

Highlights of a Special Meeting of Diocesan Council to Consider the Letting Down the Nets Planning Study Report

Prepared by the Executive Secretary of Synod, the Rev'd Canon Fred Krieger

At its special meeting of 13 September 2006, Diocesan Council, assisted by standing committee chairs, the Stewardship Resource Development Committee and consultants from the National Church,

-heard identified three main barriers to healthy congregations and stewardship identified in the Letting Down the Nets Planning Study Report, namely communications, organizational structure and the allotment system

-heard and endorsed actions taken by our Bishops to address the three barriers, that is (1) the establishment of a task group to investigate our communications and propose an effective communications strategy by June 2007, (2) the appointment of Janet Marshall working with a small group of Council members to help the Diocese to develop a structure that will serve the Diocesan vision, and (3) the appointment of a task group to seek a fresh approach to our allotment system that will be simple, fair, equitable, understood and accepted in time for the 2008 budget. These groups will report directly to Diocesan Council.

-ratified the co-option of Selma Doucet and David Olding as members of the forthcoming synod

-heard and discussed presentations on the origins of the Letting Down the Nets Program and how the study report of our Diocese was prepared, presented by Geoff Jackson and Rob Waller, consultants

---- The wider stewardship program has four tracks: (1) Stewardship education and congregational development, (2) Proportional giving, (3) Annual appeal, and (4) Major gifts and planned giving.

----a theology underlies the stewardship venture, namely that healthy congregations and stewardship grow out of relationships which give birth to a community's identity, which yields a vision, which gives way to clarity of mission, which generates work towards goals and strategies, etc.

----the planning study in the Diocese of NSPEI was generated from interviews and focus groups with persons in various regions and with various histories with the church.

----three principal barriers to healthy stewardship and growth were identified: communications, organizational structure and our allotment system. These especially damage trust.

-participated in a Stewardship Liturgy led by Canon David Reid

-appreciated a Lunch prepared and served by the Ladies Guild of St. Peter's, Birch Cove.

-were led through exercises by Charles O'Neil in five parts: (1) private reflection and group discussion of what do I now believe and do about Christian stewardship, and how do I feel about what I believe and do?, (2) earliest memories of money, (3) a bible study in two versions that invited reflection on barriers to stewardship, (4) developing strategies to overcome barriers, and (5) closing prayers

-heard Bishop Moxley speak about program plans, resources and goals

----work on trust and relationship building

----work regionally, share resources

----focus on healthy congregations. A healthy congregation engenders healthy stewardship

----stewardship begins with faithful persons

----challenge persons to discover and offer their gifts; we all have something to offer

----by 2010 have a Diocese of Anglicans who have a theology of abundance and who live counter-cultural lives

----have healthy and viable congregations because of this challenge

----have a stewardship movement within the Diocese adaptable to regions and parishes

----we need three pilot regions in which, ideally, all parishes participate

----so work that by 2010 we can celebrate our successes

----We need Diocesan Council to be committed to this project

----Speak about today's special meeting in your parish and region

----Stewardship is not a financial but a spiritual matter

-Council members were invited to complete an evaluation form prepared by Tanya Moxley