

Highlights for the 152nd Session of Synod (Synod 2025)

Prepared by Archdeacon Tom Henderson, Assistant Secretary

Theme: Therefore, we have hope.

Day 2 – Saturday, 24 May 2025

Morning worship began at 9:08 a.m. led by the Reverend Dawna Wall, Rector of the Parish of Lunenburg. Seedlings and seeds for planting were available from the Diocesan Environmental Network. God is the gardener. Synod delegates are seeds and pollinators.

Bishop continues with her charge. **(Bishop's Charge Part 2)**. She shared with us what gives her hope. Direct correlation between hope and action. We are often paralyzed by inaction. We are to do what we need to do. Even if the odds are overwhelming, it is by acting we can live out our hope. The bishop finds hope in the conversations she has had with confirmands and people in discernment. They are claiming this space as a spiritual home. See how the seeds of faith are growing in them, in ways they don't always expect. One idea that came to fruition was "faith in motion" the possibility of turning our parking lots into electric recharge areas. A local fisherman commented: "I didn't know the church cared about these things," concern for our communities and the wider world. God is still hanging around with fisher folk on our seashores. Another example of hope is the ecumenical shared ministry tried in Digby and the congregations are looking to continue the endeavour. There is a tremendous appetite for hospitality and sharing resources. When a church was damage irreparably by Hurricane Fiona a few years ago both the local United Church and the Presbyterian Church offered to open their doors. There has been an uptick in vocational inquiries. God is calling us to new ways of ministry. What is God calling them to do? We are building on a competency approach. We are looking at working with partners, like AST, to meet the needs of the emerging church. We are at the forefront of funding projects for special projects. So much of what we do now is partnership. We are finding ways to work together with others to do the things we care about. It is important to build and grow relationships. We are investing in leaders and to walk along parishes to be agents of hope and change. The Diocese is listening to needs of parishes and communities. We are putting together resources, like the Parish Handbook, to help bring our dreams to realization. The bishop gave her heartfelt thanks for the Diocesan staff who have faithfully served us all. There have been a lot of changes these past five years. God continues to work through each of you to bear fruit. Therefore, we have hope. May we be ambassadors of hope in Christ to a weary world.

Diocesan Controller Lawrence Roche shared remarks on the upcoming Diocese-Wide Strategic Direction, which is set to be worked on following this Synod. He also expressed gratitude to the corporate entities whose generous support helped fund several Synod events.

We were pleased to welcome Raissa Marks, who presented the work she has done in collaboration with the Synod Office. Raissa explained that staff were interviewed and had meetings with operational units. Topics discussed - What are the pieces and how do they fit together. How to take advantage of the strengths? How do we mitigate against the weaknesses? Reviewed our current context, synod's work since Covid, has led into guiding principles. Why are we doing this? Leads back to our vision. We connect, build, and nurture connections. We serve our parishes. We understand change is difficult. In all things we embrace the language and theology of abundance. Our strategic planning focus actions are: 1.

Envisioning a New Future, open to new structures and gather inspiration from other dioceses; 2. Building Community; 3. Developing Leadership, building collegiality; 4. Financial Stewardship; 5. Communicating with Parishes, especially around expectations; 6. Team Building for the Office Staff; and 7. Improving Systems. The strategic plan will be rolled out over the next few years and will reflect the vision statement of the Diocese and the marks of mission.

The Bishop pointed out that she often meets with parish councils during her visits. She asks them: what are you doing well? What's happening on the ground? And then she shares it with the diocesan staff. Two things she emphasized. It's in the letter. Also, sometimes picking up the phone solves issues quicker than email.

Resolution 7. Resolution for Strategic Directive: **resolved that this synod receive, endorse, and encourage the Diocesan Synod Office Strategic Direction as presented.** Moved by Lawrence Roche/Arran Thorpe. **Carried.**

Sticky notes will be gathered from delegates: *What is one focus area from today's presentation that gives you a sense of hope for our future? What do you think the priorities should be?*

Resolution 5: Resolution for Accommodation. Friendly amendment (Rev'd Patti Brace/Rev'd Nicole Uzans)

Resolve that the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island will initiate a commitment to support reasonable and appropriate accommodations that would enable Synod delegates whose disabilities prevented them from full participation in any meeting of Synod, ~~effective immediately at this 152nd Session of Synod, May 23-25, 2025.~~ Friendly amendment accepted by mover and seconder of original motion, Archdeacon Katherine Bourbonniere/ Linda Rouleau. **Carried.**

Resolution 8: A resolution to affirm the work of the Diocese and adopt the Faith Pledge of the Can't Buy My Silence and Daughter Project Canada. Faith Pledge: "We pledge never to request another party to submit to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with the goal of stopping them from raising complaints, or discussing incidents, of sexual harassment, misconduct or abuse, discrimination, retaliation, bullying, or other harassment in any instance, including pre-use Non-Disclosure Agreements in settlements to cover up sin, silence victims, or avoid accountability." Moved by Cynthia Pilichos/Patrick Donahue.

Friendly amendment: ... to submit to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), unless requested by the complainant, in cases involving ... (Paul Jennings) Friendly amendment accepted by mover and seconder of original, Cynthia Pilichos/Patrick Donahue. **Carried.**

Lunch at Morrison Hall on the University Campus.

Reflection and prayer. We remembered those who have gone before us and in loving memory of members of synod who now Rest in Peace.

Youth nominations for Diocesan Council: to be voted on by youth delegate:

Harley McCluskey, Holy Trinity Emmanuel

Ethan Teal, North Sydney

MacKenzie Carr, New London
Karmen MacDonald, Emmanuel Spryfield
Dan Shasky, St. Albans

Resolution 9 - Resolved that Canon 35: Parish Government be repealed and replaced with the attached material, with such repeal and replacement to come into effect by resolution of Diocesan Council with the Bishop's consent. Rev. Sue Channen/Susan Drain. *Carried.*

Friendly amendment: to add a section 4 Parish Corporations **(h) enter into a shared ministry arrangement, and ecumenical ministry arrangement, or a collaborative ministry arrangement.** Mike Munday/John DeCoste. *Friendly amendment accepted.*

Resolution 12 A resolution to amend Canon 20: Regional Deans, as crafted in consultation with Canon 20 Task Force appointed following Synod 151, 2023. Rev. Shirley Cole/Rev. Matthew Sponagle. Carried.

Resolution 10. Friendly amendment: to add "commit to work towards healing, reconciliation, and full inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ people; **in the full life of the church.**" Dan Shasky/Ethan Teal. *Friendly amendment accepted.*

A resolution to commit to affirming, acknowledging, and continuing to welcome and include those identify as 2SLGTQIA+ in and to communities. Rev. Kristin MacKenzie/ Rev. Dr. Patti Bruce. *Carried.*

Presentation of the Anglican Foundation by Scott Brubacher. Greetings from the Board. Foundation is 68 years old, set up to administer loans to support church infrastructure. The foundation has granted \$42 millions in grants over the years. Since 2010 this Diocese has received \$561,200. 30% has gone to youth focussed ministries. This is not just an investment in programs, also an investment in hope. \$15000 was secured through the Say Yes to Kids campaign. Say Yes to Kids is the largest support for children and youth ministry. Various projects throughout the Diocese. There is Bishop Sandra Fyfe fundraising page: Bishop Sandra says yes! The focus is on renewal and growth for funding projects. Intent is to help the Church imagine what might be. Connecting with donors through legacy giving. Legacy giving is not just about wealth – it is about faith, its values, and hope for the future. God is doing amazing things in this diocese and across the church.

Bishop Deon K. Johnson continues with his keynote. He recalled his grandmother was the soundtrack of his childhood. She sang when she was happy. She sang when she was sad. She sang hymns. She would sing "It is well with my soul." This hymn was written by a father who lost children in a shipwreck. Even in our grief we can sign. Our hope is about balancing two opposite things: Good Friday and Easter. His grandmother placed her hope in her grandchildren. She stressed the importance of education. She had a special mahogany table made by her grandfather when he was still a slave. The hope lay in world that a previous generation could not imagine. Jesus says in the Great Commission: "I will be with you even to end of the age." Ministry is messy. When we are trying to figure out what to do, remember God is there. As St. Catherine of Sienna said: "Be who you are meant to be and you will set the whole world on fire." Our first identity and name is: God's beloved. God will send us out to do His work and equip us to do it.

We are called to be ambassadors of hope. Joy is not happiness. Joy is being able to look into the direst of circumstances and know you are God's beloved. We begin with Holy Listening. The last words of a dying church or congregation is "we have never done it this way." The Church has something the world needs and we are to let the world know it. This hope must begin with holy listeners: we must begin from a place of questioning. Jesus in the gospels asks about 300 questions. He only has 3 answers. Next step is to have the courageous conversations. We engage each other in the back and forth. Then we are to rest. Jesus often goes to a quiet place when surrounded by people. We have to ground ourselves, to go back to the well to rejuvenate. Last: Do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. We continue to do our work because the world is not just, or merciful, or humility. Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled... I go to prepare a place for you." Until we go to that place, we have work to do. What will we do with our peace (piece) of Christ?

Discussion questions: *How are you setting the world on fire? When have you experienced the strange stirring of your heart towards hope? Where have you seen desolation and consolation in your community of faith?*

Feedback:

- Don't go to the margins to preach Jesus but to find Jesus. We need the poor and the outcast more that they need us.
- We are blessed by those called by God. How can we not see God at work here? Same as the cooperation among parishes and churches.
- We can inspire others by recognizing our presence in the community.
- God will give the work and will give us the gifts to equip us. Our interactions with others may be greater than we think.
- Believe a theology of abundance. We can help both people around us and those afar, refugees and newcomers.
- If you want to build a ship, don't get them to gather wood, but give them a passion for the sea.

Resolution 9 a. Resolve that Canon 35: Parish Government be amended by removing the sections with line running through them and adding the sections that are unlined as set out below:

16(3) Monies deposited to credit a parish or a church shall be drawn upon by cheque ~~signed for the parish or the church or electronic transfer~~, as the case may be, ~~by any two of the treasurer, secretary and wardens of the parish or the church~~ observing best-banking practices as outlined in the related Administrative Policy 2.2.17: Best-Banking Practices. Rev' Matthew Sponagle/Dawn Purcell. Carried.

Resolution 11 A resolution to amend Canon 11: Diocesan Council as crafted in consultation with the Canon 11 Task Force appointed following Synod 151. 2023. Rev' Canon David Greenwood/Edith Marshall. Carried.

Friendly amendment: remove the voting privilege of the executive director. Rev' Benjamin von Bredow / Rev' Ian Wissler. *Friendly amendment accepted.*

Friendly amendment: if no vocational deacon has been elected as a member of Diocesan Executive Council from a region, at least one of the appointments made by the bishop will be a deacon. *Heather Carter.*
Friendly amendment accepted.

Amendment: to add Director of Mission & Ministry as a non-voting ex-officio of Diocesan Council. Trudy Cole/Dawn Purcell. Yeas 90/ Nays 101 Failed.

Remarks by LCol. John O'Connell, visitor/observer Canadian Armed Forces chaplain, shared with us a thought of Dorothy Day, love comes with building a community.

Resolution 14: Friendly amendment: acknowledge the ongoing challenge in our provinces of substantial disruptions of mental health and will work to equip our lay and clergy leaders to respond it. Garth Watt.
Amendment accepted.

A resolution to address the mental health crisis in our communities. Thomas Garlick/ Rev' Kristin MacKenzie. Carried.

Youth Delegates elected to Diocesan Council:

Ethan Teale, North Sydney

Karmen MacDonald, Emmanuel Spryfield

Moved to ratify. Rev' Will Ferrey/Archdeacon Katherine Bourbonniere. Carried.

Prince Edward Island Delegate to General Synod.

Move to ratify the appointment of the **Rev' Cathy Pharo as a delegate to General Synod** from Prince Edward Island elected by the Diocesan Church Society of Prince Edward Island. Archdeacon John Clarke/Katherine Bourbonniere.

Resolution 13. Budget. Resolved that Canon 16 Budget be amended by adding the sections set out below. Rev' Matthew Sponagle/ Rev' Arran Thorpe.

Amendment: to add to the exemptions under 4 1) f) Income from fund-raising events, hall rentals and similar income generating activities is reported as the net income for each event. The cost of earning such income is exempt, but cannot exceed the income earned from each activity, unless agreed to by the Diocesan Controller. Eric Thomson/Garth Watt. Yeas 64 /Nays 126. Failed

Finished with **Holden Evening Prayer** (Setting by Marty Haugen)

Concluded at 9 PM. Will resume in the morning with Parish Eucharist at 9 AM.