

Province of Canada

Diocesan Report

Diocese of Central Newfoundland Year 2009

Description of the Diocese *(statistical data from Anglican Yearbook, demographics, uniqueness, etc.):*

Founded in 1976, the Diocese of Central Newfoundland's see city is Gander. The Geographical area encompasses 27,000 square miles and the Anglican population is approximately 33,000. There are 32 parishes with 32 priests serving in parish ministry, and 2 serving non-parochial. 27 priests are retired. There are 330 Licensed Lay-ministers and 423 Eucharistic Assistants.

The Diocese is largely rural with most parishes having multiple points. The economy is fairly stable with many people working in resource-based industries and others commuting to and from work on the main land. The population is aging and public school enrollment is declining.

Central Diocese is a close-knit Diocese and in many instances has the feel of an extended family. Diocesan gatherings such as Synods and conferences offer opportunity for people to catch up with one another and renew friendships.

Good News Stories/Stewardship/Highlights/Initiatives *(brief descriptions of three-five):*

The downturn in the global economy has had little impact on the life of our Diocese. We continue to be viable financially and to help out struggling parishes and other organizations where we can. In our Diocese there is a growing emphasis on persons exercising their baptismal ministry and the desire for congregations to enter into mission-minded thinking. More and more people are becoming familiar with and comfortable in the methodology of biblical tithing and this is often encouraged by the lay and ordained leadership in our parishes. Along with our clergy, we have an excellent support base of committed lay-leaders. Many of our laity avail of theological training by distance such as correspondence course from Queen's College etc.

Our Mint Brook Camp and Conference Centre continues to be utilized for events such as summer camps for young people, Cursillo, Men's Conferences, Women's Conferences, Lay Minister's and other conferences.

A couple of years ago our Diocese embarked on a "Strategic Plan" with the report offering many suggestions and challenges to our parishes. We are continuing to work through the document and some parishes are in the process of implementing the recommendations which came from it. Over the last number of years many parishes have developed their own Mission Statement and are working towards visioning the future.

Upon invitation from parishes, Bishop David and Rev. John Watton have been travelling the diocese speaking to people about the present discussion on the human sexuality debate in the church. People have found this to be informative and necessary in helping a grasp where we are at this point in the life of the greater church.

Challenges/Issues *(brief commentary on the greatest challenges/issues in your diocese):*

One great challenge for our Diocese is coming to terms with many buildings and properties which are expensive to maintain and in many cases redundant. A number of congregations have opted to formally close and amalgamate with adjacent congregations but this process is sometimes painful and difficult to consider.

Our population is an aging one. Many of our larger centres such as Gander, Grand Falls/Windsor, Lewisporte, Clarenville, etc., have an ever growing chronic care and long-term care population. How best do we utilize our human resources to minister to this growing challenge? Equipping lay visitors is part of the answer yet other ministries of the church need to be nurtured as well; such as ministry to the youth and young couples.

Opportunities/Suggestions for Sharing with other Dioceses *(possible resources, policy development, etc.):*

One thing our Diocese can offer to the other Dioceses is to encourage others as we have been doing, in continuing the process of building collegiality amongst the clergy and making Synod Office as welcoming as possible to both clergy and lay. Central Newfoundland tries with God's grace to treat all people and parishes as equals. We endeavour as a family to listen respectfully to one another. Generally speaking, most of our clergy, including our Synod Office staff are available for conversation and discussion, even after hours.

Some Ways your Diocese can Contribute to the Provincial Structure and how the Ecclesiastical Province can Support your Diocese.

We can contribute by promoting Queen's College as a viable alternative for training men and women for ministry in the Church of God. Queen's College is a small Anglican college affiliated with Memorial University in St. John's, NL. Queen's is ecumenical in flavor and offers a good selection of courses by correspondence as well.