

The Ecclesiastical Province of Canada
Provincial Synod 2015
A Report from the Diocese of Western Newfoundland

To better comprehend our present Diocesan ministry it is helpful to understand our historical context. When the Diocese of Western Newfoundland was established in 1976, there were approximately 40,000 resident Anglicans in 19 Parishes staffed by 25 priests. The Synod Office was staffed the Bishop and an Administrative Assistant. Today, there are approximately 13,000 Anglicans in 32 Parishes staffed by 27 priests. The Synod Office Staff includes His Grace, the Executive Archdeacon, the Institutional Chaplain, the Diocesan Treasurer and a part-time Administrative Assistant/Book Room Clerk. In 2013, for the first year ever, every Parish in the Diocese met its Diocesan “Fair-Share” Assessment. And, in 2014, only one Parish was unable to meet its Diocesan “Fair-Share” Assessment. Considering our population decline, our aging demographic and the economic challenges of Western Newfoundland, Christian stewardship and discipleship is alive and well!

(1.) Describe in detail any initiative in the Diocese where there has been a coming together or working together which has built up or is building up the whole body of Christ.

Our greatest initiative has been in the Humber Deanery, the seven parishes surrounding and comprising the See City. Through the visioning of the Joint Working Group, these parishes have established **The Open Door**. This outreach ministry operates every Monday from the Cathedral Hall. Here, all guests are warmly welcomed with a hot meal and sent away with gift bag including all manner of toiletries and healthy snack foods. It is indeed a haven of Christian love, friendship and fellowship. From its inaugural day, April 28, 2014, to April 13, 2015, 2187 guests have been served by 973 volunteers.

As well, there are three Cluster Ministries within our Diocese. Parishes have identified and accepted the inability to sustain full-time ministry. Subsequently, neighbouring Parishes have pooled their financial resources and come together to share in the provision of liturgical and pastoral ministry. In 2009 the Parishes of Burgeo and Ramea initiated this model in our Diocese. They were followed in 2010 by the Parishes of Bay St. George and Stephenville Crossing. In each of these cases, all congregations remain in place. That being said, the viability of smaller congregations and the maintenance of buildings is constantly monitored and evaluated. However, in 2014, when the Parishes of Cow Head and Daniel’s Harbour began sharing a priest, it was conditional to the closure of four congregations.

For approximately 30 years now the Diocese has funded an Institutional Chaplain in the See City that tends to the sacramental and pastoral needs of patients in our Regional Health Centre and the Long Term Care facility. This position is funded solely by the “Fair Share” Assessment of each Parish, and it is whole-heartedly supported by our people.

(2.) What initiatives are underway, but have yet to bear fruit, or are still in the planning stage?

Presently, two Parishes employ a half-time priest. The leadership of both of these Parishes are discerning their future model of ministry, which will, in all probability, result in a Cluster Ministry. The leadership of two other Parishes are assessing their financial viability and discerning their future. Again, Cluster Ministry is a real possibility. Recently, the leadership of the four Parishes (8 Congregations) on the southwest corner of the Diocese attended the gathering “Sowing Seeds”. Here, we discussed the future of shared ministry in this portion of the Diocese. As well, this year we sent our first “locally raised” candidate to ACPO and another “locally raised” candidate has been identified. And, we are putting a renewed emphasis on the *Education for Ministry* (EfM) Program as a means of making disciples. A recent Mentor Training was undertaken in the hope that we will have four EfM groups in the Diocese beginning in September.

(3.) How can the Province of Canada help your Diocese with these initiatives? What can your Diocese offer to the other Dioceses of the Province?

As noted and discussed at length at the September 2013 Provincial Council Meeting held in Corner Brook, NL, the three Dioceses in Newfoundland and Labrador, through our Tri-Diocesan Management Committee, work together extensively to build up the whole body of Christ. We share and manage a joint investment portfolio, *Anglican Joint Investments*, which includes Congregational, Parish and Diocesan funds from each of the three Dioceses, as well as those of *Queen’s College* and *The Anglican Charitable Foundation for Children*. *Queen’s College* is the theological college owned and operated by our three Anglican Dioceses. *The Anglican Charitable Foundation for Children* is a mission and outreach ministry which provides financial assistance and educational bursaries to Anglican families in need in our civil province. Through the *Retirement and Training Fund* health and dental plans are negotiated and secured for active and retired clergy in our Dioceses, as well as providing for severance payments upon retirement. *Anglican Life in Newfoundland and Labrador* is our Tri-Diocesan Newspaper. And, through the *Newfoundland Insurance Account*, all of our Church properties are duly insured. Also of note is that, every fall, the Diocesan Executive Officers and Treasurers gather to discuss matters in common. Recent discussions included the development of a standardized clergy/lay employee registration form to be used by each Diocese and a shared Human Resources Policy. This model of extensive shared ministry can be emulated by other Dioceses.

As well, sharing the procedures and protocols followed as we negotiated and facilitated Cluster Ministries can be offered by our Diocese. Being able to identify the strengths, weaknesses, pitfalls, challenges and successes can provide assistance and learning for those who may wish to embark on such ministry projects.