



# 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 1,00 members, of whom more than 600 will usually meet in a large hotel. We have moved from the 2013 location. This year we will be in the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill, located at Highway 7 and Leslie Street.

When you arrive at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel, follow signs to the Grand York Ballroom. Just before you get there, you’ll come to the registration area. Registration is sorted into clergy and laity, and then for laity, alphabetically by parish (with all the “Saints” together in the S section) and for clergy, alphabetically by surname. At registration you’ll be given a nametag, and a “clicker” – it looks like a TV remote, which is used for voting. There will be a demonstration of how to use them before any actual voting occurs.

When you go along from the registration, you’ll be in the Grand York Foyer – where there are displays from various organisations. Feel free to check them out. The washrooms are just off the registration area.

The Synod Hall is the Grand York Ballroom, next to the foyer. 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, as well as regular wheat 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 voting 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.)

Wi-Fi connection will be provided on a complimentary basis. Although a limited number of charging stations will be available, we encourage you to utilize the power-saving options on your computer to maximize battery time.

Information and education are also part of synod’s purpose. There will be five “Missional Moments” in the course of the Synod. Here people from different parts of the Diocese who are involved in interesting forms of mission in various parts of the diocese will share how they are doing God’s work.

The Display Area in the Grand York Foyer is also part of the education and information available. The displays have materials of interest; and the Foyer 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.)

Buffet lunch will be served just outside the Synod hall in the foyer. You are on your own for supper on Friday evening. There are restaurants in the hotel, and a large range of eating places (from fast-food to table-service restaurants) just across from the hotel – visible through the windows in the foyer.

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 insights and learnings you gain and share them with your parish.