



Narrative Report on the Priorities and Plans 2015-2017

Approved by the 157th Regular Session of Synod
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Isaiah 43:19

Report to the 157th Regular Session of Synod Priorities and Plans 2015-2017 – Narrative Report

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Scope of Report

This document should be read in conjunction with The Anglican Diocese of Toronto: Priorities and Plans 2015-2017, the Financial Budget 2016-2017, and Growing in Christ, our strategic plan 2016-2021. This report was received by Diocesan Council on September 21, 2017.

This is a Narrative Report on the Priorities and Plans 2015-2017 approved by Synod in November 2015. Since this document's approval, the organization embarked on a strategic planning process and subsequently Diocesan Council approved *Growing in Christ* in June 2016. This report contains highlights of notable accomplishments as the Diocese transitioned to *Growing in Christ*.

This report includes:

- (I) Financial Results of the Operating Budget.
- (II) A summary of highlights and accomplishments in the various program areas.

(I) Financial Results – Operating Budget

Revenue has remained fairly consistent over the two-year period with a less than 1% change in actual results. Expenditures were slightly higher in that same period. There were a number of changes in operations that impacted the financial situation; however, the costs were accommodated within budget.

Support for the Wider Church

The Diocese continues to support the work of the Primate, General Synod, Provincial Synod and its staff and committees. The Diocese of Toronto hosted Provincial Synod in the fall of 2015 and General Synod in the summer of 2016. General Synod and Provincial Synod members from the Diocese of Toronto participate in initiatives by providing expertise in a wide range of matters including pensions, investments, communications, and stewardship, as well as matters of doctrine and worship.

(II) Program Areas

Strategic Planning

- The Diocese of Toronto embarked on a strategic planning process that culminated in *Growing in Christ*, our next Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

Archives

- Hosted a meeting of Anglican Diocesan Archivists in November 2016.
- A key volunteer, Dorothy Kealey, ODT, was recognized for her contributions in January 2017 by receiving the *Order of the Diocese of Toronto*.
- Met a milestone of hitting the 10,000th request for information since implementing the tracking system in 2005. Currently experiencing an increase in the amount of requests received, with more than 800 documented requests in each of the last three years.
- Digitized a sample set of documents with a long-term goal of expanding the project to include digitizing additional records.

Bishop's Office

- In 2015:
 - Ordained 9 Transitional Deacons and 3 Vocational Deacons.
 - 20 applications for Postulancy, accepted 11 Postulants (9 Wycliffe, 2 Trinity – 9 men, 2 women) – 2 postulants subsequently withdrew.
 - 18 Curates and 18 Supervisors participating in the Momentum program.
 - 36 clergy engaged in the Fresh Start Program, with 11 trained facilitators.
- In 2016:
 - Ordained 10 Transitional Deacons and 2 Vocational Deacons.
 - 26 applications for Postulancy, accepted 10 Postulants (5 Wycliffe, 2 Trinity, 3 other seminaries – 5 men, 5 women) – 1 postulant subsequently withdrew.
 - 18 Curates and 18 Supervisors participating in the Momentum program.
 - 40 clergy engaged in the Fresh Start Program, with 8 trained facilitators.
- In 2017:
 - Ordained 6 Transitional Deacons and 3 Vocational Deacons (1 pending).
 - 16 applications for Postulancy, accepted 9 Postulants (4 Wycliffe, 4 Trinity, 1 other seminary – 6 men, 3 women) – 1 postulant subsequently withdrew.
 - 17 Curates and 16 Supervisors participating in the Momentum program.
 - 53 clergy engaged in the Fresh Start Program, with 12 trained facilitators (four newly trained).

Congregational Development

A snapshot of the Diocesan Volunteer Corps in 2016 included:

- 70 total deployable volunteers, of which 15 joined, and 4 retired.
- 13 new recruits to working groups, boards and committees.
- 11 unsuccessful or deferred recruits.
- 22 Parish Selection Committees.
- 6 Fresh Start for congregations.
- 20 Natural Church Development (NCD) cycles.
 - 1st cycle – 6 churches
 - 2nd cycle – 4 churches
 - 3rd cycle – 3 churches
 - 4th cycle – 2 churches
 - 5th cycle – 1 church
 - 6th cycle – 4 churches
- 44 churches engaged in a reconfiguration processes.
- 10 workshops.
- 3 presentations.
- 48 Volunteer Conference attendees.
- 22 churches assisted by the Parish Finance Advisory Committee.

Communications

- Created video reflections with Archbishop Johnson each Christmas and Easter, reaching 41,400 people on average and earning 70,500 total views (4 videos).
- Posted live on social media from the 2016 electoral Synod, earning 211,800 impressions and more than 2,000 interactions in two days.
- Communicated about the Episcopal Election, including video interviews with nominees (each viewed about 1,000 times), a new landing page for nominees' profiles and a Facebook group discussion with nominees.
- Completed 10 parish websites as part of the Parish Website Project to help parishes improve their online communication practices. Applied for and received a new Our Faith-Our Hope grant to continue the project.
- Created social media ads inviting people to church for Christmas and Easter, earning an average of 65,600 impressions each.
- Continued regular social media posts from the Diocese on Facebook and Twitter, nearly doubling the average reach of posts. In May 2016, launched a diocesan Instagram account.
- Researched and created a model for monthly social media measurement to track changes over time and identify ways to improve the diocesan social media activity.
- With a cross-departmental working group, developed a visual identity and branding for Growing in Christ. Created a section on the diocesan website for the strategic plan, which has received more than 4,000 views so far.

- Began posting *The Anglican on Issuu* each month, as well as continuing to provide PDFs, to improve the online reading experience.
- Completed a technical security audit of the website to identify potential risks. As a result, fixed a few coding issues that exposed the site to security threats and implemented automatic scans for attacks and daily back-ups of the site.

Human Resources

- Under the *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy, those serving in high-risk ministry positions must complete a police record check through the Diocese as one step towards ensuring that our Church is a safe place of ministry for children and vulnerable adults. In the reporting period 3,775 police record checks were processed.
- A new grant for Discretionary Medical and Dental expenses was created in 2015. The Human Resources staff oversee this grant.
- 19 disability leaves were supported by the Human Resources department.

The following workshops took place:

- Sexual Misconduct Policy workshop for clergy: four full-day workshops were held in the fall of 2015, with 285 participants. These workshops ensure that the Diocese is in compliance with the training component of the policy.
- Sexual Misconduct Policy workshop for Wycliffe students: each September, the Human Resources staff led a workshop for the students at Wycliffe College.
- Clergy Orientation: two sessions were held for clergy new to the Diocese; one in 2015 and one in 2016. There were 22 participants.
- Momentum: The Human Resources presented a session for Momentum participants in the Spring of 2017. There were 18 participants.
- Screening information for Postulants and Candidates: three sessions were held for new postulants and new candidates for the diaconate. The workshops outline the screening requirements for ordination and Sexual Misconduct Policy training. There were **25** participants.
- Parish Leadership 101: The Human Resources staff presented a session for Churchwardens and Incumbents at the 2016 and 2017 workshops.
- Staff training: a number of sessions were held for Synod Office staff on policies such as Sexual Misconduct Policy, Workplace Violence and Harassment, First Aid and CPR, and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA).
- Provincial Senior Leaders: Twice a year, the Senior Leaders of the Episcopal Province of Ontario gather for resource sharing, training, and development of best practices. The sessions are hosted by the Diocese of Toronto. Four sessions were held in this time period.

Missional Ministries

- Our missional ministries in the Diocese of Toronto are diverse and growing!¹ We have new Mandarin-speaking ministries at St. George on Yonge, St. James Cathedral, St. Paul, L'Amoureux, and St. Philip on-the-Hill, Unionville. We have vibrant Reach and Stretch Grant ministries specifically oriented toward evangelistic ministry. Reach Grants are seed money grants (up to \$5000) for short-term mission. They are designed to be missional research and development. Stretch grants are continuation grants (up to \$20,000) disbursed only once a Reach Grant idea has grown into a mid-term mission. We have attempted over 70 Reach and Stretch Grant ideas that have borne fruit in sharpening our skills for mission. They range from creating a safe third space for gay youth in a rural community to Pub ministry to resourcing a community outdoor Christmas pageant telling the story of the feast of the Incarnation of Christ to supporting a family-friendly second evening service with Messy Church. We also have a talented and hard-working Church Planter who is re-establishing the parish of St. Stephen, Maple. In addition to all this, there are missional parish ministries and reboots of parishes where it had seemed that life in this season was over. And our Chaplains all minister to the unchurched and de-churched in their various contexts. All of these ministries are missional in orientation and are vital to the health and vibrancy of the Diocese.

So, from all our efforts, what have we learned about mission? Here are just a few general learnings from among many that we could share:

- Perhaps the most important reflection on our missional journey so far is that we cannot share faith without being spiritually alive ourselves. That's logical. We have to tend our own spiritual health; otherwise we have nothing to share. Faith that has not been tended will die – or at least become merely habit.

Christian Education, discipleship and spiritual refreshment are our wells to draw from for this ministry. Their usefulness will depend entirely on our contexts. What is helpful in one part of our diocese may not necessarily be helpful in another. We are large and diverse; we are old and middle aged and young; we are rural and suburban and urban; we proudly represent the multi-cultural nature of this country and we span the ecclesiological spectrum. There are few dioceses with as many gifts and as many challenges as Toronto has. Therefore, it's incumbent on us to take that diversity seriously and value and feed the Body of Christ appropriately.

This diversity takes form in the kinds of missional activity we engage in. Mission is deeply contextual – we cannot have a 'program mindset' about what it means for the context of each parish. The way we reach out to those who do not yet know the name of Jesus will be determined by the circumstances in which we have our common life together. There is no 'one size fits all' or program for mission. It is an orientation and a

¹ Missional ministry is defined as ministry to the unchurched and de-churched.

direction that we travel in - always. It's hard but good work. However, we do need some tools. Chief among them is our felt need to develop the skills and language that is necessary to explain our faith and to draw connections with our ever-changing culture. This is a particularly Pauline brand of apologetics. We also have a need to till the soil in our own parishes/faith communities so that if the de-churched and unchurched are inclined to come back to us or to take a chance on our parishes, they will receive a genuine welcome with their restart. William Temple is famous for having said "the church is the only institution that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members."

A few years ago, acknowledging this truth, a group of people set out to produce a parish resource for all parishes in the Diocese of Toronto called "Invited." It aims to get at the recovery of who we are and what we are called to as Christian communities. It's on the Diocesan website and is free for all to use. It's a start.

- We also know that the body of Christ is healthiest when it is balanced (1 Corinthians 12). We also know that we grow or disciple a church as much as evangelize for a church. Therefore, the children who are in our communities really and truly are our future.

There are two trends found in the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life's most recent two surveys – and which are also echoed in the recent British Social Attitudes survey that should concern us all deeply. They pertain to the pattern of belonging that we are seeing lived out in our churches with regard to our young. Anecdotally, they are very similar to our lived experience as Canadian Anglicans.

The first trend is that of those young people who disappear from our churches: nearly 50% of youth leave the church by age 18. The second trend is even more worrying: nearly 80% leave by their early 20's. This is easily observable in our churches. This should make us ask a few questions about our current practices:

- Are children and youth at the centre of our communities – and not on the periphery? Do we honour the place of children in our main liturgies? Are they truly welcome? Is their blessed noise and movement lovingly folded into our worship? Have we made physical room for them? Do we help them to learn Christian customs? Have we modified some of our customs to include and encourage and build confidence in them? How do our children learn the scriptures? How do they learn what it means to live as Christians in a post-Christian culture? Do we understand and then help them to navigate a digital universe as Christians? Do we understand and help them to share the Gospel with an increasingly secular culture? Do we help them with much-needed apologetical skills? Are we willing to make the changes that are required to accommodate the needs of children and youth? Even if that means that our ministries and liturgies need to look and feel different?

Children and Youth ministry is an important investment we need to make in our parishes.

But this is not to say that our churches only serve and value the young. By no means! The gifts of those who are older, and whose life experience and many hours of disposable time and room for commitment are of tremendous value in this missional season. In fact, without our more experienced Anglicans, the church would be in peril. But the fact remains, our Christian experience changes over time and there are different needs and concerns at different times in our lives. A way to honour those needs and changes is to focus some of our formation and training in these areas.

These are only some of the learning that we have encountered in our striving to make every parish mission-shaped in the Diocese of Toronto.

Property Resources

- The newly renamed Property Resources Department has, since 2016, been working to balance day-to-day operational and procedural demands with the planning work necessary to give important strategic direction to our management of the Diocesan real property portfolio.
- *Growing in Christ* has empowered the new Director of Property Resources to begin a comprehensive review of current policies, practices and trends (in consultation with other denominations, plus industry experts).
- Various analyses are currently in the early stages of growth, including work by a recently retained third-party consulting firm to holistically review and assess our entire portfolio of holdings. In response to the chorus of concern expressed in recent years by the Trusts Committee and Executive Board about the sale of rectories, the Director and Chancellor have been working since May 2017 on another alternative structure (as opposed to outright sale) to preserve our Diocesan foothold in the residential real estate market, while not burdening parishes with an asset that is a drain on both their financial and personnel resources.
- Investigation is being made about possible ways the portfolio can be leveraged to create additional revenue streams to help support parish and Diocesan ministry. In collaboration with the Director of Finance, current sources of funding are being examined for new ways to help support crucial capital repairs. The Diocesan *Building Inspection Policy* is being re-evaluated to help make it a more useful tool for Diocesan-wide management of the asset base, and to ascertain our current deferred maintenance backlog.
- Following from either amalgamation or disestablishment, and prior to a determination being made about whether an asset is surplus to needs by the Area Bishop, properties are being assessed for possible adaptive re-uses or future Anglican reboot, innovative redevelopment under different ownership structures, or long-term leases. Similarly, a review is planned of our current Canonical structures in respect to the distribution of

surplus property sale proceeds; namely, how are these proceeds best allocated both locally, plus to the Ministry Allocation Fund, so as to allow for maximum benefit.

- A property portfolio of the size and geographical breadth of the Diocese, largely managed by local volunteers, requires significant institutional/Diocesan support. Through a combination of Canonical structure, provincial statute and industry best-practice, local congregations require considerable consultation and guidance. As a result, a review of current staffing needs is underway with a recognition that current personnel levels (2 – Director, plus administrative assistant) are inadequate for responsible and proactive long-term stewardship of this valuable asset base.

Stewardship Development

- The stewardship office has raised up a team of 14 stewardship education coaches available to assist parish leadership with year round education efforts.
- *Growing Healthy Stewards* (GHS) was introduced in 2013 to provide a comprehensive year round stewardship program for parishes in the diocese.
- Assisted 14 parishes in the past 2 years. The program pays particular attention to educating church members on the importance of stewardship as a way of life, promoting sacrificial giving, legacy giving, graciously acknowledging the giftedness of volunteers and celebrating the ministry of the church.
- Typically parishes can expect GHS to result in annual offertory growth of 15%, and increased awareness of the importance of service in the church and gratitude
- The success of GHS has received attention across the Canadian church. In the past 18 months the stewardship office assisted in raising up coaches in the diocese of Ontario for their stewardship education efforts
- Presentations have been made in the diocese of New Westminster, Moosonee and at the national level concerning the merits of the program.

Social Justice & Advocacy

- Held annual Outreach & Advocacy Conference for education and networking, attended by over 100 in 2015 and over 70 in 2016.
- Prepared annual Social Justice Vestry Motions for consideration by parishes, including background materials to inform discussion. Workshops were held in each Area prior to vestry in 2016 and 2017 to equip parish leaders to speak to the motions. 74 parishes passed the social justice vestry motion in 2016 and 64 parishes passed the motion in 2017. As a result of these motions, an increasing number of parishes in the Diocese have become active in learning more and engaging in advocacy on Indigenous issues.
- From October 2015 to May 2017, over 77 parishes in the Diocese were engaged in the refugee sponsorship process with the Anglican-United Refugee Alliance (AURA), five times the sponsorship involvement in previous years.
- A Ministry Allocation Fund (MAF) tithe in the amount of \$500,000 was set aside in 2015 to provide grants for parishes to undertake refugee sponsorships. To date, 21 of the 32 grants awarded, totaling \$313,023, have been disbursed. Of the grants awarded, 17

were to parishes engaged in refugee sponsorship for the first time, and 20 involved partnerships between multiple parishes, ecumenical/interfaith networks or others in the wider community.

- 20 families contacted Romero House to open their home to refugee claimants following the Archbishop’s video “Do you have a room to spare?” in January 2017.
- Diocesan staff contributed to the creation of a resource booklet on justice issues produced by the Anglican Church of Canada prior to the October 2015 federal election, and drafted letters of welcome on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop to new or returning MPs.
- Diocesan staff continued to make annual pre-budget submissions to the provincial Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and to draft the response of the Diocesan Bishop to the annual provincial budget.
- Diocesan staff and volunteers actively engaged with interfaith and secular networks to advocate for the adoption and implementation of the City of Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Diocesan staff and volunteers advocated with the City of Toronto for increased shelter response during the colder months of the year. The City has responded by opening additional warming centres from November 15 to April 15.
- Diocesan staff preached at seven parishes in the Diocese as well as Holy Trinity School, and made presentations at four parishes.
- Diocesan staff collaborated with the Archbishop’s Youth Ministry Team on new Interface youth social justice event in fall 2015, attended by 35, and co-sponsored a retreat with Student Christian Movement in October 2016, with 32 attendees.
- The distribution of the monthly Social Justice & Advocacy e-newsletter is up to 876 individuals the Facebook page has close to 400 followers and both are increasing.