

BISHOP'S CHARGE—PART I

Sisters and Brothers,

I greet you in the name of the one whom we serve, Jesus. He is our reason for being and our Saviour and Friend.

I honour you for your role and calling to be the 98th Synod of this diocese. I greet you as the Nimpkish, Cowichan/Malaspina, Haro, Selkirk and Tolmie regions of our diocese that live, worship and play on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth and the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples.

To the First Peoples of these traditional territories, I reaffirm our commitment to journey together in a process of truth-telling, healing and reconciliation. We recognize on this journey that when we entered this land we did not honour your language, your traditions, your culture and their spirituality. It is our desire that, as we continue our journey together, we will learn from your ways. I welcome and honour your presence as we gather and continue our journey towards *Renewed Hearts, Renewed Spirits and Renewed People*.

Huy tseep q'u! Kleco, Kleco! Gilakas'la!

In the traditional language of my grandmother's family, fáilte, céad míle fáilte.

The Charge will be given in three parts:

Part I: Introduction—Uploaded to the website before Synod

Part II: Given at Synod

Part III: Re-Charge

I have tried to exercise my episcopacy as one where I listen to the people of the diocese. As I have travelled around the diocese, I have said to congregations that I can make decisions for them. However, I believe that in each congregation there is both the capacity and the giftedness to make the best decision for the diocese as it is expressed in that parish. Please don't get me wrong, I am not afraid to make hard decisions. I will, after listening and praying.

In the same way, the final part of my Charge will be given after I listen to what you, the people of the diocese, have been saying as you listen for God's guidance throughout Synod.

So, from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.—2 Corinthians 5:16



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I invite you to come to this synod with a good heart, a gentle spirit and a kind voice and ask that together we reflect a people able to live well together with our differences. In the tradition of the Gael there is a saying *Is Blath an Fhuil*, which means *The Blood is Strong*. Separated by land and sea the blood is strong. Alistair McLeod captures this sentiment beautifully in his novel *No Great Mischief* (1999) in which he tells the story of a family coming from Scotland to Canada. We are family and no matter what happens or how it happens to us. No matter what we face we are still a family because the blood is strong. The Gaelic word for blood does not mean physical strength, but translates as warmth, affection or tenderness. As we gather as a diocesan family, may we exhibit each of these in our speech, interaction and disposition. We gather as children made in the image of God. We honour one another, remembering that when we gather we seek the mind of Christ as we listen to one another in conversation and the Spirit's guidance in our decision-making.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.—2 Corinthians 5: 17 - 20 a

At Synod 2016 I said these words:

Renewal or transformation within the church will not be realized through structural change. If the structure fails to bring us into a closer relationship with Jesus, it will fail to be transformative for us as individuals and as a community. We are a people and community who are focused and centred around our relationship with Jesus Christ. We are being changed by coming into a real and living relationship with Jesus and we are transformed by the presence and power of the Spirit in our midst. We are looking at reforming, renewing, and reshaping the structure which allows us to bring this good news of God, through Jesus Christ, to the world and communities in which we live, work and play. We will not be satisfied with changing structures that leave lives untouched by Christ.



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At this synod, we will focus on our story—a story formed by community. You will hear the story of how we sought a vision from God. You will hear how we have been living this vision through locally-initiated activities supported by our Vision Fund. You will hear the story of how the Vision Implementation Teams: Reconciliation and Beyond, Emerging Communities, Engaging God World, Lay Leadership and Training, Worship Resources and Youth and Family Life will animate our vision in the years ahead. You will also hear the story of how we will revitalize our parishes through Transforming Futures. And we will all be invited to live deeper into the story of the good news of God in Jesus Christ.

SYNOD GOAL: Demonstrate widely recognized, tangible signs that healing and reconciliation within the life of the diocese is happening and is an ongoing priority.

At our last synod we recognized the pain and the grief that was present at every level of our diocese because of the disestablishment of parishes and of the closing of Camp Columbia. Since then, we have gathered at parish and regional levels, at the We Together conference in 2017, and at other diocesan events throughout the year. Each time we have met, we have been actively engaged in reconciliation work. It is my prayer and hope that as we met and prayed and anointed each other, we have been moving along the grief journey towards wellness. It is therefore fitting that this synod will meet at the Songhees Wellness Centre—a place of healing and wholeness.

It was never my intention to allow my name to stand as bishop to oversee the death of an institution. Neither was it my intention to lead the diocese in a direction that maintained the status quo. Rather, I laid out for the diocese a three-point direction to prepare us to face the challenges for our generation. At the end of the last synod I said we were at a junction waiting for the light to change (Randy Travis—"Waiting On The Light To Change"). I concurred with the decision of Synod 2016 to take a step back and take time to look at our options, and to work towards healing in our diocese, prepared to come back at the next Synod with a financial plan to set a course for our future.

At the end of Synod 2016, I spoke about the Randy Travis song "Waiting On The Light To Change." That light has changed, and it is time for us to accelerate forward on this journey together, blessed in being recreated by God, living into the friendship offered by Jesus and using the gifts that have been given to all of us by the Spirit. Friends, in our diocese the light has changed.



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The old road has taken its toll
I've been broke down
But now I am back on the road
Got it in gear, sitting on the go
Just waiting for the light to change

Things are moving up ahead for me now
And I'm ready to roll, I'm waiting
I'm waiting for the light to change.

—Randy Travis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSin-ZfgOmY>

I have been asked why I get up in the morning to come to work to save a dying institution. I do not get up in the morning to save a dying institution, I get up because I believe the gospel of Jesus Christ is doing something transformational in the lives of the people in our neighborhoods and we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, are called to be a part of that transformation.

SYNOD GOAL: All synod delegates understand the diocesan vision, have seen examples of it being lived out in the diocese and are leaving Synod with a sense of enthusiasm and optimism about how the vision is/will be lived out in their church communities.

I believe the vision God has gifted us with is a contextual vision for us living on these island and inlets. I also believe that living out of this vision will be a witness to the communities in which we live and to the whole faith community. Living out the vision is our participation in God's mission to the world. I believe that if we build on the work accomplished with the support of the Vision Fund, together we will be able to do much more.

I understand that folk in some of our parishes are struggling to keep the lights on. I understand that it is sometimes difficult to think about "the diocese" when life in the local context is overwhelming. The vision we have begins in the parish, in the local context. If we do not have vital congregations we will all suffer.

SYNOD GOAL: Delegates understand and approve a realistic five-year financial plan that includes a substantial fundraising component.



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Transforming Futures—Together we are nurturing vibrant and effective congregations

The focus of *Transforming Futures* is not funding a deficit we have inherited. We need to come to terms with our budget and look to a future without deficits. The five-year plan goes a long way towards doing just that.

It is true that in the past we have taken some wrong turns and gone down some dead ends. However, we together have been able to financially support parishes that would otherwise have had to close. We together have been able to ensure coverage when clergy are ill. We together have been there for each other when conflicts arise. We together have created, implemented and maintained a renowned program for refugee support. All of this we together have accomplished, despite inheriting a deficit.

We cannot go into the future making the same mistakes we have made in the past. Our budget cannot shore up a dying institution. It must fund a vision that supports healthy Anglican congregations across these islands and inlets.

Diocesan Council and Finance Committee have worked hard in preparation for this synod. It was the desire of those two committees to come to synod as prepared as possible to help us move into God's future. Our financial position today is better than it was in April 2016. We are not perfect, but we are further down the road to turning our financial reality around.

SYNOD GOAL: Demonstrate a strong, clear sense that after the diocesan Year of Reconciliation we are beginning to establish new relationships built on trust and mutual respect, with the First Peoples of these islands and inlets.

As we leave behind the Year of Reconciliation, folk have asked me "What's next?" I have thought and prayed about what our focus should be for the coming year. After attending the recent Sacred Circle and hearing Bishop Mark McDonald teach on discipleship I believe we as a diocese should make this our focus. So, on the first Sunday of Advent this year we will move into a *Season of Discipleship*.



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A Season of Discipleship

"...one of the greatest challenges the churches have to meet, in this century, is how the modern person (modern man), who cannot live the monastic life, can yet experience community life...because we have seen, it is more and more acknowledged that life together is the very essence of authentic Christian existence."
Tullio Vinay (Corrymeela 1965)

Together, we will recommit to understanding community life in a number of ways: Firstly, I am encouraging you as members of this synod to begin to shape your lives around a rhythm of life. Many of you have heard me referring to page 555 of the *Book of Common Prayer* which directs every Christian to live by a rule (rhythm of life). The rule calls us to **pray**, to **study**, to **worship** and to **give**. It is a rhythm every Christian is invited to live daily. I encourage you to take this invitation back into your parishes. As lay leaders of this diocese invite others to live into this rhythm of life, alongside you. There will be those in your parishes who already live this way. Have them tell their story, encourage them to be witnesses. There will be others who need to be reminded of this invitation or to have it extended to them for the first time.

Another rule of life is found in the gospel-based *A Disciple's Prayer Book* that comes from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and can be [downloaded](#) free from the General Synod website. During the Season of Discipleship, we will use *A Disciple's Prayer Book* as our primary resource.

I also encourage you to [read about](#) Bishop Mark McDonald's (Sacred Circle 2018) teaching on discipleship in which he reminds us that the church is not a building but the gathering of people. When two or three are gathered we meet in the presence of Jesus.

Remember that there is no place in scripture where the laity are referred to as a lesser order or more ignorant than the clergy. The laity are always referred to as 'The People of God'—"You are my people and I am your God. Once you were not a people but now you are the people of God." I am calling us as a diocese to build up the ministry of the laity. Begin by gathering three to twelve people in each parish to study and pray together. If you can gather more people that would be wonderful!

I am asking clergy to provide resources, arrange gatherings, and let the laity take the lead in how these gatherings take shape. The purpose is not to create a program or a plan, but to simply gather on a regular basis, putting the gospel in the centre of our



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circle. Through prayer and study, we will grow in relationship to one another and closer to God. The gospel will become central in all we do.

When you meet as parish council, committees and teams in your parish, give time to prayer and study using *A Disciple's Prayer Book*. We will add to the materials as we move through the year.

It will be obvious to you that this falls under the vision area of *Faith in Formation* and the *Lay Leadership and Training* direction.

General Synod 2019

Before and since the last General Synod, we as a diocese have been learning a lot about reconciliation and living together with differences. With the support of most diocesan clergy, and with the guidance of the chancellor of General Synod, I have asked our diocese to walk together and choose a middle way regarding the proposed changes to the marriage canon. We know and experience that there are faithful Christians who through scripture, tradition and reason come to an understanding of marriage in its traditional form. We know and experience that there are faithful Christians who through scripture, tradition and reason support the proposed changes to the marriage canon. This conflict is present and real within the whole church.

We have learned that conflict need not disable us but can be used as a positive influence to transform us as individuals and as community. I have supported those congregations and clergy that adhere to the traditional understanding of marriage. I will continue to do that, no matter what decision comes out of the second reading of the marriage canon. I have also supported, and will continue to support, those clergy and congregations that hold alternative understandings of Christian marriage—recognizing that such forms of marriage continue to involve the same preparation and requirements as all other marriages within the church.

It seems to me that this is the most Anglican way forward. I am advised that this option does not contravene the marriage canon, in either its present or revised forms. It can be a witness to the church and reflects the very best of what it means to be an Anglican and a Christian. We will no longer debate sexual orientation and gender difference in this diocese. In my experience, debate has not moved folk from one position to another on this subject. Debate has only hurt people. We live together with differences; this is the work of reconciliation. It is my hope that we as a diocese can be a witness to the church nationally, showing how we can live and walk together, in the understanding that unity is not the same as uniformity.



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As we move towards the gathering of our national church in Vancouver next year, please continue to pray for the Council of General Synod. Please pray for those among us who will become members of that General Synod. Please pray for all those who wish to enter the sacred bonds of marriage within the church. And please pray for reconciliation and unity within diversity in our diocese.

Indigenous Council

General Synod 2019 will hear from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples as it plans and shape a self-determining Indigenous Anglican church. As we move nationally towards a self-determining Indigenous church it is important to hear and respond to the Indigenous voices within our diocese.

To further this work locally, I will form an Indigenous Council to help the diocese move toward a self-determining Indigenous church. It is my hope that this council will form the core of an Indigenous ACPO to work with those who are discerning a call to ordination. I hope to continue to work with Chiefs and Elders as they identify ministers among their people.

At the Sacred Circle this year I had the opportunity to meet and speak to the Maori bishops, and I learned about this model of locally raising up of clergy. It is a model based in community and relationship. The strength of the candidate is discerned through their relationship and leadership in community and they are ordained in the community. After ordination, the church works with them around appropriate and contextual formation. It is my intention to ordain Jill Harris to the transitional diaconate on January 6, 2019 using this model. I have met with the Chief and Council of Penelakut and they have given permission for this ordination to happen and for it to take place on their territories. Jill will be the first Indigenous person ordained from within this diocese.

Order of the Diocese of BC—Faithfulness

As I travel, I continually see the lay commitment to Jesus Christ and the work of ministry and mission as it is lived out in the local context. I am therefore very pleased that on October 20 at Christ Church Cathedral we will be honouring the first recipients of the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia ("the Order"). The Order is a way to give thanks for lay ministry within our diocese as well as the ministry of those outside our diocese.



RENEWED HEARTS RENEWED SPIRITS RENEWED PEOPLE

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We will continue to look at other ways to raise up and honour the laity of our parishes who give so much in so many ways. I thank Ian Powell (clergy) for his work and support in establishing the Order.

Youth Council and Leadership

During this year I have met with the youth of our diocese to hear their voice and make that voice heard within the diocese. Out of these discussions we have formed a Youth Council. I am very grateful to Aneeta Saroop (clergy) and Chris McDonald (lay) for their support and work in forming the Youth Council. I'm looking forward to working with this group to find new ways to raise up their leadership amongst us.

Renewed People

It is my prayer as we gather and move step by step into God's future that the decision we make at this synod will shape and help us as a diocesan family to grow and become a *renewed people with renewed hearts and spirits*.

We need to leave this synod aware that we are stronger together and that we need each other to fulfill the vision God has set before us. We will need to have the confidence that we have put into place a financial plan that will enable the fulfilment this vision at the parish level.

Come to this synod having prepared at the parish and regional levels and having read the materials available on the [diocesan website](#). Come to this synod with hearts ready to hear and respond to the Spirit.

I am looking forward to seeing what God will do through us, in us and in spite of us!

Walk gently with one another. Walk gently on these islands and inlets. Walk gently with the Creator.

Yours in Christ,



+Logan



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