

2025 DIOCESAN SYNOD COUNCIL

Regional Representatives

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|---|---|
| • Canon Patricia Davis | Brock |
| • The Reverend Deacon Rod McDowell | Brock |
| • Mr. Gord Rendell (<i>alternate</i>) | Brock |
| • Dr. Thomas Littlewood | Greater Wellington |
| • Mr. John Laidlaw | Greater Wellington |
| • Mrs. Anne Gould (<i>alternate</i>) | Greater Wellington |
| • Ms. Bev Groombridge | Hamilton-Haldimand |
| • Mrs. Susan Little | Hamilton-Haldimand |
| • The Reverend Janice Brooks (<i>alternate</i>) | Hamilton-Haldimand |
| • Mr. Byron Nicolson | Lincoln |
| • The Reverend Rob Towler | Lincoln (<i>through January 31, 2025</i>) |
| • Mr. Mark Young | Lincoln (<i>effective February 1, 2025</i>) |
| • Ms. Amy Collard | Trafalgar |
| • The Reverend Canon Malcolm French | Trafalgar |
| • Mr. Winston Tinglin (<i>alternate</i>) | Trafalgar |

Regional Archdeacons

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| • The Venerable Terry Holub | Brock |
| • The Venerable Peter Scott | Greater Wellington (<i>through October 31, 2025</i>) |
| • The Venerable Paul Walker | Greater Wellington (<i>effective November 1, 2025</i>) |
| • The Venerable Terry DeForest | Hamilton-Haldimand |
| • The Venerable Sheila Van Zandwyk | Lincoln |
| • The Venerable Jeff Ward | Trafalgar |

Financial Advisory Committee

- The Reverend Canon Dr. Eleanor Clitheroe

Canterbury Hills

- *vacant*

Episcopal Appointees

- | | |
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| • Ms. Nancy Coombs | • Ms. Paige Keller |
| • Ms. Gillian Hendry | • The Reverend Monica Romig Green |

Officers

- The Right Reverend Dr. Susan Bell, Diocesan Bishop
- Canon Greg Tweney, Chancellor
- Ms. Christine Morrow, Treasurer & Director of Finance
- The Venerable William (Bill) Mous, Executive Officer & Secretary of Synod
- The Very Reverend Dr. Tim Dobbin, Rector of Christ's Church Cathedral & Dean of Niagara

REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD COUNCIL

This report summarizes the actions of Synod Council from November of 2024 through October of 2025. The requirement for at least six meetings to be held, as set out in Canon 1.9(9), was met with nine (9) meetings duly convened during this period.

Election and Appointments

- Appointed the following as diocesan signing officers: the Right Reverend Dr. Susan Bell, diocesan bishop; the Venerable Bill Mous, executive officer and secretary of synod; Ms. Christine Morrow, treasurer and director of finance; and Ms. Jane Wyse, executive assistant to the bishop.
- Approved the election of the following directors to serve on the board of 2498317 Ontario Inc, the corporation established to oversee diocesan development projects, for the year 2025 or until their successors are duly elected: the Right Reverend Dr. Susan Bell, Ms. Christine Morrow, the Venerable Bill Mous, and Canon Terry Charters. The bishop and the secretary of synod were also authorized to sign the authorizing resolution on behalf of the Synod.
- Elected Canon Patricia Davis, Mrs. Bev Groombridge, and the Reverend Canon Malcolm French to the coordinating team for Synod Council.
- Elected Mr. Nicholas Choules-Burbidge, Mr. Jim Higginson, the Reverend Rob Towler, the Reverend Canon Dr. Eleanor Clitheroe and Mr. Marshall Horner to the Financial Advisory Committee for a two-year term.
- Elected Mr. Bill Kuehnbaum, Mr. Peter Barr, the Reverend Canon Dr. Eleanor Clitheroe, Mr. John Nicholson, Mr. Brock Mason, and Mr. Mark Young to the Investment Advisory Committee for a two-year term.
- Elected Mr. Nicolas Choules-Burbidge, Mr. David Eccles, Mr. Greg Cook, Mr. Tony Denning, and the Reverend Canon Leslie Gerlofs to the Audit Committee for a two-year term.
- Elected the Venerable Sheila Van Zandwyk, Mr. Neil Culp, Mr. Tim Tiernay, Ms. Colina Magee, and the Reverend Deacon Sheila Plant to the Human Resources for Ministry Committee for a two-year term.
- Elected Mrs. Susan Little, the Reverend Canon Malcolm French and Mr. John Laidlaw to the Nominations Committee for a one-year term.
- Reappointed the Reverend Victor Kischak for a further two-year term as a diocesan representative on the Cathedral Place Property Management Committee.
- Appointed the Reverend Cheryl Barker, Mr. Friedrich Liu, the Reverend Canon Dr. Ian Mobsby, the Reverend Canon Stuart Pike, and the Reverend Nicola Zhang to serve on the Mission in Acts Mission Advisory Board.
 - Appointed the diocesan signing officers to serve as signing officers for matters related to the Mission in Acts Mission.
- Appointed the Reverend Andrew Rampton, Dr. Emily Hill, and the Reverend Canon Dr. Ian Mobsby to serve on the All Saints Mission Advisory Board.
- Appointed the Reverend Canon Dr. Eleanor Clitheroe, Ms. Cheryl Hudson, Mr. John Laidlaw, and the Venerable Peter Scott to the Missional Budget Planning Committee for a one-year term.

- Acting as the General Membership of the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara:
 - Elected Mr. Tony Denning to the office of president and Mrs. Jodey Porter to the office of vice president of the foundation, to serve until the next annual general meeting.
- Appointed the Reverend Deacon Sandra Thomson, Mr. Ron Martin, the Reverend Dr. Dan Tatarnic, the Reverend Canon Dr. Ian Mobsby, the Reverend Deacon Jean Ruttan-Yates, the Reverend Canon Pam Guyatt, and Ms. Pam Mallindine to serve on the Migrant Farmworkers Mission Advisory Board.
 - Appointed the diocesan signing officers to serve as signing officers for matters related to the Migrant Farmworkers Mission.
- Appointed Mr. Thomas Lazier as the diocesan solicitor for the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, effective January 1, 2026, for a term of 5 years, thereafter to be renewed by mutual consent.

Policy & Governance Matters

- Approved the updated terms of reference for the Financial Advisory Committee, effective December 10, 2025.
- Approved the revised Sabbatical Leave Policy, as circulated, effective December 10, 2025.
- Approved the updated regulations for holding vestry meetings, as circulated, effective January 1, 2025.
- Approved the new bylaws of the Burlington Anglican Lutheran Church.
- Approved the designation of Mission in Acts Mission as a diocesan mission, effective June 1, 2025, in accordance with Canon 4.9 and subject to the bishop's formal assent.
- Approved the designation of the Migrant Farmworkers Mission as a diocesan mission, effective October 1, 2025, in accordance with Canon 4.9 and subject to the bishop's formal assent.
- Approved the renewal of the diocesan annual grant program—formerly known as Walking on Water (WOW)—to be known as Missional Innovation Grants (MIG) with a mandate to support innovative, community-based missional initiatives that emerge from attentive listening, respond to local spiritual needs, and connect meaningfully with those outside the Church.
 - Authorized the diocesan treasurer, in consultation with the diocesan leadership team, to budget for the disbursement of such grants annually from funds in excess of the one million dollar internally restricted diocesan fund held for its annual grant program.
 - Approved the composition of the Missional Innovation Grants Committee to be a representative from each region of the diocese, as appointed by the bishop, as well as the parish development missionary and the community missionary.
- Duly considered proposed canon changes to the following diocesan canons: Canon 1.1-Composition of Synod; Canon 1.9 – Synod Council; Canon 2.9 – The Cathedral of the Diocese of Niagara; Canon 3.5 – College of Deacons; Canon 4.1 – Vestries and Churchwardens; and Canon 4.7 – As to Purchasing, Selling or Mortgaging Church Property.

Parish & Mission Matters

- Authorized the Church of the Ascension, Hamilton; All Saints, Erin; St. Stephen on-the-Mount, Hamilton; St. James, Fergus; Christ Church Wainfleet, All Saints, Ridgeway, St. John's, Nassagaweya, St. Mark's, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and All Saints, Dain City to hold their annual vestry meetings no later than March 2, 2025.

- Authorized St. John's Nassagaweya to hold their annual vestry meeting no later than March 9, 2025.
- Approved the submission of a grant application to the Anglican Foundation of Canada in the amount of \$15,000, by St. George's St. Catharines for its exterior restoration project; and commended the parish for its diligent efforts to renew its historic church building, recognizing the essential role it plays for the many and diverse parish and community ministries.
- Approved the submission of a grant application to the Anglican Foundation of Canada in the amount of \$9,907.28, by St. Stephen-on-the-Mount, Hamilton for a new sign with a digital display; and commended the parish for its missional aspirations to better connect its ministries and events with the neighbourhood that it serves
- Approved the submission of a grant application to the Anglican Foundation of Canada in the amount of \$15,000, by Holy Trinity, Fonthill for the first phase of their *Spiritual Renewal and Building Refresh* project; and commended the parish for its intentional missional efforts in the community it serves and for its plans to improve accessibility and renew the fabric of its church building such that it is a better container for ministry for the people of the Town of Pelham while helping to sustain its missional endeavours.
- Approved a grant application to the Anglican Foundation of Canada, in the amount of \$15,000, by the diocese for St. Brigid's Community pilot project; and commended the bishop and St. Brigid's Circle support group for their creative, bold, and intentional missional efforts to build a connected Christian community of young adults, seeking to address the need for faith formation amidst the growing social and spiritual isolation, anxiety, and fragmentation of our society.

Property Matters

- Approved the Open Doors building project of St. John's, Elora, estimated to cost \$3.2 million, to create a new accessible gathering space, barrier-free washrooms, and a commercial kitchen to better serve the needs of their community.
- Approved diocesan officers to enter into a five-year license agreement between the Diocese of Niagara and St. Matthew's House for the purposes of operating the Cathedral Café.
- Authorized the Executive Officer & Secretary of Synod to list the property located at 5324 Bromley Road (formerly St. Elizabeth's Anglican Church) in Burlington for sale.
- Approved the sale of 5324 Bromley Road (formerly St. Elizabeth's Anglican Church) in Burlington to St. Peter's Chaldean Catholic Church, on terms satisfactory to the bishop, executive officer, and diocesan solicitor.

Financial Matters

- Directed \$425,000 from the final principal payment from the vender take-back mortgage associated with the sale of the Speedvale Avenue property in Guelph be invested in the Legal Reserve Fund; and, given 2025 cash flow requirements, the treasurer to provide additional recommendations about the allocation of the remaining proceeds at its December 2025 meeting.
- Approved, on the recommendation of the Financial Advisory Committee, the request of St. Stephen on-the-Mount, Hamilton for a loan from the rectory fund, in the amount of \$17,578.31.

- Approved the transfer of \$45,000 from the unspent Cathedral Place capital budget and \$11,000 severance and transition budget line to reserve funds for these specific purposes.
- Approved, on an extraordinary, one-time basis, a diocesan investment of \$100,000 in a community bond issued by St. John's, Elora, pending approval of building project by the vestry, Synod Council, and bishop.
- Approved the use of the full capital amount of the diocesan-held fund created from the 2007 sale of cemetery land bequeathed to St. John's, Elora, valued at approximately \$350,000, for the parish's Open Doors building project, and the lifting of any and all prior internal restrictions on the use of these funds.
- Acting as the General Membership of the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara:
 - Received and accepted the foundation's 2024 audited financial statements.
 - Appointed KPMG as the auditors of the foundation for the 2025 fiscal year.
- Approved the audited consolidated financial statements of The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, for the year ended December 31, 2024.
- Approved the revised and amended diocesan Investment Policy Statement.
- Approved an increase of \$29,000 to the 2025 capital budget to cover the cost of a server replacement required to upgrade to the diocese's Sage 300 accounting software, with an additional \$5000 being allocated from the contingency line of the diocesan budget.
- Approved the adoption and implementation of a market-based housing allowance approach, as adapted from the United Church of Canada, for clergy (excluding interim priests and assistant curates), effective January 1, 2026.
 - Approved a 3.2% cost of living adjustment to all housing allowances for assistant curates and licensed lay workers, effective, January 1, 2026.
- Approved a mandatory 3.2% cost of living adjustment in 2026 to the current clergy minimum stipend grid and to licensed lay workers' stipends, in addition to the year of service increase (averaging at 0.6% in later years) factored into the grid.
 - Recommended a 3.2% cost of living adjustment plus a recommended 0.6% year of service increase in 2026 to clergy stipends for those clergy and licensed lay workers currently being paid at rates that exceed the minimum stipend grid.
 - Recommended an increase of 3.8% to the annual compensation of non-licensed lay employees, effective January 1, 2026.
- Commended the 2026 diocesan budget for approval by the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara.

Respectfully submitted,

The Venerable Bill Mous, Executive Officer & Secretary of Synod
 Ms. Hannah Keller, Administrative Assistant