

General Synod delegate reports

The Primacy - submitted by Archbishop Greg

Each of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion has a Primate who is the senior bishop of that province, and convenes the gatherings of synods and meetings of bishops within that province. The historic practice is that each Province elects that primate from amongst the Diocesan Bishops - and that bishop remains in their diocese, while taking on the extra duties involved. In Canada since about 1970 (and the USA from before then), the Primate has been required to resign from their diocese and move to the National Offices in Toronto to act as CEO of the General Synod Offices. That model was put into place through a process in the late 1960's, and grew out of an era in which congregations had been growing and the church's ministries and work with it. After many years of decline and shrinking church programs, in the last number of years there has been conversation about, and serious desire to change that model back to the original way, and thus the way that is followed around the globe. That conversation led to a motion at this General Synod to have this change explored and hopefully a proposal brought forward at the next General Synod to effect that change.

Migrant workers in Canada - submitted by Ms. Connie Jensen

This resolution is a follow-up to a 2019 resolution intended to strengthen the commitment of the Anglican Church of Canada toward the elimination of human trafficking and modern slavery, both in Canada and globally. The Primate and the National House of Bishops are asked to engage federal, provincial and municipal leaders to ensure safe, non-exploitative labour conditions for migrant workers that address permanent residency pathways, documentation, fair wages, and access to health care, education and social services.

Additionally, the Office of General Synod is tasked, through this resolution, to promote resources that will support Anglican parishes in their ministries of care and advocacy of migrant workers and the organizations that serve them, with the goals of raising awareness, offering pastoral care, and providing services as would be most helpful to them.

Ecological Justice - submitted by Ms. Connie Jensen

1. Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

The resolution has asked the Primate, on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, to sign the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Letter

(<https://fossilfuel treaty.org/faith-letter#faith-letter>), requesting a binding global plan to:

- a) end expansion of new coal, oil or gas production as per the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Environment Programme
- b) phase out existing production of fossil fuels in a manner that is fair and equitable, and
- c) ensure a global just transition to 100% access to renewable energy globally.

Background notes for this resolution cite the work of the Creation Matters Working Group of Synod to address relevant issues as part of the church's 5th Mark of Mission, listing a moral imperative to protect the rights of those in need now and in future through transition to renewable sources of energy. Recognizing the undeniable of the science surrounding the increasing danger facing humanity because of the use of fossil fuels, the resolution tasks the Anglican Church to join a growing number of Indigenous Peoples, lawmakers, scientists, etc. who are speaking to this danger.

2. Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The resolution encourages dioceses and members of the Anglican Church of Canada to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from our buildings as safely, as quickly and as realistically as possible, with a target date of completion by 2035. Further, the resolution encourages dioceses with "historic wealth" obtained via investments in fossil fuels to share that wealth with dioceses in remote communities, particularly in the North, to support this transition.

Background notes refer to the encouragement of transition to low-GHG electrification, to share information with dioceses about potential cost savings, including alerts to decarbonize, particularly when an existing system is ready for repair or replacement.

Ecumenical Guests - submitted by Ms. Donna Wilson

In attendance at this Synod were several Ecumenical guests who added a lot to the gathering and three gave wonderful homilies at the Eucharists during the week.

First to speak was The Most Reverend Michael Curry, Retired 27th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church at the Opening Eucharist at St. Paul's Cathedral on June 23rd. He urged everyone to let go of everything that is weighing us down and that keeps our church from being all that God intends. He encouraged all of us to run with perseverance into the week ahead looking to Jesus because he had given us what we need to make all the decisions necessary.

The second Guest to preach a homily was Susan Johnson, retiring National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). She preached at the Eucharist Service before the election of the new Primate on June 26th. Bishop Johnson's homily reminded us that the Good Shepherd was with us whispering grace and peace. The Holy Spirit was also there giving us guidance to soar on the Wings of Eagles. She reminded us that the Primate has many roles, some of which are a coach cheering us all on, a baker waiting for us to rise up, a teacher gently leading, a ring master encouraging everyone to use their gifts for the good of our Church.

The homily at the Eucharist Service for the installation of the newly elected 15th Primate, Shane Parker, on June 29th was given by Bishop of Amazonia and Primate of the Anglican Church of Brazil Marinez Rosa dos Santos Bassotto, who spoke about the qualities of the Good Shepherd and the need for God's compassion for the frailties of even the best human pastors. To Primate Shane Parker she said Primacy isn't an honour but a call to Service, Mission, Evangelism and Action in the name of God on behalf of the people.

Another notable guest was The Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary, The United Church of Canada who did a great job as Master of Ceremonies for the Primatial Farewell Banquet. He was also in attendance at the Plenary Sessions during the week.

Primatial Election - submitted by Archdeacon Noel Wygiera

<https://anglicanjournal.com/bishop-of-ottawa-shane-parker-elected-primate/>

The Primatial Election was probably the most anticipated event of General Synod 2025. The role of the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada has become significant in the life of the Canadian Church so it was an honour to be among the group who would select the person to fill the role for the next few years. Regarding the election itself, one of the most asked questions has been, "How did that happen?" as the person who ended up being elected had not been nominated prior to the election.

Initially, the House of Bishops had put forward a slate of four candidates to take part in the election: National Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper, Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson of Calgary, Bishop Riscylla Shaw of Toronto, and Bishop David Lehman of Caledonia. The Canons (Laws) of the Anglican Church of Canada allow for members of the Orders of Laity or Clergy to request that the bishops provide additional names of candidates at any time after the second ballot. This is indeed what happened. A resolution requesting an additional name was passed in the Order of Laity following the second ballot and The Bishop of Ottawa, Shane Parker, was added to the third ballot. He was elected on the fifth ballot and installed as Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada in a joyful Eucharistic celebration at the conclusion of General Synod 2025.

Unauthorized Expenditure - submitted by Archdeacon Noel Wygiera

<https://anglicanplanet.org/story/financial-scandal-revealed-to-general-synod-8566a>

Approving audited financial statements is a normal practice when we gather for General Synod. However, this procedure was anything but routine this year. Attached to the 2024 statements was a note referring to a future obligation relating to Church House moving to a new property. The matter was discussed at length in the Committee of the Whole and delegates were able to ask questions and were provided with information to help understand what had been uncovered.

In short, at some point in the recent past, the Council of General Synod authorized certain Officers of General Synod to explore the possibility of moving Church House to a location to be shared with the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The officers had been given the authority to enter a non-binding memorandum of understanding but what came to light was that the officers had exceeded this authority and entered what appears to be a binding contract and lease agreement.

This revealed lease agreement, if found to be binding, would commit the Anglican Church of Canada to expenditures of around \$9 million over five years. This amount represents a four-fold increase over the cost of keeping the offices at the current location, which is owned by the Anglican Church of Canada. Not only would this move create excessive added expenses, but it also does not lead to ownership of the property. It also came to light that other entities within the Anglican Church of Canada, such as Alongside Hope and the Anglican Foundation, which currently rent space at Church House, would not be offered space in the new location. An investigation of these matters is currently being conducted by a non-related accounting firm to help us understand the financial obligations and the legal implications for both the Anglican Church of Canada and the officers involved in the transaction.

While there was little that could be done by delegates at General Synod while the investigation is taking place, we, the delegates from the Diocese of Calgary, felt it necessary to ensure that the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada has reasonable financial controls in place in order that we might not find ourselves in such a situation ever again. After having a thoughtful conversation about what we could do, and developing a plan, our Dean, The Very Rev. Chris Dowdeswell, worked long into the night, drafting a resolution to be brought before the assembly. The resolution in its final form (C009), which was moved by Archdeacon Noel Wygiera and seconded by Mrs. Connie Jensen, directed the Council General Synod to “consider a policy requiring the Officers of General Synod to obtain consent of the Synod, or of its Council between Synod meetings, prior to incurring any expenditure or financial commitment amounting to more than a reasonable limit set by the Council of General Synod for transactions that are not accounted for in the approved budget.” The resolution was passed with near unanimous consent.

Land of the Holy One - submitted by Archdeacon Noel Wygiera

<https://anglicanjournal.com/general-synod-calls-for-arms-embargo-on-israel-expresses-support-for-people-in-holy-land/>

A resolution (C012) requested that the Primate publicly write to Prime Minister Mark Carney and Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Anand calling on the Canadian government to “uphold their moral responsibilities” and impose a full, immediate arms embargo on Israel. It also encouraged all Canadian Anglicans to regularly write to and/or call their elected representatives asking them to work towards such an embargo. The resolution was widely supported by delegates who rose to speak about it including Archdeacon Noel Wygiera, clergy member for the diocese of Calgary, who spoke strongly in support of the motion and addressed anxieties that such statements could be viewed as antisemitic.

“I want to stand up and say that there’s nothing, absolutely nothing, antisemitic about this motion—that we are friends both to the people of Palestine and the people of Israel,” Wygiera said. “That is our call. And because we are friends of Israel, good friends sometimes have to say to their friends, ‘No, you’ve gone too far,’ because that is part of friendship. It’s about being honest with one another.” The resolution passed by a large majority.

A second resolution (C011) concerning our relationship with the Church in the Land of the Holy One was also passed. The resolution directed the Partners in Mission Coordinating Committee to connect with all the church’s operations and partners, such as Alongside Hope and the Companions of Jerusalem, to “engage, equip and invite Dioceses to engage intentional processes of study, intercession and action for pathways of peace.” The resolution further encouraged all dioceses to extend words and expressions of support to the Episcopal diocese of Jerusalem and Naoum, and to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. It encouraged all parishes to voice their concern by actively including prayers for the Middle East, and Palestine in particular, in their Sunday intercessions and study programs.

The Diaconate - submitted by Dean Chris Dowdeswell

A national survey in 2022 revealed wide variation in how the diaconate is understood and practiced across dioceses. Two documents were therefore prepared by Anglican Deacons Canada to promote consistency and clarity. These are entitled the “Theological Statement on the Diaconate” and “Practices for a Restored Diaconate.” They can be found here:

<https://gs2025.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Report-008-Appendix-1-Theological-Statement-and-Practices-for-a-Restored-Diaconate.pdf>

General Synod officially adopted the Theological Statement. The statement builds on the earlier Iona Report (2016), but aims for a richer theological imagination and understanding of diaconal ministry. Bishop Lynne McNaughton, who moved the

resolution, emphasized that deacons can help the church shed its “insulation” from the world, bringing it closer to broader societal realities.

There was some discussion on the meaning of “adopted” versus “commended.” Adoption signals formal approval, while commendation encourages broader reflection—both of which are intended to enrich the church’s engagement with diaconal ministry. A proposed amendment to remove the adoption language was rejected, and the original resolution passed as presented.

The Theological Statement is adopted but it is also commended to theological colleges, ministerial training centres, and ecumenical partners for study and feedback, with the anticipation of ongoing evolution. The Faith, Worship and Ministry (FWM) Coordinating Committee is expecting input by October 2027. Also, the national House of Bishops is asked to devote time to reflect on diaconal theology and practice, then report back.

General Synod also commended the “Practices for a Restored Diaconate” document, which is a practical compendium designed to help parishes and dioceses contextualize and apply the theological statement. Dioceses are encouraged to experiment with the recommended practices and report back by October 2027, while theological institutions and partners are also invited to study the document. As Bishop McNaughton noted, variation across local contexts is expected, but the aim is to nurture a robust, livable diaconal ministry aligned with the theological vision.

Below is a summary of both documents:

Theological Statement

1. A Threefold Order of Ministry

Deacons are affirmed as one order among the three—their ministry is rooted in scripture and the Church’s architecture alongside bishops and presbyters.

2. Grounded in God’s Mission (missio Dei)

The diaconate finds its origin in God’s call to compassionate service. Deacons particularly embody the Church’s commitment to addressing human need, transformation, and caring for creation—reflecting the “Five Marks of Mission.”

3. Symbolic and Functional Role of Deacons

Baptism calls all Christians to diakonia (service), yet deacons are uniquely ordained as living symbols of that ministry. They represent Christ to the world and bring the world’s needs before the Church.

4. Restoring an Equal and Distinct Order

Historically sidelined as an inferior, transitional order primarily oriented toward priesthood, the diaconate is now being renewed as a full, equal, and distinct form of ministry—no longer merely an apprenticeship but a calling in its own right.

5. Bridging Church and World

Deacons uniquely stand at the intersection between the sacred and secular, drawing the Church's attention to the world's needs and enabling the Church to act prophetically and compassionately.

6. Liturgy and Oversight

Deacons serve under the bishop's authority, often assigned to local congregations or ministries. Their liturgical roles—such as proclaiming the Gospel, setting up the Eucharist, dismissing the congregation—are intentional reflections of their outward-focused vocation.

Practices for a Restored Diaconate

These provide flexible, aspirational guidelines—meant to be adopted or adapted locally.

1. Discernment

Vocational discernment should reflect the diaconal calling—not presbyteral expectations—and include mentors who understand or are deacons themselves. Communities are encouraged to recognize and nurture individuals living out Christian service, inviting them into formal discernment processes grounded in the Iona Report framework.

2. Education, Training & Formation

Formative preparation for deacons should be as intentional, comprehensive, and accessible as that for presbyters, encompassing head, hands, and heart: knowledge, skill, and identity. Key areas of focus include theology, social justice, ecumenical engagement, liturgical proficiency, and cultural competency—especially in understanding reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Candidates benefit from placement experiences, mentorship, spiritual direction, and continuing education beyond ordination.

3. Licensing, Deployment, Compensation & Transitions

Deacons are formally licensed by a bishop (not as assistants); their roles, supervision, compensation, and review periods are clearly articulated. They often serve both within the Church and in societal or secular roles, with appropriate structures to support both facets of their ministry. Compensation may range from reimbursement to full salary and benefits, aligning with recognition of their training and responsibilities. Deacons should be included in Church governance at parish, diocesan, and national levels, and well-supported during periods of transition.

4. Liturgical Roles

Liturgy is an important expression of diaconal identity: deacons are entrusted with proclaiming the Gospel, preparing the table, dismissing congregations, and leading prayers—mysteriously acting as both heralds and servants. Some roles—like officiating Communion using reserved sacraments or celebrating weddings—are generally

reserved for priests or bishops, though specific exceptions may apply with proper authorization.

Pathways for Transformational Change - submitted by Ms. Hannah Wygiera

<https://anglicanjournal.com/general-synod-overwhelmingly-votes-for-change/>

One of the biggest topics throughout General Synod was the Pathways for Transformational Change. These came out of the Primate's Commission "Reimagining the Church: Proclaiming the Gospel in the 21st Century." This commission presented seven hypotheses and through a series of consultations across the Anglican Church of Canada, six proposals were presented to General Synod as steps forward. The Pathways seek to investigate changes in governance and structure at all levels of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The first Pathway looks at Organizational Structure. The reality of declining numbers across the Anglican Church in Canada indicates that the current structure is unsustainable. This Pathway encourages the creation of a working group to investigate organizational changes at all governance levels.

The second Pathway focuses on Management Overview & Restructuring. This Pathway focuses on the Office of General Synod and the roles of staff in Church House. The majority of people across the Anglican Church of Canada don't really know what staff do and see that there is a lack of financial accountability because of the lack of information. Perhaps some of these roles are redundant. Perhaps they are more important than we realize. This Pathway suggests a consultation process to clarify and restructure these staff roles.

The third Pathway examines Inclusion & Diversity in Decision-Making. Current structures in General Synod are seen as barriers and often representation to General Synod does not reflect the diversity of the Anglican Church of Canada. Matters such as age, family composition, culture, gender, language, race, and regional structures should be considered in restructuring processes. The Pathway proposes a committee dedicated to diversity and inclusivity to investigate ways forward.

The fourth Pathway looks at Communications. Communicating what is happening across the Anglican Church of Canada is important but the cost of the current journalism format is far greater than the Church can sustain. Additionally, matters such as access to internet and postal services, as well as ecological sustainability need to be considered. This Pathway suggests a review of current communications models and exploring new ways of communications.

The fifth Pathway is titled, "Walking Together in Partnership: Indigenous Church (Sacred Circle) with the Historic Settler Church (General Synod, Provinces, Dioceses and Territories)." This Pathway seeks to create a clear definition of the partnership between

General Synod and Sacred Circle as well as clarify how General Synod's governing structures can support Sacred Circle. This would mean the creation of a working group made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Anglicans. The group would support the work of previous Pathways on restructuring.

The sixth Pathway examines Ministry in Remote Northern Communities. The work of the Council of the North has been identified as essential work in the Anglican Church of Canada. However, funding to the Council of the North is systematically being reduced every year, making it seem like less of a financial priority. This Pathway suggests a consultation process to examine finances and priorities in relation to the Council of the North, as well as clarifying the relationship between the Council, Sacred Circle, and General Synod.

Two resolutions were presented to General Synod 2025. The first (A180) tasked the Primate, officers, and Council of General Synod to begin pursuing the Pathways and report back to the Members of General Synod at least every year, with a cumulative report at General Synod 2028. The second resolution (A020-R2) allocated up to \$2 million of unrestricted funds to explore the Pathways. Both resolutions passed.

During periods of discussion, the main concern regarding the Pathways was the reality of disconnect between local parishes and General Synod. In local contexts, many people do not know what General Synod does. It is often seen as out-of-touch from the concerns of local parishes. The general hope for these Pathways is that local contexts, where the work of the Church is most prominent, will be considered.

Queer Interfaith Coalition Letter - submitted by Ms Hannah Wygiera

<https://anglicanjournal.com/queer-interfaith-coalition-letter-endorsed-with-amendment-recognizing-diversity-of-opinion-on-marriage-canon/>

This open letter to the Canadian Government from the Queer Interfaith Coalition offers support to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. A resolution (C003-R1) was presented to General Synod to encourage every member of the Anglican Church of Canada to sign the letter in support and reinforce that the Anglican Church of Canada is a safe place for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

While support for this resolution was clear, concern was brought up over the letter's use of the word "heresy." The ambiguity of using "heresy" could mean that the letter condemns our ecumenical partners who have not vocalized acceptance of same-sex marriage, such as the Roman Catholic Church. Additionally, "heresy" could potentially villainize Anglicans who prescribe to the traditional view of marriage. Because of this ambiguity, an amendment was proposed to clarify that the letter does not contradict the theological affirmations adopted by General Synod in 2019 and that the language of heresy is not a condemnation of Christians who do not believe that scripture permits Holy Matrimony for same-sex couples.

The majority of speakers expressed support for this amendment and the clarification it brought. The amendment passed and the full resolution also passed.

Youth Involvement in the Council of General Synod -Submitted by Ms. Beatryce Hardock

<https://anglicanjournal.com/general-synod-endorses-national-youth-council-and-doublin-g-cogs-youth-members/>

Two motions were passed relating to youth involvement in the Council of General Synod: Establishing a National Youth Council (C013) and Youth Involvement On The Council of General Synod (C015). These motions seek to bolster the voices of the youth already deeply involved in the life and leadership of our national church. Both motions were passed almost unanimously and with a great deal of support for the ideas. General Synod met these motions with much excitement and applause, a gesture that was encouraging to the youth seeking to serve God through the Anglican Church of Canada.

The first motion seeks to establish a national youth council to speak into the motions that are brought to CoGS, and to create a space where youth are able to collaborate to bring new perspectives and action points to be discussed in CoGS meetings. Many youth were involved in the seconding, moving, and amending of motions at General Synod this year and have shown themselves to be competent and diligent in their work in our church's governance. A youth council hopes to support the youth to continue to do what they have shown they are capable of at General Synod.

The second motion will have it that two youth representatives will be elected from each ecclesiastical province onto CoGs, rather than one. There are many barriers to youth's full involvement in church governance: school, work, and finances can be complicated factors to work around. The election of two youth will help to get around this, and it will help the youth speak more into the ever evolving world we live in.

There was a phrase that almost became a sort of mantra within the discussions surrounding youth in our church, and that is that 'we are not the youth of tomorrow, but of today'. The youth also hope that the excitement for youth voices will be reflected in more local diocesan and parish leadership. These motions help to solidify this idea that the youth are here right now and want to see this church serve Christ in the years to come.

Morning Prayer and Bible Study - submitted by Archdeacon Jacqui Durand

Every morning during Synod, we engaged in the practice of Gospel-Based Discipleship. GBD began in remote Indigenous communities without clergy, as a way to gather

around the Gospel and to listen with intention to what Jesus, the Gospel, is saying to us. We follow the outline of The Disciple's Prayer Book, beginning with a Gathering Collect and Psalm. The Gospel passage is read three times from three different versions, and each time we reflect on a different question. With the first reading, we listen for a word, sentence, idea, or image that stands out for us, and we share that with the group. With the second reading and sharing, we listen for what Jesus, the Gospel, is saying to us, and with the third reading, we reflect on what Jesus might be calling us to do. Sharing takes place in a talking circle, without crosstalk or debate. Reflections are centered in a Scriptural understanding of the faith but not based on interpretation. We are in prayerful listening, similar to the practice of Lectio Divina (divine reading). Afterwards, we confess the Creed, offer prayers of thanksgiving and intercessions, and conclude with the Lord's prayer. The local First Nation Spiritual team provided an adapted iteration of this practice; in addition to the sharing at our table groups, we, as the whole Synod, received a prepared reflection from a different person each day. I enjoyed the adaptation, especially for such a large gathering, but some people mentioned that they preferred the more traditional style.

Tenets of Disability Theology - submitted by Archdeacon Jacqui Durand.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Task Force on Ability and Inclusion made a presentation to Synod based on tenets outlined in Nancy Eiesland's 1994 book, "The Disabled God," which "challenged and largely banished the discriminatory theology of the last many centuries." The Tenets build on concepts, such as the *Imago Dei* (image of God), which sees disability as part of human diversity and not caused by divine punishment. While one person did raise an objection based on passages of Scripture where disobedience and sin resulted in affliction, there have been volumes of theological discourse in the past several decades that have built upon this and related work and the amended motion for Synod to "initiate a process for the dissemination and study of these tenets," passed by a very large margin.