

MINUTES OF THE 148TH SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

Friday November 4, 2022 via Zoom videoconference

Saturday, November 5, 2022 in person at the Burlington Convention Centre
“God’s Church for God’s Mission”

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Call to order, Territorial Acknowledgement, and Opening Prayer

The Right Reverend Susan Bell called the Synod to order at 7:00 pm.

The bishop acknowledged that our diocese is situated within the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe, Attawandaron, and Mississaugas of the Credit and also acknowledged with respect and honour the heritage and gifts of the Métis people.

Bishop Bell offered a prayer for the Synod.

Organizing Synod

Bishop Bell welcomed all guests and recognized new members of Synod.

She gave a special welcome to guest Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan of Ontario and archbishop of the dioceses of Algoma and Moosonee, recognizing her amazing efforts to attend the Synod, after a last-minute cancellation of her flight which meant that the archbishop drove all day from Sault Saint Marie to arrive for this evening’s session on time.

Bishop Bell also welcomed Archbishop Colin Johnson to his first Synod of the Diocese of Niagara in his new role as Niagara’s assistant bishop.

The bishop informed Synod that voting for this online session would be by voice vote.

Bishop Bell extended privileges of the house to Sue Carson of Climate Justice Niagara, Renée Anderson, lay director of Niagara Huron Cursillo, and Sharon Millar of Canterbury Hills Camp.

Greetings from the Metropolitan

Archbishop Anne Germond commented that in her role as head of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, she is struck by what a vast and varied province she oversees. She compared Niagara’s rich, arable land, wealth and large population to Kashechewan’s harsher landscape, lack of clean running water and scarcity of fresh food that must be flown to James Bay at great cost. She thanked Niagara for its long-time role in extending its mission and ministry beyond its boundaries, citing Bishop Bell’s work as an ambassador for Niagara and the huge impact of the Niagara School for Missional Leadership where many from the Dioceses of Algoma and Moosonee are registered and participating learn.

Archbishop Germond thanked Archdeacon Bill Mous, whose coordinating communications work, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic have helped the province. She also acknowledged the giftedness of Chancellor Greg Tweney and the work of the Safe Church Response team. And she thanked Canon David Linn who served as the provincial secretary of the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO) for two decades. Archbishop Anne said that the Diocese of Niagara is a gift to the Church!

The metropolitan reflected on the concept of gift. We begin as gifts; we receive gifts of love, food, and training. Everything we have is a gift. Gifts aren’t sedentary to be stacked and stored but come from Jesus, companions on a journey to build up the body of Christ. She said we have a gifted bishop, synod office team and clergy. The resources at our disposal are a gift. Our core values are to help the vulnerable but we mustn’t be afraid to take on even more challenges. We are not alone as God is with us, meets us, shares joy with us, and takes on the burden with us. God is Love.

Bishop Bell responded that we are blessed by Archbishop Anne's words and company.

Credentials Committee Report

Chancellor Greg Tweney advised Synod that as of 6:55 pm, 71 out of 80 members of the order of the clergy, representing 83%, and 110 out of 156 of the order of the laity, representing 71%, were present and that 65 out of 81 parishes, or 82% were represented. Quorum was achieved.

Motion 1: Credentials Committee Report

Canon Greg Tweney / The Venerable Bill Mous

THAT the report of the credentials committee be accepted.

CARRIED

Notices of Motion

The Chancellor spoke about the rules of order and advised members that since the convening circular was published, no additional motions had been received. Canon Greg Tweney indicated that any motions for consideration at this Synod would need to be presented in writing to Archdeacon Bill Mous no later than 10:50am on Saturday, November 5.

Appointments to Diocesan Court

The bishop informed members of synod that she was appointing the following people to the diocesan court: The Reverend Canon Stuart Pike, The Venerable Peter Scott, The Venerable Sheila Van Zandwyk, Mr. Neil Bell, Ms. Ann Cunningham, and Ms. Mary Donkin.

Consent Agenda

The following items were listed on the consent agenda for the Synod:

Election of Synod Secretaries

that Ms. Sue Thibodeau be elected as the honorary lay secretary of synod and the Reverend Pam Guyatt be elected as the honorary clerical secretary of synod for the 148th Synod of the diocese.

Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Synod

that the minutes of the 147th Synod of the diocese, as found in the convening circular, be approved.

Adoption of the Agenda

that the agenda as presented by the synod agenda committee be adopted.

Reception of All Reports

that all reports found in the convening circular, including the audited financial statements and auditor's report, be received.

Trinity College Corporation

that the representatives from the Diocese of Niagara to the Corporation of Trinity College be: The Reverend Fran Wallace and The Reverend Canon Sue-Ann Ward (clergy) and Mr. David Montgomery (lay); for a term of two years.

Synod Council Report

that the Synod Council report, having been fully considered, be now finally approved, and that all the decisions, agreements and documents entered into and signed on Synod's behalf since its last report, be hereby ratified and confirmed.

Motion # 2: Approval of the Consent Agenda

Mr. Thomas Littlewood/ Ms. Janice Whiteley

THAT the items listed on the consent agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

Introduction to the Synod's Theme with Bible study on 1 Peter 4:12-5, 11

The Bible Study was based on the same passage as was used at Lambeth Conference this year. The verses were read by Canon Balman Kalantari, Emily Hill, and Leonel Abaroa-Bolona.

1 Peter includes the final instructions of Peter to his friends. Bishop Bell reminded members that the focus is "Together we endure sticking close to Jesus." She noted that Christian life can be hard, requiring suffering, patience and hardship, both in Peter's time and in this culture in the light of the pandemic and in parts of the world where Christians are marginalized and punished. We suffer but we can thrive.

An interview from the Lambeth Conference between Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit of Kenya was highlighted. Archbishop Ole Sapit, before becoming a Christian, was born into a Maasai family and raised to be a shepherd. He had to fight a lion with his peers to become a warrior. He recalled that they fought the lion in confusion hearing yells, roars and bells. This passage has real meaning to him. Just as Peter compared the devil to a lion, the world can be a hostile and dangerous.

Archbishop Ole Sapit stated that shepherding is an important concept- be it shepherding cows at the village level or people at the national level. As bishop, he noted that he is a shepherd with a broader vision involving issues of safety, environment, food security, terrorism, economy, and recklessness of the political class. The Archbishop Welby asked how do shepherds find shepherds? Who shepherds the archbishop? Jesus is the chief shepherd.

Members of synod were divided into smaller breakout groups to discuss three questions:

- Who/what are the roaring lions in your context?
- In our local context, how are we resisting these lions?
- In our local context, how do we keep steadfast in our faith?

On return to the plenary, participants shared responses to these questions. Common "lions" facing parishes included resistance to change, the absence of families and children, the fallout of the pandemic, milestones of millennials not being met in this generation, churches having to close and individuals continuing ministries despite personal loss.

Examples of resisting the lions included reminding ourselves of abundance, having attitudes of gratitude and generosity, discovering who is in our neighbourhoods, listening to those who need our help, working in community, engaging in the Mission Action Plan, adopting an attitude of optimism, and upholding each other. We keep steadfast knowing morale is up at the synod office, online programs now draw in new participants, and some parishes are seeing more families coming to church.

Archbishop Germond shared that being raised in South Africa she learned that while encountering lions on game reserves, one must be attentive to the lion, clear headed and confident. She listed a litany of "lions" or challenges that the church faces including secularism, polarization, individualization, and socio-economic ills. The Church at times ignores the ills in the world, lacks training of leadership, suffers from the pressure of time and resources on families and fear for the sustainability of parishes. The lions can overwhelm us and we can turn in on ourselves. There is holiness in loving but we must act. When together in community, we must listen and act- even small acts of love, justice, reconciliation and kindness are important. We must return to common worship and prayer. Prayer leads to a new relationship with God. We need to build up our common life.

Bishop Bell concluded the Bible Study with the advice that we should commit our lions to God who will give us the resilience and strength to overcome them.

Night Prayers

Canon Mike Deed, Nancy McBride, Sheila Plant and Nina Page led Synod in compline.

Friday's session of Synod concluded at 8:45pm.

Saturday, November 5, 2022

IN PERSON at the Burlington Convention Centre

Bishop Susan Bell called the second day of the Synod to order at 9:00 am.

Rhonda Ploughman, rector of Church of the Epiphany, Oakville, offered a territorial acknowledgement, reminding members that Synod is taking place on the hereditary lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Haudenosaunee peoples.

Gathering Eucharist with Bishop's Charge to Synod

The Gathering Eucharist included music from the new hymn book: *Sing a New Creation*. The readings were: 1 Peter 5.1-11 and John 21: 15-19.

Bishop Susan Bell shared that she stood before Synod in a quandary: that if she is too negative, she may be seen as not trusting in God; by being too positive, she risks not seeing the present moment. As such, the bishop prayed for God to speak through her charge, in the midst of this liminal space.

The bishop acknowledged the fear and anxiety in the room; noting that anxiety is one of the roaring lions referenced in 1 Peter. While we may want the bishop to just "fix it" - to bring in more money, to get people back to church, to replace the ones we lost with energetic, committed new faces, she cannot. For it is God that is in charge, and the bishop exhorted the Synod to cast all its anxiety on God because God loves us, as Peter's letter reminds its readers. We must embrace where we are now, not avoid it, but come together to resist the "lions that prowl." The bishop asked members of synod to compare themselves to Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit of Kenya who faced his lion in confusion and fear. Anxiety, scarcity, and negativity seek to divide us. It's not possible to "manage" this, and the state of permacrisis the world finds itself in at the present time.

What is open to us as people of faith, said Bishop Bell, is just that: to move forward in faith, expecting that God will act in our world. We must lean with the wind of the Holy Spirit that brings change, life and growth, for we are a people of expectation, ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus.

With more of the pandemic to go, we are feeling poor, smaller in numbers, tired and discouraged. At the same time the bishop noted that online worship mostly remains strong and will be a permanent fixture, an area of growth to embrace. Bishop Bell also shared that diocesan income will be down 23% in 2023. Accordingly, we are drawing on our rainy-day funds and the bishop gave thanks to God for these, to give us time to recover from this downturn.

Despite feeling the pressure of lower revenue, the bishop encouraged members of Synod to distinguish between feeling and reality. Parishes have been assessed \$400 000 less towards Diocesan Mission and Ministry assessments (DMM) for 2023, as the formula is compassionate and progressive. Some parishes are already reshewing a positive change in revenue, rebounding from their low water mark. There is built in help for parishes for the period of recovery, and cause for some cautious optimism. Because our ministry is vital, recovery is probable. If we expect failure, we will get it. We should pray and work in expectation that God's provision will prevail. This is faith, hope and godly work in action.

Bishop Bell stated that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, we were in stormy waters. The Mission Action Plan (MAP) was the diocese's map out of the darkness and confusion. During the pandemic many of the MAP ministries have flourished, particularly in the last year. The bishop cited three examples: the Niagara School for Missional Leadership which has some incredible offerings, including a training program for deacons; the right-skilling of the diocesan staff for the diocese's current mission-shaped needs and focus on leadership through the differentiated curacy fund; and our ongoing response to the climate crisis by partnering with the Net Zero initiative.

The bishop stated that the climate crisis is the most critical issue of our time. The disasters of Hurricane Fiona and forest fires like Lytton BC are not one-off but are becoming normative. It is a scandal and an affront to the Creator that these events become accepted as normal. Fellow humans are suffering from the ravages of climate change. The Lambeth Conference emphasized that the climate crisis is a first

order issue and there is power in corporate action. There are 85 million Anglicans worldwide in 165 countries, the third largest Christian denomination in the world. Bishop Bell invited members of synod to act together and advocate for our concerns to make a truly significant contribution for the generations to come. The 20,000 of Anglicans of the diocese can move the needle if we act corporately.

In this liminal space of discontinuous change, and time of great anxiety for the future of the Church, Bishop Bell asserted that the whole diocese has been working carefully and intentionally, following our MAP through the present and on into the future. She noted that the goal of developing a MAP was to give voice and missional shape to our ministry both corporately at the diocesan level and at the parish level, with a view to undertake a capital campaign to resource the vision.

In drawing her charge to a close, the bishop acknowledged that the lions are still here, but we know how to resist them - together in the power of the Holy Spirit and ignited by the love of Jesus. Bishop Bell observed that she has seen this through our parishes time and again, as people who are called to life and compelled to love. We must go forward sticking together, sticking to the MAP, and expecting God to provide what we need, when we have need of it.

Bishop Susan Bell commented that the retirements and moves of so many experienced people has been bittersweet; much history and experience has left the building and at the same time new energy and fresh perspectives have entered. The bishop offered gratitude for the diligent service of the diocesan staff: Carrie, Connor, Emily, Jane, Sarah, Kemi, Kim, Debbie, Abiola, Trish, Lorna, Mackenzie, Derek, Bill, Christyn, and Deirdre. She shared that this staff is here to serve parishes and has been humbled to hear over and over from parishes how much their patience, expertise, and dedication is appreciated.

Bishop Susan gave specific thanks to Kemi Okwelum who stepped into her new role as diocesan treasurer and director of finance with confidence and love for the Church; to Jane Wyse who seamlessly stepped in her new role as executive assistant supporting the bishop in so many ways; to Canon Christyn Perkons who is approaching retirement and has shown deep faith and love for the diocese and every parish and ministry; to Dean Tim Dobbin, for his leadership and partnership in prayer; and to Archdeacon Bill Mous for applying his broad skills in service to the diocese, the province and the national church but most importantly to God.

The bishop concluded her charge by giving thanks to God for members of synod, for their service and commitment, and especially to the clergy whose gifts, heart, dedication, and sacrifices she sees.

BREAK

Missional Moment: Susie Kim, Neighbourhood Missioner

Susie Kim shared with Synod that her ministry in central Hamilton is undertaken with no agenda but is one of presence; she engages in conversations with anyone in the community she serves. Her “office” is in establishments like The Bray where she chit chats over beer with managers, bartenders, and regulars, getting to know people’s lives there over time. Susie compared her work as a missioner to the Good Samaritan who was able to drop off a stranger at the inn and leave. The innkeeper knew him, trusted him and knew he would pay. Where you are a regular, you develop a relationship with your neighbourhood and meet Jesus there. Susie noted that All Saints Mission will have an impact of healing and trust.

Canon Changes

Canon Greg Tweney was unable to attend the Saturday in-person session of Synod. Bishop Susan noted that he was connected via Zoom and is available to lend advice if needed. However, he is unable to move any of the resolutions related to the canon changes; in his place, Synod Council member Byron Nicholson agreed to move or second motions put forward by the Chancellor.

The bishop invited Archdeacon Bill Mous to walk members of synod through the various canon changes.

Motion #3 Amendment to Canon 1.9 (2) - Synod Council

Mr. Byron Nicholson / The Venerable Bill Mous

THAT Canon 1.9 (2) be amended to read as follows:

An alternate representative, clergy or lay, may be elected from each of the regions who shall serve as a member of the Synod Council in the event of an elected member's inability to attend a meeting of the Council. If an elected member resigns, such alternate representative shall serve out the balance of the member's term. Alternate members shall have full voting privileges when attending on behalf of an elected member or serving out the balance of a term.

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY**

Motion #4: Amendment to Canon 1.9 (3) - Synod Council

The Venerable Bill Mous / Mr. Byron Nicholson

THAT Canon 1.9 (3) be amended to read as follows:

- (a) There shall be standing committees of the Synod Council, as follows:*
- i. The Coordinating Team of Synod Council, consisting of the Secretary of Synod, and at least three members to be elected annually by the Synod Council. The Coordinating Team shall meet between sessions of the Synod Council at the call of the Secretary of Synod, who shall chair the meetings.*
 - ii. The Financial Advisory Committee, consisting of the Treasurer and at least six members to be elected by the Synod Council for a two-year term, renewable twice.*
 - iii. The Investment Advisory Committee, consisting of the Treasurer and at least six members to be elected by the Synod Council for a two-year term, renewable twice.*
 - iv. The Audit Committee, consisting of the Treasurer, and at least six members, to be elected by the Synod Council for a two-year term, renewable twice.*
 - v. The Human Resources for Ministry Committee, consisting of the Bishop or Bishop's designate, and at least four members elected by the Synod Council for a two-year term, renewable twice.*
- (b) Other standing committees may be mandated by Synod Council, as necessary.*
- (c) The terms of reference for each standing committee will be defined in a mandate letter approved by the Synod Council.*
- (d) Unless otherwise specified, the chair of each standing committee shall be appointed by the Bishop.*
- (e) Members of the committees shall normally be members of a parish vestry within Niagara.*
- (f) The Bishop and Executive Officer shall be ex officio members of all standing committees.*

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY**

Motion #5: Amendment to Canon 1.9 (7) - Synod Council

Mr. Byron Nicholson / The Venerable Bill Mous

THAT Canon 1.9 (7) be amended to read as follows:

The Synod Council shall, at its first meeting following the conclusion of the Diocesan Synod, appoint signing officers for the Diocese, such signing officers to include the Bishop of the Diocese, the Executive Officer, the Secretary of Synod, the Treasurer, and any other individuals as shall be designated at that time by the Synod Council, provided that two signatures shall be affixed to all cheques and bills of exchange, one of which must be

that of the Treasurer, the Executive Officer, or one other person appointed by Synod Council, and provided further that such signing officers as appointed pursuant to this section shall be authorized, in the name of the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, to

- (a) draw, accept, sign, approve, and make all or any bills of exchange, promissory notes, electronic or wire transfers, cheques and orders for the payment of money;*
- (b) pay and receive all moneys and to give acquittance for the same;*
- (c) assign and transfer to the financial institution acting as custodian all or any stocks, mutual funds, bonds and other securities and from time to time to borrow money from such financial institution either by overdrawing the account or otherwise; and*
- (d) generally for and on behalf of the said Synod to transact with the said bank any business.*

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY**

Motion #6 Amendment to Canon 2.2 – Secretary and Treasurer
The Venerable Bill Mous / Mr. Byron Nicholson

THAT section 5 of Canon 2.2 be deleted along with all references to the controller position found in the diocesan canons.

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY**

Motion #7 Amendment to Canon 3.1 (1) - Appointment of Incumbents
Mr. Byron Nicholson / The Venerable Bill Mous

THAT section 1 of Canon 3.1 be amended to read as follows:

1. *There shall be in every parish (not being an assisted parish) a Committee (hereinafter called "The Parochial Committee"), which shall consist of the lay representatives to the Synod and the Churchwardens of the parish. Such Committee shall have full power in conference with the Bishop, to represent the Parish in the selection of an incumbent. An archdeacon or other representative shall be appointed by the Bishop to oversee the interview process.*

For the sake of greater clarity:

- (i) The chair shall be elected from amongst the members of the Committee.*
- (ii) Alternate lay representatives to the Synod and Deputy Churchwardens of the parish may attend meetings of the Parochial Committee but are not entitled to vote.*
- (iii) In the event of a change of leadership during the Parochial Committee's work, past wardens or lay representatives may, at the Bishop's sole discretion, continue to serve on the Committee but are not entitled to vote.*
- (iv) In extraordinary circumstances, at the outset of the Committee's work, additional members of the parish may be appointed by the Bishop.*

Some discussion about the motion arose from the floor of Synod and the potential impact the canon change may have, particularly as wardens transition. When there were no further comments, the Bishop called the question.

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY**

Motion #8 Amendment to Canon 4.1 (4) - Vestries and Churchwardens

The Venerable Bill Mous / Mr. Byron Nicholson

THAT section 4 of Canon 4.1 be amended to read as follows:

4 a) An Annual Vestry Meeting shall be held by the 1st of March each year, or on such day as may be fixed by the Synod. In extraordinary circumstances, this deadline may be extended with the approval of the Synod Council.

b) Notice of the annual meeting shall be given during Divine Service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the said meeting.

c) The annual meeting shall be for the purpose of receiving the audited accounts of the Vestry, and subsequently of electing and appointing Churchwardens and Lay Representatives and for the transaction of other business connected with the temporalities of the Church.

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY**

Motion #9 Amendment to Canon 4.3 (1) – Differences between Clergy and Parishioners

Mr. Byron Nicholson / The Venerable Bill Mous

THAT section 1 of Canon 4.3 be amended by deleting the phrase, “through the inability of the Incumbent through age, infirmity or any other cause, or.”

**CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF LAITY
CARRIED IN THE ORDER OF CLERGY**

Audit Matters

The bishop welcomed Treasurer Kemi Okwelum and noted that this was her first Synod with the diocese.

Auditor’s Report and Audited Financial Statements

Kemi Okwelum noted the auditor’s report indicates a qualified opinion, as is customary for charitable organizations. There were no areas of concern highlighted in the report. The auditors noted a decline in revenue compared to last year which was primarily from the extraordinary property sales of \$4.1M in 2020 compared to \$392K in 2021. The diocese closed with a net surplus of \$1.25M mainly due to investment gains and increased DMM revenues. Expenses remained at the same level as 2020. The overall net surplus of 2021 was less than 2020 because of the extraordinary \$4M received from the sale of properties. The treasurer reviewed highlights from the Statement of Financial Position. She noted that net assets increased by \$1.2M or 11% and decline of total liabilities by -\$17% or \$81K, and gave an overview of changes to our investment funds (including creation of a Legal Reserve Fund of \$370K, Church Planters Fund \$100K and Property Renewal Reserve Fund of \$100K).

Motion #10 Appointment of Auditors

The Reverend Dr. Eleanor Clitheroe / The Reverend Canon Leslie Gerlofs

THAT KPMG be appointed as auditors for the fiscal year 2022.

CARRIED

The bishop offered her gratitude for the work of the diocesan finance team.

Anti-Racism Working Group Presentation

Chair Naomi Kabugi introduced members of her team and shared that they are making final touches on an Anti-Racism Training Curriculum. The manual, to be used by the diocese, is expected to be launched in 2023. Synod participated in a series of body exercises taken from “My Grandmother’s Hands: a Book on Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies.” It noted that these are tools to calm our bodies, settle our fears and make us ready to deal with our “lions”.

Canon Christyn Perkons then reviewed the structure of the Anti-Racism curriculum which is comprised of six sessions of 2 hours each, two topics per session:

Session 1	Anti Racism/Anti Oppression and Language
Session 2	Keep Calm + Check your Privileges and Microaggression
Session 3	Origin of Race and Body Trauma and Healing
Session 4	Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Indigenous Racism
Session 5	Anti-Asian Racism and Anti Immigrant + Newcomer Racism
Session 6	Facing Realities, Radical Hospitality and Racism in Church Culture

Deirdre Pike introduced a video on microaggression, "Where are you from?" and then reflected on how to interrupt and re-direct a person who is being a micro-aggressor.

There remains some work to be done: completing the drafts, seeking feedback, developing graphics, recruiting trainers and facilitators among the clergy and lay readers. She invited everyone to contribute. A report will be presented to the 2023 Synod. Diocesan structures will be reviewed to support the document. The bishop commented that anti-Racism work is important Gospel work.

Ahead of lunch, Archdeacon Bill Mous shared some brief announcements. Bishop Susan Bell was presented, on behalf of the diocese, a bouquet of flowers in recognition of her 20 years of ordained ministry. Archbishop Anne Germond also presented her with a pair of beaded moccasins to be made by a lay reader in Thunder Bay Deanery as a thank you from the diocese of Algoma and Moosonee for her leadership and teaching through the Niagara School of Missional Leadership. She shared that Bishop Bell is a model of what it is to be a bishop including the programs she promotes and her forward thinking while centering everything in Jesus Christ. Members of Synod joined with Archbishop Germond in praying a blessing upon the bishop.

Archbishop Colin Johnson led Synod in a grace; 'Johnny Appleseed' was sung together.

LUNCH

Missional Moment #2: Niagara-Huron Cursillo

Renée Anderson, Cursillo lay director, and Brian Galligan, Cursillo spiritual director, shared in a presentation about how Cursillo helps participants to discern their vision and to equip them for mission. The program, a three-day residential course, aims to develop missional leaders in the Church who actively use their gifts to grow the Church. After the weekend the candidate is expected to discuss their learnings with their priest and seek guidance. Participants can be called to holy orders or lay leadership with calls to outreach and faith in action within the home parish or beyond. The goal of Cursillo is to proclaim the Gospel and seek to make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ

Climate Justice Niagara Presentation

Past Chair Sue Carson spoke about the work of the Climate Justice Niagara Committee, which includes a new initiative to recognize parishes which have created gardens (rain, pollinator, or vegetable) to help the environment. Already 8 parishes have received a certificate. The committee is also working on a Climate Justice prayer for the diocese, which is almost ready to share.

Sue Carson reported on the 2019 single-use plastics motion. While efforts have been hampered by the pandemic, one-third of parishes passed this in 2020 and others will be doing so at their vestries this year. It was noted that the federal government will be passing a new law phasing out 6 common single-use plastics which will help make the transition easier for some items.

The Energy Audit program passed at Synod in 2021 aims to reduce energy use by 10% in 5 years. Fourteen parishes have been early adopters and completed their walk-through energy audits. Important data has been collected since such a wide variety of buildings is involved. Starting in January 2023, Humber College students will use infrared cameras to detect cold areas in facilities signed up for the

audit. Every parish is encouraged to access the information on the diocesan website and plan to complete their Energy Audit to help reduce energy use and save utility costs. Steps in the process: collect utility data from the last few years, complete the energy walk through (2 hours), create a 5-year plan, educate the parish, educate the renters and users. Sue Carson emphasized that Climate Justice Niagara is just an email away, and the committee is keen to support parishes achieve a 10% reduction in their carbon footprint; this is one small step by each parish but one giant leap if we work together.

Bishop Bell reminded members that climate action is the moral issue of our time; collective prayer and action, in addition to our own personal commitments, is crucial to our response.

Bishops' Lambeth Dialogue with Questions from Members

Bishop Susan Bell and Archbishop Anne Germond sat down in conversation to reflect about the Lambeth Conference held during the summer in England. They noted that some 650 bishops attended the pre-conference in Canterbury Cathedral and there were over 1500 participants at the 12-day conference, representing 85 million Anglicans in 165 countries, who gathered to worship, engage in Bible study, listen and get to know each other better.

Both bishops agreed that the diversity was breathtaking and through participation in Bible study and small group sessions, many bonds of affection were formed. The most painful moment was at the first communion service, after singing and sharing the peace together, several bishops chose not to receive communion as a form of protest against the differing views of same sex marriage. They noted that voting was suspended to avoid dissent on motions involving human sexuality. Bishop Bell pointed out, however, that during a transition time "grey things" happen, both good and bad, and that the number of bishops affirming same sex marriage grew over time in Lambeth.

Due to geopolitics, the stakes are high in the policies of human sexuality in many parts of the world. In the many small group sessions, Bishop Bell developed a respectful relationship with the Bishop of South Sudan who had been a child soldier and serves in a very different landscape than here in Niagara. They agreed to do an interview on BBC presenting their differing views.

Bishop Bell gave examples of the special ministries of certain bishops from several countries that she met whose challenges are so different than ours here in Niagara, some facing dangers of execution for being Anglican. She gave examples of countries like Madagascar, Pakistan, North and South Sudan where Christians are oppressed and often don't receive aid in times of disaster.

In conclusion remarks, the bishops affirmed that meeting at Lambeth is crucial for building unity in the Church, by seeing the face of Christ in the person across the table even if you don't agree. Building a relationship is key to convincing others through their hearts, if not through their minds.

Mission Action Plan Update

An update on the work of the diocesan Mission Action Plan (MAP) was presented by Canon Christyn Perkons, director of congregational support and development, and Dr. Emily Hill, the newly appointed parish development missionary.

Canon Perkons noted that the role of a Mission Action Plan is to give opportunities to ignite and strengthen faith. She highlighted many examples of how the diocesan MAP is being lived out across the diocese, including through Garfield Wu's work at St Luke's Palermo, and St Cuthbert's Oakville, five divinity students have come forth to pursue their callings; through Canon Mike Deed's work in developing All Saints Mission, creating a new space on the main floor of a condo building for people not used to churches, pioneers in rebooting a church community; through changing diocesan culture: through new synod staff models and having Archbishop Colin Johnson as a mission coach, and by increasing the digital presence of parishes and creating the "new normal" through tech grants. In the coming year, the diocese's progress with the MAP objectives will be reviewed and future steps will be developed.

Dr. Hill discussed the MAP Parish Initiative that includes the MAP Guide for Parishes discernment process, under the three foci of Faith Formation, Parish Culture, and Links with the Neighbourhood.

There are 246 parish initiatives already planned for 2023-24 from the 24 parishes who have completed their submissions, and more are in the process, averaging 6-12 initiatives per parish. Some initiatives include: a senior health and wellness project, community fridges and cooking lessons, coffee groups for the newly retired, parish retreats and theology book clubs. Dr. Hill compared these small steps to the mustard seed that will sprout into a big tree. She witnesses great vibrancy in the diocese.

Dr. Hill invited parishes to contact her for help or advice and to share stories. \$50,000 has been put aside to be shared toward a parish's DMM payment if their MAP documents are submitted to the diocesan office by June 2, 2023.

As the presentation concluded, the bishop shared her gratitude to Canon Christyn Perkons for the legacy gift of the MAP which she spearheaded. Bishop Bell observed that over her 20 years of ministry as a member of the diocesan staff team, her impact on parishes has been profound and deep. As she prepares for retirement in 2023, the bishop thanked Canon Perkons for her friendship, her witness, and for the incredible ways she has served the Church. Members of Synod offered a standing ovation in recognition of Canon Christyn Perkons' extraordinary ministry with the diocese.

2023 Diocesan Budget Presentation

Archdeacon Peter Scott, chair of the Missional Budget Planning Committee, presented the 2023 diocesan budget along with Kemi Okwelum, the diocesan treasurer.

Archdeacon Scott connected the scriptural focus of this year's Synod to the work of the Committee in preparing a budget. He noted that one of the messages of 1 Peter is that we are protected by our God even if we are suffering trials. The 2022 priorities are continuing into 2023, reflecting our new realities and societal changes. Archdeacon Scott acknowledged the struggles of this time but also pointed to the opportunity of new online ministries and connections. The 2023 budget makes provision for the following priorities: improved mental health supports for clergy and staff, resourcing parish Mission Action Plans, differentiated curacies, enhancing funding for clergy coaching, bolstering resources for Climate Justice Niagara, and supporting the Niagara School for Missional Leadership. The budget also invests in the work of the Anti-Racism Working Group to develop and roll-out an Anti-Racism curriculum. Archdeacon Scott also cited the youth programs, such as The Table, that successfully used a hybrid model to keep participants engaged and help the diocese live into our Mission Action Plan. Already nearly 200 new missional initiatives are being contemplated by parishes who have completed their Mission Action Plan. The proposed budget for 2023 will set aside \$50,000 as an incentive to parishes who complete their parish MAPs to help foster their missional initiatives.

Kemi Okwelum gave an overview of the key numbers in the 2023 budget. She noted that diocesan revenue will be down 23% year over year - \$2.93M in 2023 versus \$3.8M in 2022. This shift is in part because no properties are forecast to be sold in 2023 and Diocesan Mission & Ministry contributions will decrease by 13% compared to last year. The strain on the budget is similar to what is being felt in many parishes. Significant effort has been made to reduce costs while maintaining our capacity for ministry. The budget for most expense lines is maintained or reduced compared to 2022. Through intentional, mission-oriented realignment, staffing costs are reduced by \$100,000 year over year. At the same time, a 4% increase in staffing costs has been implemented, as directed by Synod Council, recognizing the extraordinary increases in the cost of living we are experiencing.

Overall, the budget forecasts a deficit of \$41,500 for 2023 after draws from investments are factored in. The treasurer noted that the diocese is blessed by a rich heritage of funds to sustain our ministry at levels over and above what operating revenues would permit. Various diocesan investments will fund nearly \$650,000 worth of ministry in 2023. This budget makes a \$3.6M dollar investment in ministry at every level, equipping us for the mission to which God has called us.

The bishop thanked the budget committee for their work and opened the floor of Synod for questions and comments. Canon Martha Tatarnic and Neil Culp, both of St. George's St. Catharines, spoke to the budget, expressing concerns about the magnitude and sustainability of investment draws required to support diocesan ministry.

Motion #11 2023 Budget

Ms. Kemi Okwelum /The Venerable Peter Scott

THAT this Synod approve the 2023 diocesan budget.

CARRIED

Missional Moment #3: Canterbury Hills Camp

Camp Director Sharon Millar shared that 2022 was a big relaunch of full camping activities at Canterbury Hills including overnight camping built on developing relationships, off-site experiences, and leadership training. Synod heard about the transformation that happens when children encountering God's creation, have an opportunity to build community, and build relationships with one another. The Synod enjoyed the many slides highlighting staff, campers, and their activities.

Other Business

Election of Representatives to Synod Council

The bishop invited the secretary of synod to display the slate of nominees selected or acclaimed by their respective regions for election by Synod as representatives to Synod Council.

The slate of nominees included: Pat Davis, Alternate: Gary Pollard (Brock); Anne Gould, Alternate: Paul Walker (Greater Wellington); Bev Groombridge, Alternate: Susan Little (Hamilton-Haldimand); Byron Nicholson, Alternate: Jodey Porter (Lincoln); and Alternate: Karine Snowden (Trafalgar).

Motion #12 The Venerable Bill Mous / Ms. Mary Donkin

THAT this Synod elect the regional members of Synod Council for the 2023/2024 term and alternate members for the 2023 term.

CARRIED

The bishop expressed gratitude for all who let their names stand and congratulated those elected.

Concluding Synod

The Bishop's Assent of the Actions of Synod

Bishop Susan Bell gave her assent to all acts and resolutions during Synod.

Archdeacon Bill Mous reminded members that the bishop's Charge, along with her interview on BBC with the Bishop of South Sudan, will be shared with an evaluation of this year's Synod which will be sent to all members shortly after the Synod adjourns.

Closing Prayers and Blessing

The Synod concluded with closing prayers and blessing, led by Canon Leslie Gerlofs.

The bishop thanked all those who made the Synod possible, including Canon Mike Deed, Archdeacon Bill Mous, Mary Anne Grant, Jan Charters, Sarah Bird, Connor Jay, Jane Wyse, Adam McNeil and Chancellor Greg Tweney.

Bishop Susan Bell also noted that the Synod has been blessed by the presence and wisdom Archbishop Anne Germond who has been our most honoured guest over the past two days. The bishop concluded by thanking members of synod for their Gospel partnership.

Adjournment

The 148th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara adjourned on or about 3:15pm.