

97th SYNOD: UPDATE FOR ST MARY'S PARISHIONERS - MAY 1ST 2016

By: Nancy Choat and Ken Pedlow

Nancy:

Ken, myself, Rob and Gil headed for the Nanaimo Ecumenical Centre in Nanaimo, Friday April 22nd to attend and participate in the 97th Synod of The Diocese of British Columbia. Before getting to our destination, we enjoyed a cruise across the Saanich Inlet to Mill Bay and a stop at Tim Horton's on the other side! But arrive we did in fine style, in time to register, meet Don Wilson, our fifth Synod delegate, and enjoy a meal before attending an evening Eucharist.

So, why are Ken and I telling you about the Synod we attended last weekend? As representatives of the Parish of Central Saanich, it's important that parishioners are informed about those items discussed at Synod that may have an impact on each of us as part of the Diocese of British Columbia.

Before handing it over to Ken, I thought I'd provide a brief introduction to Synod (for the uninformed).....what it is and how it works. The word "synod" comes from the Greek "σύνδοκος" (synodos) **meaning** "assembly" or "meeting", and it is synonymous with the Latin word "concilium" **meaning** "council", also referring to an assembly of church officials or churches. The Diocese of British Columbia is made up of 5 regions. Our region is called Haro which consists of parishes on the Saanich Peninsula and southern Gulf Islands. Each parish has a designated number of representatives (elected at our general vestry meeting in February) who can attend a synod and each has a vote. The Parish of Central Saanich has 3 lay delegates. There are two delegates from one congregation and one from the other, and this arrangement alternates between the two congregations each year. This year the Synod Delegates are Don Wilson from St Stephen's, and myself and Ken Pedlow from St Mary's. Synods are called by the Bishop of each Diocese. All Synod Delegates sit on the Council of each Parish. Oh, and by the way, a total of 148 (51 clergy/97 laity) representatives were present at this day and half synod. So now that I have enlightened you on the where's and why for's of Synod, I'll turn it over to Ken.

Ken:

Following the opening Eucharist, a number of administrative actions took place including the election of the clerical and lay secretaries and greetings from Archbishop John Privett, who was attending the entire Synod representing the ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and Yukon.

The main focus of the evening was a presentation by Bishop Logan on his Sacred Journey walk down the island. A video was shown of the trip. The importance for the Bishop of the process of apology and reconciliation with First Nation's people was evident. He emphasized that the native people he met appreciated that the journey was not just a media event to promote the Anglican Church. The walk is only the start of a process which will include the following:

- On June 21st, National Aboriginal Day, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People is to be read in each parish in the presence of local aboriginal leaders.
- The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the residential schools issue, a number of which are directed at the churches involved, are to be formally adopted by the Diocese and implemented to the best of our ability.
- Efforts are to be made to close the gap between First Nations and other Canadians.
- Actions will be taken to support the preservation of native languages.

Nancy:

Which brings us to Saturday. To condense and tell you the main points of what was either presented or discussed in groups, I will attempt to make it meaningful for you.

The Bishop announced that the companion relationship with the Province of Myanmar was ending and that efforts were to commence on finding a replacement.

The incredible response of the Diocese to the issue of Syrian refugees was highlighted as an indication what can be accomplished when the will and support is there. 138 individuals have been dealt with to date.

Just like we have visions of what we want to accomplish, (and we on Council have

been working with Rob on our own Parish goals/ vision) so the Diocese has a Vision or goals. And one of the purposes of this particular Synod was to bring us up to date with what the Bishop referred to as the Vision Fulfillment Journey for the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia. For most of us there were a lot of words and phrases used to describe: Where are We Going? Where Have We Been? and Where are We Now? The main thrust of all that was presented could be summed up as:

- providing a revitalized communion on these Islands (i.e. Vancouver Islands and those that surround us)
- constantly finding new ways of being church / Christianity
- reaching out to young people
- communicating effectively, especially from the synod office at the Cathedral to the regions
- making the best use of property and people in new ways.

A Vision Team has been working on these points since 2014 and you may have noticed in the Diocesan Post, the headings: **Renewed Hearts, Renewed Spirits, Renewed People** which provide the essence of this Vision. There was a Synod held last fall to further discuss plans for implementing this Vision, including the cost. Rob Waller, a consultant, was hired and he gave his report and findings after consultation, along with recommendations.

There were other presentations given by staff from the Diocesan office. We discussed these presentations in groups and what seemed to be a common theme was the importance of the office of the Diocese to better communicate with the Parishes and do so more frequently.....the lacking of trust was a major issue. There is a new Communications Officer employed, Catherine Pate who is working on revising the Diocese's web site as well as a new Treasurer, Gail Gauthier who is anxious to meet with each Parish as the head office attempts to standardize each Parish's system of reporting finances.

What seemed to come out of this entire synod was a firm request to have the Synod office follow up on what was suggested, by making contact with each parish and that parishioners need to be informed.....this can be done through the synod representatives. I guess our responsibility will be to follow up from our end.....we

shall see and as they say: "to be continued".....

Ken:

The Synod was closed with remarks by Archbishop Privett. He commented on the respectful level of communication at the Synod. He stated that Bishop Logan is leading the Province in the process of First Nations reconciliation. He praised the recently released Waller Report to the Diocese which looks at its current capability to pursue a major fund raising campaign. He reflected that the building of trust within the Diocese between the parishes and the Synod Office will take time.

In Bishop Logan's closing remarks he asked us not be afraid of the future and the challenges we face. He recognized the feedback that 10 Diocesan Visions is challenging. He reiterated the reframing of the 10 Diocesan Visions into three groups.

The first is Faith in Foundation which incorporates Asset Management, financial resources, effective communication, current ministries and shared and remote ministries. He sees these as the essential core which the Synod Office will take a leadership role in.

The second is Faith in Formation which looks inward within the Diocese. This includes the visions of youth and family ministry, worship resources and lay ministry and leadership formation. An implementation team will be looking at these.

The third is Faith in Action which looks outward from the Diocese. This includes engaging God's world, emerging ministries and reconciliation and beyond.

The Bishop concluded by saying that he recognizes the hurt felt by many parishioners over the parish dis-establishments and restructurings over the past few years, and the recent closure of Camp Columbia, and efforts have to be made to deal with that pain.

Nancy:

The Bishop closed the Synod with the words from the Country and Western song:

"Waiting on the Light to Change".....rather appropriate! Thank you and stay tuned.....