

Report of the Twenty-Eighth Youth Synod Session

Held May 28, 2016 at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

Introduction of:

Chair	Connor Wilson
Chancellor	The Reverend Bill Mous
MCs	Ceilidh Gibson and Fraser Passmore
Diocesan Staff	Su McLeod and the Reverend Bill Mous
Scribe	Carrie Charters

Voting Delegates:

Jasmine Adomeit	Philip Kinch	Charlotte Pollard
Derek Alakas	Halle LeChet	Sierra Robertson-Roper
Siobhan Bennett	Rob Lewis	Jules Skene-LeBlanc
Claire Christoff	Jake Lidwill	Helen Snow
Matthew Collard	Emily Loader	Brett Stewart
Jessica Cook	Taylor Loader	Faith Vermolen
Anya Deacon	Nik Luce	Connor Wilson
Ceilidh Gibson	Pat Manning	Shay Wood
Hannah Keller	Noah Ollmann	Shannon Worth
Danielle Kelly	Fraser Passmore	
Matthew Kinch	Emily Pfau	

Other Adult Observers:

Carrie Charters	Small Group Leader
Belle Daley	Small Group Leader/Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee
Mary Gordon	Small Group Leader/Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee
Jen Harper	Small Group Leader
Aidan Maloney	Small Group Leader/Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee
Su McLeod	Diocesan Staff
Reverend Bill Mous	Diocesan Staff
Jordan Russell	Small Group Leader
Jane Wyse	Diocesan Staff

Call to Order

Opening Statements

Connor Wilson, Chair

- If you feel moved to say something, please do. Personally have regretted not speaking to motions in the past. Youth Synod in Action – be active!

Bill Mous, Chancellor

- When you're debating motions, remember to ask yourself if you can commit to the action – have some integrity about that.
- Carefully reflect on the motions.
- Lots of motions from the floor written this weekend – wonderful to see.
- Looking forward to respectful and open debate.

Rights to the Floor

Motion to Give Rights to the Floor for Observers:

Carrie Charters, Isabelle Daley, Mary Gordon, Jen Harper, Aidan Maloney, Su McLeod, Jordan Russell, Anna Ryder, Jane Wyse

“that the observers listed above be granted rights to the floor..”

MOTION CARRIED

1) Formation of Youth Synod Council

WHEREAS: The diocese of Niagara does not currently have a group that directly informs and guides decisions and programming for young people by young people;

AND WHEREAS: The existence of a group that meets between Youth Synods has proven to be beneficial in the past to facilitate and promote the actions, values and thoughts of Youth Synod, to follow up on motions, and plan future synods;

AND WHEREAS: Diverse representation on Youth Synod Council may facilitate the creation of motions reflecting the concerns and priorities of youth in the diocese.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. This Youth Synod approves the formation of a Youth Synod Council to commence regular meetings beginning in the fall of 2016.
2. The composition of Youth Synod Council be comprised as follows:
 - a. The Chair of Youth Synod
 - b. Incoming and outgoing MCs
 - c. Representative to Synod Council
 - d. Representative to Just Generation Youth Council (when possible)
 - e. At least two representatives from each region (when possible)
 - f. A minimum of two and maximum of five members at large
 - g. One adult lay representative
 - h. The Diocesan Program Consultant for Children, Youth and Families
 - i. Chaplain
 - j. Youth Delegate to General Synod
3. Youth Synod Council will discuss current events and make responses on behalf of Youth Synod; be a body of consultation, planning, motion follow up, advice and advocacy without canonical authority. As such it is bound by the canons, constitutions, and policies of the diocese of Niagara, and the motions approved by previous Youth Synods.

Moved by: Faith Vermolen, St. George's, St. Catharines

Seconded by: Rob Lewis, St. David's, Welland

MOTION CARRIED

2) Gender Inclusivity

WHEREAS: In 2015 Youth Synod resolved that:

1. The program consultant provide information and education at programs over the next year about the proper use of gender pronouns;
2. Norms during diocesan events include the appropriate use of pronouns;

3. At every diocesan youth event, there will be at least one bathroom that will be designated to be a unisex bathroom;
4. Youth Synod in Action 2015 delegates commit to using inclusive language in their everyday life.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT:

1. Delegates to Youth Synod commit to educate themselves about gender identity.
2. Delegates to Youth Synod commit to being patient and gracious with each other when learning the use of individuals' preferred pronouns.

Moved by: Ceilidh Gibson; St. George's, St. Catharines

Seconded by: Fraser Passmore; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

MOTION CARRIED

3) Updating Past Motions

WHEREAS: In 2006 the Youth Synod delegates passed the following clause: "All youth events charge an additional amount (\$5.00 suggested) to sponsor a child in a third-world country through a selected agency (PWRDF, World Vision) thereby providing an economic option to child labour."

AND WHEREAS: In 2007 the Youth Synod delegates passed the following clause: "To ask the youth to bring a donation of food as suggested from a list in their registration package or encourage the parish to donate food items for youth to bring to youth events. Delegates to Youth Synod have strived into the commitments made in these motions ever since."

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Youth Synod Council revisit these motions and bring to Youth Synod 2017 recommendations for updates, to ensure these motions reflect current realities and issues.

Moved by: Ceilidh Gibson; St. George's, St. Catharines

Seconded by: Claire Christoff; St. Christopher's, Burlington

MOTION CARRIED

4) Support for Pride Week Hamilton

WHEREAS: Pride Week in Hamilton happens this year from June 15-21st;

AND WHEREAS: Delegates to Youth Synod strive to be an inclusive community and to uphold and respect the dignity of every human being.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT:

1. Youth Synod requests that Dean Peter Wall and the Cathedral congregation host a service in support of the LGBTQ+ community and allies in the lead up to, or during, Pride Week in Hamilton.
2. Delegates to Youth Synod in Action be invited and will make a strong effort to attend this service as a sign of their commitment to full inclusion within the Church.

Moved by: Claire Christoff; St. Christopher's, Burlington

Seconded by: Fraser Passmore; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

MOTION CARRIED

5) Welcoming Newcomers

WHEREAS: In the last 30 years the diocese has helped to resettle newcomers to Canada;

AND WHEREAS: In response the global refugee crisis, the diocese committed to welcoming as many as 50 refugees to mark its 140th anniversary;

AND WHEREAS: The diocese is on track to sponsor more than 100 refugees in 2015/2016.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Youth Synod Council consult with the Diocesan Refugee Coordinator to organize a team of people to build relationships with their peers who are newcomers to Canada in consultation with the Diocesan Refugee Working Group.
2. Youth Synod Council write a letter to the Diocesan Refugee Working Group, and copy Bishop Michael Bird and members of Synod Council, to recognize and give thanks for their leadership and ministry in response to the global refugee crisis.

Moved by: Ann Snyder; St. John, Thorold

Seconded by: Jake Lidwill; St. Mark's, Orangeville

MOTION CARRIED

6) Religious Freedoms

WHEREAS: According to a CBC news article, on February 26' 2015 a woman was told to remove her hijab in court or the judge would blatantly ignore her;

AND WHEREAS: According to Charisma News, on March 7, 2016, a rule was made where businesses with more than 15 employees must accommodate workers with religious belief with sincerity and may not refuse to interview those who carry a symbol of their resiliency;

AND WHEREAS: As of October 7, 2015, Ontario has the largest population of Muslim women in Canada.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Youth Synod in Action will write a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asking to support the religious freedoms of those with religious beliefs when engaged in legal practices.
2. Delegates educate themselves on challenges faced by religious groups outside of the Anglican religion in regards to civic duties and how they can conflict with religious freedoms.

Moved by: Jules Leblanc; St. Alban's, Acton

Seconded by: Rob Lewis; St. David's, Welland

MOTION TO VOTE CLAUSE BY CLAUSE

Moved by: Danielle Kelly; St. George's, Guelph

Seconded by: Fraser Passmore; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

MOTION CARRIED

Clause 1

1. Youth Synod in Action will write a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau asking to support the religious freedoms of those with religious beliefs when engaged in legal practices.

CLAUSE DEFEATED

Clause 2

2. Delegates educate themselves on challenges faced by religious groups outside of the Anglican religion in regards to civic duties and how they can conflict with religious freedoms.

CLAUSE CARRIED

7) Attawapiskat Solidarity

WHEREAS: Attawapiskat, population 2,000, is in the midst of a suicide epidemic. More than 100 people, children and adults, have attempted to take their lives since last fall — 28 March 2016 alone.

AND WHEREAS: A group of youth, desperate to turn things around, walked for three days onto a winter road to convince their peers that suicide is not a solution and vowed to hatch a plan to heal the community. They walked in the tradition of other First Nations walkers who have travelled long distances to raise awareness and return to a healthier lifestyle.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Youth Synod Council explores ways in which the youth in our diocese can come alongside youth of Attawapiskat beyond the current crisis and respond to needs identified by the youth of this community.
2. As part of this exploration, Youth Synod Council explores whether there is interest from youth to build relationships with the youth of Attawapiskat by regularly writing letter to the youth.

Moved by: Ceilidh Gibson; St. George's, St. Catharines

Seconded by: Jake Lidwill; St. Mark's, Orangeville

MOTION TABLED TO NEXT YOUTH SYNOD

8) Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

WHEREAS: Residential schools lasted for 153 years;

AND WHEREAS: The First People's experiences at residential schools were all different – some positive and some including abuse and neglect;

AND WHEREAS: Residential schools have left lasting effects on survivors and intergenerational survivors.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Delegates will commit to helping their parishes learn about the history of the First Peoples in Canada, by accessing and sharing resources (people and materials) from Youth Synod in Action session 1;
2. Through education and dialogue delegates will be empowered to speaking the truth when hearing comments, myths, and stereotypes about First Peoples;
3. Delegates commit to familiarizing themselves with the Call to Action #48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Moved by: Emily Pfau; St. Michael's, Hamilton

Seconded by: Shay Wood; Church of the Nativity, Hamilton

MOTION TO VOTE CLAUSE BY CLAUSE

Moved by: Nik Luce; Church of the Incarnation, Oakville

Seconded By: Hannah Keller; St. George, Guelph

MOTION CARRIED

Clause 1

1. Delegates will commit to helping their parishes learn about the history of the First Peoples in Canada, by accessing and sharing resources (people and materials) from Youth Synod in Action session 1.

CLAUSE CARRIED

Clause 2

2. Through education and dialogue delegates will be empowered to speaking the truth when hearing comments, myths, and stereotypes about First Peoples.

CLAUSE CARRIED

Clause 3

3. Delegates commit to familiarizing themselves with the Call to Action #48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

CLAUSE CARRIED

MOTION CARRIED

9) Missing & Murdered Aboriginal Women

WHEREAS: According to the National Women's Association of Canada, 10% of homicides against women are against Aboriginal women while they make up only 3% of the female population;

AND WHEREAS: A study from the RCMP showed that between 1980 and 2012, over 1017 Aboriginal women and girls were murdered (this is 4.5 times greater than any other Canadian homicide rate);

AND WHEREAS: The same study also showed that in November 2013 at least 105 First Nations, Metis and Inuit women and girls were reported missing.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Youth Synod Council will invite Archdeacon Val Kerr and other appropriate representatives to speak and educate on the topic of Missing & Murdered Aboriginal Women.
2. A Facebook page entitled "Canadian Youth in Solidarity for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women" will be created and monitored by the mover of this motion
3. Each delegate and young adult mentor who have a Facebook account commits to join this group and invite 5 other friends to join.
4. All delegates, young adult mentors and adult leaders commit to watching the documentary "Finding Dawn" and sharing the link on at least one other social medium along with the information presented in this motion's whereas clauses.

Moved by: Hannah Keller; St. George's, Guelph

Seconded by: Faith Vermolen; St. George's, St. Catharines

MOTION CARRIED

10) Support for Diversity

WHEREAS: Equality allows the same limitations on all individuals while equity is the quality of being fair and impartial;

AND WHEREAS: Diversity is looked at as an open-ended definition, and because it's open-ended there are many versions of the word;

AND WHEREAS: As a society we support the idea of diversity, but not the outcome of it as diversity can lead to bullying, exclusion, and stereotyping.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Youth Synod delegates will educate themselves on diversity issues in their home church and actively participate to overcome them.
2. Members of Youth Synod Council and delegates plan an event that educates youth synod members on diversity issues, and how to engage in dialogue.
3. Delegates are encouraged to educate themselves on the difference between Equity and Equality, and use this knowledge in their everyday lives.

Mover: Noah Ollmann; St. Andrew's, Grimsby

Seconder: Jake Lidwill; St. Mark's, Orangeville

MOTION TO VOTE CLAUSE BY CLAUSE

Moved by: Siobhan Bennett; St. Paul, Fort Erie

Seconded by: Fraser Passmore; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

MOTION CARRIED

Clause 1

1. Youth Synod delegates will educate themselves on diversity issues in their home church and actively participate to overcome them.

CLAUSE CARRIED

Clause 2

2. Members of Youth Synod Council and delegates plan an event that educates youth synod members on diversity issues, and how to engage in dialogue.

CLAUSE DEFEATED

Clause 3

3. Delegates are encouraged to educate themselves on the difference between Equity and Equality, and use this knowledge in their everyday lives.

CLAUSE CARRIED

11) Foster Gender & Sexual Inclusivity

WHEREAS: Positive Space refers to an environment that is open and welcoming, as well as equitable and accessible to persons of all sexual and gender diversities;

AND WHEREAS: Grounded in the values of our baptism, we strive to uphold the dignity of every human being;

AND WHEREAS: The Positive Living immersion experience was a good starting point for education and awareness raising about gender and sexual identity, and creating positive space in our faith community;

AND WHEREAS: A year is a long time to wait to reengage in this topic when there is an opportunity for continued education and advocacy.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT:

1. Youth Synod Council organizes and hosts continuous workshops, educating all people including young and elderly, to promote conversation and dialogue about gender and sexual inclusivity for people within and around the Diocese of Niagara.

Moved by: Fraser Passmore; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton
Seconded by: Claire Christoff; St. Christopher's, Burlington

MOTION TO REFER to Youth Synod Council.

Moved by: Hannah Keller; St. George's, Guelph
Seconded by: Pat Manning; St. John the Evangelist, Thorold

MOTION TO REFER CARRIED

12) Inclusivity in Jamaica

WHEREAS: In Jamaican culture the church plays a distinctive role within the society. Jamaican priests preach hate speech on a weekly basis, and have a strong influence towards the practices and laws for the country;

AND WHEREAS: Those identified as LGBTQ+ and their defenders are subjected to physical and mental violence including being shot, stabbed, imprisoned, hate speech, and being disowned by both their families and their community;

AND WHEREAS: The Anti-Sodomy law allows individuals who are in a same sex relationship to be jailed;

AND WHEREAS: those who are realised from jail are forced to wear a sex offender sign. If caught without the sign, the fine can cost up to one million dollars and an additional year in prison.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. All members of Youth Synod write and send formal letters to churches in Jamaica, explaining how inclusivity works in their own parishes and in Youth Ministry within the Diocese of Niagara.
2. Members of Youth Synod will watch "The Abominable Crime," a documentary made by Maurice Tomlinson that sheds light on the anti-sodomy law in Jamaica.

Moved by: Noah Ollmann; St. Andrew's, Grimsby
Second by: Fraser Passmore; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

MOTION TO REFER to Youth Synod Council.

Moved by: Hannah Keller; St. George, Guelph
Seconded by: Jules Skene-LeBlanc; St. Alban the Martyr, Acton

MOTION DEFEATED

MOTION TO VOTE CLAUSE BY CLAUSE

Moved by: Siobhan Bennett; St. Paul, Fort Erie
Seconded by: Ceilidh Gibson; St. George, St. Catharines

MOTION CARRIED

Clause 1

1. All members of Youth Synod write and send formal letters to churches in Jamaica, explaining how inclusivity works in their own parishes and in Youth Ministry within the Diocese of Niagara.

CLAUSE DEFEATED

- Posters and pamphlets are great resources, but the best way to grow our programs and to share what happens in them is by word of mouth, and that means delegates sharing with friends and classmates and fellow parishioners. Staff can promote but so can delegates.
- Debate on Religious Freedom barely scratched the surface and is worth more conversation. Learn rights as Canadian citizens, about Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which gives fundamental freedom of thought and religion – though oppressions are faced by people living here and around the world.
- What does it mean for you to uphold the dignity of every human being, and to live with love in your everyday choices?
- In 1993 the Anglican Church of Canada apologized for its 33 residential schools across Canada. No residential school in our Diocese but plenty nearby, and still lots of work to do to reconcile our past with our future. As a starting point, visiting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada website – www.trc.ca – will provide lots of information.
- Justice making is about relationship. Letters without relationship may not be effective – must witness oppression wherever it happens but also explore ways to build relationships and find ways to enter into a dialogue with our brothers and sisters in Jamaica.
- Thank you for your work throughout this weekend – for the motions, the debate, the perspective, the discernment. It has been thoughtful, moving and meaningful.
- Thanks to MCs and Chair for their work.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Clause 2

2. Members of Youth Synod will watch "The Abominable Crime," a documentary made by Maurice Tomlinson that sheds light on the anti-sodomy law in Jamaica.

CLAUSE CARRIED

13) Communicating Youth Ministry Programs

WHEREAS: The way youth communicate is no longer through traditional social media;

AND WHEREAS: Not all parishes pass information about Diocesan youth events on to the youth;

AND WHEREAS: The events offered by the Diocese of Niagara are extremely valuable and sustain our faith.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Pamphlets and resources for events such as NYC, YLTP, embark, etc. should be made readily available and clearly visible.
2. Parishes will add youth ministry events and programs to bulletins each week/month to invite involvement and share information.

Moved by: Sierra Roberston-Roper; St. James, Dundas

Seconded by: Noah Ollmann; St. Andrew's, Grimsby

MOTION CARRIED

CLOSING REMARKS

MCs

- We have signup sheets for Youth Synod Council as well as to help plan the Pride event.

Chair

- I'm very proud of everyone for participation – speaking and voting.
- There will be impact – a pebble in a lake creates ripples.

Chancellor

- It is wonderful to have Youth Synod Council back in action.
- The tasks given to Youth Synod Council are substantial, but a good start, and the new body will equip the work of Youth Synod.
- Points of clarification were helpful. Participation was not passive; it was taken seriously.
- Thanks to those who spoke from the heart and were vulnerable; sharing experience lived and otherwise as well as perspectives.
- Brett shared wisdom about patience going both ways, and that's important to take out of this space as well.
- For a number of years we have discussed how to deal with past motions, so it's wonderful to see that there is now a process. Thought about rescinding/repealing/updated will be important for Youth Synod Council to consider through the year.
- One delegate noted that people see Jesus and think, 'oh crap.' Invitation to delegates to help friends and neighbours to see Jesus in a new way: radically inclusive, angry about injustice, sought to offer care, compassion and healing to the people he met. How do we extend that invitation to people in our lives?