



Report to Provincial Synod on Missional Activities Diocese of Fredericton June 2018

Missional Commitment

At the 136th session of the Diocesan Synod on November 4, 2017, the diocese passed a motion that would have every parish commit time for reflection and study on Michael Frost's book, *Surprise the World*.

Frost presents a model through which all followers of Jesus can be intentional in living missional lifestyles that are impacting their communities – BELLS. We are invited to **Bless** those around us; to **Eat** and spend time with others; to **Learn** Jesus by spending time reading and studying the Scriptures; to **Listen** to the Holy Spirit and deepen our prayer life; and to remember that we are **Sent** people.

During the presentation at Synod, lay members of the diocese who are engaged in these aspects were invited to share a brief moment on how their life and ministry have been impacted by embracing these principles.

We have begun to see how this study is making a difference as parishes and members begin considering ways to reach out in their communities. We have emphasized that this is not a church growth strategy or program but rather a way of living.

Missional Activities

Bishop's Pilgrimage

In 2015, Bishop David Edwards began an annual journey across the diocese. He has committed to walking through each of the archdeaconries; one each summer. The pilgrimage, which began as a commitment to meeting the people, understanding their needs and praying through every community and hamlet of the diocese, has continued to grow. Daily, the number of walkers has increased and has even seen some travel across the diocese to take part.

Walking approximately 20kms each day, has given the bishop and his team an opportunity to understand the challenges of life in New Brunswick, and to discern how the church can respond and support.

St Luke's (Portland): A Turn Around

This parish in the 'Old North End' of Saint John was near closure and dissolution. Today, it is a thriving centre for outreach in the community. In 2015, a mission-action plan was developed with four priority committees established: worship, outreach, marketing and sustainability, with sustainability at the very top. Through upgrades to the building accessibility has been dealt with. Repairs to the roof and heat pumps installed in the hall and sanctuary has allowed the parish has been able to focus on reaching the neighbourhood.

A refugee family from the Democratic Republic of the Congo moved into the vacant rectory next door. Members of the parish became involved in supporting the family and help get everything in order for them. The family has also become active members of the parish. The church has become a spiritual home for the local residents who frequent the drop-ins, meal program, and clothing closet as well as benefitting from the health care support offered. Monthly, a barber and nurse come in to provide aesthetic care – ensuring that they are being fully cared for.

A Mobile Parish

When two amalgamated parishes were facing closure, they decided to turn their focus from bills and buildings to mission. The former parish of West Saint John sold their buildings (St Jude & St George) and envisioned how they could best serve the community. Through partnerships, their ministry began to unfold and grow far beyond what they had imagined. Worshipping in two locations – Carleton Kirk United Church and the Seafarers Mission centre, use of the Salvation Army food truck on Wednesday evenings and a presence at the local school has meant that the members of the parishes are committed to finding way to be a blessing. The creation of this mission base also meant that the diocese needed to adjust the canons to facilitate such a community and to give them voice at synod.

Discipleship Communities

Vacant homes have given freedom to the diocese to test a model for discipleship homes. Bishop's Court (Fredericton) and a rectory in Apohaqui have been the test-sites for discipleship homes, aimed at supporting young adults from the diocese in growing in their faith while living in community.

Some are attending university, while others are working, but all are committed to living life together. Daily prayer, shared meals and a mission focus are at the core of the homes.

Seniors Care

An idea that was birthed out of concern for the growing number of seniors living in nursing homes and retirement centres, has the seen the creation of a regional chaplain for seniors.

In the Saint John area, a growing number of facilities are emerging and local clergy have recognized that far to often, when residents move in they can be easily forgotten. The regional chaplain provides visitation and is training others from the

local parishes to join in a commitment to spend time in one-on-one visits with the residents. This ministry has been warmly welcomed by staff and nurses who recognize that the need for spiritual and pastoral care is significant to the well-being of the residents.

Healing the broken-hearted

Suicide affects many people and communities. A postulant from the diocese was personally impacted years ago when her brother completed suicide. After spending years trying to make sense of this action, she knew that others needed support in the journey as well. A support group for survivors was launched and they are working at creating awareness for survivors and those contemplating.

Moving On

Traditionally, when parishes begin declining in numbers and struggling financially, they begin to consider dissolution. The Parish of Millidgeville decided it was time to move to a space that they could afford. A congregational vote encouraged and empowered the interim priest-in-charge to find a suitable alternative for them to meet and worship in. A congregation which has its roots in the Tractarian movement, was used to a certain style of facility and liturgy.

After much prayer, the congregation discerned a move to a local men's shelter in the Uptown area of the city. This move has reunited the parish to its social justice roots and given them a renewed understanding of purpose. The former 1-acre lot of the church, hall and rectory are to be sold to a developer and the funds used towards the mission and outreach of the parish.

Community Centre

A relatively new building for the Parish of the Nerepis & St John, half of the facility being constructed and finished, left a shell for the other side of the centre. Wanting to serve the community, the parish began to see what was needed. The result of the discernment was a community playground. The parish has begun fundraising to finish the space as a community centre that will be open year-round.

Renewing Old Stones

Stone Church in Saint John has been known for its commitment to the community, however for years the 194-year old buildings were showing signs of age. For years the vestry and congregation were talking about options – renovations or a fresh start. After a 2-week commitment to prayer and fasting, it was decided that the Hall needed to come down and the sanctuary be upgraded and reconfigured as a multi-purpose space. The land where the hall once sat is now a beautiful courtyard used frequently during the summer months. The sanctuary now has small meeting rooms, a laundry facility, kitchen and moveable seating.

Together, with the Province of Canada

The gift of the Anglican Communion, and collaboration, means that we have the opportunity to share resources and ideas as well as maintaining a commitment to supporting one another in prayer. The work of furthering the Kingdom of God and being the reflection of Christ's love to our communities, in today's culture, necessitates that we take risks and begin considering new methods of reaching people.

June 1, 2018