



Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

The Anglican Church of Canada

The Right Reverend Dr. Geoff Peddle, M.Div., Ph.D.
Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

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January 17, 2019

My Dear People,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ on this the fifth anniversary of my consecration as Bishop for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. On January 17, 2014, at our Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in the city bearing his name my episcopacy began. The past five years have been filled with many challenges and many joys. There have been surprises, both good and bad, along the way and three significant synods have been held during that time to explore our history and present-day reality. Since 2017 we have looked intensely at our future and in November 2018 at our Diocesan Synod, we took council together for that future and chose a new path for our church. I am grateful for the faithfulness of many across our vast church on the Avalon Peninsula and Labrador and I am humbled by the continuing prayers and constant support I receive as your bishop.

The primary reason for my letter to you today is to implement some of the decisions made at our recent Synod – *The Future of the Church and the Church of the Future* – and to set in motion new initiatives. At Synod, the **Report of the Commission on Parish Renewal and Viability** called, *Surviving or Thriving: The Future of the Church in the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador*, was presented and a series of 29 motions were passed. Two weeks later the new Diocesan Executive Committee met to consider the work of Synod in its role as “the Synod between Synods” with constitutional authority to

make decisions until Synod meets again. I am pleased to report to you that the Executive Committee has risen to the challenge handed to it and is working diligently and responsibly to carry out the mandate given to it by the people of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. As you know, the Synod of 2018 was very much about finding new ways of being the church in the world and it is now the responsibility of our entire diocesan leadership from Parish to Synod Office to deliver on that expectation. Our Diocese has now created a Mission Fund to facilitate missional ministry in the years ahead. The current system of diocesan grants to parishes for the purpose of maintaining historical structures and ministries will end in 2019 and all diocesan grants as of 2020 will be missional in nature to encourage future sustainability and fresh ministries.

Another reason for this letter is to announce the appointment of the Cathedral Chapter and certain other senior leadership positions in our Diocese under my authority as Bishop for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. I commend for your prayers and support the individuals named, including the new **Mission Archdeacon** for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. This appointment will be for a three-year term and will combine the role of Mission Canon identified in the Report of the Commission on Parish Renewal and Viability and the position of Implementation Facilitator also identified in that report. The Executive Committee decided to be prudent financially as we appoint new diocesan staff to ensure that the resources are in place for all future appointments. It was also decided by Executive Committee that “the current staff of Synod Office be retained, namely the positions of Finance Officer and Executive Officer, for the 2019 and 2020 Diocesan fiscal years.”



I am pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Gregory Mercer, currently Rector of St. Thomas' Church in St. John's, to the position of Mission Archdeacon, effective May 1. Although Archdeacon Mercer will continue in his present role at St. Thomas' until the end of April, he will immediately assume certain diocesan responsibilities related to his new role of Mission Archdeacon. The first of those responsibilities will be to consult with the Archdeaconry Councils and identify the appropriate Mission Areas in our diocese called for in the Report of the Diocesan Commission. I am allowing only a six-week window to complete that work and it is my intention on February 28 to appoint **Area Mission Deans** across the Diocese to work under the immediate direction of the Mission Archdeacon and alongside the Territorial Archdeacons. The appointment of Area Deans will be crucial for our future and they will operate as part of an extended Cathedral Chapter for the next two years with the option of an appointment for one additional year and they will each carry the title of Dean during their tenure. I anticipate the appointment of 6-8 new Area Deans on February 28. On September 27 of this year I am convening a special Mission Conference with the support of Queen's College to discuss Christian Mission and to consider our progress this year. At that conference I will be expecting a report to be delivered in person by each of the Area Deans and a comprehensive overall report to be delivered by the Mission Archdeacon. I note that several parishes have already begun the work outlined by Synod and completed their Parish Sustainability Assessment. In addition to the Area Deans to be appointed in February, a new Cathedral Chapter comprised of Canons and Archdeacons is appointed effective as of this date. The Chapter members are:

Bishop and Dean of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

- The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle

Commissary to the Bishop, Diocesan Executive Officer, Registrar and Secretary-Treasurer of Synod

- The Venerable Samuel Rose

Archdeacons

- The Venerable Julie Brace, Territorial Archdeacon for the Archdeaconry of Labrador
- The Venerable Gregory Mercer, Diocesan Mission Archdeacon
- The Venerable Josiah Noel, Territorial Archdeacon for the Archdeaconry of Trinity-Conception-Placentia
- The Venerable Charlene Taylor, Territorial Archdeacon for the Archdeaconry of the Avalon
- The Venerable Roger Whalen, Rector of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist

Canons

- The Rev. Canon Dr. David Bell (Canon Bell will assume the role of Canon Theologian for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and continue as Chair of the College of Deacons. His appointment is also in recognition of his role at Queen's College as Dean of Theology)
- The Rev. Canon Edward Keeping (Canon Keeping will be responsible for Hospital and Institutional Chaplaincy)
- The Rev. Canon Amanda Taylor (Canon Taylor will assist with Diocesan Ministry to Children and Youth, and provide resources to those exploring Vocations in Ministry)
- The Rev. Canon Sandra Tilley (Congregational Development)
- The Rev. Canon Gerald Westcott (Canon Westcott will continue his work in Christian Spirituality)
- Canon D. Bradford L. Wicks Q.C.: Chancellor and Diocesan Solicitor (Canon Wicks will continue to oversee all legal matters for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador)

•The Rev. Canon Dr. Leslie J. Francis will receive the honorary title of Honorary Distinguished Canon of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador but without a Cathedral Stall or the usual Canonical responsibilities of the Cathedral Chapter. This appointment is in recognition of Professor Francis' continuing support of theological education at Queen's College and in particular his gift of the Exploring Faith program with its 35 students across the Middle East who are now educated through Queen's College.

All roles and titles in the Cathedral Chapter are effective as of this date, January 17, 2019, and will last for three years, ending in January of 2022 or at the discretion of a new bishop in the event of my retirement. Reflecting my

belief that titles in the Church should be functional and accountable, membership in the Cathedral Chapter will be tied to particular and designated tasks. However, those roles may change during the tenure of this Chapter and there may also be new appointments when appropriate. The Chapter will meet at the call of the Bishop with every member of Chapter asked to report on their work at that time. The formal installation of the Cathedral Chapter and Area Deans will take place on the evening of Sunday, April 7, at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist. The date of the first meeting of the Chapter will be Monday, April 8 and Tuesday, April 9. I hope to gather the Deacons of our diocese for a similar overnight retreat on September 25.

I announced in November that we will gather for a special Synod on September 28, 2019, to discuss Marriage Equality. This Synod will follow on the heels of our Mission Conference on September 27 and it is my hope that many Synod Delegates will be able to attend both. General Synod for the Anglican Church of Canada will take place in July of 2019. As your Bishop, I believe that there is now a consensus on the matter of human sexuality across the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador regarding our common life together that is the result of the respectful and sustained conversation we have been having for quite some time now. I previously commended to your use the study guide, *Easter(n) Dialogues: A Guide for Initiating Parish Conversations around Human Sexuality in the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador*, and I am grateful that so many engaged with that resource. I know that we are not all of a single mind on the matter of same-sex marriage, and there continues to be a diversity of opinion within our church, however the consensus that I am now seeing in our Diocese is such that I believe most all of us will be able to live and serve and worship together.

On January 1, 2020, the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador will assume responsibility once more for the **Joint Committee Office**. The Joint Committee is that body put in place at the time the single Diocese of Newfoundland became three dioceses in 1976 and it manages matters of shared interest such as insurance, investments and *Anglican Life*. Until 2005 the Joint Committee Officer was part of the staff of our diocese, but in that year the office transferred to the Diocese of Central Newfoundland in Gander, with Bishop Donald Young assuming responsibility. I am pleased to announce that effective January 1, 2020, the Rev. Fred Marshall, presently Rector of the Parish of the Living Water, will join our Synod Office staff as the new Joint Committee Officer. I am announcing this appointment early because of the necessity of a lengthy transition of the Joint Committee Office from Gander to St. John's. Related to changes at Synod Office, I anticipate that in 2019 construction will begin on a new **Diocesan Centre for Ministry** attached to our Cathedral in downtown St. John's and funded by the sale of the old Cathedral Parish Hall as well as significant Glebe assets and investments. This new Ministry Centre will enable the coming together of Synod Office and the Cathedral Office and provide for an enhanced diocesan ministry as Synod Office assumes new responsibilities in the years ahead. Another of those new responsibilities will be Centralized Payroll, effective March 1 of this year, as the Diocesan Synod Office will make possible the transfer of all payroll responsibilities for clergy from parishes to Synod Office. Parishes that wish to avail of this new way of financial administration may request the Diocese to take over that responsibility.

I am pleased to grant educational leave effective May 1, for three months, to the current Diocesan Executive Officer, Archdeacon Samuel Rose. During his sabbatical leave, Archdeacon Sam will pursue various University courses and other interests of an artistic nature. The current Rector of the Parish of the Good Shepherd in Mount Pearl, Archdeacon Charlene Taylor, will transfer to Synod Office during that time and function as Diocesan Executive Officer, *pro tem*. I have also accepted the retirement of Mr. Peter Chalker from his role as Diocesan Archivist and I thank him for his good work. I am pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Irving Letto, effective April 1, 2019.

As I look into 2019, I see our work as a church to be about putting our house in order. The adjustments and corrections now underway will better enable us to embrace the future with confidence and hope for the sake of all who belong to this church and all who are cared for, protected by, and sheltered under its wings. I do see most of the renovation work on our "Church-House" being completed within five years and all of it completed within ten. I have concluded, however, that merely putting our own house in order is no longer adequate if we do not engage even more profoundly with the world around us in every way so that our church can become a source of healing and rebirth wherever it is present. In Jewish tradition there is the concept of "*tikkun olam*" which translates

roughly as “repairing the world” and points to the peace and justice of God not just within the worshipping congregation but everywhere.

I believe the time has come to reflect on our identity as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and discover fresh ways of serving and worshiping that reflect who we are. We are a church of the local that has always sought to be close to the people of the Rock and the Big Land and we continue to have a Christian presence in almost every community, but we can do a better job of listening and advocating. We should not be afraid to speak to matters ranging from the environment to the economy, from education to health care, from affordable housing to rural depopulation. We can even do better by working with social agencies and governments in the face of a crushing provincial debt burden that will haunt us for generations to come. I foresee a future where our church will grow in important ways and only sometimes will that growth be numerical; more frequently it will be in faithfulness.



Our recent Synod was about the Future of the Church as we know it today, and the Church of the Future that we do not yet know fully. I believe that the Church of the Future is already emerging across our diocese as laypeople and clergy embrace a new risk of faith and a new life in Christ. It seems to me that the future church will become more contextual to Newfoundland and Labrador and will look inside itself more deeply for the treasures of the Kingdom already buried within. It will become a “Church of the People” in a new way. The endless arguments over human sexuality consuming so much energy in the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Communion mean little to a family here wondering how they will pay their electricity bills next year or put food on the table or even if their father or mother will have a job. We need to speak to the ordinary concerns of ordinary people right here and right now if we want to be a Church of the People.

We can also do better by recognizing the *diaspora* of our people with tens of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians *and their children* living outside the province. My heart was stirred at a baptism recently when a camera was set up in a church here along with a camera in Alberta and a young man out there got up at 6 a.m. on a Sunday morning and dressed for church and recited his vows as a Godparent from thousands of miles away along with the other Godparents present in person. Such was his dedication to the great responsibility he had taken on. Many who have moved away still identify most strongly with our church here. Indeed, I continue to baptize the children of my own nephews and nieces who, like salmon returning to the river of their birth, come home to be baptized in Newfoundland every year. At the time of our Confederation in 1949 we had the youngest population in Canada. Today we have the oldest. Far too many of our young people, my own children included, have moved away to work. We can talk forever about social justice but where is that social justice when our sons and daughters have no future in their home province? I wonder if our church has a role to play in the creation of employment here simply because of our vast assets and the way in which so many different people come together under our umbrella. We have lots of properties and land that can be used differently if we want to work with employers and innovators. I ask if we can engage in a new way with government and the private sector in job creation and innovation so that some of our young people do not have to go away and so that others may even come home.

In the days ahead let us use all our resources and assets in creative new ways for the well-being of all our citizens, and for the healing of our world.

With my every blessing,
+Geoffrey

Diocesan Executive Committee 2018-2020

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle, Bishop and Chair
 Canon Brad Wicks, Diocesan Chancellor
 The Ven. Roger Whalen, Rector of the Cathedral (Bishop's appointment)
 The Ven. Sam Rose, Diocesan Executive Officer
 The Ven. Josiah Noel, Territorial Archdeacon – Trinity/Conception/Placentia
 The Ven. Julie Brace, Territorial Archdeacon – Labrador
 The Ven. Charlene Taylor, Territorial Archdeacon – Avalon
 Ms. Elaine Drover - Parish of the Epiphany, Heart's Delight (Trinity/Conception/Placentia)
 Ms. Trudy Hutchings – Parish of St. Mark's, Shearstown/Butlerville (Trinity/Conception/Placentia)
 The Rev. Fred Marshall – Parish of the Living Water (Trinity/Conception/Placentia)
 Ms. Deborah Pantin – Parish of St. Thomas (Avalon)
 Ms. Karen Mitchell – Parish of St. Augustine's (Avalon)
 The Rev. Jonathan Rowe – Parish of St. Michael and All Angels (Avalon)
 Rev. Gail Williams – Parish of Southeast Labrador (Labrador)
 Ms. Miriam Holwell – Parish of Lake Melville (Labrador)
 Ms. Nicolle Critch – Parish of Labrador West (Labrador)
 Mr. Fred Dinham – Finance Officer (non-voting)
 The Rev. Christopher Fowler – Recording Secretary (non-voting)

Diocesan Finance Committee 2018-2020

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle, Bishop
 The Ven. Sam Rose, Diocesan Executive Officer
 Canon Elizabeth Barnes, Honorary Diocesan Treasurer
 The Rev. Kenute Francis
 The Ven. Charlene Taylor
 The Rev. Jolene Peters
 Mr. Bruce Tilley
 Mr. Peter Honeygold
 Mr. Jerry White
 Mr. Fred Dinham, Finance Officer (non-voting)
 Ms. Elizabeth Crisby, Recording Secretary (non-voting)

Diocesan Legislative Committee 2018-2020

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle, Bishop
 The Ven. Roger Whalen, Rector of the Cathedral (Bishop's appointment)
 Canon Brad Wicks, Diocesan Chancellor and Chair
 The Ven. Sam Rose, Diocesan Executive Officer
 The Very Rev. William Bellamy
 The Rev. Jonathan Rowe
 Mr. Derek Sullivan

Diocesan Compensation Committee 2018-2020

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle, Bishop
Canon Elizabeth Barnes
The Ven. Sam Rose, Diocesan Executive Officer
Dr. Harold Press
Mr. Austin Keeping

General Synod Delegates 2019

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle, Bishop
The Rev. Derrick Bishop
The Venerable Greg Mercer
Canon Amanda Taylor

Ms. Nicole Critch
Ms. Trudy Hutchings
Ms. Joanne Minnett (youth)
Canon Brad Wicks