

SYNOD SPEAK: DIOCESE OF NIAGARA EDITION

Bishop, Diocesan

The Right Reverend Susan Bell is the diocesan bishop of Niagara. This is an elected position by the members of diocesan synod. The Bishop acts as the chair of diocesan synod. The Bishop is the spiritual leader of Anglicans in the diocese as well as the head of the organization that is the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara. Bishop Bell was consecrated bishop in May 2018.

Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings (BACCB)

This committee advises the bishop on matters related to our diocesan buildings, their maintenance, upkeep and renovation. The guidelines pertaining to Canon 4.6 stipulate that a BACCB representative is involved in any building project before approval is granted by synod council.

Bishop's Advisory Committee on Property Renewal (BACPR)

This new committee will advise the bishop on matters related to the development of our properties, particularly when parishes have been disestablished and our property is left vacant.

Canon

1. A law or decree of the church. The canons of the diocese define its organization, structure, and operational methods.
2. An honorary title conferred on some members of the clergy or laity by the bishop.

Chancellor

This person acts as legal advisor to the bishop and secretary of synod to interpret matters of civil and canon law, synod policies and procedures, and discipline. At synod, the chancellor sits at the head table to provide advice, particularly related to the rules of order of the synod.

Curate

This is usually a newly ordained person who is working in a training position under the guidance of a rector. They usually stay in that position for two to three years.

Diocesan Mission & Ministry (DM&M)

Funds received on the offering plate of local churches are shared with the diocesan, national and international parts of our church through our Diocesan Mission and Ministry (DM&M) contributions.

Diocese

We are the Diocese of Niagara. A diocese is an area or district under the jurisdiction and pastoral care of a diocesan bishop. The Diocese of Niagara comprises the cities of Hamilton and Guelph, the regions of Niagara and Halton, as well as Wellington, Haldimand and Dufferin counties. There are 90 parishes, over 110 active clergy, and just oodles and oodles of laity.

Divinity Students

These are people presently enrolled in a university theological program and may be working in a parish as a student intern. They are not ordained (i.e., they are not a priest or deacon) but are frequently discerning a call to ordained ministry.

Financial Advisory Committee (FAC)

The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) deals with all financial aspects of the diocese and is a standing committee of synod council. It is responsible to the synod council and its membership consists of the diocesan treasurer and seven members elected by synod council.

General Synod

This is the governing body of the Anglican Church of Canada which meets every three years under the presidency of the Primate. Its purpose is to conduct the business of the national (Canadian) church and it also meets when required to elect a Primate. Members include clergy and laity elected by diocesan synods as well as all active bishops. There are 30 youth members at General Synod, one per diocese. One youth delegate will be sent from Niagara.

Incumbent

A member of the clergy appointed by the bishop to a parish or other office of the Church. The title rector may be the commonly used term in your parish.

Laity or Lay People

Simply put, laity or lay people are members of a church that are not ordained (a priest or deacon) but whose ministry serves as the hands and feet of Jesus.

Licensed Lay Worker

Lay persons professing a vocation to career ministry and who upon qualification, licensing and commissioning, obtain an employment contract with a parish or an appropriate affiliate to a particular ministry or undertaking in the diocese, shall be recognized as licensed lay workers. Such ministry may be exercisable within the diocese in fields including education, social and community work, pastoral care, administration, mission and liturgy.

Metropolitan Bishop, Archbishop

The Archbishop is a diocesan bishop who has been elected to be in charge of one of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of the Anglican Church. There are four provinces in the Anglican Church of Canada. Our diocese is in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. The current Metropolitan of Ontario is the Most Reverend Anne Germond.

Mission Action Plan (MAP)

The Mission Action Plan begun in 2019 as a discernment process for understanding what God is calling us to do but also who we are becoming as a diocese as we follow God's lead into the future. The completed MAP resulted in a plan that guided our ministry initiatives for almost five years. In 2024, we launched MAP 2.0, building on this foundation to boldly reimagine how we can deepen faith, join God's mission, and care for God's world. Resources have also been developed to aid parishes in developing their own Mission Action Plan.

Motion

A formal proposal brought to synod for its consideration. Motions require a mover and a seconder and are decided by a vote after a period of debate, the length of which is determined by the chair. Motions may be written beforehand or may be moved from the floor (raised at the event). All motions are subject to possible amendments which also require a mover and a seconder. If an amendment is moved and seconded, it must be debated and voted upon before any further debate or consideration of the original motion. If an amendment is successful, then the original motion is changed by the amendment and debated and voted upon as if it were the original motion. If you think this is confusing, just wait till someone proposes an amendment to the amendment.

Motion of Adjournment

At the conclusion of the synod proper session, someone will move adjournment. This motion does not require a seconder, but at least half the voting delegates present must vote in its favour. A motion of adjournment is not debatable.

Motion "that the question be put"

A motion which, when seconded and adopted, requires that a vote be taken immediately on the matter under debate. This motion is not debatable.

Motion of Referral

Any motion can be quickly dealt with through a motion of referral. These motions refer the motion under consideration to other boards or committees for consideration, and sometimes for action. Usually the body to which the motion is referred (at Youth Synod this might be to the Youth Ministry Committee or at Diocesan Synod, it would be to Synod Council) is required to investigate the motion and make recommendations to the next session of the synod. The only debate permitted on a motion of referral is on where to refer.

Provincial Synod

The governing body of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. Members are elected from both clergy and laity from the dioceses of Algoma, Huron, Moosenee, Niagara, Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto. The metropolitan bishop (presently The Most Reverend Anne Germond) presides. Provincial Synod meets every three years and also meets to elect a Metropolitan. The next session of Provincial Synod will take place the fall of 2021.

Quorum

The minimum number of members of synod required to legally conduct business. The quorum of Niagara's Diocesan Synod is one-fifth of the members of each of the clergy and lay orders present to vote.

Rector

The title used for the priest in charge of a parish. Another title you may hear is Incumbent.

Region

A geographical area of the diocese contains a group of parishes. Each region has a regional dean who is nominated through by the clergy of the region by an election and a regional archdeacon who is appointed by the bishop. There are five regions in the Diocese of Niagara and they are: Brock, Greater Wellington, Hamilton-Haldimand, Lincoln and Trafalgar.

Synod (Diocesan Synod)

A meeting where a group of representatives from parishes make decisions on matters of policy, finance, and management normally meeting once a year in the fall. It is also responsible for the election of Bishops. In between synods, the work of synod is carried out by the synod council, standing committees, and other vision groups that may be appointed from time to time.

Synod Council

Synod Council exercises the decision-making powers of synod between sessions with the exception of those of a legislative nature. Members include the bishop; the chancellor; the secretary of synod, the treasurer, regional archdeacons and regional representatives, and a few others just for good measure.

Synod Proper Session

This is a block of time in which all the motions are discussed, debated and voted on.

Vestry

The members of each parish who are members of the Anglican Church, 16 years of age and older gather to elect the People's Warden, Lay Member(s) of Synod, and any other parish officers as well as to decide important business of the parish.

Vision for Ministry

One of the hallmarks of Bishop Bell's leadership is a focus on renewal and mission; and this includes an emphasis on spiritual formation.