Report on Synod Meeting

Place: November 7, 2026 | Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton

Chair: Bishop Most Rev David Edwards

REPORT ON THE 141ST SESSION OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD OF FREDERICTON

1. Opening and Theme

The 141st Session of the Diocesan Synod of Fredericton began with Morning Prayer, followed by the Bishop's sermon and address.

The Synod's theme was **"Followers of Jesus sharing hope and help in our communities and beyond."** The Five Marks of Mission were emphasized, reminding the Church of its responsibility to proclaim the Gospel, nurture new believers, respond to human need, pursue justice and peace, and care for creation.

2. Important Motions Carried

Several substantive motions concerning diocesan and parish governance were carried.

Motion 2026-01 – Amendment of the Synod Constitution
Moved by David Bell; seconded by Cheryl Jacobs.

The Diocesan Administrator was added to the list of members of the Synod, formally recognizing the position within diocesan governance.

Motion 2026-02 – Amendment of Canon Four: Educational Responsibilities
Moved by David Bell; seconded by Cheryl Jacobs.

The Diocesan Council's responsibility to support the educational work of the Diocese was clarified. The institutions specifically recognized include:

- University of King's College, Halifax
- Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax
- Rothesay Netherwood School, Rothesay

- Threshold School of Ministry, Saint John

Motion 2026-03 – Amendment of Canon Four: Diocesan Council Responsibilities
Moved by David Bell; seconded by Cheryl Jacobs.

The Council's responsibilities were clarified, including managing the temporal affairs of the Diocese, supporting the mission and ministry of the Church, supporting the wider Church in Canada and internationally, and levying financial assessments on parishes, missions and the Cathedral to support Synod's work.

The provision restricting electronic meetings to exceptional circumstances was also repealed.

Motion 2026-04 – Amendment of Canon Six: Church Warden Tenure
Moved by David Bell; seconded by Cheryl Jacobs.

A five-year consecutive service limit was introduced for Church Wardens. Where both Wardens have served five years, the annual meeting may elect one of them for one additional year. The Diocesan Council may grant an extension for a specified period, subject to approval or ratification by the parish.

Motion 2026-05 – Amendment of Canon Six: Parish Annual Meetings and Vestry
Moved by David Henderson; seconded by Norman McLeod. Amendment moved by Cheryl Jacobs and seconded by Maria Shepherdson.

The motion addressed parish annual meetings and the number of Vestry members to be elected. Annual meetings must take place no later than the third Sunday in March. The number of Vestry members must be determined before nominations are made. The circulated proposal also addressed reducing the minimum Vestry size from six to four to assist smaller congregations. The final approved wording should be checked against the Synod's official minutes.

Motion 2026-06 – Obsolete or Impractical Trusts
Moved by Edias Christopher Tapera; seconded by Myrna Good-Hollett.

The Diocesan Council was asked to review charitable trusts, memorial funds, endowments and other restricted funds where the original purpose may no longer be practical or possible to fulfil. Parishes will be invited to provide details of affected funds, including their original purpose and current balance. The Council will seek legal advice and report its findings and recommendations to a future Synod.

This is particularly relevant to parishes holding memorial donations and restricted funds.

Archdeaconry Elections to Diocesan Council
Moved by Cheryl Jacobs; seconded by Rob Salloum.

The Synod accepted the Archdeaconry Greater Chapter elections to Diocesan Council. The representatives presented were:

- **Chatham:** The Rev. Chukwuebuka Chukwuemeka and Ms. Laura McNulty.
- **Fredericton:** Dr. Ken Brien and the Rev. Neil Osiowy.
- **Kingston and the Kennebecasis:** Mr. Connor DeMerchant and the Rev. Robert Montgomery.
- **Moncton:** The Rev. Julian Pillay; no lay representative was elected.
- **Saint John:** The Rev. Terence Chandra and Ms. Margaret Holder.
- **St. Andrews:** Ms. Dawn Clark and the Rev. Caleb Twinamatsiko.
- **Woodstock:** The Rev. Harold Boomer and Ms. Marilyn Wilson.

3. Financial Highlights

The Treasurer's report presented a positive financial picture for 2025.

- The Diocese recorded an operating surplus of approximately **$537,000**, compared with a budgeted deficit of $217,000.
- Investment income was approximately $1 million higher than anticipated.
- The Diocesan Church Investment Fund (DCIF) achieved a return of **6.85%** in 2025.
- An additional **1.5% bonus interest distribution** was approved for parochial investors and diocesan funds.
- Total DCIF funds under diocesan management increased to approximately **$52.8 million**.
- Parochial investors held approximately **$24.2 million** of the fund.
- The 2026 diocesan budget was prepared with a projected operating deficit of $239,000, with the expectation that careful spending, increased revenue and investment income would help manage the financial position.

The Synod also reported that the Shared Ministry Assessment collection rate was approximately **97%**. For 2027, the Diocesan Council approved a reduction in the bottom

assessment threshold from 9% to 7% on the first $50,000 of operating income. This is expected to provide savings of approximately $1,000 for many parishes.

4. Ministry and Outreach Highlights

The Synod reports highlighted the continuing work of diocesan ministries and community outreach.

- **Alongside Hope:** The organization was supporting 53 projects in 28 countries, including Canada, with approximately 264,000 people positively impacted through its work.
- **Anglican Church Women:** Members continued supporting camps, food pantries, school lunch programs, transition houses, inner-city ministries and international mission projects.
- **Camp Brookwood and Camp Medley:** Youth camps continued providing opportunities for children and young people to develop their faith, build friendships and participate in outdoor activities. The Diocese continued supporting its camps and their development. Currently they are in need of money for the pool construction and money was collected during the synod meeting for this purpose.
- **Mothers' Union:** The ministry continued its work supporting families, promoting prayer and fellowship, and raising awareness of gender-based violence.
- **School of Church Music:** The 2025 and 2026 summer programs continued bringing together choristers of different ages. Efforts were made to rebuild youth participation.
- **Layreader Ministry:** The Diocese continued strengthening Layreader ministry through support, training and formation.

These reports demonstrated the important contribution of volunteers and diocesan organizations to the life of the Church and the wider community.

5. Key Takeaways for Parish Leadership

The Synod decisions and reports highlighted several matters that parishes should keep in mind:

1. **Annual Meetings:** Parish annual meetings must be held by the third Sunday in March. Vestry membership requirements should be reviewed in light of the approved Canon Six amendment.

2. **Church Wardens:** Parishes should be mindful of the new five-year consecutive service provision and the process for requesting an extension.
3. **Restricted and Memorial Funds:** Parishes should review their memorial funds, endowments and restricted donations, particularly where the original purpose may no longer be achievable.
4. **Financial Planning:** Parishes should take note of the 2027 Shared Ministry Assessment changes when preparing their budgets.
5. **Mission and Outreach:** The Diocese continues to encourage parishes to strengthen their local mission, community involvement and support for those in need.

The Bishop has announced that he will be retiring next year. While this news may come as a surprise and bring mixed emotions to many of us, we give thanks for his faithful service, leadership, and dedication to the Church.

Conclusion

The 141st Session of the Diocesan Synod addressed important matters relating to governance, parish leadership, financial stewardship and the mission of the Church.

The decisions provide direction for the ongoing administration of parishes and the Diocese, while the ministry reports demonstrate the value of working together to serve our communities.

As we continue our work, we are reminded of our calling to share the hope of Christ, support one another and serve our communities through faith and loving action.

Respectfully submitted,

Delegates- Kelly Vanbuskirk, Brian Johnson and Savitha Balakrishnan

Anglican Parish of the Six Saints