

SYNOD CHARGE
178th Synod of the Diocese of Huron

THEME: SENT INTO THE WORLD...

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and **began to send them out two by two**, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. **(Mark 6)**

“.....but as for you, **go and proclaim the kingdom of God (Luke 10)**

Welcome to the 178th Synod of the Diocese of Huron! A very warm welcome to Bishop Marinez Bassotto, Bishop of our Companion Diocese who is with us for a few days through Synod....and I believe we may see Bishop Cronyn in our midst tomorrow!

In these days of rapid change when we are being asked to reimagine the Church - a first question for us must be, 'What is the purpose of the Church?' That sounds like a simple question but may be one we rarely ask ourselves. We take it for granted and believe it is simply our job to keep it going. The purpose of Church is not for self-preservation. We are the vehicle for God's presence to be made known! The ministry and structure of the Church are to support God's call to Love God with heart, soul mind and strength and to love neighbour as self.

The disciples Jesus chose and mentored did not have much preparation time. Soon after meeting and listening to Jesus he sent them out into the world. He sent them to tell what they DID know - what they had seen and heard. A continuous cycle began of sending out - coming back - reflecting/learning - sending again. They were in a missional apprenticeship - learning as you go! Whether following Jesus as he taught, preached and healed or going out themselves they were learning the kingdom through action and reflection.

Life is an extended engagement in this same praxis - learning what is needed to respond to this moment so that God's kingdom may be seen and known. We often want to be absolutely sure we have the answers lined up - and are completely ready before we set off. The disciples show us a different way. Instead we see disciples who are not united in themselves; with different agendas (political, spiritual, personal....); often barely grasping the significance of what they were hearing or seeing; sent out into the world to proclaim what they did know. And God used their willingness, their faith, their courage, in all their frailty, to be those who transmit the Good News of the Kingdom and love it into birth both before and after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A life of faith - is just that - a life of FAITHit is a relationship that we trust is strong, flexible, enduring in which we can face whatever comes. It is this relationship we are called give witness to. We will not have all the answers; or everything neatly tied up. We are continuing apprentices invited to practice what we are learning. We are called to a way to live in this crazy, upside down world that loves, heals, forgives, renews and creates. It is an apprenticeship as an apostle - an apprenticeship we enter at baptism and continue every day of our lives until we are called home to God.

We are SENT INTO THE WORLD TO LIVE AND PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Over the past two years I have delighted to hear the stories of how you are being sent into the world, into your communities to proclaim the Kingdom. We are using, as our guide, the Five Marks of Mission. Our Mission & Ministry Plans are helping us focus our efforts - to choose wisely how to use the resources we have been given to fill these Marks of Mission with love, joy and action.

- To serve refugees through sponsorships across the diocese
- To provide a place of worship for foreign students - and learn with them in Simcoe
- To serve youth who are parenting through Monica Place
- To share God's word with those in prisons through the ministry of our Deacons
- To introduce children and youth into God's story - Vacation Bible Schools and Huron Church Camp
- To hold deanery workshops on Evangelism, Discipleship, Vitality, Growth
- To offer theological courses - for any and all wanting to explore in Saugeens, Huron, Renison and Canterbury Colleges
- To respond to the TRC recommendations learning our history with our indigenous brothers and sisters and speaking up against continuing injustices
- To feed the hungry - the many Food Banks and Clothing Depots and community suppers
- To love neighbour - offering a place for prayer to our Muslim brothers/sisters and standing in solidarity against the violence that is threatening religious communities worldwide
- To learn from and with our Companion Diocese of Amazonia - as they build their diocese and stand with the marginalized

A look back.....

In 2018 our Synod theme was 'Rebuild My Church 2018'. Over the past year we have had:

- a second round of Jubilee Grants trying new ways to connect with those outside the Church - pizza lunches & conversation for high school students/St. Brigid dinners/Green Space Spirit Garden/Alpha
- Missional parish coaching for a group of 10 parishes as a pilot project;
- Stewardship workshops assisted parishes to reflect and engage and strengthen their stewardship of all resources - people, buildings, finances;
- Evangelism and discipleship workshops in Deaneries;
- and grants from Huron Development Fund to parishes trying new approaches.
- Every parish was asked to implement their Mission & Ministry Plan review, revise and renew it for 2019.

We had a very good year as a diocese as parishes were able to pay almost full apportionment - 99.2%! I know that required a concerted effort from all parishioners. Thank you!!

We continued to streamline our Diocesan office seeking to improve our use of technology. Many meetings are now held in a way that allows participation by Zoom - with 'Isaac' the owl connecting us by voice and visuals. We did see some staff changes as Charlie Mungar, Cathy Hodgins, and now Diane Picard have retired. We welcomed Meg Walmsley & Shyla Guy to assist us in the office and have just welcomed a new assistant for the Bishop's Office, Gabrielle Rock. Please know that our staff are

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dedicated to you and your parish! The changes have meant steep learning curves in new or adapted positions and we have faced some technology challenges that continue to be worked out. Yet there is a spirit of joy and faithful dedication among the staff as they serve our parishes. I am deeply grateful for their partnership in our ministry.

I have now visited - 99 Churches in 70 parishes on Sunday mornings and others for meetings of Clericus, Deanery Confirmations, Selection Committees and so on. I look forward the adventure of every Sunday morning as I continue to learn Huron!

Since Synod 2018 I have ordained - 2 Transitional Deacons (David Hyatt & Hana Scorrar); 1 Vocational Deacon (Cheryl Highmore) and 1 Priest for Specialized Ministry (Anne Veyvara Divinski) and 1 Priest (Jeff Kischak). We welcomed new clergy from other dioceses - Rev. Joel Steiner (Holy Trinity/Ayr); Rev. Preston Parsons (St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener); Rev. CJ Adams (Holy Trinity/St. Paul's Chatham); and Rev. Stephen Martin (St. Stephen's, Stratford).

In 2018 we installed three new Archdeacons: The Vens. Tim Dobbin, Kim Van Allen and Megan Collings-Moore. They joined six other Archdeacons to offer critical leadership with me and the Regional Deans to every Deanery - some are retired!! Bishop Terry stepped back as Archdeacon of Lambton-Kent after helping us for over a year. We are reviewing all of the ministries in Lambton-Kent through a Bishop's Commission before determining a new Archdeacon for the area. I am grateful for Archdeacon Tanya Phibbs leadership as interim Archdeacon for the area.

Over the past year we have had seven congregations disestablish or reorganize and buildings be deconsecrated. We will honour these parishes later in our Synod giving thanks for their faithfulness. St. Paul's Chatham, St. Stephen's Courtright, St. George's Windsor, Bishop Cronyn Memorial, London, St. Paul's Kerwood; (2019) St. James, Middleton and St. James Hanover. In addition one parish, St. Luke's Broughdale, has become a Worshipping Community as it develops a new ministry reaching out to University students called Luke's Place. I ask your prayers for Canon Adele Miles and her team as they risk new ways of connecting and being God's people.

A look ahead.....

Key goals for 2019: Marks of Mission

Mark 1: Proclamation - telling God's story

- Huron Church Camp
- Encouraging the Bible Challenge; events like Bound to the Word; podcasts like those sponsored by the Rev. Stephen Hendry & Rich Jones and Canon Kevin George & the Rev. Rob Henderson

Mark 2: Teach, Baptize and nurture new (and continuing!) believers

- FAITH STORIES at Synod last year and this year; Christian Foundations (200 books - bought and used - All Saints' Windsor); Courses at Saugeens School of Theology and Lth around Huron; regular ongoing bible studies/programs in every parish;

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- Missional Leadership training for parishes.....1st round complete - will evaluate - and consider a second round of parishes
- IDLC - Interdiocesan learning Community - how do we structure the diocese to support ministry? What needs to change? Key members of the leadership team - staff and Archdeacons and Lay leaders will be joining other diocesan leadership teams in Canada.

Mark 3: Loving Service

- PWRDF & Anglican Foundation
- Continued parish outreach locally -
- What is the need near you and your parish?

Mark 4: Justice and Peace

- Anti-racism work - parishes, staff, deaneries, clergy & lay leaders
- Appointment of Animator for Reconciliation and Justice - the Rev. Rosalyn Elm
- Continued focus on learning for all Anglicans: Every parish/Deanery to screen: *Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts* (Anglican Video)
- Respect Justice Camp 2019

Mark 5: Creation Care

- Greening of parishes - especially our use of plastics - Can we reduce more?
- Tree planting - last night at the Cathedral - Do we have space for more?

General Synod

A final word on the upcoming General Synod. Thank you for the work our diocese did on the Marriage Canon. Our reflections were submitted to the Convening Circular and will be part of the discernment of the General Synod as it votes for a second time on the proposed change to permit same sex marriages.

We will be considering some small changes in the Canons of the Anglican Church of Canada that will permit the growth of a self-determining Indigenous Church within the Anglican Church of Canada.

Finally the clergy and lay members of General Synod will be electing a new primate. It was with much prayer and no little hesitation that I let my name be nominated. I want to assure you that if I am not elected I am very happy in my role here as the Bishop of Huron. I have committed to leaving this discernment in the hearts of General Synod led by the Holy Spirit - so the Spirit better be working overtime for the good of both Huron and the national Church! Please pray that the bishop needed for this time in the Anglican Church of Canada will be selected. Pray for our own members of General Synod as we discern and pray and work with the whole Church.

Conclusion

The work before us can be daunting but I am confident that - as we say in the baptismal covenant - we can meet our call 'with God's help'. We must be willing to be sent and live with uncertainty - incompleteness - and risks. We do not go alone.

This poem by Archbishop Oscar Romero beautifully describes our task as we are **sent into the world!**

A prayer by Oscar Romero

Reflection prayer on Mission and Transition

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
Which is another way of saying that
The Kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that should be said.
No prayer fully expressed our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.
This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow
We water seeds already planted,
Knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produced effects far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything.
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enable us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
A step along the way,
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results,
But that is the difference
Between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
Ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future that is not our own. Amen.