

## **Province of Canada Diocesan Report**

**Diocese of** Central Newfoundland **Year** 2012

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### **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 of the diocese encompasses 27,000 square miles with an Anglican population of approximately 33,000. There are 32 parishes. 32 priests serve in parish ministry, and 2 priests are non-parochial. 27 priests are retired. There are approximately 330 Licensed Lay-Ministers and 430 Eucharistic Assistants.

The diocese is rural with most parishes being multi-point. Our economy is stable with many people working in resource-based industries. Many people commute to and from work in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Our population is aging and public school enrollment is declining. In recent years we have experienced many baby-boomers retiring back to Newfoundland. This has helped off set the population decline in our communities. Tourism continues to be an important industry.

Central Diocese is close-knit and 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 ongoing downturn in the global economy has had little impact on life in our diocese. We continue to be financially viable, assisting struggling parishes and other charitable groups as we can. There is a growing emphasis on the ministry of the baptized and the desire for congregations to enter into mission-minded thinking. More people are comfortable with the practice of biblical tithing as it is encouraged by the lay and ordained leadership in our parishes. We have an excellent support base of committed lay-leaders. Many of our laity avails of theological training by distance such as correspondence/distance courses from Queen's College.

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 and Lay Minister training events just to name a few.

In 2011, we made our Program Officer's position full-time and brought up the salaries of our lay office staff more in line with their counterparts in other dioceses. After the last House of Bishop's meeting, Bishop David challenged individuals to contribute towards buying a motor cycle for a priest in the Diocese of Cuba. The response has resulted in nearly half the amount required being raised at this point.

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

An ongoing challenge for our Diocese is coming to terms with many buildings which are expensive to maintain and insure. In 2010, Hurricane Igor inflicted damage on many of our older buildings; in one case resulting in irreparable damage to one church which had to be taken down. A number of congregations have opted to formally close and amalgamate with adjacent congregations, but this process is often painful and controversial in smaller communities where the church building is the last public structure left. We have not needed to amalgamate parishes.

As our population ages, many of our larger towns such as Gander, Grand Falls\Windsor, Lewisporte, Clarenville and Marystown experience an ever increasing chronic and long-term care population due to facilities being readily available. How to best utilize our human and financial resources to deal with the challenge of a large aging population is an ongoing issue.

We are thankful for a large contingent of retired clergy who on a temporary basis are able to offset the shortage of full-time priests needed to fill self-supporting parishes. As the average age of our clergy increases, the need for a goodly number of qualified persons to train for the ministry becomes more imperative.

**Ways in which the diocese has “pruned the vine” in order to promote more vigorous growth and more fruit in other areas of mission and ministry.**

Central Diocese has not had to do much pruning in recent years. We continue to be viable financially, and spiritually. As an act of stewardship we have reduced the number of people on many of our committees in order to promote better efficiency and reduce travel costs. This way we are able to direct extra funds towards other projects. Our experience is that in keeping regular contact with the lay and ordained leadership in parishes, the feeling of the diocese as being a large extended family is nurtured. To better communicate what is happening in our diocese and to disseminate information and resources in a timely manner, we are in the process of establishing a diocesan email data base which will include the email addresses of clergy and laity alike.