



the DIOCESE  
of WESTERN  
NEWFOUNDLAND

The Right Reverend John Organ, BTh., MA, CD  
Bishop of Western Newfoundland

## Provincial Synod

### Report of the Diocese of Western Newfoundland to the 2024 Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada

#### Greetings in Christ

At the Episcopal electoral synod in April of 2018, The Reverend Canon John Organ was elected bishop. Having served as a chaplain to the Canadian Forces for twenty years, and then chaplain to the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem for the following three years, and then a parish priest in the Diocese of Ottawa for three years after that, he was away from his home diocese for nearly 30 years.

Many things had change over these nearly three decades. Most significant among them for Newfoundland and Labrador was the cod-moratorium, which led to significant out-migration from outport and rural communities. Within the local church there was numerical decline as a result of out-migration and the general trend of decreasing interest in church life by younger people.

Responding to these changes, the bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, The Right Reverend Geoffrey Peddle, of Blessed Memory, commissioned a paper to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the Anglican Church in Newfoundland and Labrador. The paper recommended that instead of maintaining three Anglican dioceses in Newfoundland and Labrador, there should be a return to having one diocese for the whole province. Subsequently, in 2018, at the synod of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, a motion calling for one diocese was unanimously passed.

The commissioned paper and synod motion in the Diocese of ENL contributed to Bishop Organ's decision to conduct a commission within the Diocese of Western Newfoundland that was aimed at studying in detail the local diocesan context to determine its own specific strengths and weaknesses. The Commission's work was conducted from 2019 to 2021, mostly during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was comprised of interviews, questionnaires, provincial reports, and censuses. Provided with this

introduction is a copy of our diocesan Commission Report and the subsequent Strategic Plan of the Diocese of Western Newfoundland. In summary, we discovered we did not have too few Anglicans but rather too few Anglicans fully involved. Moreover, while not frequently attending church service, the vast majority of Anglicans within the diocese identifies as members of the Anglican Church and support the church financially.

Consequently, it was determined that Anglicans deserve the opportunity to consider their relationship to the church and how to more effectively live out their baptismal vows. The commission felt led by the Holy Spirit to conduct a Discipleship Campaign and to reach out to every Anglican in the diocese inviting all, frequent and less frequent church attenders, into a deeper following of Jesus Christ.

We launched the discipleship in the fall of 2023, following a year or discipleship training. A letter from the diocesan bishop and parish priest was sent to each Anglican, inviting them to a discipleship meal. At the meal, discipleship was gently introduced and the campaign explained.

We are now in the first full year of the discipleship campaign. Several training days have been held with clergy and lay discipleship leaders. A Lenten study was encouraged in all parishes using a resource by Bishop Mariann Budde, which teaches discipleship through seven basic practices. This resource has been well received and fruitful.

Bishop Budde will be our primary speaker at our diocesan synod in September, 2024. She will focus on discipleship. In addition, the Archbishop of York, The Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell, will conduct a workshop on discipleship for clergy and lay leaders of our diocese just prior to synod, 2024.

Qualitative measures are revealing a genuine deepening of discipleship within all involved in our campaign to-date. As the campaign continues through 2024 and 2025, we expect to also have quantitative evidence of more and more Anglicans becoming fully involved in living out their following of Jesus Christ.

Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest percentage of Anglicans in all of Canada's provinces. 21.5 % of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians stated their Anglican identity to Census Canada in 2021. This means more than 100,000 people in the province identify with belonging to the Anglican Church. Their willingness to self-identify is a sign of their belonging to the Anglican Church. This provides an opportunity for our church to foster a deepening of their belonging and to encourage and equip them to intentionally live into and out of their discipleship.

As a diocese, we are prayerfully and strategically committed to encouraging all Anglicans of our diocese to deepen their following of Christ and to take their rightful place in the Church, the Body of Christ.

The Diocese of Western Newfoundland consists of 29 Parishes. During 2023, there were 163 baptized, 49 couples married, 112 people confirmed and there were 534 funerals. The Diocesan office has a staff of three people – Bishop, Archdeacon and Treasurer/Administrative assistant who also takes care of the Bookroom.

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*Honour the Past, Live the Present, Embrace the Future!*