

# MISSION ACTION PLAN REPORT

The diocesan Mission Action Plan and the parish Mission Action Plans are living documents designed to capture the exciting ways we are actively coming alongside God at work in our communities and our parishes to co-create God's new society. These priorities and initiatives reflect an intersection of our spiritual yearnings, strengths, and challenges and it's so affirming to see this work renewing and transforming our ministries.

In the past year, parishes have been busy with Mission Action Plan (MAP) activities, including:

- 47 parishes developed a Mission Action Plan (32 in 2022 and 14 in 2023) and received Diocesan Mission and Ministry rebates for doing so..
- Across the 47 participating parishes, 469 initiatives were chosen (156 for Adult Faith Formation, 159 for Reshaping Parish Culture to Enable Ministry, and 154 for Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood).
- Parishes have been implementing the initiatives, and, through a survey sent to MAP advocates in April, most have reported a good level of engagement and new energy for mission within their congregations.
- A few parishes have struggled to make progress in implementing their MAP and have received support to address the specific challenges they are facing and chart a new path forward.
- It is recommended that parishes refresh the MAP regularly (every 1 – 2 years). Some parishes have completed the goals set out in their first MAP and are now embarking on their second MAP process. We are developing a MAP 2.0 guide to help parishes to take next steps and set new goals.

In the past year, we have continued to engage with the diocesan Mission Action Plan in the following ways:

- *Create and Implement Opportunities to Ignite and Strengthen Faith*
  - Our four intentional missional ministries continue to share the Good News through Mission in Acts (Chinese Anglican ministry), the Cathedral Community of Prayer, St. Luke's Common Prayer, and the missional witness in the neighbourhoods around All Saints Mission, Hamilton.
  - The Niagara School for Missional Leadership has added more courses each term, growing missional leaders in many exciting areas.
  - 21 parishes identified developing or reinstating a Bible Study program as one of their MAP goals. The diocese is providing resources and support for both the Revive and Alpha programs as well as access to many Bible Study resources through the lending library.
  - The Bishop's Lenten Book Study for 2023 featured three books by authors from within the diocese (Dr. John Bowen's *The Unfolding Gospel*; The Rev. Michael Coren's *The Rebel Christ*; The Rev. Canon Martha Tatarnic's *Why Gather?*). These books encouraged readers to examine our lives, churches, and the world to see how God is at work making all things new through Jesus Christ.
  - Under the leadership of the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry (CYFM) program consultant, "The Table" - a monthly gathering of young adults from

across the diocese – met regularly to engage in authentic conversations about life's big questions, trending topics, and Christian spirituality.

- 2023's Youth Leadership Training program welcomed a full cohort back to gathering in person at Canterbury Hills. Inspired by Jesus' leadership, the youth explored gifts, identity, belonging, and purpose in the context of discipleship.
- The CYFM leaders network welcomed several new members this year and hosted their first retreat, which equipped participants to grow faith formation in their parishes through Godly Play.
- Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo held its first in-person weekend since the pandemic. There were 41 people in attendance (18 were new participants).
- *Reimagining Parish Culture and Adapting our Structures to Enable Ministry*
  - All Saints Anglican Mission, established by the bishop and Synod Council, and functioning with the support of the All Saints Mission Advisory Board, moved into their new building on Palm Sunday. The church space was consecrated by Bishop Susan Bell on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. In addition to offering regular Sunday worship and faith formation opportunities, All Saints is becoming a community hub for neighbours (e.g., coffee & co-working space on Mondays and knitting with neighbours' group twice a month).
  - Staffing at the diocesan office has been reimagined to better support the Church's mission in Niagara. In 2023, we welcomed Canon Drew MacDonald, stewardship and campaign advisor, Shannon MacKenzie, human resources and volunteer coordinator, Hannah Keller, administrative assistant, as well as Canon Ian Mobsby, our new community missionary. We have now reached a full staff complement with the skills and competencies necessary for our ministry in the coming years.
  - Synod Council continues to consider new policies and canons designed to enhance our shared ministry and focus our energy on God's mission. Updated terms of reference for the Human Resources for Ministry committee, refreshed building project regulations pertaining to Canon 4.6, and an updated process for endorsing Anglican Foundation grants are a few examples.
- *Prioritize Social Justice with an Emphasis on Environmental Justice*
  - The Anti-Racism Working Group finalized the "made in Niagara" anti-racism curriculum for clergy and parishioners. The program consultant for justice and outreach will be leading the train-the-trainer sessions using the curriculum this year in preparation of training all the clergy in 2024/25.
  - As the Migrant Farmworker Project emerged from the pandemic, workers identified a need for something beyond Sunday communal dinners and so the hub model has been developed at St. Alban's, Beamsville. Workers are now gathering from the fields to build relationships amongst one another and with volunteers over coffee and delicious food in the newly developed café on Thursday in the late afternoon and evening. And the café along with the medical clinic, staffed by our partner, Quest, as well as the thrift shop, the Hispanic groceries and Bikes for Farmworkers program are meeting the needs of 80-100 migrant farm workers weekly necessitating the addition of a second evening. In addition, an ESL class has been added at the Hub and with a recent donation of laptops, a WiFi lounge is in the planning stages. Plans are underway to provide

300 Christmas bags for the farmworkers again this Christmas with participation from several area Anglican churches.

- Bishop Susan Bell hosted a conversation with leading Climate Scientist Katherine Hayhoe at a Bishop's Company online event. Katherine provided insight and tools for creating community advocacy initiatives and conversations with our friends, family, and neighbours. Bishop Susan has stayed in touch with Katherine and referred to Katherine's witness and call to action as part of her remarks at General Synod for a motion calling on the Church to move towards a net zero carbon emission approach.
- Climate Justice Niagara (CJN)'s work with the Net Zero Churches Project as well as resourcing World Water Day, Earth Sunday and the Season of Creation.
- The Communion Forest initiative has started in Niagara with CJN exploring partnerships with Neighbourwoods and Green Venture to do tree inventories on parish properties and planting of native trees in appropriate places around the diocese.
- The Human Trafficking Working Group created and promoted resources for "Freedom Sunday" on Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. They also hosted a webinar about human trafficking that included speakers from the YMCA of Hamilton /Burlington/ Brantford and the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre.
- The in-person *Fiercely Loved: God's Got You* liturgy on June 11<sup>th</sup> celebrating pride, allyship, and diocesan support of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Truth and Reconciliation: *Listening to Indigenous Voices* - a virtual learning event with Bruce Weaver for National Indigenous' Peoples Day - and a *Kairos Blanket Exercise* learning opportunity at the cathedral with Archdeacon Val Kerr for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- The diocese has provided a major gift of \$100,000 to St. Matthew's House to support 412 Barton Project – 12 deeply affordable housing units intended for seniors facing homelessness, with a special focus on Indigenous and Black older adults.

It is exciting to see how God is at work in the diocese through the MAP goals and initiatives. Thank you to everyone who has been involved.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Hill  
Parish Development Missioner