



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

What to expect at Synod

Synod is the regular meeting of people from across the diocese of Toronto, to conduct business for the diocese. Synod sets policy, can change diocesan rules (called “canons”), and approves the budget. That’s its business side. Synod also provides opportunity for discussion and education for members. The diocese is a very large family, and we don’t gather all together very often, so it’s good to take advantage of the opportunity when we do.

The word “synod” comes from Greek , *syn* + *odos*, which means “to travel together”. At synod, people from all parts of this church in this area come together to travel the same road, to make decisions together, and to build up the connections that hold the church family together.

There is pre-synod material provided online: the convening circular and other material, all available on the diocesan website. It’s a good idea to be familiar with that before the actual session of synod. Bring a paper copy of the actual agenda with you, at least. Because synod is a very large number of people – over 800 members, of whom more than 600 will usually attend – it’s held in the ballroom of the International Plaza Hotel.

When you arrive at the International Plaza Hotel, the registration is downstairs. It’s sorted into clergy and laity, and then alphabetically by parish (with all the “Saints” together in the S section). At registration you’ll be given a nametag, and a “clicker” – it looks like a TV remote, and it’s used for voting. There will be a demonstration of how to use them before any actual votes.

When you go upstairs from the registration, you’ll be in the Crush Court – where there are displays from various organisations. Feel free to check them out. The washrooms are just off the Crush Court too.

The Synod Hall is the ballroom, just off the Crush Court. Find yourself a seat at the tables in here. You’ll probably want to sit with other people from your parish, but this is a great chance to meet other members of the diocesan family.

Because we’re a church, we begin with worship – Synod begins with a celebration of the Eucharist, right in the synod hall. Everything you need for the service – hymns, prayers – will be projected on the four large screens around the room. When it comes to Communion time, find a nearby station – they will be all around the edges of the room; the station immediately in front of the altar will have gluten-free wafers.

After the Eucharist, the Archbishop will give his charge to Synod – his thoughts on where we are, where we should go in the future, and set the tone for the meeting. Then the business session of the synod will start. There will be motions presented, debate, and we will vote on various items as laid out in the agenda. At times, the chair will open the floor for discussion. If you wish to speak to a motion, go to one of the numbered microphones in the hall. The chair will call on speakers at the microphones in turn. When it is your turn, first of all, identify yourself first (“I’m Janet Lee, from St Andrew’s Whitby”) and have your say. You will have three minutes, and should you run long, a bell will indicate that your time is up.

When it comes time to vote, follow the instructions from the Chair on which button on your clicker to push to vote one way or the other. (Some non-controversial motions, like accepting minutes, and extending courtesies of the house, will be voted by show of hands. The Chair will make it clear what to do.)

We will have a guest speaker, Bishop Jane Alexander of Edmonton, who will address synod a couple of times in the course of our time together.

Information and education is also part of synod's purpose. There will be four "Missional Moments" in the course of the synod. Here people from rural, or suburban, or urban parts of the diocese who are involved in unusual forms of mission in various parts of the diocese will tell part of how they are doing God's work. There will also be two times for educational workshops on the Friday. There are ten different workshops, which will each run twice; you should register and select which two you would like to attend. The workshops will be in meeting rooms near the ballroom.

The Crush Court is also part of the education and information available. The displays have material of interest; and the court itself is a great place to meet and talk to people from all over the diocese, outside the formal structure of the business meeting.

There are two "Members' Time"s on the agenda, when members of synod can bring any subject to the attention of their fellow members. You can have a couple of minutes at the microphone to speak on any matter that you think the church should hear. (This is NOT, however, a time to announce your fall fair.)

Lunch will be served in the Synod hall. You are on your own for breakfast, and for supper on Friday evening. There are restaurants in the hotel, and a range of eating places (from burger joints to table-service restaurants) just across Dixon Road from the hotel.

Synod is a significant time commitment from members, so thank you for coming. Please come and enjoy your time "travelling together" with the rest of the diocesan family, and take whatever learnings you make back to your own parish.