

Blessing of the
Animals services

6, 10

Summer fun at
Camp Brookwood

7

Doing Things
Differently in the
Parish of Stanley

13

Advent
activities

16



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SERVING THE DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON



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THE REV. CANON JON LOWNDS, right, checks cameras and monitors during the 139th Session of the Diocesan Synod of Fredericton, held at Christ Church Cathedral Nov. 2. He was one of several people handling the technology needs of the day. The Cathedral was full, with 215 delegates, guests, diocesan staff, observers and volunteers on hand to make the day a blessing and a success.

139th Diocesan Synod preaches one theme: community

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

From the Bishop's Charge to archdeaconry presentations, one word rang out: community.

Last spring, as Archbishop David Edwards began discerning his charge for diocesan synod, the word community came to mind — the concept of we, as Anglicans, being community for and in our communities.

All that culminated in a day that focused mainly on others, as 215 people— clerics, laity, volunteers, observers, diocesan staff and guests — gathered at Christ Church Cathedral Nov. 2 for the 139th Session of the Diocesan

Synod of Fredericton.

The day began with the introduction of new clergy members, and remembering those clergy and lay members who had passed on since the last synod session in 2022. Credential committee chair Cheryl Jacobs reported that 57 of 73 clergy were present, and 128 of 158 laity, thus declaring a quorum for the gathering to proceed.

Nominations committee chair Robert Taylor outlined the nominations process for delegates to upcoming General and Provincial Synods and entertained nominations from the floor. The election results were announced

in the afternoon after voting.

After a service of Morning Prayer led by Dean Geoffrey Hall, with hymn music by the Cathedral's director of music Thomas Gonder, Archbishop David Edwards began his charge.

BISHOP'S CHARGE

"As some of you know in August, I broke my wrist at St. Michael's Youth Conference," he said.

"Debbie sent me a very comforting message on Facebook which read, 'The primary cause of injury amongst old men, is forgetting they are not young men.'"

He used that illustration to point out how we often like to reminisce about the good old days.

"Unfortunately, we cannot go back, we must move on," he said.

"When I read scripture, I always come back to the same things when it is addressing the way in which the people of God should live," he said.

That is the two commandments mentioned in Matthew 22:37-40: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it:

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

St. Paul gives explicit instructions on how we are to live, as noted in the chosen scripture for synod: "Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour." Romans 15:2.

That naturally leads to the question, who is my neighbour, which Jesus answered by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan.

David cited Strong's Concordance to answer that question as well: our neighbour is "... any other person irrespective of nation or religion with whom we live or whom we chance to meet."

David noted that during his 10 years as bishop, he has stressed that our mission is 'the care and cure of lost souls' and the Five Marks of Mission.

He is encouraged by the many works in the diocese that address number three: "To respond to human need by loving service."

"These speak to the heart of who we are as God's people," he said. "But I believe we are being called further."

He pointed to the first two Marks of Mission: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God; To teach, baptize and nurture new believers. They have been traditionally seen as evangelism.

But to proclaim this news, we need to know the truth of it, he said. "So, I am going to ask a very basic question: do we as individuals and congregations know the truth of what many of us say every Sunday at the Eucharist? 'Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again?'"

Do we know the story of Jesus on the cross, why he went to the cross, how he rose again? Do we know that his life did not end in death but in new life for us? Do we know he will come again?

Synod continues on page 4

139TH DIOCESAN SYNOD

CONTINUED: 139th Diocesan Synod session preaches community

And most importantly, are we living as if we believe these things to be true?

"In the light of this, how do we ever more intentionally move towards being effective agents of God?" he asked. "The first thing we need to do is to spend time listening for God and listening to God."

He told the gathering of the 70th anniversary service he led at St. Peter's, Wickham, the previous weekend. As he began his sermon, he felt a sudden change in the atmosphere of the small church.

"A thickening of the air, deep silence, deep peace," he said. "I stopped speaking and asked if they could feel it. Yes, they nodded. The Holy Spirit was there. I had no idea where to go next. My sermon didn't seem relevant.

"The sense I got was I needed to speak on forgiveness and peace, so I did."

But hearing the voice of God can be difficult with all the noise and distractions of our lives. To that end, David has been working on a video series and study guide on discipleship and vocation.

"It is rare that I would say this, but I want each parish to use the material I have prepared to discern how we continue to be communities for the communities we serve," he said.

"Each delegate here has the responsibility to use this material and urge that it is acted upon. It may be difficult, and it is not the be-all and end-all of study material, but it is an honest attempt to move us ahead as people of the Kingdom of God."

He noted he's not usually so bossy, but, "We as the Church have been called to play a part in God's reaching out in love, yet too easily we spend our time dealing with saving the furniture while the house burns."

He outlined five priorities for the diocese and discussed each one.

- Our Cathedral
- Discipleship and formation
- Re-shaping ministry on the ground
- New styles of ministry
- Sharing resources

Christ Church Cathedral needs upwards of \$12 million in upgrades in the near future. There are ongoing efforts to address that, the most



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LUNCH FOR 215 PEOPLE was held at Cathedral Memorial Hall, where lots of fellowship and renewal of old friendships took place, along with the meal.

likely being the formation of a foundation to which the building and land would be given, with the congregation negotiating its use for their purposes.

Discipleship and formation means "walking in the footsteps of Jesus, following his example, and formation is shaping our lives accordingly. These apply to both individuals and congregations," said David.

Re-shaping ministry on the ground will become a necessity as the scarcity of funds and clergy become more pronounced.

"I believe that within the next 10 years our deaneries will have one, two or at best three parishes where full-time clergy are based, and out of these, ministry will be co-ordinated across the region.

"This does not mean we will be closing buildings in vast swathes across the countryside, but it does mean we are going to have think carefully and collaboratively about how and who will do ministry."

New styles of ministry will include "different types of ministers: priests, deacons, lay readers, evangelists, church planters, congregational developers, itinerant ministers," said David.

"Apart from the priests and deacons, they will be lay and ordained. They will be stipendiary and self-supporting. They will be bi-vocational, part-time and full-time. Their training will be varied, and this is far from a comprehensive list."

Sharing resources can

mean parishes helping parishes financially, but also sharing clergy, plus coming together for events, and sharing music, worship and so on.

"As time goes by such sharing of people, money and things will become a greater feature of our life together," he said.

CHARGE'S CONCLUSION

David told members that between now and the next diocesan synod session, he'd like them to focus on Marks of Mission 1 and 2: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God; and To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.

"We cannot presume that people will just arrive in church and pick up the life of faith by merely being there. It is our task to be in our communities amongst the people, encouraging them to be disciples of Jesus as we show what it is to be a disciple," he said.

"Underpinning all of this needs to be the process of discernment and discipleship... What we do has to be outward focused and not just about survival.

"It is about placing Jesus at the centre of everything we do. It is about continuing to serve the communities in which we are set. It is about looking towards life together, rather than fearing death alone."

ARCHDEACONRY PRESENTATIONS

A representative from each archdeaconry gave a short presentation on the congrega-

tional efforts to 'Be community for our communities.' Director of mission and ministry Shawn Branch led. The number of outreach project was so long it took an hour to go through them.

Many of them focused on feeding the hungry in schools and in the community. Others focused on the care of seniors, outreach to youth and children, housing, and other activities designed to invite the community in for various events. Many spoke of redoubled efforts during the Christmas season to ensure everyone has what they need.

After each archdeaconry presentation, Shawn led a prayer for them. And at the conclusion, members offered up a hearty round of applause.

Before lunch, members watched a short presentation on the Diocese of the Arctic and its challenges and victories.

The afternoon began with a service of Holy Eucharist, led by Dean Geoffrey Hall, with music by the Cathedral worship team.

BUSINESS

The business part of synod began with motions. The first three, explained by chancellor David Bell and approved by synod, dealt with updated wording in canons that reflect needed changes. One of note that will affect every parish is the more flexible deadline of parish annual meetings, from the end of February to the third Sunday of March.

The Rev. Canon Greg

McMullin moved a motion, seconded by the Rev. Mike Caines, advising the Synod to partner with parishes in the ministry of evangelism and to re-prioritize synod budgeting to be able to yield up to \$10,000 in shared ministry assessment in order to provide parishes with financial flexibility for evangelistic ministry.

This was countered by several delegates asking questions, noting there is already missional money available to parishes and that further payouts could mean cuts to diocesan services parishes rely on.

In the end, the motion was defeated.

The Rev. Canon Gerry Laskey, seconded by the Rev. Paul Gwese, moved a motion that declared "our loyalty, attachment and commitment to Christ Church Cathedral... our Mother Church." It pledged support, including financial support, and stated the stake the entire diocese has in it.

With the removal of one clause, the motion was passed.

The Rev. Thomas Nisbett gave a report on the Task Force on Racial Justice, which was formed as a result of his motion at the 138th Diocesan Synod.

"We must learn from our past, including discussing it, which may be uncomfortable," said Thomas. "We have to become comfortable with feeling uncomfortable."

Another motion confirmed the election of new members to Diocesan Council, which now includes the following people listed by archdeaconry: **Chatham:** Laura McNulty, the Rev. Canon Gerry Laskey **Fredericton:** Nancy Stephens, the Rev. Neil Osiowy **Kingston & the Kennebecasis:** Connor DeMerchant, the Rev. Robert Montgomery **Moncton:** Michael Briggs, the Rev. Julian Pillay

Saint John: Trevor Fotheringham, the Rev. Terence Chandra

St. Andrews: Tony Munn, the Rev. Caleb Twinamatsiko

Woodstock: the Rev. Harold Boomer, no lay person elected

ELECTION RESULTS

To General Synod (clergy): The Ven. John Matheson, the Ven. Leo Martin; alternates, in order: the Rev. Julian Pillay,

Synod continued on page 5

139TH DIOCESAN SYNOD



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TOP ROW: Archdeacon Perry Cooper chats with Bishop David Parsons (Arctic) and Rita Parsons, who have returned to the diocese in retirement. The Rev. Mary Anne Langmaid during the archdeaconry presentations. **Head table:** Dean Geoffrey Hall, Chancellor David Bell, Archbishop David Edwards, Secretary of Synod David Peer and Lay Vice-chair of Synod Susan Jack.

MIDDLE ROW: All eyes on the screens. Tony Munn during the response to the Bishop's Charge. Cathedral worship team.

BOTTOM ROW: The Rev. Thomas Nisbett during his report on the Task Force on Racial Justice. The Rev. Canon Greg McMullin moving a motion.

Photos by Derwin Gowan & Gary Barfitt, with appreciation for their time and talents.

Synod coverage continued

the Rev. Maria Shepherdson, the Rev. Paul Gwese.

To General Synod (laity):

Shawn Branch, David Bell; alternates, in order: Nancy Stephens, Ken Brien

To General Synod (youth):

Rochelle Young

To Provincial Synod (clergy):

Julian Pillay, Maria Shepherdson; alternate: Paul Gwese

To Provincial Synod (laity):

none

To Provincial Synod (youth):

none

RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE:

Tony Munn, a member of the Parish of Pennfield, gave the response to Archbishop David's charge. He began by thanking David for his "able and visionary leadership," and thanking God for his protection of our bishop.

"Your vision in the theme of

this Synod of being a community for communities is, in my view, a method of fulfilling and achieving the Great Commission," he said.

However, he noted that this goal isn't as easy for some parishes as others.

"It is something that needs to be learned, practiced with patience, commitment and persistence," he said. "It is a sacrifice that requires us to reconsider our comfort zones, personal space and personal feelings and opinions, which, in most times have proved to slow the work in this area. Maybe it is time for us to let go.

"To be a practical community, each one must move closer towards each other, some a short distance, and others a lengthy one based on our gifts, talents and abilities."

And the question of who is our neighbour, "it is one we each need to ask on a daily basis and seek God to give us a Spirit sight to see our neighbours..."

CONCLUSION

The Rev. Caleb Twinamatsiko spoke on a new initiative in his Parish of Pennfield called KCSE, Kigando Community Support for the Elderly, a registered charity in both Canada and Uganda that gives aid to elderly widows who have none.

It was spawned by his and his wife, Hope's care for his 99-year-old widowed mother after he and his family moved to Canada. He was able to help her with money and modifications to her home, but many others in the region have no one to help them.

The offering of the day was earmarked for KCSE, which totalled \$3,249.40.

Representing our ecumenical guests, the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Stevenson (Past President, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council, United Church of Canada), spoke on what she witnessed.

She was particularly taken with the long list of outreach initiatives presented by the archdeaconries. The mark of a relevant church is the question of whether the community

would miss you if you no longer existed, she said.

"Yours would!" She urged delegates to tap into community partners, and recognize the access they have to resources among them.

Bishop David told delegates his assent is required for all the motions passed, "which I gladly do." He thanked delegates for coming, and thanked the many people who helped organize and carry out the event, including diocesan staff and volunteers.

"It's a joy to be together," he said.

FEEDBACK

Bishop David felt it was a productive, blessed day.

"I had a good sense of people being together and sharing important information on what they do and their encouragement of each other."

The Rev Julian Pillay: The 139th Diocesan Synod was really encouraging. Archbishop David Edwards delivered a clear, biblical and timely charge and spurred us

on to evangelism and Gospel-based discipleship. The Synod organizing committee together with the Cathedral staff did a fantastic job in hosting the 139th Synod. Praise God!

Nancy Stephens, Parish of Douglas and Nashwaaksis:

I was really blessed by the Bishop's Charge. It was very meaningful. Reshaping our ministry on the ground — I think that's essential, especially in rural parishes. We have to be committed to do that collaboratively.

Barb Belyea, Parish of Woodstock, first-time delegate:

I'm quite impressed with it, especially with everyone around the diocese giving input on what they've been doing.

To read the Bishop's charge in its entirety, visit nb.anglican.ca/bishops-charge.

WATCH FOR MORE SYNOD COVERAGE NEXT MONTH