on the floor which would significantly reduce the support of the diocesan budget over five years. The Bishop preempted the motion pending research of consequences should it be implemented. Budget Funding Task Force at work to return its finding to Synod 2009. Budget funding currently frozen. Concern about future support of diocesan budget support is a real concern being raised at all levels.

2. Issues of sexuality. Diocesan-wide dialogue no doubt going forward informally. No additional recent formal initiatives by the Diocese during the past year.

3. Shared Ministry Plan. Although progress is being made on the 2006 Shared Ministry Plan (a result of General Synod's pre-planning study regarding stewardship programming) implementation and follow-up is definitely the more challenging work in the formulation of a strategic plan. Tracking progress and taking action items seriously is often not a priority. The Plan looks good on the shelf.

4. The work of Synod. Several major directives from the 2007 Diocesan Synod have created a very busy post-Synod environment. Groups at work in an attempt to address Synod concerns include: Budget Support Task Force; Struggling and Rural Parishes Task Force; Communications Committee; Embryonic Stem Cell Research Task Force. Although a position resolution regarding human sexuality was made by Synod 2007, the Bishop informally committed the Diocese to addressing these issues.

5. Vocational diaconate. Promoting a clear understanding of the nature of a renewed diaconate is a challenging endeavour. Although the discernment process leading to ordination to the (vocational) diaconate is designed to engage parishes in a discussion of about ministry (lay, deacon, priest and bishop) many reject the notion due to lack of in depth consideration and assumed conflict with traditional roles of priesthood and parish leadership. The insistence for immediacy of the process and proposed preparation/educational requirements by potential candidates and parishes involved makes a solid program difficult to implement.

OPPORTUNITIES/SUGGESTIONS FOR SHARING WITH OTHER DIOCESES

1. Diocesan officers. Meeting of Diocesan Treasurers and Executive Officers organized by General Synod in Toronto in June 2008 was appreciated and useful, although it seemed to be planned at the last minute. A provincial attempt to share at this level could be of enormous benefit to the eastern dioceses.

2. Feedback. Evidence of follow-up or consideration of previous suggestions by Provincial Synod/Council would definitely be encouraging.

SOME WAYS YOUR DIOCESE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROVINCIAL STRUCTURE AND HOW THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE CAN SUPPORT YOUR DIOCESE.

1. Visibility of delegates. On the part of delegates elected to/members of Provincial Synod, better connections could be made between meetings of Synod. Seldom is there any initiative to communicate the work of Provincial Synod or to assist the Diocese to become engaged. It is assumed that delegates attend but there is little, if any, follow-up. What is really accomplished?

2. Information Management. The Diocese of Fredericton continues to use one of the few internet connected information gathering/management systems in existence in the Canadian Anglican Church.

Respectfully submitted,
The Ven. Geoffrey Hall
Secretary of Synod and Assistant to the Bishop of Fredericton
01 August 2008