



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF QUEBEC

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Report to Provincial Synod 2021

Please provide a brief description of your diocese at this time, including statistics for baptisms, marriages and burials for the most recent year for which you have prepared statistics. The year 2020 would be ideal, but 2019 would be great as well.

Among the many challenges presented by the pandemic has been the collection of annual reports from the congregations of the diocese, who in some cases have gone two consecutive years without holding an annual vestry meeting. Our statistics for 2019 show 17 baptisms, 2 weddings, and 40 funerals. A more fulsome description of the Diocese of Quebec can be found at <http://quebec.anglican.ca/quebec>.

Describe in detail any initiative by churches and members of the diocese that is producing real hope for the time ahead, especially after Covid 19.

Clergy, laity, and our small diocesan staff and leadership team have been steadfast and faithful—and a times innovative—throughout this exhausting and challenging time. Like many other dioceses, we practically overnight developed an online presence, not only for liturgies, but also for discussion and study groups, and for Gospel Based Discipleship. The telephone was rediscovered as essential pastoral tool. As a result, somewhat counterintuitively, many in the diocese feel as (if not more) connected to the community of faith as before the pandemic. What's obvious is that these online offerings have met a need that predates the pandemic, and so we'll have to determine what a "mixed economy" of online and in-person church life will look like in our diocese after we're on the other side of COVID-19.

Where did you experience "rejoicing in hope" at difficult times during this pandemic?

While much hope has been experienced during the pandemic, it's hard to honestly say it's been accompanied by much rejoicing. "Enduring in hope" may more accurately describe our COVID-19 journey. For many the pandemic has resulted in separation anxiety, worries about congregational finances, vocational dilemmas, and physical and mental health crises. One of the church's roles in this crisis has perhaps simply been to be a steadfast and non-anxious presence in the midst of everything, always pointing to another part of Romans, which holds out the hope that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Despite our limited resources of time, energy and money, our relationships among dioceses of the Province continue to be important. Have you any thoughts about ways to gather and to support one another within our Province?

The locus of communion among the dioceses of our ecclesiastical province since the first weeks of the pandemic has been the provincial House of Bishops. Gathered together first by Archbishop Ron and then by Archbishop David, the bishops have been meeting by Zoom on a regular basis (sometimes monthly) not only to share information and best practices about how to live out our mission in the midst of a global pandemic, but also to provide mutual support between bishops and between dioceses, since the bishops bring with them to these meetings the hopes, needs, and concerns of the people of the dioceses they serve. The provincial House of Bishops certainly never met as frequently, nor perhaps been as cohesive. There is every reason to believe that the provincial House of Bishops will continue to be a key instrument of communion and relationship building among the dioceses of our ecclesiastical province, long after the pandemic is behind us.

The pandemic has also demonstrated not only the efficacy of online meetings, but also the much smaller cost they exact on our churches' shrinking budgets and— even more importantly—on God's creation. The Provincial Synod's decision in 2018 to move its gatherings online has proven positively prophetic, and provided a model of good stewardship of the church's and the earth's resources.