

STEWARDS OF THE GIFT
The 186th Synod of the Diocese of Huron
October 24 & 25, 2025

The 186th Synod of the Diocese of Huron was held at St. Paul's Cathedral on Friday, October 24th and Saturday, October 25th, 2025. Representatives from St. Martin-in-the-Fields in attendance were the Rev'd Sarah Armstrong, Rector, and Mrs. Norma Chicoine, Lay Delegate to Synod. The following is a summary of key points from Synod proceedings, prepared by these representatives.

The Bishop's Charge

Bishop Townshend reminded Synod that his charge from the 185th Synod of the Diocese of Huron, the theme of that year being "Turning to Grace", could be summarized in four words: Stay close to Jesus.

This year, the Bishop's charge expounded on the theme of Synod 2025: **Stewards of the Gift**.

Bishop Townshend spoke about three key resource areas that, by our Baptism, we are called to steward: people, property, and planning.

People

Every baptized person has a vocation, which comes to us through baptism, with spiritual gifts. Together, the church is equipped for ministry. The ministry of the baptized continues to be the most important resource to developed and celebrated in the church.

This Synod has focus on stewardship, because that is the response of a disciple to the flow of gifts that God gives us through our lifetime. This makes us stewards of grace. While we focus on being a learning church, just church, and diverse church, remember that this work is centred around one crucial thing: our response to the gift of God, that is, stewardship. Part of this work is calling out new gift for ministry without our network of church, for example, the commissioning of the four new Territorial Archdeacons.

The Diocese of Huron consists of about 140 active parish communities, some of which are multi-point parishes. That's the highest congregation to Bishop ratio in Canada. Bishop Todd expressed that he is grateful to serve as Bishop, and honoured to serve alongside the people of this Diocese of Huron.

Property

We receive the gifts of land and property as an inheritance that we are stewards of for this time. It is important that we steward these resources in the most truthful, generous, and healing ways that we can. Huron Anglicans have been faithful in this challenge.

There is work being done to reimagine how the property that we've inherited can best be used to serve the needs of our communities. St. Paul's Cathedral; St. Matthew's Church, Florence; St. James, Ingersoll; All Saints, Waterloo; and the Anglican parishes in Sarnia were cited as being exemplary of parishes that have reimagined use of their inherited land and property.

Planning

We need to plan in order to organize our mission. ‘Turning to Grace’ was not intended to be a strategic plan, but rather a shift in our focus, vision, and language. Bishop Townshend is pleased to see how this is coming alive in parish communities.

Bishop Townshend summarized his charges from the past several years:

- 2020: Remember who we are and what we do.
- 2021: Live in community by yielding to the life of the Spirit.
- 2022: Expect to meet the risen Jesus along the way.
- 2023: Be ready to sing the Lord’s song in a strange new land.
- 2024: Continually turn to the God of grace.

The Bishop’s charge for 2025: Cultivate a life of faithful stewardship and generosity, in community, with a focus on God and His gift. Fundraising is only a small part of this work. Sustaining our faith institutions is critically important, but it’s not an end in itself.

We do not practise stewardship to sustain the church; rather, we sustain the church so that we can practice stewardship. The church must be sustained because we are stewards of God’s transformative generosity. We are the people that God will use to transform and reconcile peoples and communities. It is serious business to be stewards of the promise of Jesus: it is life and death work. This is urgent and compelling call in a time such as this.

Next steps for parishes: The Rev’d Andra O’Neill will be emailing out resources for parishes who wish to undertake a year of stewardship. Key takeaways from her presentation included: a call to be faithful in offering our first fruits, which is faith act because we are asked to give what comes first not knowing what, if anything will come after; parishes with high uptake on automatic givings are almost always more financially stable; automatic giving is like an offering of first fruits because we commit our gift at the beginning of the year, not knowing what the coming months will bring.

Update on Huron Archives

The Verschoyle Phillip Cronyn Memorial Archives’ 50-year partnership with Huron University College is ending. The space is needed for other purposes. August 2026 is the hard timeline to return an empty room to the College.

After considering a wide range of options for relocating the collection, the formation of a new archive, The Reverend Canon Dr. J. Douglas Leighton Archives of the Diocese of Huron, will be established in purpose-renovated space at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Report presented by Tom Adam, Archives Committee; Dez Nacario, Archivist; The Ven. Dr. Stephen McClatchie, Archdeacon, Episcopal Office.

Finance Report

Financial reviews of 2020 and 2021 have been completed. KPMG is not able to complete financial audits for subsequent years in a timely manner, and effectively resigned as the auditor for the Diocese. The finance team put out a RFP to find a new auditor, the result of which is that Graham Scott Enns, LLC of St. Thomas will provide audits for year end 2022-2025, it is hoped by Synod 2026. Jacqueline Davison noted that this is an ambitious timeline.

Report presented by the Rev'd Diana Boland, Chair, Administration and Finance Committee; Jacqueline Davison, Director of Finance.

If you have any questions about Synod or this report, please contact Norma or Rev'd Sarah.

A recording of the presentations made to Synod on Saturday, October 25th is publicly available on the Diocesan website via this link: <https://diohuron.org/media/2025-10-15-186th-synod-of-the-diocese-of-huron>