

Highlights for the 152nd Session of Synod (Synod 2025)
Prepared by Archdeacon Tom Henderson, Assistant Secretary
Theme: *Therefore we have hope.*

Day 1 – Friday, 23 May 2025

Call to order and prayer by Bishop Sandra Fyfe at 1:15 p.m. at the Charles Keaton Centre, Antigonish, NS.

Service of prayer beginning with a reading from Lamentation and land acknowledgement and the many cultures that formed us. Hymn: Great is Thy Faithfulness

Report of the credentials committee read by Dawn Purcell: 53 out of 96 clergy, 135 out of 178 lay – *quorum met.*

Ratifications of Executive Secretary of Synod, Dawn Purcell, and Assistant Executive Secretary of Synod, Archdeacon Tom Henderson. *Moved by Dorothy Miller Seconded by Paul Fevens. Carried.*

Report on the Sessional Committees read by Dawn Purcell.

Comfort notes and housekeeping by Synod co-chairs of Paul Fevens and the Reverend Dorothy Miller.

Bishop Sandra Fyfe welcomed and extended courtesies of the house to observers and ecumenical visitors to Synod. Our keynote speaker is the Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson, Bishop of Missouri.

Courtesies extended to the house for ecumenical visitors. *Moved by Reverend Dorothy Miller Seconded by Paul Fevens Carried.*

Motion of Loyalty to the King and we acknowledge we meet on the ancestral lands of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet people and covered by Treaties of Peace with the Crown". *Moved by Reverend Dorothy Miller Seconded by Paul Fevens Carried.*

Motion of greetings to the Anglican Communion and the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. *Moved by David Greenwood and Seconded by Dawn Purcell. Carried.*

Motion to extend courtesies of the house to ecumenical visitors. *Moved by Reverend Canon Lisa Vaughn and Reverend Carl Fraser. Carried.*

Motion to receive committees report. *Moved by Dawn Purcell and Lawrence Roche. Carried.*

Call for nominations. Only position is for Youth Delegate. Explanation of procedures by the Reverend Will Ferrey.

The Bishop's Charge by the Right Reverend Sandra Fyfe, Bishop of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward. Words of welcome. We are episcopal led and synodical governed. One thing we need for the times we live in is

hope. Lamentations as the title suggests is a lament after the crisis afflicting ancient Israel. The Temple had been destroyed, a large section of the population had been deported, and the only ones left are the poor and weak. Our devastation, grief, and loss may not be quite so violent, but our parishes are bereft of peace. This passage in Lamentation (Lamentations 3.21-24) acknowledges our place within this grief, but it does not leave us there. Shared a story about an Easter garden where a little girl forgot the plot, the story for which we put the garden in. The mother reminded her of the story of Jesus. We are to pay attention to this. This, in lamentations, does not negate what came before, but sits along side the sorrow. God has not abandoned us. The bishop shared her experience with clinical pastoral education where she felt that she was outside her depth. She learned to acknowledge this but not to stew in it. We should take the time to remember our faith story and put God at the center. God is here. God is merciful. God has not abandoned us. It is a recollection, an intentional remembering of God's unbreakable faithfulness to the promise. This is hope that is trauma informed, not wishful thinking. How to help one another remember the plot. What is giving you hope at this time. What is the "This" that you call to mind. Tomorrow she'll share where she sees the hope.

Feedback from table discussions.

Keynote speaker: The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson, Bishop of Missouri. Elected in 2019 to the episcopacy in the Diocese of Missouri and cut his teeth in the Covid era.

Keynote Address:

Therefore, we have HOPE. What do we do with our peace (piece) of Christ. Hope is a radical act of defiance in the face of the impossible.

The most important thing we have in this world is "time."

We spend a lot of time in Church using up time. How to live out our divine purpose in the time we are given? Jesus Christ promises "I will be with you always even to the end of the age." *Do we believe this?*

We are called in this time to be a people of hope: We say, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." Do you believe this and live this out? The only Gospel someone may read is you. If this is the case, are they seeing and reading "good news." The heart of hope is love. Love is not something we hoard but give away. Love God. Love neighbour. Love self. When we do that, we fully live into our call.

When we know God is in charge of our future, then we can move through the present. We are to be grounded in the One who holds the future. At the heart of who we are is a people grounded in hope.

Spoke about the story of the midwives in the Book of Exodus who delivered the deliverers, Shiphrah and Puah. Because of their persistence the people of Israel had a future. Shiphrah means "beautiful" and Puah means "splendid." They were called by God to a vocation of hope. These two women risked their lives to save others. A mid-wife lets the birthing mother to "Let Go..."

What do we let go to allow something to come into being. Letting go means if we do not like change, we are going to like being irrelevant a whole lot less.

Shiphrah and Puah teaches us to **Take courage. Be bold. Find Vision.** We are on a path of liberation from that which confines us. Courage is the most important of the virtues.

Shiphrah and Puah teaches us to Envision the Future. They trusted that God would make that vision of freedom a reality: a vision of what God is doing in our communities. We are called not only to be the light of the world but also the hope of the world.

It was said of Shiphrah and Puah they feared God. Be grounded in prayer. Rooted in faith. Trust in God. We are to go back to the source, the well, for refreshment.

Shiphrah and Puah teaches us to “Discover Joy.” Exodus reminds us that the women sang for joy with the tambourine. Who goes back for a tambourine in the midst of fleeing? What is your tambourine?

Questions for discussion:

What is your tambourine?

How am I and my community living out radical hope as an act of defiance?

What do you need to let go of in order for God to grow into something new?

Feedback from table discussions.

- The Bible is a book of trauma written by those who lost... but they are not losing.
- Become a community not so much of welcoming as of hospitality ... to make a place for you.
- A healthy orchard needs to cut out the dead wood.
- Our primary tambourine is our faith... we return to it.
- None of the generation of Shiphrah and Puah never made it to the Promised Land. Only way to have a future we have to let go of somethings. We have to lament but we cannot stay in the lament. We can get stuck dancing on the shore and fail to see the Promised Land to which we are going.
- We have to go where people are like Christ did.
- Evangelism is about asking people about what is on their heart. Walking along someone with what they are going through.
- We fear what we do not know and fear off holds us back from doing what we need to do. God's people have never been settled. How do we shift our patterns to be relevant to what we can be.
- We need to give up just surviving.
- Communion of Saints: we stand in a long line of those who have gone before us and in front of those who will come after.
- Forget the mindset of scarcity. There is more than enough for everyone. We preach resurrection, but practice resuscitation. Everything you need to thrive, you already have. There is so much we can do collectively if we can get out the way.

A few remarks by Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Antigonish. Hope is a common theme. Pope Leo stated in his first sermon: "Welcome His Word that enlightens and consols. Become One in Christ." Pope Leo XIV wants his to be a papacy to be peace.

Motions:

Resolution # 5: Resolve that the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island will commit to supporting reasonable and appropriate accommodations that would enable Synod delegates whose disabilities prevent them from full participation in any meeting of Synod, effective immediately at this 152nd Session of Synod, May 23-25, 2025. *Moved by Archdeacon Katherine Bourbonniere and seconded by Linda Rouleau.*

Friendly amendment: Resolve that the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island will initiate a commitment to support reasonable and appropriate ...

Marion Lucas Jeffries/Nicola Cumin

Motion to table until it can be addressed by the Chancellor. *Moved by Tim Anderson and seconded by Wayne Finney. **Carried.***

Broke for Supper at 5:15 p.m.

Reconvened for the Synod Eucharist at St. Xavier University Chapel led by the Synod Worship at 7:15.

Presentation of certificates for Clergy anniversaries. Ceilidh in the arena at 8:30 p.m.