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Report to Provincial Synod 2024

Established in 1793, the Diocese of Quebec includes more than 50 congregations (some of which only meet a handful of times a year) scattered across 720,000 km² of the traditional lands of the Abenaki, Atikamekw, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Innu, Mi'kmaq, Naskapi and Wolastoqiyik First Nations. We are served by 25 clergy (only 7 of whom receive full-time stipends) and a large and faithful complement of lay readers. Most of our congregations worship in English, although we have some who worship in French (or both French and English), and one parish's primary language of worship is Naskapi.

In 2022 just over 1,600 people were recorded on parish rolls, although in the federal census of the previous year more than 6,000 individuals on the diocese's territory identified as Anglican. Eleven baptisms were recorded in the diocese in 2022, as well as nine marriages and 89 burials.

Numbers, of course, only tell a part of the story. A fuller picture of some of the life and work of the Diocese of Quebec can be found in the following vignettes.

- It's been nearly a decade since the last resident minister left the villages of Harrington Harbour and Chevery on the Lower North Shore, where the Anglican and United Church communities have a long history of cooperation. When it became increasingly clear that the prospects of enlisting another full-time resident cleric (either Anglican or United) were pretty dim, the local and regional leadership from both churches worked together to develop a plan to provide and share the costs of regular visits by ordained clergy throughout the year, supplemented by local lay worship leaders who provide occasional services, including baptisms and funerals. This shared ministry is coordinated through an Ecumenical Liaison Committee consisting of local lay leaders and regional denominational leaders, both Anglican and United.
- Knocked back first by the COVID-19 pandemic and then Hurricane Fiona, the future of Camp Fort Haldimand in the Deanery of Gaspé was very much in doubt on the eve of its 75th anniversary last summer. However, a team of hard-working and committed volunteers rallied to raise funds,

repair storm damage, and enlist support in the wider community so that last July they welcomed their first campers since 2019. Twenty-two English- and French-speaking children enrolled in a week-long camp that also provided opportunities for older youth to train as counsellors. Building on last year's success, and due to popular demand, this year's children's camp will be extended to two weeks, providing young people in the Gaspé with a unique opportunity to connect with creation, with each other, and with God.

- Inspired by examples as diverse as forest ecosystems and the book of Acts, a new ministry model in the Quebec City region formally came into being earlier this year. The Saint Lawrence Valley Anglican Ministry (or SLVAM for short) consists (at the moment) of three congregations: St. Michael, Sillery, the cathedral parish, and Christ Church, Valcartier. Just as trees in a forest rely on and benefit from each other, the congregations forming a part of SLVAM share financial and human resources, knowledge, skills, and charisms. Such was also the model of the earliest Christian communities we read about in the Acts of the Apostles. Each parish retains its autonomy while working cooperatively, thereby challenging the tendency to work in silos, and encouraging each congregation to share their gifts and strengths with the whole.
- Inspiration for such an approach comes from the Saint Francis Regional Ministry in the Eastern Townships, which, now into its second decade, offers a hopeful glimpse into the potential of such innovative ministry models. With the patience and dedication of lay and ordained leadership, trust and confidence (not to mention a very high degree of organization) has reached a point where what was once a deanery of disparate parishes now functions cooperatively as a single pastoral unit—but one in which the uniqueness of each congregation is still honoured. Rather than resulting in precipitous church closures, the regional ministry model in the Deanery of Saint Francis has instead created a way for congregations to remain open and active as long as they are able by allowing them to share in ministry resources—such as a team of priests, deacons, and lay readers—that they wouldn't have the means to access otherwise.

There are more such stories to tell from our diocese; these are just four—and there's more to each of these four stories than I've been able to offer in this little snapshot. A cynic might say that these are just quaint examples of a shrinking, rickety institution trying to patch up holes and jury-rig solutions to problems that it no longer has the resources to fix properly. I will admit that sometimes it does feel that way. But then I remember that these and many other such

examples are perfectly in keeping with the long history and tradition of the way ministry has been lived out throughout the Diocese of Quebec's 231 years. Almost every time I read another Bishop of Quebec's charge from the 1800s or do a dive into the diocesan archives, I'm helpfully reminded that there truly is nothing new under the sun—that this has almost always been the stuff of Anglican ministry in central and eastern Quebec: demonstrating resilience in the face of adversity, recognizing abundance where others only see scarcity, being creative when "the way things have always been done" doesn't work anymore—and always with a deep, abiding, and hope-filled faith in God's providence and in Christ's promise that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church.

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