

2021-11-08

Report from Council of General Synod (CoGS)

I am writing this report having just returned from our first hybrid zoom and in-person meeting of the Council of General Synod.

It was both strange and wonderful to be able to gather again. The last time we had any sort of in-person meeting together at the Queen of the Apostles retreat centre in Mississauga, was in March of 2019, just as the world changed completely.

Since that meeting, we have held several zoom meetings in an attempt to do as much work as possible together in shorter but more frequent meetings as we learned how challenging it can be to sit in a meeting on zoom for long periods of time.

This was our penultimate meeting of the triennium as we look towards General Synod which will be hosted by Calgary this coming July. There were three big pieces of work that happened at this meeting I want to tell you about, but if you would like a fuller report you can click on the links below to read the highlights posted on the national church website from [Friday](#) and [Saturday](#).

The first piece of business to note was the presentation from the Strategic planning working group. This group has been working very hard and in consultation with several groups and conversation partners from all over the National church to put together a document that will hopefully guide us as a church in our work and ministry. Given the ever-shifting landscape of our world and our church, it was noted this will continue to be a work in progress, but it offers some aspirational statements to guide us as the Anglican Church of Canada. These statements are as follows:

The Anglican church of Canada will be a church that

1. Invites and deepens life in Christ
2. Is intentionally dismantling colonialism and passionately inclusive.
3. Embraces mutual interdependence with the Indigenous Church (Sacred Circle).
4. Stewards God's creation and attends to the well-being of humankind.
5. Lives in relationship with each other in local, diocesan, national and global communities.

The strategic planning group have been working hard to share their work with Dioceses and Provincial Synods in order to hear responses and you can learn more about their work [here](#).

The second piece of business I want to tell you about is the approval of three liturgies and a sampler of a new addition to the hymnal which are all now available for trial and feedback, with the approval of the Bishop. These works include: *Deconsecration of a Sacred Building*, *Welcoming Those Preparing for Baptism/Rite for the Catechumenate* and *Pastoral Liturgies for Journeys of Gender Transition and Affirmation*. You can learn more about the Faith, Worship and Ministry working group [here](#).

And finally, on Saturday we spent some time hearing from Archbishop Mark McDonald who joined us from Glasgow where he is attending the COP26 conference and the Rev. Canon Murray Still on the Anglican Council of Indigenous People. It was great to hear the important work happening there and as a part of their presentation they shared a powerful video documenting the long journey Indigenous Anglicans have taken to get to this point.

I strongly encourage you to take some time to watch and you can do that by going [here](#)

I will close with the statement that was released to the Dioceses regarding an important motion that was passed in response to our commitment to the Call to Action #6 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

‘At the CoGS meeting we passed a motion brought forward by the Anglican Council of Indigenous People’s (ACIP) to affirm our commitment to the repeal of Act 43 of the Criminal Code in line with our commitment to the Call to Action #6 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (and all of the Calls to Action). The Rev. Murray Still, co-chair of ACIP, shared a statement from faith leaders which is attached. Also attached is a fact sheet shared with the House of Bishops. These may be helpful background documents in sharing with others about the decision made this weekend. We continue in our ongoing work to fulfill the Calls to Action.’

As I said it was a very full three days and I continue to be grateful to be a part of it. One question that continues to arise is what relevance the National Church has for us in our Dioceses and congregations and my hope is that by sharing the work of CoGS, some of those questions are answered.

Please reach out if you have any questions. And I ask you to hold in prayer the planning committee for the next General Synod.

With gratitude,
Marnie Peterson