



Surviving or  
Thriving: The Future  
of the Church in the  
Diocese of Eastern  
Newfoundland and  
Labrador

Report of  
The Commission on  
Parish Renewal and Viability



**ANGLICAN** EAST NL

**Presented to:**  
**The Rt. Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Peddle**

October 16, 2018

# DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT

As Anglicans we are called to obey our Lord's commission: "Go, then to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

Our Diocese is an integral part of the body of Christ – a Church empowered by the Spirit through the study of Scripture and the worship of God; proclaiming the good news, as it reaches out in love to relieve the burdens and hurts in the world and affirming the joys.

Therefore, with grateful hearts, we covenant to:

- Worship and praise Almighty God;
- Provide the means for spiritual growth;
- Interpret the teaching of Jesus for our time;
- Teach Christian doctrine in the Anglican tradition;
- Proclaim the gospel message through witness and evangelism;
- Challenge injustices;
- Pray for and nurture our Christian community and the world;
- Be faithful to our Anglican identity shaped by scripture, tradition, reason and experience; and
- Be faithful, wise and responsible stewards of God's gifts of creation, redemption and empowerment.

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

On Behalf of

The Commission on Parish Renewal and Viability

October 15, 2018

The Right Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Peddle  
Anglican Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador  
19 Kings Bridge Road  
St. John's, NL  
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Dear Bishop Geoff;

It gives us great pleasure to present to you this report of the Commission on Parish Renewal and Viability: *Surviving or Thriving: The Future of the Church in the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador*.

It has been quite the journey for all of us in these last fourteen months – at times daunting, at other times filled with excitement, but always challenging. We sincerely thank you for this opportunity to come alongside the faithful as together we seek to do God's work. From day one we understood our mission to secure the future of our church in this diocese. As you will see in this report there are many challenges, but our hope is that Synod will receive it as a positive step forward.

In His service,

The Reverend Canon Gregory Mercer (Chair)  
Mrs. Deborah Pantin  
Capt. Peter Adams  
Mr. Peter Reccord  
Ms. Pamela Norman  
Mr. David Legge  
The Reverend Jolene Peters  
The Very Reverend William Bellamy

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

### “Your House is Left Desolate”

Matthew 23:37 – 24:2

Jesus laments over Jerusalem and forecasts the destruction of the Temple.

In this short passage Jesus draws our attention to the importance of words and actions. The Temple, which he called in another passage “His Father’s house of prayer” is now “desolate.” Like a desert, there is little life left in it – dead religion; spiritually bankrupt. As he walks away from the Temple his disciples are trying to catch up with him and calling his attention to the magnificent building. Jesus’ response is one that could easily have gotten him killed: “Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.” The Temple, the centre of the Jewish faith, Jesus has condemned as desolate and nothing but a heap of stones. What the disciples saw as important - buildings - Jesus is telling them that God is not to be found there. Notice how things have devolved in a matter of four or five lines – from *house* to *buildings* to *stones* to *rubble* - from a magnificent building to a heap of nothing but stones.

Nothing, temple or church, can assume that it is going to last forever. As far as Jesus is concerned, a church is not a building, not an institution, not an organization. A church is people. It is a living thing, and it only gets to live as long as it is doing the right things. And when it stops doing the right things, Jesus is, *out of here*. What, then, is the right thing?

It is a moving picture to envision Jesus with his back turned to the Temple, and all that it represents, and walking away from it. Equally disturbing are his words: “Your house is left desolate.” There is not much promise when God has left the building. Yet in another passage God shows us a completely different attitude towards the Church. Acts 20:28: “Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.” Clearly, in this passage the Church is the people. God sees the Church as precious, valuable, important. God cherishes the Church so much that he gave his own blood. We are to shepherd this Church, but we are also commissioned to grow it.

Ephesians 4:1-16

The author presents a vision of a church that enjoys growth and is building itself up in love.

There are several important themes in the opening verses of Ephesians, Chapter 4: unity; spiritual gifts (their importance); equipping the saints (for the work of ministry and building up the church); and building itself up in love. The Letter to the Ephesians celebrates the life of the church, a unique community established by God through the work of Jesus Christ, who is its head. The church was established for God’s eternal purpose, but the themes of Chapter 4, when taken as a whole, seem to suggest or imply that there is a general problem. The unity of one faith must be preserved; hence the value of particular gifts, and the equipping the saints for the building up of the church in love. The ministers will prepare believers, serve believers, and generally build up the body of Christ. The church members themselves must be equipped; they must be mature in the faith.

What are the issues facing our church today? Is it the unity of faith as expressed by the author of Ephesians? Or is it twenty-first century cultural obstacles? And what will be the training (equipping) necessary to address those challenges? Somewhere along the way the rules changed. We have witnessed in the last fifty years the most accelerated social change in human history, yet in the world of churches ministry continues to function under the same old methodologies. What are the tools and skills needed for church leaders and members today so that the church can once again enjoy growth and building itself up in love?

## INTRODUCTION

In June of 2017 the Executive Council of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador approved the following motion:

**“That the Bishop appoint a Diocesan Task Force [The Commission on Parish Renewal and Viability] to examine and propose a restructuring of the Diocese for consideration at the next meeting of Diocesan Synod in the Fall of 2018...”**

The motion was primarily in response to overall declining numbers in the Diocese, creating an unhealthy situation of excess property that is becoming more and more difficult to maintain. In 2015 the Anglican population of the Diocese had dropped to less than half the 1990 level (from 60,000 to less than 30,000) and Sunday attendance to approximately one-third. The decline in church attendance, along with demographic shifts, population trends, and cultural shifts, has contributed to an increasingly difficult and, in some cases, burdensome situation of maintaining properties at the expense of church health and growth.

The Commission, through the process of town hall meetings and research, was given the mandate of investigating present and future ministry trends among parishes and seeking ways in which the Diocese can assist parishes in finding new models of ministry, parish renewal and sustainability - essentially to assist parishes in finding effective means of health and growth. To propose any means of restructuring without a plan for strengthening and building the church for tomorrow is merely putting off the inevitable. Strengthening local parishes is a two-part process that involves both a plan for restructuring and mission.

Research shows that a healthy missional church is one that places great emphasis on both sides of faith – personal and social. It is a church true to evangelism (personal soul care) and social engagement (justice), all supported by a loving caring community (hospitality). Evangelism, of course, remains unfinished if it does not achieve justice and transform cultures. A missional church is one that links personal faith to social concern. We see this concern for personal transformation in Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians 5:17: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” 1 John 3:17-18 is the outcome of that transformation: “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” When personal care and social care are fused, the church is truly the church and the people of God are truly the people of God. There in their midst is Jesus.

The Commission understood its task as not limited to the business of restructuring, but also to offer some means by which the whole operation is better equipped to fulfill its mission. Any model, therefore, would have to include a plan for enhanced missional ministry.

## TOWN HALL ANALYSIS – WHAT WE HEARD

The Commission conducted a series of town hall meetings to hear from Anglicans on the current state and future of the Church in this diocese. Twelve meetings were held throughout the island part of the Diocese and five in Labrador. There were originally nine meetings scheduled on the island, but three more were added: one parish invited the Commission back for a second meeting; a group of 26-40-year-olds was brought together because their voices had largely been absent from the general meetings; and the clergy were convened for a meeting in September because, likewise, the Commission felt they had not really heard from this group.

Attendance ranged from 40 to 90 people, though the 26-40 group was much smaller. The meetings were mostly populated by the over-60 demographic with some meetings having only one or no one under 50 years of age. (Labrador was the exception in a few places.) Clergy were present at all of the meetings but comments were predominantly made by the laity.

Prior to the meetings, church vestries were required to complete Parish Profile documents and submit them to the Commission. The congregations of the parishes were also asked to meet for a Bible study exercise developed by the Very Rev. Bill Bellamy to inspire self-examination. Both were tools to be used as preparation for the town hall gatherings.

The meetings ranged from quiet to lively. Several common themes emerged from the discussions:

1. The need or lack of clerical and lay training for the church of the future (or even the present);
2. The need for changes in worship styles and the approved liturgies;
3. The role of social media in the presentation of ourselves, our church body and our beliefs to the world;
4. How we should work together to live out our missions;
5. The missing generations, most notably the 26-40-year-old demographic and their un-disciplined children;
6. Our call to mission;
7. The role of our buildings in the transition to missional parishes and the overall stewardship of our resources.

The following is a reporting on the discussions around these themes using both direct quotes from participants and summaries.

### Clergy/Lay Training

Reconfiguration in most parishes will mean drastic change. To most this is a “scary process.” At the meeting hosted in Portugal Cove it was remarked, “As congregations, we are at the mercy of our rector, too, and what they are willing to support and do. Clergy have different ideas and priorities. When rectors change, the focus of the parish often changes.” They felt that “clergy training is required to carry out the changes in bringing the old, irrelevant church of today, as seen by the under-40s age group, to a missional, relevant and growing church responding to the needs of society.” The meeting hosted by the Parish of the Living Water at Arnold’s Cove was well attended, engaged and had a better cross-section of age groups than some meetings. People were “aware of the problems and recognize(d) that change is inevitable,” and they “need leadership and guidance on how to proceed.” The talk was of “a spiritual coming together.” Everyone recognized “that clergy are spending too much time on administration.” New models of ministry were discussed. There was mention of “lay people who are called to pastoral ministry and could be taught to be pastoral visitors, freeing up clergy,” team ministry and opportunities to share with other denominations. These people are already having informal discussions about changing to future new models. This change “will require leadership from the Bishop’s office downward and the possibility of one diocese with a lean mean Synod Office.” At another meeting there was criticism of a perceived “lack of leadership, training and encouragement from the Synod Office.”

## Worship/Liturgical Change

Many felt “the music and liturgy itself needs to be re-examined with emphasis on interesting, topical, and relevant sermons.” Over and over, changes to worship services were mentioned. “We need good music and good preaching,” was a common theme. At the meeting hosted by the Good Shepherd, it was felt that “we need more creative liturgies connecting us to the greater community and its needs.” A written submission spoke of “preaching the Gospel on Sunday to empower us to be God’s people in the community.” At Bay Roberts one parishioner felt, “The Anglican Church on Sunday morning is just going through the motions - the same hymns, prayers, etc. every Sunday.” He noted that he has seen no change in the fifty years since his parents insisted he go to church. Nothing tugs at him to make him want to be there. “It’s just a ritual,” he said. The same sentiment was expressed at All Saints: “The prayers are too old, too formal, and always the same. We need something livelier, and for young families to feel that children are welcome.” At the Parish of the Epiphany, a 52-year old said, “To bring young families, the format needs to be more relatable. We need to talk about what’s happening now in the world and relate that to the words of Jesus. It is important to incorporate current events and to bring life and joy into the worship - not the old book and not ancient hymns. Change the worship style to connect with younger people.” At Pouch Cove this theme was echoed: “We are living in a time when information is constantly coming at us and our brains are excited by many things. Our old style of worship is not working. Worship patterns need to be evaluated; they are often seen as mundane.”

The Parish of The Holy Innocents was mentioned as a good news story, with big changes at the beginning of their services. They had made several changes, including the institution of a café at the beginning of their service. They have posters and art and 15 minutes of children’s music and videos, with the children being free to roam around throughout the service.

## Social Media

The expanded use of social media was a recurring theme. At St Mark’s it was stated, “We don’t tell our stories enough. Each congregation has a unique purpose in their community. There is a need to use social media and be in touch with each other and let people know what each parish has to offer.” One speaker saw “a need for an open approach to community-based ministry with a ‘product’ that resonates with people.” At the meeting hosted by All Saints, which uses social media extensively, they reminded the group that “someone other than the clergy must to be in charge of social media.” Opportunities for government funding and tapping into high school students’ skills were discussed. A consultant has drafted a policy which she is willing to share. Diocesan or Archdeaconry workshops on the sharing of information using social media were suggested. At St. Paul’s in Harbour Grace it was summed up by one parishioner who said, “We need to change what we offer - hit the ‘refresh’ button. We need to create a new church for new people to come. We are trying to find solutions for people who aren’t here, who aren’t interested, and don’t want to come. They do not think about church. Our challenge is massive, but if there is no success, all of this will deteriorate and fall down. So, what are we offering that meets people’s needs and brings them to us, either in person or virtually? We have to think about ‘what’, not ‘where!’” From the Parish of the Holy Trinity we heard, “We need to move away from the model of Priest+Building+People=Church and return to our Heavenly Father and hearing the Word of God. But we also need to use new media to get the Word out.” At the meeting at Arnold’s Cove we were told, “Find out where the young people are and go there! It could be on Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube or other social media.”

## Working Together

Over half of the parishes felt there was not enough effort put into working together. It was said, “We need to come together, bringing parts of each church with us and make it ‘ours’ rather than starting from scratch.” Divisions need to be eliminated and the sharing of resources expanded, as mentioned in several meetings. The question was

asked, “How can we talk about cooperation between parishes when there is division even within the parish itself?” They spoke of “showing the world we are working together to make changes, not only in the church community, but in society as a whole.” One speaker saw a need for “an open approach to community-based ministry with a product that resonates with people.” They voiced “a need to become missional. Mission is all about being sent out and how we carry the love of God to God’s people and how we use our resources to do that.” We were reminded that some things are being done together, such as the St. Thomas’ and St. Michael’s Refugee Committee, but they felt “we are not building on that. Maybe each parish could have a focus, with all coordinated by the Diocese. We need to find synergies and work together with groups inside and outside the church.” At Portugal Cove, an attendee felt that, “We need to demonstrate that we all work together.” From the very first town hall at St. Mark’s came the comment, “Our purpose is to come together as the people of God, being part of activities at other parishes, and more connected. We don’t need to re-do what others are doing, but we can learn from each other and strengthen each other.”

### 26-40 Year-olds

A question that sparked a great deal of discussion throughout the meetings was about the willingness to change. Some felt “the Commission was long overdue and that the Parishes need direction.” This direction has to be “pointed toward reaching the under-40s if our church communities are to survive.” As mentioned, most meetings were dominated by the over-60 generation. At Portugal Cove, where only one attendee was under 40 years old, discussion focused on the missing age group: “Parents have disaffiliated themselves from church, so they are not discipling their children. Two generations are missing. If we don’t have a discipleship program, we will die.” At Bay Roberts we heard, “Young people need a ‘job’ in the church and need to be listened to. Problems arise when young people have nowhere to go. We can be that place. Young people need a place to go and be together and have fun.” In St. John’s it was said that, “Youth probably don’t even think about denominations within the Christian faith. The fundamental questions are, ‘Is the church relevant?’ and, ‘How do we get relevant again?’ Youth are very social justice minded and all there for walks for charity and crowd-funding. People respond to stories.”

A younger man at Epiphany spoke about people his age. He felt that 95% of people his age do not believe in God and have no faith in the church. They associate organized religion with bad things, such as terrorism and abuse. At All Saints a woman advised, “We have to do more than talk to young people; we have to listen to what they say.” The story was told of a young person making a suggestion and being ignored, which led to dissociation from the church.

During the meeting at The Good Shepherd this was also shared: “There has been a cultural change and people are not interested in a church they see as irrelevant. Combining parishes is a possibility but, with current church demographics, that will just result in a big collection of seniors who will eventually die off. What then? The church has to change how it does business or it will decline further. There is nothing going on for young people to get attracted to after Sunday school and Confirmation.” In response to the question, “What are we doing wrong?” we heard, “We are staying the same. Young people do not want to come to old dilapidated buildings where all the money is spent on upkeep.” Overall, the sentiment was, “The Anglican Church of Canada’s culture needs to change vastly.”

At a meeting of what was called “the de-churched” the Commission heard some honest, direct and challenging opinions from about a dozen individuals in the 26-40 age group. Most had church involvement as children and no longer attended, or not regularly. Reasons for not attending included weekend fatigue (weeknight service might be better); no one they know goes to church any more (no longer a social requirement or expectation); all denominations are affected by negative news reports of abuse and scandal in churches; lack of inclusion; disharmony in the Anglican Communion (conservative Anglicans left to form their own Network); nothing in church to

engage this age group (told what to do instead of being given a project to run with); unbelief (and unwillingness to say a creed they do not believe); and being made to feel guilty when they do show up. On the other hand, they did identify some positive aspects of church or things they wished there was more of, such as: dialogue sermons, instead of preaching; some meditative practices; opportunities to discuss 'the big issues'; richness and authenticity – something that is intellectually and spiritually satisfying; community involvement; good works (Who will do this work if the church doesn't?); and the sense of community. Others spoke of the sense of peace and sanctuary that they find in the church building, appreciation for the Anglican Chaplain at MUN who came down from his office to where the students were, and their participation in St. Mark's Pub Theology.

### Getting Missional

At Portugal Cove, mission was defined as being, "all about being sent out and how we carry the love of God to God's people and how we use our resources to do that." At another meeting the suggestion was made that "money spent on church maintenance could do much good if spent on mission." At All Saints it was felt that, "The church is not doing a whole lot to prepare people or encourage mission work. People do outreach as a part of their own small groups, but it is not encouraged or motivated by the church. People are not being trained either." In Dunville, a non-denominational café has opened. The meeting there was reminded that, "Jesus told stories and we need to do that. The church will grow if God's love is shown." Others agreed: "We need to identify the needs in the community we serve and find a way for the Church to meet those needs. We need a focus on belonging and being needed and wanted. We need efforts to bring our current parishioners back as well as go out into the community." A student of Queen's College attended the meeting at Harbour Grace. She has done research on what young people want and what keeps them coming and the answer is 'mission'. She said, "They will engage in Confirmation classes and Christian Education if there is a mission, especially outreach, and continue that engagement into adulthood." Another parishioner reported, "My children and grandchildren don't enter church but are willing to engage in mission. We have to become missional!"

### Buildings

Buildings were a major concern for most parishes. At present most of our buildings are filled to only 5-10 % of their capacity on any given Sunday. Research indicates that 30% is the benchmark for the survival of churches in a singular building. Reconfiguration would see some buildings close and result in the loss of some parishes. This was not well received in some areas. Some parishes recognize their buildings as integral parts of the history of their communities. However, one participant stated, "The need is to look beyond the buildings. All are operating in silos now. The mission of the church cannot be to save buildings. More cooperation between the parishes to make use of the buildings is needed." It was felt "the church needs its vision articulated. Where are we going? What does God want the Church to be? We need to be proactive. We need to know what we are working towards, and not just closing buildings."

At the meeting hosted by The Good Shepherd, stewardship was seen as central to the issue of buildings: "We are called to be good stewards. With the costs of maintaining our real estate and our lack of funds, we must ask ourselves what kind of stewards we are being." The three churches at that meeting are within 15 minutes of each other and can be accommodated in one building. The story was told of the reconfiguration of the parishes in the Trinity Bay area into the Parish of the Epiphany and of the financial benefits and spiritual benefits which resulted. Pouch Cove and Torbay, at 14 kilometres apart, did not see amalgamation as an option due to distance: "In Pouch Cove, it would make more sense to work with other denominations in the community. Of the main churches in Pouch Cove, the Anglican church is the strongest and has the most widely-used hall." They let community groups use it for free. Community support for fundraising functions is very strong and leads to fellowship. "We can meet community needs through fundraising and community gatherings," they reported. Both communities are growing and viable

but “need help learning how to reach the millennials. Society is changing by the hour and the church by the decade.”

At the meeting at All Saints, all four parishes in attendance record more baptisms than funerals, which was not the case in most other parishes. The four buildings of these parishes are within a 20-minute drive of each other and all congregations can be accommodated in one church. Paradise felt they had “money problems and not people problems.” There was no talk of reconfiguration, realignment or cooperation.

The Parish of the Holy Trinity mentioned that, “there were plans for four congregations to come together a number of years ago, but one congregation would not agree so the Diocese did not approve the planned amalgamation.” It was reported that this had been a difficult time, with loss of parishioners, and there was an evident reluctance to reopen discussion. The parish has three pairs of two congregations and each pair comes together in one of the churches each Sunday. With Dunville and Placentia 7 kilometres apart, Heart’s Content and New Perlican 4 kilometres apart, and New Perlican to Winterton only another 8 kilometres, they acknowledge that “the writing is on the wall” and they need to talk.

At the meeting at the Parish of the Living Water, there was a focus on unity within the parish. The congregations within the parish “support one another, but not under one roof” and see themselves as “coming together spiritually first.” They currently have four services on Sunday, one in each church. It was said that, “old attitudes and ideas must die so that we can find new ways to worship and serve God.”

Some churches have already made the move to share resources by alternating services between church buildings. Shared churches are used by Bay Roberts and Coley’s Point and between Hillview and Hatchet Cove. The sharing of buildings with other denominations was discussed but there were no examples given. At Bay Roberts it was stated clearly, “Parishes need direction. We need to get away from the mindset of buildings. We need to identify the needs in the community and find a way to meet those needs. We need one building for these four parishes.”

From Spaniard’s Bay to Carbonear is less than a 20-minute drive; yet there are four parishes with a total capacity of 2500 and average Sunday attendance of 400. Viability was discussed: “Viability depends on what you want. If we want to be viable as an Anglican worshipping community, we will have to merge and close buildings. If we want to be a community church, we will have to talk to other denominations.”

## Labrador

Labrador was at a slight disadvantage when it came to the town hall gatherings. They did not have the luxury of completing the Parish Profiles and to reflect on them or to complete the parish Bible study, both of which were meant to be a preparation for the meetings. As a result, the meetings in Labrador stretched well into the third hour with the addition of the Bible study. However, that did not negatively impact participation. With an average attendance of about 30 per parish, there was lively discussion.

Many of the common themes discussed above were also of concern for Labrador. Labrador is a place of unique challenges, primarily because of its geography. While road development has certainly made it much easier getting from one community to another, because of the distance, the concept of working together and forming mission areas is very unlikely. Moreover, coastal Labrador is faced with the same decline in population and shifting demographics as outport Newfoundland. This makes work in the social sector, church and non-profit organisations particularly challenging. Labrador West and Happy Valley-Goose Bay are the only two areas of the province (apart from the St. John’s metropolitan area) to show any signs of stability or growth in terms of population. It is also interesting to note that St. Andrew’s Parish in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is the only church in

the whole of the diocese that has not declined in average Sunday attendance over the last thirty years. They do acknowledge, however, that there are a few more grey heads.

For the people of Labrador, the Church remains a very important part of the community identity – especially along the coast. “No church equals no community,” noted one parishioner. While lay ministry has stepped up to help with some pastoral ministries (funerals), they hurt because of the lack of spiritual leadership. Particularly noted at the Labrador Planning and Strategy Conference was the plea from the people of Southeast Labrador, “All we want is a priest.” The only solution to this is probably to ‘raise up’ and nurture local people for ministry. This, they claim, “We have been saying for years.” But there is also a need to strengthen confidence for the laity “to start something” and not fully rely on clergy presence.

The geography of Labrador has also made it difficult in getting clergy to go to the Big Land. And clergy foreign to the culture have not always worked out well. The congregations of Southeast Labrador have admitted that they are still recovering from a bad experience a few years ago. Thanks to the efforts of the Venerable Gerry Peddle, they have made significant progress. But, like many parts of the island portion of the diocese, the closure and merger of some church buildings in Labrador, or some other model of ministry, may be necessary. To some degree this is already happening. Williams Harbour is a case in point. The people of Williams Harbour are now a part of the church in Port Hope Simpson. The challenges in Labrador are unique and complex. The closure of buildings seems inevitable, especially if acquiring full-time clergy and focusing on mission is to be achieved.

## SUMMARY

The Commission heard from several hundred members of the Diocese through the town hall meetings. Discussions were frank and predominantly respectful, and engagement from most parishes was good. The common themes strongly suggest that there is far more at stake here than just a “proposal for restructuring” of the Diocese. Any restructuring that may involve closures, amalgamations, mergers, clusters or new buildings, is only a part of the solution. Time and again the Commission was reminded of the importance of mission: “We shouldn’t be talking about buildings but about mission.” It was clear that change will not be easy, even ‘scary’. Most agreed church closures should and would happen - but not with their church! With churches filled to only 5-10% of capacity, reconfiguration is a must. There is a growing understanding that there are no buildings so sacred that their congregations should not consider other options, and that strong leadership is required to guide the process. Sharing resources, with other Anglican parishes and with other denominations, should be optimized to provide all age groups and individuals with a meaningful place to worship God and to belong in a form we can all comfortably call ‘Church’.

## PARISH PROFILES

Prior to the scheduled town hall meetings parishes were asked to complete a Parish Profile form designed by the Commission. It had a two-fold purpose: 1) a means of reflection by the Vestry of that parish in preparation for the town hall meetings; and, 2) to help the Commission grasp the status of the diocese in terms of infrastructure and forecasting. The following data from the Profile reports provide a snapshot of the diocese. For a more comprehensive review of the challenges that have been facing the Diocese for some time now, see the “Ministries in Action” report of the Commission on Parish Demographics, October 2003.

### Infrastructure

Among thirty-eight parishes, the Diocese is responsible for ninety-seven buildings (excluding rectories, Synod Office, and the church buildings in Churchill Falls, which are owned by the CFLCo, and Come by Chance, which is managed by a non-denominational Board of Management.)

Of those ninety-seven buildings, seventy are church buildings, with a combined seating capacity of approximately 18,000 and a total Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) of 3600 (an average occupancy of 20% - all services included). A number of parishes reported only about a 10% occupancy and a few only 5%. The Parish of the Epiphany was the only real exception, reporting a seating capacity of 210 with an ASA of 128 (approximately 60% occupancy).

Not all parishes reported the insured value of their property but, based on those that did, it is estimated that the total insured value of all church buildings and church halls is approximately \$70,000,000 (excluding Rectories, Synod Office and the church buildings in Churchill Falls and Come by Chance).

Proximity between church buildings was also of interest to the Commission. Except for Labrador and a few areas on the Avalon portion of the Diocese, the average driving distance between church buildings is about 5 kilometres – ranging from 1.1 km to 11 km. This is true not only of church buildings within a multi-point parish but between parishes.

Noted as well was the cost of Synod-approved renovations and maintenance throughout the diocese on Church property since 2008 – 5.5 million dollars (not including the cost of the new church building on Bell Island). The Parish Profile asked only for the “last” Synod-approved renovation; there were probably other projects, not only for church buildings, but also for rectories and parish halls.

The math is predictive. With approximately 135 mostly wooden buildings (if rectories are included), at an insured value approaching \$100,000,000, costing millions of dollars to maintain, coupled with declining numbers, an aging population, shifting demographics, and generations of people de-churched and finding no reason to return to church, something has to give.

### Envelope Revenue/Contributions

The report on “Net Income (Loss)” per parish is all but meaningless. Parishes will find a way to balance their budgets. Except for a few thousand dollars here or there, losses were manageable. (3 parishes/congregations reported losses in excess of \$10,000 and 2 in excess of \$30,000.)

Noteworthy, however, was the level of giving. The average giving per person in the Diocese is approximately \$480, ranging from \$158 to \$1142. Most congregations reported average givings within the \$300-\$500 range. Only three parishes reported contributions in excess of \$1000 per person on average. In these three parishes less

than eighteen percent of the people gave fifty percent of the regular offerings (two of them less than 10 percent). Balancing those parishes' budgets was essentially left in hands of a small minority – mostly seniors and senior-seniors.

Reported parish giving patterns can be classified into four categories, as follows:

**Unhealthy** - Less than 20% of parishioners giving 50% of Givings: 40% of the parishes/congregations reported in this category. The total envelope contributions are left to a small minority, usually seniors, and makes for a very vulnerable and unhealthy situation.

**Fair** – 20% to 25% of parishioners giving 50% of Givings: 24% of parishes/congregations are in this category. Less vulnerable, but room for improvement.

**Optimum** – 26% to 35% of parishioners giving 50% of Givings: 17% of parishes/congregations reported in this category.

**Confusing** – Greater than 36% of parishioners giving 50% of Givings: 19% of parishes/congregations fall in this category. Many of the parishes/congregations reporting in this category have a very small number of contributors, which skews the statistics. For example, one congregation with only eight contributors reported sixty percent of their subscribers giving fifty percent of total envelope contributions.

The goal is clearly “Optimum,” where approximately thirty percent of contributors give fifty percent of the total envelope contributions. Notably, this is the smallest percentage of parishes/congregations.

The Profile sheets also revealed a serious financial stewardship concern. In reality, the average annual offering per person is approximately \$400 (about \$33 per month). A few parishes reported annual contributions per person of less than \$200 (about \$17 per month). Does this reflect a missional church?

While it was not the within the mandate of the Commission to do any in-depth study of parish finances and financial stewardship, a healthy missional parish is described as one wherein a minimum of 87% of its revenue comes from envelope contributions. Many of our parishes are nowhere close to this figure. Financial stewardship will have to be addressed if parishes are to be sustainable.

### A Few Statistics

The Parish Profile asked congregations to report on their age demographics using percentages according to four different age bands. The categories were: 0-25 years, 26-40 years, 41-65 years, and 66 years plus. Several parishes took this to heart and worked it out to very accurate percentages. Others were educated guesses. Nevertheless, it provides a fairly accurate picture of the age of the congregations across the Diocese. St. Mark's, Churchill Falls is the only congregation that reported “zero” people in the congregation over sixty-six years of age. There were a few others, notably Rigolet and Holy Innocents, Paradise, that reported low figures in this category and healthy figures in the other three categories. There were a number of parishes that reported “Zero” in the two younger categories and ninety percent in the sixty-six plus category. On average, the age demographics of our diocese looks like this:

0-25 years: 10%  
 26-40 years: 7%  
 41-65 years: 25%  
 66+: 58%.

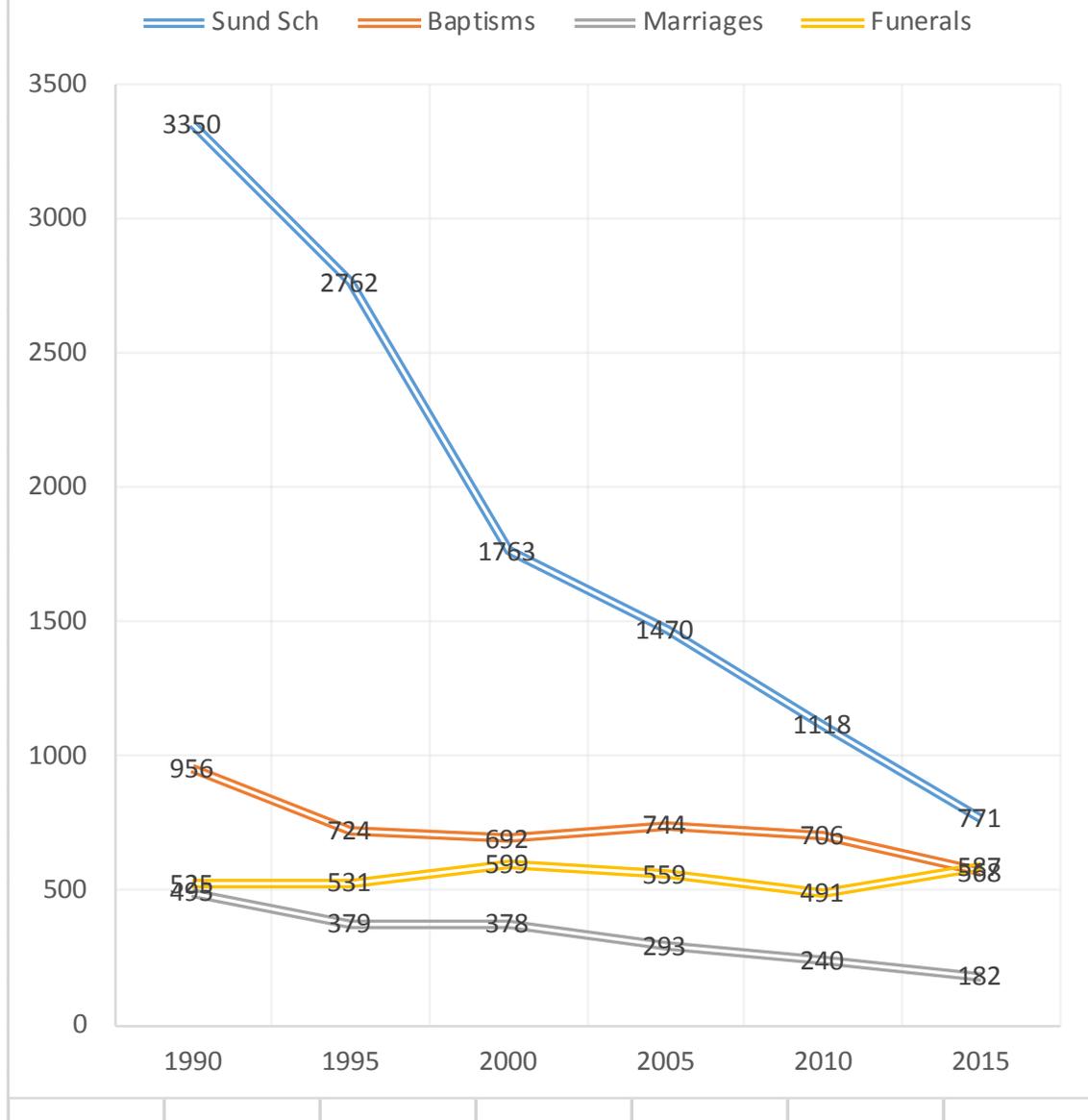
Note also the variance between single-point and multi-point parishes:

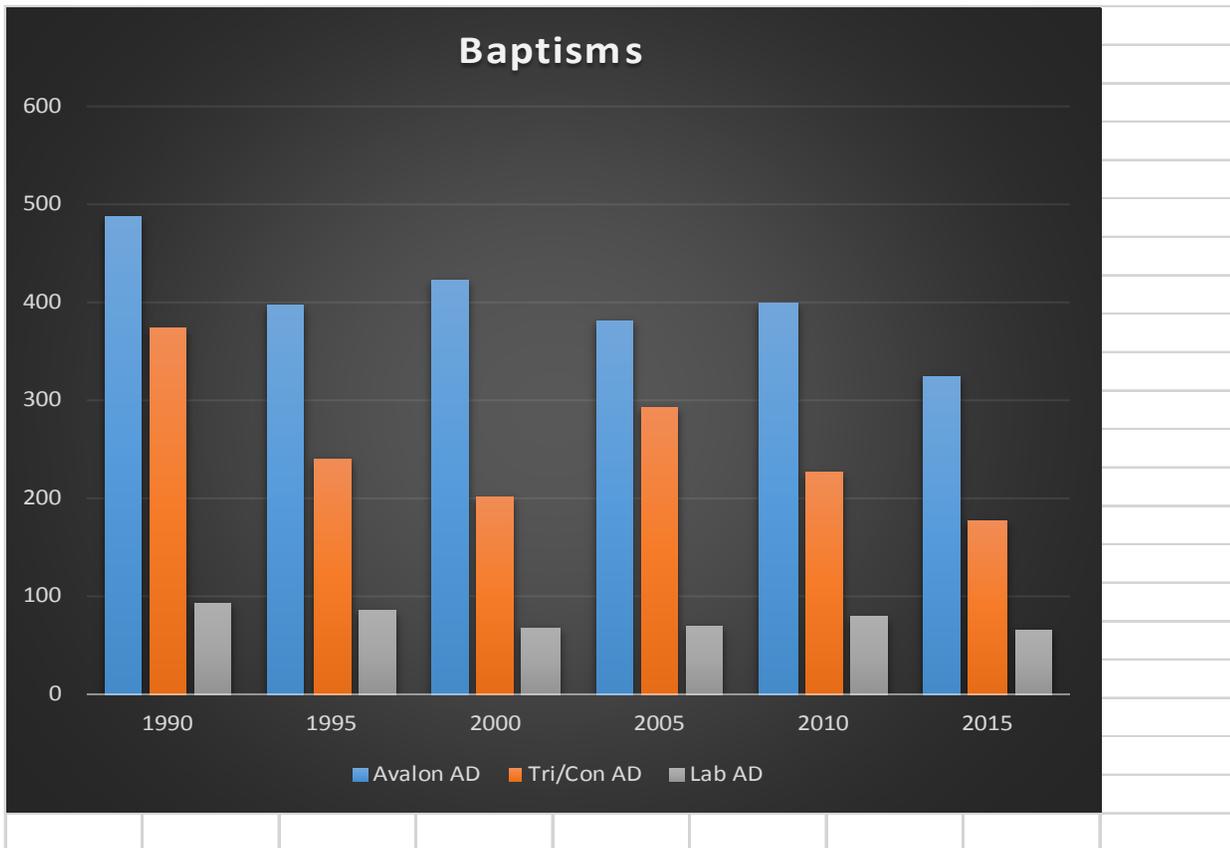
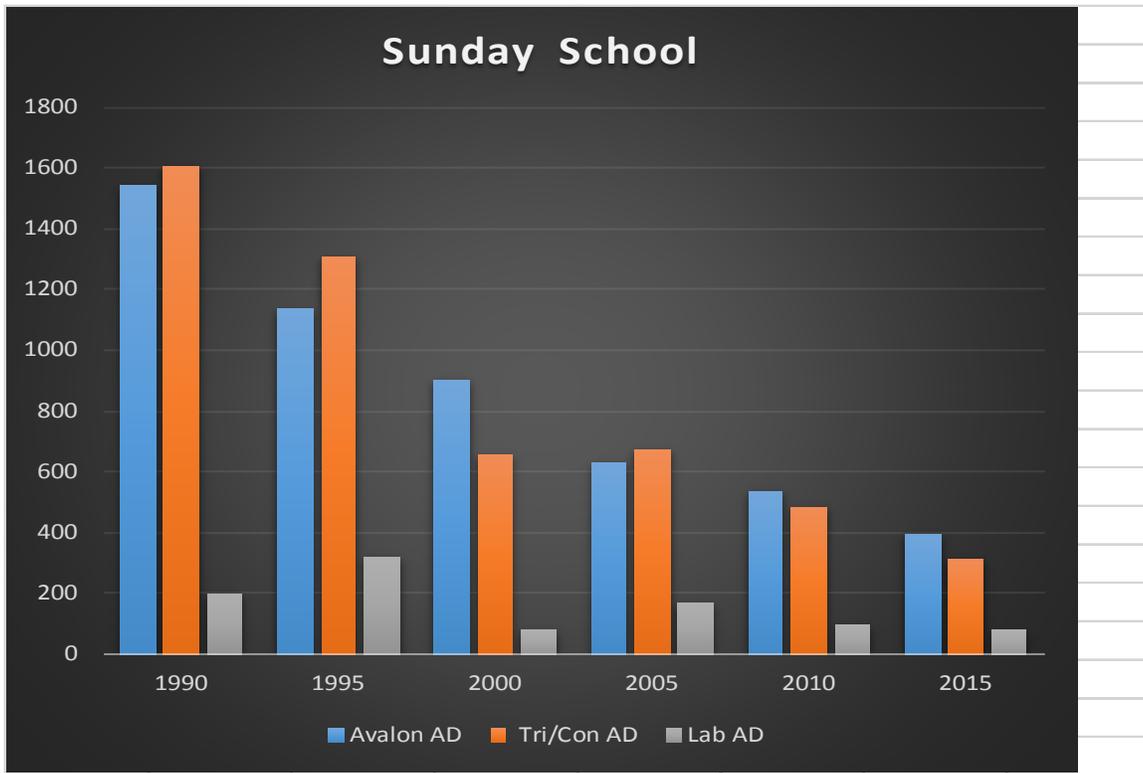
	Single-Point	Multi-Point
0-40	26%	14%
41-65	26%	21%
66+	48%	65%

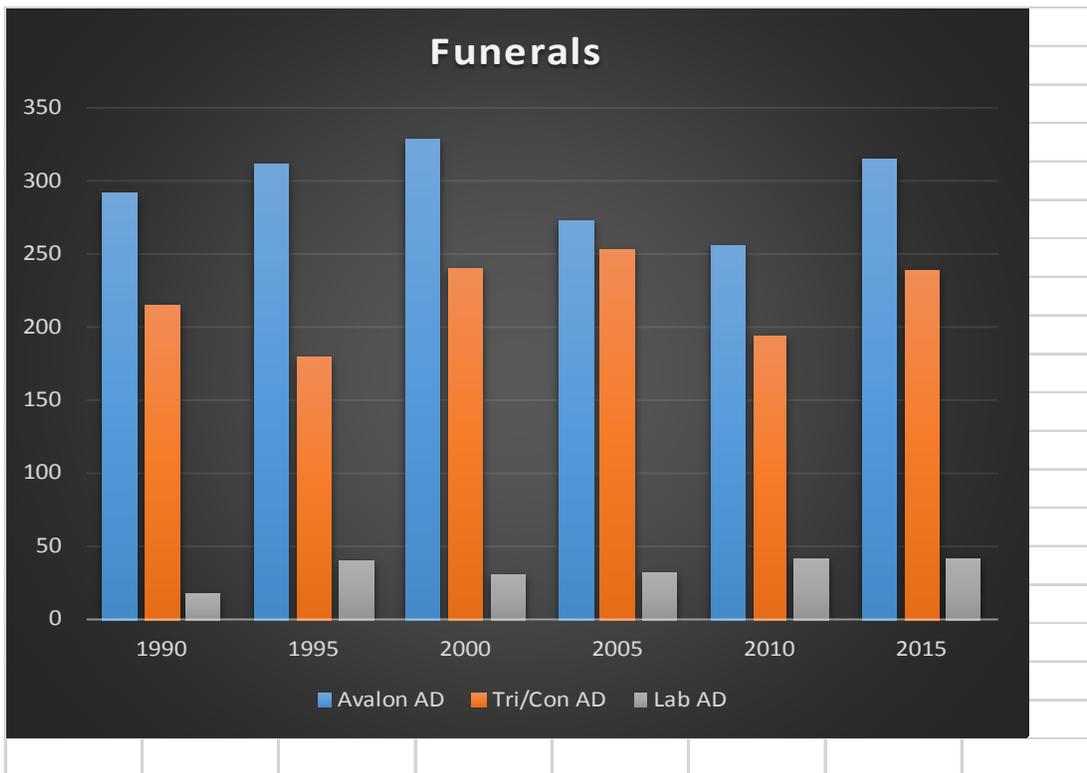
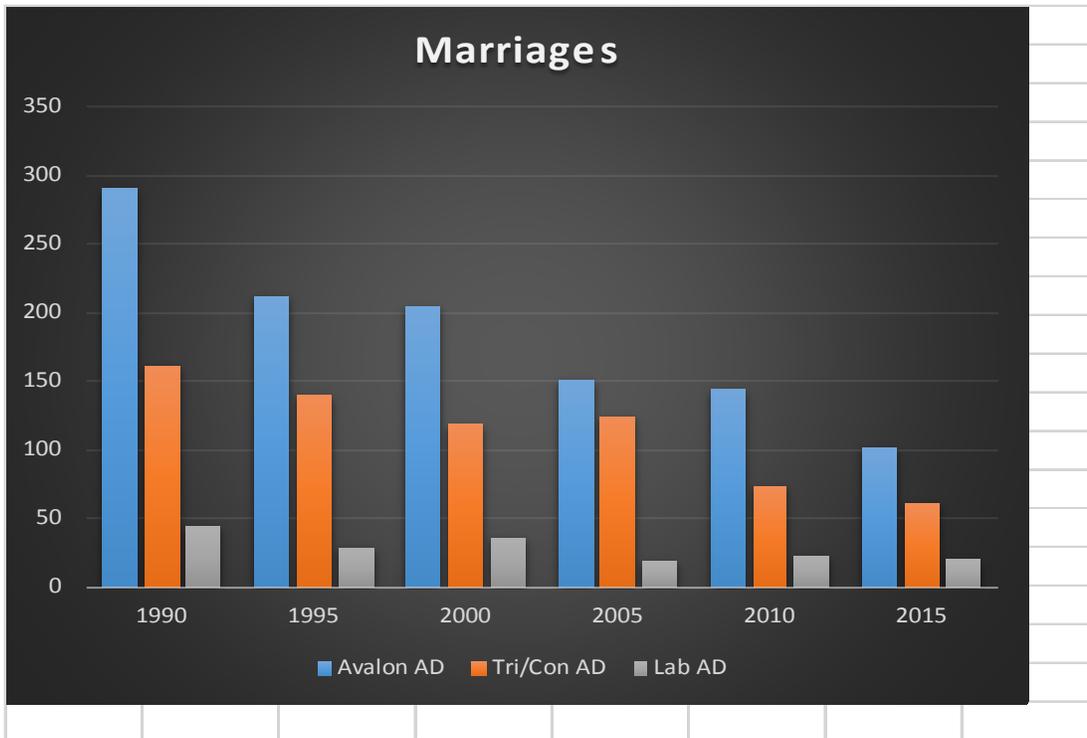
### Other Factors

While the number of baptisms is not necessarily a good indicator of the birth rate it is a very good indicator of what is happening at the parish/congregational level. According to diocesan statistics, the number of baptisms reported in 2015 had dropped to about two-thirds of what they were in 1990, while the number of funerals has been fairly constant, rising only marginally. The comparison of baptisms to funerals reveals a challenge to growth. Positive growth occurs when there are more baptisms than funerals; negative growth is just the opposite. According to the Profiles, many parishes are entering a negative growth situation where there are more funerals than baptisms. Positive and negative growth factors affect a parish's ability to remain sustainable. A parish's potential to both survive and thrive will have to take into consideration the call on the church for its sacramental and pastoral ministries, all of which are in decline. Church weddings are down significantly in the last 25-30 years, as is Sunday School attendance, with a number of parishes reporting no Sunday School at all. All of these factors, as well as the declining numbers attending Sunday worship and reduced revenues, affect the viability equation.

## 25 YEAR TRENDS







## Sustainability

What does a sustainable, missional church look like? Research suggests (see report on Research) that single-point parishes (one church building and one leader) have a greater chance at missional growth than multi-point parishes. If this is the preferred model what are the defined figures and parameters? Research also noted that urban churches have a much greater chance to grow than rural areas. What growth rate would be needed to offset the current decline? What does a healthy church look like in coastal Labrador and outport Newfoundland where the population is in decline? According to one survey of 2200 churches, a twenty-percent congregational increase is needed in order for a church to remain healthy and sustainable. This may be possible in urban areas but in rural Newfoundland and Labrador where the population is in decline, is there a better formula for a sustainable, healthy church?

In terms of revenue and congregational numbers, what would constitute a sustainable, single-point parish? An earlier diocesan report (1996) suggested 200 funding parishioners with an annual budget of \$200,000. Approximately 45% of the budget is for staff and the remainder for maintenance, assessments and mission. This is consistent with other research. Based on a median budget of \$173,000, the budget for a traditional, single-point parish would look something like this:

Salaries/Benefits	46%
Maint/Insurance/Assessment	31%
Mission	10%
Equipment/Supplies	5%
Administration	2%
Loans/Misc	6%
Total	100%

The survey of 2200 churches indicated that 87% of the budget should come from freewill/envelope contributions. 87% of \$173,000 is \$150,510. The average giving for a congregation/parish of 200 with a budget of \$173,000 at 87% envelope offering, would be \$752.00 per person. The average giving per contributor throughout this diocese (excluding the three parishes whose average giving per person is above \$1000), is less than \$400. To be healthy, sustainable and missional, most of our parishes would need to do some serious financial stewardship to double their present level of freewill offerings.

Parishes need to have a realistic look at their present situation. They need to assess their community and neighbourhood – the nature of the community. What is the future of the community? What is being forecast? What is trending? They need to know their mission field and how best to deliver ministry in the area. Is maintaining four or five small churches within a driving distance of half an hour the most effective means to a healthy, sustainable church? What configuration best suits the context of the community and its future needs?

## Real Diocesan Scenarios

### Scenario #1

*A small number of single-point parishes in outport Newfoundland reported a contributing membership of 150, with an average budget of \$145,000. (This includes a 7% allotment for mission, approx. \$10,000). Using the envelope-based formula of 87%, the average giving per person would be \$841 ( $\$145,000 \times 87\% / 150 = \$841$ ). Currently the average giving per person in most of the diocesan parishes is only half that amount, in a few cases only a quarter.*

### Scenario #2

In the St. John's metropolitan area where the cost of staffing and operations is generally higher (for example, the average paid organist/music director costs approx. \$20,000), a conservative budget of \$200,000 (7% mission allotment included), would require a contributing membership of at least 200. Following the 87% formula, each member would have to give \$870 on average ( $\$200,000 \times 87\% / 200 = \$870$ ).

Each scenario poses a major financial stewardship challenge with the present level of giving. Either the envelope contributions need to increase significantly, or the formula must change. Even if the envelope contributions were reduced to 75% of total revenue, the average giving per person would still be significant, \$725 and \$750 respectively.

In this diocese:

- 43% of parishes receive between 30 – 59% of their revenue from envelopes;
- 53% receive between 60 – 80% of their revenue from envelopes;
- No parish reached the 87% rule;
- A small number of parishes rely excessively on other financial resources (rentals, fundraising, memorials, ACW donations, grants-in-aid, and special donations/bequests).

Upon review of a number of other dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada that have a missional policy, a sustainable parish ministry is defined as a congregation, cluster of congregations or parish ministry initiative that has many of the following observable characteristics:

- It has clergy and active lay leadership with the skills to manage the programs and property of the parish ministry to meet its own sense of mission.
- It has the energy and resources to meet the challenges of the community it serves.
- It relies mainly on the freewill offerings of its member for its core financial support
- It has the resources and appropriate leadership necessary to carry out its calling.
- It can provide for the future well-being of congregational or parish life.
- It generates resources from its member and those it serves and does not deplete its capital reserves or capital assets.

*(The Diocese of Toronto and The Diocese of Central Newfoundland)*

The three main aspects of sustainability are: resources; finances; and mission.

It is not the mandate of this Commission to draft a Missional Policy for the Diocese. It is our mandate to look at the whole issue of sustainability and restructuring and to make recommendations where a parish/congregation is no longer strategic and financially self-supporting. When all is considered - infrastructure, demographics, revenue - the challenges are huge but not insurmountable and show great possibility and potential. Possibility is a motivator.

## RESTRUCTURING

In the theological reflection at the beginning of this report, Jesus walked away from a building, a religious institution, that he felt was no longer doing the right thing and then forecast its destruction. It is a tough message. And yet we are reminded in the Acts of the Apostles that this Church of his is precious, bought with his own blood. Clearly the Church is the people whom He has commissioned to care for and to grow.

The Commission was asked to investigate present trends and models in the diocese and “to propose a restructuring” of the Diocese for consideration at Synod. (See “Ministries in Action,” Report of the Commission on Parish Demographics, October 2003 for a full review of Ministry/Parish Models.)

The business of excessive real estate and restructuring is nothing new to the church and is a topic that has been tinkered with in the Diocese as far back as 1972 when there was just one diocese for Newfoundland and Labrador. At Synod that year they were considering dividing the Diocese into regions instead of three separate dioceses. Resolution 18 of the Diocesan Task Force in that year read, “Be it resolved that each Region when set up give consideration to the closing out of small churches situated within commuting distance of each other but that no firm decision be made to close out any church until there is an agreement by the Parishioners concerned.” Notable responses included this one: “The church includes too much real estate and not enough religion. The recommendation of this resolution is a very touchy issue and one which could cause much trouble if the local feelings and traditions are not sufficiently taken into account.”

The saga continues. The Report of the Advisory Committee presented to The Right Reverend Donald Harvey in February 1996, chronicled a whole list of problems associated with re-alignment. The explanatory notes to Resolution 3 on Parish Viability included: “Parish re-alignments of the past have had mixed results both spiritually and financially. The following facts are very pertinent to the analysis of the present state of these parishes.” It then goes on to list of number of critical considerations including diocesan officials using “heavy-handed” tactics to force alignments when participants did not wish to go a route. Should we expect any different response from the people this time around?

What exactly is the Commission asked to do or present? When it speaks of a “proposal for restructuring” is the Diocese asking the Commission to pinpoint or single out certain churches, parishes or arrears and say to them, “You are no longer viable, and we are recommending to Synod that you close or merge, or find some other model?” Again, this heavy-handed approach has left its scars in the past. Moreover, the Commission does not know the full context and dynamics of any given area/parish/cluster to determine what needs to be done. This is beyond the scope of the Commission in its limited time frame.

Then there is the other extreme of ignoring the question altogether and simply saying to parishes, “Find your own solution.” Neither the Commission, nor the responses at the town hall meetings, suggests that that is a solution. First, it is simply not good stewardship to maintain all these buildings at the expense of ministry/mission and, second, with declining, aging demographics the task of “keeping her going” is just too much. There is a sense of defeat in some parishes and there remains a strong sense of parochial status in our congregations/parishes. But having said that, the climate is ripe for change. The nodding of heads at the town hall gatherings suggests that we cannot continue on the path we are on and something must be done. In fact, some of the smaller congregations have already made the move to close buildings or find some other model. It is already happening, and we have the testimony of a number of good working models in our diocese.

The Commission has been saying throughout the season of town hall meetings that “Churches close churches.” It is also true that at the present rate of decline churches will close regardless. It is just a matter of getting on board. The sooner we can identify critical areas/parishes, the less grief over managing decline. Identifying certain areas

is not a sign of defeat but a means to restoring hope. While a few churches are so remote that special consideration may be made to look at other models, other areas show great potential. For instance, Conception Bay North in the Bay Roberts area is fairly stable economically. Is there any reason why the whole of the Bay Roberts area from Shearstown to North River could not come together under a single, new and modern complex designed to support missional ministry instead of trying to maintain five old buildings, all of which are struggling, and all of which are within five or ten minutes from Bay Roberts central? This holds true for South East Labrador and parts of the Isthmus as well. There are churches in the St. John's metropolitan area that are spending far more on maintenance than they are on staffing and mission. And there are congregations/parishes that are a constant drain on their parishioners and the Diocese. These are sometimes called "vampire" parishes – sucking the life-blood out of them.

The Commission therefore feels that while the time may be ripe for change, any proposal would have to include participation on behalf of the people using an assessment tool with which parishes can evaluate themselves – aided by the expertise of a Missional Officer at Synod Office, and the concept of Mission Areas. We are not mavericks, independent-minded churches seeking only to maintain their own interests (as in the case of the Temple scene). It is about doing the right thing, a process that begins with the parish but doesn't end there.

## RESEARCH

Research on the decline of the Church is in no short supply. The difficulty lies in identifying and understanding the problem. Formulation of the problem is more essential than the solution. After reading and studying reams of books and articles the problem(s) are diverse, which makes the solution even more challenging. Most of the material below comes from several streams, including the Church of England, the Church in Wales, the Diocese of Toronto, various publications, and good news stories from a variety of denominations from across Canada.

Institutional Christianity is in decline. According to an article published in the *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, except for parts of Africa and Asia where Christianity is growing faster than the national population growth, the institutional church is "disintegrating." The article also reported an increase in the defragmentation of traditional denominations with a corresponding increase in denominations and worship centers. Even within the Anglican tradition there have been a number of breakaway groups. Meanwhile, secularism continues to rise, and non-church-going people are less likely to consider going to church than ever before. Institutional decline, defragmentation and the rise in secularism means there are less people to maintain the present infrastructure and "burdensome" buildings. This brings up the question of organizational sustainability, starting with the obvious: financial self-reliance, i.e., continued existence.

However, the issue of sustainability is more than a matter of economics, as important as that may be. Numerous publications attest to the fact that a sustainable organization must be able to achieve organizational mission and goals, and to live up to its vision and core values. Neither is sustainability simply a matter of downsizing. Denominations are unlikely to survive the challenges of restructuring and downsizing if they are not willing to become vision-guided and experimental. To be sustainable an organization must have a clearly articulated vision and the necessary resources to maintain that vision. The problem is that with current structures and the present parish culture, denominations become consumed with merely maintaining their existence and traditions. It becomes increasingly difficult for them to focus on mission and to live according to their vision and values. Even the process of downsizing, merger and amalgamation of churches has a way of consuming a leader's time and resources at the expense of mission. Probably there is a lot to be said for Jesus turning his back on the Temple and walking away.

But despite the decline of institutional Christianity there are churches that are growing, mostly among the conservative/evangelical traditions, although there are some great examples of growth from the more

progressive/liberal traditions as well. The churches that are growing are independent even if they claim affiliation to a particular denomination. Why are these churches growing despite a general decline? The Church of England and the Diocese of Toronto have done considerable research in this area, both urban and rural. In general, urban churches show much more promise than rural areas – mostly because of the continued decline of the population in rural areas and the growth of urban centers.

As pointed out earlier, the problems are numerous and not always clearly defined; hence, there is no simple solution. What is obvious is that mission is always contextual. What works in one place/church may not necessarily work in another. In other words, the road to growth depends on context. What seems crucial is that congregations that show any signs of growth are constantly engaged in reflection and take nothing for granted; there is no room for autopilot. There are a number of factors associated with churches that are healthy and growing. Note, however, that association by itself does not establish causality. That is to say, factors associated with church health and growth do not prove or disprove anything and can only at best demonstrate that it is related.

The factors associated with growth are worth mentioning. *From Anecdote to Evidence*, findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013, (Church of England), listed the following:

- Context (mostly urban);
- Leadership (effective leadership leading to growth is a combination of having specific qualities and skills with an intention to grow);
- Clear mission and purpose;
- Willing to self-reflect and learn continually;
- Willing to change and adapt (to experiment);
- Actively engaging children and teenagers (retreats, conferences, etc.);
- Actively engaging with those who might not go to church (those outside the existing community);
- Hospitality (good welcoming and follow up for visitors);
- Committed to nurturing new and existing members (evangelism, discipleship courses);
- Vision (a vision for growth – need to be intentional).

Just as there are no simple recipes for growth, neither are there any simple solutions to decline. However, two of the major factors associated with decline are: 1) The challenge to retain younger generations. There is an urgent need to focus on children, young people and their parents and a challenge to identify how the church can best invest in people; and, 2) The effect of amalgamations. (Amalgamation is not to be confused with merger. The Report uses the word amalgamation in reference to a multi-point parish.) The point is that the greater number of churches in the amalgamation (parish) the more likely it is to decline. Churches are more likely to grow when there is **one leader** for **one community**. How might this work in this diocese, especially in those multi-point parishes where the driving distances between congregations is no longer a factor?

From the research and the feedback from the town hall meetings it is obvious that any proposal for restructuring would be incomplete if not complemented with a Plan for Mission, or to be missional. “Every parish missional” should be the goal. In 2011 the Diocese of Asaph in the Church in Wales launched a vision (2020 Vision, Unlocking Our Potential) to replace parishes with Mission Areas (MA). The transition from parishes to MA in the Diocese of Asaph is to be completed by 2017 with full deployment by 2020. It is a model that has merit but is nonetheless a huge undertaking. It is a long-term plan and an initiative that might be considered in this diocese at another time. But because of the crisis facing many of our parishes, such a long-term initiative is a luxury we cannot afford at this time. Nevertheless, the whole idea of MA is a very good starting point where we can get organized optimally to get on with mission. Moreover, the town hall meetings spoke loudly and clearly, not only around mission, but of the need to work together.

Mission Areas would certainly be a way to encourage inter-parish cooperation – even merger and team ministry - and specially to encourage emphasis on mission as the central activity of parish life and the Diocese. We can envision this happening on several levels. On the parish level this may require the recruitment of a Mission Officer dedicated to missional ministry apart from the Rector, although the Rector would still be the driving force behind mission. Archdeaonries could assume the responsibility for assigning Mission Areas which would be made up of both clergy and lay. This could be a cluster of parishes in a geographical area, such as a Deanery, or some other shared value, such as urban or rural. And finally, a Mission Canon (not necessarily clergy) employed on the diocesan level to oversee the implementation of the whole plan and to work with the MA is critical. The point is that everything about church needs to be missional: governance, constitution, policies, vestry, budget, parish life, etc. The ‘main thing’ needs to be the ‘main thing’ – mission!

While the concept of MA in Labrador would be challenging, the idea of “Every Parish Missional” is achievable. Expanding that concept for the Archdeaconry of Labrador could certainly be part of the mandate of the Labrador Planning and Strategy Conference.

## LABRADOR PARISHES - FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

As noted in the Town Hall Analysis, in January of 2018 members of the Commission visited Labrador and held town hall meetings in five communities including Labrador West, Churchill Falls, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Port Hope Simpson and Mary’s Harbour.

The geography of Labrador is immense and the distance between communities, especially on the coast of Labrador, provides continuing challenges in the delivery of clergy services. Over the past two decades much progress has been made in developing road transportation connecting communities to one another. This provides opportunities for sharing that were not available in the past. However, there remain a number of communities that do not have road connections.

Many congregations are small and in decline, especially in coastal Labrador. Young people in these areas are leaving their communities to pursue further education and opportunities in careers.

In Labrador West the congregation has been in decline over an extended period. However, now the parish is sustainable and the congregation reasonably stable although there is concern with an aging demographic and lack of younger people in attendance. Ordained leadership is provided with a full-time resident priest and two ordained deacons.

Churchill Falls has an Anglican priest who ministers to small congregations of both the Anglican and United Church. In recent years the priest in Churchill Falls has provided regular services to the congregation in Rigolet. While Churchill Falls has an active and engaged youth program, including a young person with a lay reader designation, the congregation is not sustainable. The minister in Churchill Falls holds the position of Archdeacon and provides some visitation to the coastal areas.

Happy Valley-Goose Bay has maintained a stable congregation over an extended period and has experienced some growth. It continues to be sustainable although there are concerns relative to an aging congregation. The parish is well supported by a full-time priest, an honorary priest and a deacon. Clergy provide services to the communities of Mud Lake and North West River.

In coastal Labrador one of the consistent comments expressed at the town halls was the desire for a full-time priest resident in the parish. In recent years recruitment of clergy for this parish has been difficult and although there

have been terms of short duration where a priest has been available to provide services to the parish, there has been a lack of continuity and stability. In the future, it is suggested that perhaps if a local person were interested in training for the priesthood, it would provide more stability for the parish.

The three main population and service centers in the Parish of South Eastern Labrador are Cartwright, Port Hope Simpson and Mary's Harbour. Other communities within the parish boundaries include St. Lewis, Pinsent's Arm, Lodge Bay, Charlottetown, Norman Bay and Black Tickle. Once or twice a year clergy services are provided to the heritage community at Battle Harbour. A full-time clergy can be recruited for the Parish of South Eastern Labrador who will reside at the rectory in Mary's Harbour. Given the improvements in road transportation to the outlying small communities, it is suggested that the church leadership and congregations in those communities, along with a newly appointed parish priest, give attention to closing a number of church buildings in several communities. Both Port Hope Simpson and Mary's Harbour have church buildings that can accommodate the congregation of communities in proximity to them.

We wonder if church buildings in outlying areas, such as Black Tickle, Charlottetown and Pinsent's Arm should be considered for closure. It is always painful when decisions need to be made to close community churches. But if the parish has hopes of becoming sustainable in the future, the financial burden of keeping so many buildings open and in good repair is beyond the financial capacity of small congregations. Communities in the parish not accessible by road would receive clergy support via available transportation means based on seasonal accessibility. At present there is an ordained deacon residing in Mary's Harbor who provides clergy services and during the recent past there have been visiting clergy to the different parts of the parish.

In the community of Cartwright there is a strong lay ministry and quite recently very good news in that a priest has been appointed who will reside in the community. This provides stability for the church congregation there. Perhaps consideration could be given to arranging clergy visitation from Cartwright to Black Tickle and Rigolet. In Rigolet there is an ordained deacon and some visitation by clergy from other parts of Labrador.

There does not appear to be any early movement around a coming together of the dioceses of Eastern NL and Western so the communities further south in the Straits were not considered in terms of this report. If a full-time priest is unable to be recruited for the Parish of South Eastern Labrador, then providing clergy services for the area should be the responsibility of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. With a second priest appointed to that parish the clergy team there would provide services to the Parish of South Eastern Labrador.

The ultimate desire of the Commission is to engage the church and its congregations toward a more missional approach to faith where congregations can grow and expand, and the closure of church buildings would not be necessary.

## LEADERSHIP/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As the Commission began its work last fall it became clear that a focus on leadership training was needed within the Diocese, in particular, missional leadership. We have reached a time in the church where we know that change must happen. The missional leader would be a catalyst for change, taking the church's vision – assuming that it has one – and enabling it, under God. Missional leadership, for both clergy and lay, is vital to healthy, growing, sustainable parish ministry.

Leadership training or professional development is nothing new and has been a topic of concern and recommendation in past diocesan reports, everything from equipping lay ministry to residential conferences for clergy. “There are three strategic focuses to effective leadership development: current leaders who need to further develop their skills, talents and interests; potential leaders who, with the right training, could assume new roles and responsibilities; and clergy who need ongoing professional development opportunities.” (Ministries in Action, October 2003)

Through the Commission's research, town hall meetings and conversations with clergy within the Diocese it has become apparent that changes are needed in the way clergy are being trained for ministry. For many years seminary training had a major focus on theology, pastoral care, sacraments and homiletics. There is no doubt these are very important aspects of a theological college in training and preparing people for ordained ministry. However, the church is ever changing, and clergy are finding that ministry today is very different than it was even twenty years ago. Those training for ministry today must be well equipped for leading their congregations through the changes that face the church. Within a three-year Master's or Bachelor program students receive very few courses on leadership, but they are being sent into parishes with the expectation that they lead those parishes and build up leaders around them for parish ministries.

At a September clergy gathering with the Commission, the Reverend Ron Lee, Rector of the Parish of Bell Island, where there has been great success in building a new church and adapting to many changes, spoke of, “the importance of leadership and having the right team around you when facing change.” Most clergy in our diocese have agreed that having leadership training and leadership resources available would enhance the ministry they are offering in their parishes.

St. Mellitus College is a relatively new theological college in the United Kingdom with campuses located in London, Chelmsford, North West England and South West England. They report, “This college has experienced remarkable life and growth over the last ten years and is widely thought to be one of the most innovative and exciting places to study theology, ministry and mission in the UK.” St. Mellitus has a deep focus on Missional Leadership and seeks to equip students practically to exercise healthy models of leadership wherever they minister, that they may be a pattern and example to Christ's people. St. Mellitus offers a one-year (full-time) or two-year (part-time) program called MA Christian Leadership. This program is in high demand in the UK and is designed to help leaders engage in Christian reflection in the sphere in which they are living or working.

The Anglican Diocese of Toronto has a strong focus on parish leadership, providing a parish leader's manual that can be located on the diocesan website, along with a list of parish leadership workshops that are offered throughout the Diocese. The Diocese of Rupert's Land employs a Diocesan Ministry Developer, the Rev. Heather McCance, who coordinates the training and formation for all who are in leadership in ministry. They, too, believe that leadership is a very important part of ministry for both ordained and lay ministers and that continual leadership training and workshops are vital for successful parish ministry.

Through the town hall meetings, the Commission discovered many similarities among parishes of the Diocese. Parishes are struggling and realize that change is needed to grow and become healthy once again. Many of our

parishes have one priest in a parish with several points. That situation does not allow much leeway for the priest to live out the vision of the church. This is consistent with research. Such a parish becomes focused on maintenance and the priest must divide his/her time between the different points, travelling and preparing services and visitation. This does not afford time to invest in being a missional priest in a missional parish. As leaders, they will become exhausted or burnt-out and unable to provide the kind of leadership they and the parish envision.

In June three members of the Commission travelled to Halifax to attend the Divine Renovation Conference. The following is taken from the Divine Renovation website: "Divine Renovation points a way forward. We don't have all the answers. But we believe we have many of the right questions. And we've experienced first-hand what it's like to be a missional parish. Divine Renovation was birthed out of a real experience of renewal. Fr. James Mallon along with the team at [Saint Benedict Parish](#) in Halifax, Canada transformed their parish into a vibrant community of missionary disciples. Pastors, priests and leaders from around the world took notice. The Divine Renovation ministry with its events, books, coaching, and resources is a response to the incredible hunger for renewal. The ministry desires to **inspire** and **equip** every leader out there so that they can move their parish from maintenance to mission."

At this powerful conference it was eye-opening and encouraging to see how many Roman Catholic parishes have found renewal, growth and strength. When making such dramatic changes and seeing the results they realized that leadership was a key factor. Afterward, the Commission considered what is being done in this diocese to equip our leaders with the necessary training and skills to lead their parishes from maintenance to a missional model. No one leader can do it all and leaders within our parishes need to be equipped to work with the priest in bringing the vision to the people within the parish and enabling the work that needs to happen. Priests' training should not end with seminary and ordination. To lead parishes in becoming mission-focused the priest must keep themselves educated and updated as we move forward in this ever-changing culture.

Divine Renovation recommends that each parish have a Senior Leadership Team. This is a team of about 4-6 people that gathers around the pastor to help make tactical decisions. The team meets once a week for 2-4 hours and exists to assist the pastor in managing the parish, involving everything from strategic decisions and people management to operations and finances. The role of the senior leadership team is to look beyond their areas of expertise or responsibility to help the pastor protect the good of the entire parish. A pastor is a better leader when they surround themselves with good leaders and open themselves to their input and influence.

Who is the missional leader? What does a missional leader look like? What are the behaviors and characteristics of missional leadership that drives growth? Whereas the priest is primarily responsible for the sacramental, pastoral and teaching ministries, the missional leader is accountable for overseeing the overall health, mission and vision of the parish. Findings from *The Church Growth Institute Program 2011-2013* "show a strong correlation between those clergy who prioritize numerical growth and those clergy whose churches grew in numbers." Missional leaders, in addition to having specific qualities and skills, are intentional about growing their churches. Qualities which stood out as being significant to growth included: motivating; envisioning; and innovating. Of course, every individual has different gifts. The challenge for the Commission and the Diocese is to support and nurture the vocation of everyone while maintaining a focus on missional thinking and training. As in all circumstances there is no single recipe.

Dioceses in Toronto and in the UK offer promising models but will need further exploration. Queen's College offers a variety of programs and courses that are available through distance, correspondence and on campus. With the advances in technology individuals can now take courses in the comfort of their homes or office and join in discussions and seminars through webinar sessions. After discussions with the Provost of Queen's College, Dr. Rick Singleton, Queen's College has announced that it will offer a Certificate in Leadership that can have a component for both clergy and laity. The Commission recommends this learning opportunity, or leadership courses that may be offered through other institutions, to clergy and laity within the Diocese. The Commission is also working with Bishop

Peddle on a proposal for a leadership conference to be held in our diocese. Leadership training for both lay and clergy may also be an agenda item for Mission Areas if Synod should adopt such a model.

The Commission understands and acknowledges that moving from a maintenance to a missional parish does not happen overnight. It takes work, dedication and a vision, but research and observation have demonstrated that it is possible, and the result is healthy and vibrant parishes. Leadership training is a key component as we move forward with this process.

## CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

Put simply, when it comes to lawful human activity in our society an individual person can do just about anything unless a law says, “No, you can’t,” while a corporate person cannot do much unless a law says, “Yes, you can.” Among many things, the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador is a corporate person and our basic law that tells us what we can do is the Constitution and Canons as adopted and amended from time to time by our Diocesan Synod. Of course, we are more than simply a corporation: we are part of the people of God, the Body of Christ. As such, the foundation on which our whole life is built must be the Word of God written, which gives authoritative testimony to the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ our Lord. And so, the Constitution and Canons which regulate our corporate life must be reflective of that foundation.

In the Gospel we find Jesus proclaiming by word and deed that the boundless love of God is for all people: for those within the fold and for those outside; for those near at hand and those far away. At His ascension He declared His followers, His Church, to be a mission-based people: to **go** into the entire world with His Gospel. Wherever the Church finds itself it is to proclaim by word and deed the boundless love of God for *all* people, within the fold and outside, near and far. Thus, the pastoral care of those within is no more important than our obligation to reach out to those outside with the words and service that give tangible witness to God’s love and care.

By their very nature constitutions tend to be rather vague documents that require interpretation and allow for growth and development in corporate life as the circumstances change in which the corporation lives. Sometimes they require amendments to provide room for growth or change of direction. The circumstances in which our “diocesan corporation” now lives are certainly different from what our experience was only a few decades ago. We are in an age which demands an increased emphasis on outreach and service to those outside the fold: to see that as an essential aspect of our *mission* as the Body of Christ today. This has always been the case, but it is fair to say that it has suffered neglect over the years. Our diocesan constitution gives little voice to that aspect of our mission. It does a better job in regulating our life together and caring for one another, those near and within.

As this Commission looked at the life of our diocese, and listened to so many people attending the town hall meetings, it became obvious that part of our overall recommendation must be with regard to amending our diocesan constitution and canons in order to give added emphasis and encouragement to that part of our life which responds to the call of Jesus to go in love and service to those outside and far. The specific amendments are found in the Resolutions of this report. Briefly stated, they are:

- Amending Chapter 1 of the Constitution, *Definitions*, to add reference to the Diocesan Mission Statement;
- Several amendments to the Constitution and Canons to add reference to the Diocesan Mission Statement as appropriate;
- An amendment to *Canon 1: The Bishop*, by specifying the leadership role of the Bishop in our participation in the mission of our Lord, while eliminating the role of Chief Administrative Officer as that is recommended for someone else;

- An amendment to *Canon 3: Ministry: Ordained and Lay*, accentuating the importance of professional development and continued education, noting the role of the Bishop in furthering this, allowing for a channelling of such efforts into the particular needs of the Diocese.

The organization of our parishes is crucial to the effective addressing of our mission. It is the feeling of the Commission, reinforced by comments at town hall gatherings, that much of our present organization as outlined in *Canon 5: The Organization of the Parish* impedes our effectiveness and must be modified. There is much parochialism, and indeed congregationalism, as we struggle to maintain what we have. Conversely, there are insufficient examples of outward looking service or teamwork with other congregations and faith communities. We are therefore proposing there be a complete revision of Canon 5 to be introduced at the next session of the Synod. Ideas being considered include:

- Restructuring (or possibly replacing) vestries, to include a missional component/committee and an administration and finance component/committee. If replacing Vestry with such committees, they would be chaired by a churchwarden with the Incumbent a member of each;
- Centralizing outreach and oversight in multi-point parishes by elimination of the congregational vestries and parish council, replacing them with the two committees referred to above, to function on the parish level with membership from each congregation;
- Encouraging teamwork, especially by allowing for the merging of parishes and having team ministries, and by working with other faith communities, where practicable.

We ask parishes and archdeaconries to give urgent consideration to this proposal and forward reaction and suggestions to Synod Office.

In many ways, the Constitution and Canons are but the dry bones of our corporate existence. No one suggests great changes will occur in our communities by making a few amendments. It is the Spirit, working in us with our individual gifts and strengths, which will give life to our participation in the mission on which Jesus sends us.

## DIOCESAN AND PARISH ORGANIZATION

(See Appendix 1 for SWOT Analysis)

### Implementation

As part of our work, the Commission has reviewed previous reports of a similar nature undertaken in our diocese in the past. There has been some excellent work completed and what is most disappointing is that many of these reports identified the same issues and solutions as this Commission. One area where the Commission feels the Diocese has been weak in the past is ensuring adequate resources are established to implement the recommendations of the reports. With this in mind, the Commission feels very strongly that an Implementation Facilitator should be appointed to implement the recommendations of this report. In the past, these responsibilities have been placed on existing resources that either did not have the right training, right skills, and sufficient authority or just had too many other responsibilities.

The Implementation Facilitator should be a lay person with education and experience in Change Management and Project Management, while coming with a faith foundation to respect the significance of the changes we are suggesting to guide the Diocese along the path that has been laid out. While Change Management and Project

Management are principles used regularly in the business world today, they can be applied effectively in the church context as well to ensure action and success. The Implementation Facilitator should be a stand-alone position with no other responsibilities other than to manage the implementation of the recommendations of this report. The Bishop will appoint this person and give them the authority to act. The Bishop must stay informed and be prepared to make necessary decisions but cannot manage this project directly. The Implementation Facilitator will work closely with the Mission Canon, rectors and Mission Coordinators (roles explained further in the document) throughout the Diocese to establish new structures, encourage collaboration between parishes, establish Mission Areas and assist with congregations that wish to merge and/or divest of buildings. The Implementation Facilitator should be appointed for a term of no less than 2 years and will likely require a renewal of term upon a review at the following Synod of the progress of the implementation. A budget, separate from the Synod Office budget, but funded by the Diocese, should be established to fund the salary and activity of the Implementation Facilitator as well as to provide transitional funds for parishes that wish to change their organizational structures towards a strong missional focus, or merge with another parish or parishes, or even close. It is suggested that the budget be developed by the Implementation Facilitator with input from the Mission Canon and Bishop, to be approved by the Diocesan Executive Committee, to ensure adequate resources are available.

### Synod Office

The structure proposed for Synod Office responds to two fundamental challenges. Churches are not very good at administration and it is becoming more and more difficult to find competent volunteers to manage the finances within the Diocese. By creating a Chief Administrative Officer role, the burden of administration is removed from the Bishop and allows him/her to focus on leadership of the spiritual aspect of our organization. Pastors are not trained as administrators and in our current state, the Bishop is overburdened in financial, human resource and other administrative functions. While the Executive Archdeacon position is there to manage the day-to-day in consultation with the Bishop, it is increasingly difficult to focus on leadership development and providing clear ministerial direction within the Diocese. Focus in these areas should lead to positive reengagement with clergy and congregations. We need to become better organized as an institution and it is time to hire people with the training and skills in these areas to improve our efficiency as an organization.

Communicating our message has always been difficult for Anglicans, but we are called to share the Good News. Having a dedicated public relations and communications professional will have a large impact in changing the negative perception of church. Increasing our presence on social media and finding new ways to deliver the Gospel can help meet seekers where they are. Young people interact on social media and that is where the Church should be. There are many opportunities for increased social media presence. For example, parishes could have a YouTube channel or Facebook page (or other platform) where sermons are posted for access by those who did not or could not get to church, or the Diocese could broadcast services throughout the diocese and world on Facebook Live or some other live streaming service. To really push the envelope, the Diocese could create a virtual parish where all parish worship and fellowship activity centres on and around social media. Jesus met the people where they were - on the side of a lake or mountain or in someone's home, wherever 2 or 3 gather. Today, many gather on social media and the Church should be there.

Hiring professional accountants and bookkeepers will relieve parishes of the burden of producing financial statements and keeping financial affairs in order. Some parishes have parish administrators whose focus is finance while others require volunteers to do this work. Professional bookkeepers will be able to keep financial records according to the general accounting rules and having an accountant (comptroller) at Synod Office focusing on financial analysis should catch disturbing trends more quickly and allow us to respond more quickly to avoid some of the troubling financial states of some parishes. Within parishes that have paid parish administrators, money saved in this regard can free up resources to hire a Mission Coordinator.

It is also time to centralize payroll for clergy and other paid staff. The Commission has heard that some clergy have had to raise funds to ensure they get paid. This should never happen, and centralizing payroll is an obvious way to prevent that. Clergy compensation is set by the Diocese and therefore funds can be remitted easily from parishes to cover payroll and having a person manage pay and benefits in one location just makes sense. Centralizing purchasing could also be a benefit. With a finance department analysing parish financial statements, opportunities to bulk order supplies and share banking and other services will save money for parishes, leaving more for missional work.

Clergy compensation should also be reviewed as part of the restructuring of the diocese. Clergy compensation is not an issue that the Commission was specifically asked to review. However, recognizing the importance that leadership within a parish plays to the success of that parish and the recommendation to move to a centralized payroll system, the Commission feels the time is right to review and overhaul the way clergy are compensated.

Clergy are presently paid based upon a “years of service” stipend scale set annually by the Diocese based solely on years being ordained. Some clergy receive an extra stipend, which in most cases is capped at \$5000, but in some instances is more than that. As well, some clergy receive a housing allowance, while others live in rectories. The Diocese is experiencing issues around recruitment and retention and the average age of our clergy looks very similar to that of our congregations.

The Commission feels a merit-based system would be a more fair and equitable way to compensate clergy recognizing not just years of ordination, but also level of responsibility, education, training, and job duties. An external consultant should be engaged by the Executive Committee to assist in establishing a compensation model that recognizes the job that is asked of our clergy which would be considered fair against other jobs with similar educational requirements and responsibility levels that will establish a suitable quality of life considering the cost of living within our region.

The Commission also feels that a performance incentive model should be created to encourage additional efforts in mission, leadership development, congregational development and stewardship. This performance incentive would be measured against objective criteria and will not be guaranteed, but only paid out in consideration of individual performance and the financial performance of the parish. If the individual does not meet the objective criteria and/or the parish does not meet all its financial obligations, then the performance incentive would be reduced to reflect this lack of performance or may not be paid at all. It is envisioned that performance incentive would only apply to the level of Rector and above.

## Parishes

Vestries and priests alike are continually overburdened by administrative matters. Tremendous effort is put into keeping the lights on, while doing God’s work in the community takes a back seat. We need to change the culture that has evolved and re-focus on Mission. If we reduce the administrative burden on parishes by centralizing financial administration and some other functions at Synod Office, the parish leadership team (Mission Team) is free to focus on God’s mission within that parish. Vestries or parish councils should get away from being decision-making bodies and focus on the strategic direction of the parish through establishing a clear Vision and Mission, setting clear direction for short and medium-term goals and encouraging the Rector and Mission Team to fulfill the mandate given to them by the congregation. Budgets are established at the Annual Congregational Meeting and the Mission Team should be empowered to act within the guidelines of that budget. The Rector should only need to seek approval from Vestry/Parish Council for large decisions that develop outside the scope of the approved budget. Otherwise, Vestry meetings should focus on mission, leadership and spiritual education and a brief review of the financial statements.

While some parishes may require an administrative assistant or secretary to fulfill some administrative functions such as tallying envelope givings, answering phones or printing the bulletin, parishes should establish a Mission Coordinator position, which could be a lay person or an associate priest, who has skills in the organization and recruitment of volunteers, communications and social media, fundraising, etc., who will work closely with the rector to ensure the mission work happens. The Rector is the spiritual leader of the parish, but cannot do the work of mission alone, so lay and clergy engagement will be essential, and the Mission Coordinator will ensure this happens. The establishment of a Mission Team lead by the Rector, with direction and support from the Vestry/Parish Council, will provide a better environment for success and should put the focus of congregations back on responding to the Great Commission.

If parishes wish to reorganize in this way or in a new innovative way that focuses on mission, they can seek the assistance of Synod Office and the Implementation Facilitator in making these changes. Vestries should also review the committees and small groups within the parishes to see if they align with the mission and vision of the parish and are serving a missional function within the parish. Dissolving committees and small groups that are not serving the mission of the parish will free up resources that can be used in other areas. It is also recommended that vestries/ parish councils meet periodically with the other vestries within their Mission Area to seek collaboration and shared mission opportunities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. ALL THINGS MISSIONAL

**Mission** implies being sent to share and engage others with the Good News of Jesus Christ, by word and deed. The basic premise is that all Christians are to be involved in The Great Commission – Matthew 28:19-20 – and that it involves discipleship-making and service. Examples may include partnering with a local charity, answering some neighbour need/crisis, overseas building project, evangelism.

A **Mission Area** is a group of parishes/congregations defined by certain criteria, e.g. geography, rural/urban, etc., working in partnership, with a shared leadership team, to allow them to be stronger together. How can churches partner with brothers and sisters in other churches to tackle things which may seem too great a task for a single congregation/parish?

The Commission is recommending:

- That Mission be recognized throughout the Diocese as a priority and the foundation of the life of every congregation.

To that end, the Commission is further recommending:

- That the Diocese begin work immediately on the development and implementation of missional ministry and reconfiguration;
- That the Diocese hire a Mission Canon to be based at the Diocesan Office to oversee the Mission of the Diocese;
- That the Diocese proceed immediately with the formation of a Mission Policy for the Diocese to guide parishes in their missional ministries. The development, implementation, oversight and evaluation of this Policy is to be the responsibility of the Mission Canon;
- That the Diocese be divided into Mission Areas (MA) and that the MA be determined/assigned by the Archdeaonries (suggestions in Appendix 4);
- That the purpose of the Mission Area would include, but not be limited to:
  - Encouraging inter-parish cooperation and supporting each parish in its missionary efforts;
  - Encouraging the emphasis on Mission as the central activity of parish and diocesan life;
  - Developing community-based ministries that are possible only by working together, particularly, where possible, with other faith communities or community agencies;
  - Seeking ways to be more effective in administration, the sharing and combining of resources, social media, etc.
  - Assisting congregations and/or parishes in the exploration of new models of ministry, including the merging of parishes and the development of team ministries;
  - Sharing responsibility with the Diocese for the training of clergy and laity on Missional Ministry and Leadership.

### 2. RESTRUCTURING, REORGANIZING AND COLLABORATION

The Commission is recommending:

- That the Diocese restructure itself to improve efficiency in operations and free up energy and resources to engage more strongly in missional ministry. Such restructuring would include Diocesan Office personnel and parish organization and relationships. Reorganization on the local level will

address parish governance, the merging of congregations in multi-point parishes where practicable, the amalgamation of adjoining parishes where practicable, and other models of ministry that best address mission emphasis. The Commission has identified a number of areas and parishes that show great potential to free up energy spent on buildings to focus on mission, namely:

**Areas:**

- Bay Roberts central from Shearstown/Butlerville to North River
- Carbonear/Harbour Grace
- St John's parishes
- South East Labrador
- Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Rigolet
- Mount Pearl parishes

**Multi-point Parishes:**

These parishes should seriously consider merging congregations or last least centralizing parish governance.

- Bay de Verde
- The Living Water
- Upper Island Cove
- The Holy Trinity
- The Holy Cross
- Spaniard's Bay
- The Holy Spirit
- Hearts Content
- Petty Harbour/Bay Bulls/Aquaforte

**Single-point Parishes:**

These parishes should seek new models of ministry where applicable. The Report of the Commission on Parish Demographics, "Ministries in Action" (October 2003), lists a number of possible ministry models. The Report can be accessed under the Diocesan Commission tab on the diocesan website.

No parish is to be excluded from full participation in Mission Area ministry.

- Bell Island
- The Epiphany, Heart's Delight
- St. John the Evangelist, CBS
- St. Peter's, CBS
- All Saints, CBS
- The Holy Innocents, Paradise
- St. Paul's, Goulds
- The Resurrection, South River
- St. Nicholas, Torbay
- All Saints, Pouch Cove
- St. Mark's, Churchill Falls
- St. Paul's, Labrador West
- St. Philips, Portugal Cove-St. Philips
- St. Lawrence, Portugal Cove-St. Philips

### 3. PARISH SUSTAINABILITY/SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Commission is recommending:

- That every parish be self-supporting, with 85% of its revenue generated from envelop offerings;
- That every parish include in its budget a tithe (10%) allotment for mission, with another 45% for staffing, and the remaining 45% for synod assessment/maintenance/operational costs. (These percentages are approximate as every parish is different;
- That as a benchmark 30% of the people in each parish be responsible for 50% of the givings;
- That each parish be committed to the mission and vision of the Diocese and that each parish have articulated:
  - Parish mission and vision statements, core values, and a plan for implementation and evaluation;
  - Ministry Plan that includes the mission and vision of the Diocese;
- That each parish have the ordained and active lay leadership with the skills to fulfill its programs and its own sense of mission.

To that end, the Commission further recommends:

- That all congregations in the Diocese complete an annual self assessment exercise using the Self-Assessment Tool in Appendix 3 to determine its strengths and weaknesses for sustaining missional ministry. This self-assessment shall be completed by the Vestry and submitted to the Diocesan Office by December 31 of each year.

### 4. LEADERSHIP/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Commission is recommending:

- That an intentional and determined effort be mounted to provide the necessary missional leadership skills for both clergy and laity to give effect to renewed emphasis on missional ministry in the Diocese.

To that end, the Commission further recommends:

- That regular continuing education for the clergy of the Diocese be made mandatory;
- That an educational conference for clergy and laity for leadership training and other matters relating to our engagement with the Church's mission be held in the year between synods;
- That Mission Areas organize ongoing leadership workshops to strengthen the work of mission within the respective Mission Areas;
- That the Diocese be prepared to subsidize clergy who wish to avail of approved continuing education courses or programs where costs exceed the funds available through their continuing education fund.

## 5. REORGANIZATION OF THE DIOCESAN OFFICE

### The Commission is recommending:

- That the Diocesan Office be reorganized to separate administrative responsibilities from the Bishop and to provide a stronger focus on administrative efficiencies within the Diocese as outlined below. This will allow the Bishop to devote more time and energy to the episcopal functions of proclaiming and teaching the faith, spiritual nurturing and providing leadership in mission ministry.

### To that end, the Commission further recommends:

- That the position of Executive Officer be replaced by a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO will report directly to Synod, and the Diocesan Executive Committee in the interim, on financial management within the Diocese but report to the Bishop for day-to-day matters. The position can be filled by a lay or ordained person with the right skills and training in administrative functions such as Finance, Human Resources, Communications, and Governance.
- That the position of “Mission Canon” be established. This is a clergy position to be appointed by the Bishop and reporting to the Bishop to lead the missional work of the Diocese. The Mission Canon will be a full-time position located at the Diocesan Office and will assist the Bishop with leadership and congregational development within the Diocese.
- That the Bishop appoint an Implementation Facilitator to act as project manager (contractual), whose sole purpose is to work with all Diocesan Office staff and all parishes to implement the recommendations of this report. The Implementation Facilitator shall be a lay person with a faith background with specific training and experience in Project and Change Management techniques. The Implementation Facilitator, once appointed:
  - Shall work with the Diocesan Finance Committee to develop a stand along budget separate from the Diocesan Budget to cover the expenses related to the implementation of the recommendations of this report. This will allow the costs to be appropriately tracked and will segregate the funds from operational funds to ensure no confusion or overlap of resources. It is envisioned that a transitional sum be allocated in this budget to assist the Diocesan Office and parishes in transitioning to new ministry and missional models.
- That the Financial Officer position be replaced with the position of “Comptroller”. The Comptroller will be a CPA (or similar designation) and will report directly to the CAO. The Comptroller is to manage financial administration within the Diocese and perform financial analysis for the Diocese and all parishes seeking to find efficiencies and improved accounting practices following the general accounting principles. As we transition to a central services model for financial management, additional “Financial Specialists” may need to be added to assist with the increased workload.
- That the Diocese establish a “Public Relations Specialist” position. This position will report to the CAO and be located at the Diocesan Office. The primary purpose of this position is to manage external and internal communications within the Diocese. The Public Relations Specialists will be responsible for:
  - Preparing public announcements, managing website and social media, and to be a resource to assist parishes in their website and social media efforts;
  - Overseeing the establishment of a set of guidelines around the use of social media in parishes and the Diocese.

## 6. CONSTITUTIONS AND CANONS (1)

In order to relate the life of the Diocese more closely to the Diocesan Mission Statement, and give greater emphasis to the work of mission,

The Commission is recommending that the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese be amended as follows:

- An amendment to Chapter 1 of the Constitution, *Definitions*;
- An amendment to *Canon 1: The Bishop*;
- An amendment to *Canon 3: Ministry: Ordained and Lay*.

## 7. CONSTITUTIONS AND CANONS (2)

The Commission is recommending:

- That in order to emphasize missional ministry at the parish level and to enhance collaboration within the Diocese, that a study be made at the Parish and Archdeaconry levels of *Canon 5: The Organization of the Parish* with a view to:
  - Restructuring Vestries to form two smaller committees, one to focus on mission and outreach and the other on administration and finance;
  - Centralizing outreach and oversight in multi-point parishes by replacing congregational Vestries and Parish Councils with the two committees referred to above, each having membership from each congregation in the Parish;
  - Enhancing collaboration by encouraging the merging of parishes and having team ministries where practicable, and by working with other faith communities;
  - Centralizing financial administration in the Diocesan Office.

The results of such study are to be forwarded to the Mission Canon in time for a new Canon 5 to be presented to the next session of the Synod.

## 8. CENTRALIZED PAYROLL

The Commission is recommending:

- That the Diocese adopt a central Payroll Management System that will:
  - Ensure all clergy and professional lay personnel employed by the Diocese are paid on time;
  - Ensure that all parishes are properly tracked and assessed for taxes, CPP, etc. and that all federal remittances will be submitted to CRA on a timely basis;
- That the person responsible for this work will be the contact person for all paid staff within the Diocese to advise on benefits, insurance, pension, and other payroll related matters.

## 9. CLERGY COMPENSATION

The Commission is recommending:

- That the Diocese establish a committee to review and modernize clergy compensation. This committee shall make a recommendation to the Diocesan Executive Committee in sufficient time to ensure a new compensation model can be approved for the 2020 calendar year.

## 10. DIOCESE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The re-amalgamation of the three Newfoundland and Labrador dioceses surfaced on a number of occasions during the Town Hall meetings as a matter, not only of efficiency, but of Christian stewardship. The question was asked, “Do we really need three Bishops and three Executive Assistants, etc. to adequately service our shrinking population?” The thoughts and recommendations of those who voiced their concern in this area are calling for a re-amalgamation along the lines of what is happening in large business organizations, school boards, health boards, as well as in the Church of England and other jurisdictions.

### The Commission is recommending:

- That the Diocese seek, either through the Anglican Joint Committee or the Bishops of all three dioceses, a means to further discuss the possibility of having one Anglican diocese for Newfoundland and Labrador.

## APPENDIX 1: SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Community of believers
- Anglicans want to be inclusive
- We all recognize there is a problem
- We do a lot of good work already

### Weaknesses

- Reluctant to change
- Poor at communicating our message
- Congregations are aging rapidly and losing their energy
- Building focused/too many buildings

### Opportunities

- There is tremendous need in all of our communities for missional work
- We have examples to learn from
- Freeing up our clergy to be clergy
- Divest of aging properties that don't meet our needs anymore

### Threats

- Vocal minority
- Negative perception of the church
- Heritage designations for some buildings
- Overburdened leadership

## APPENDIX 2: Mission Ideas

### Property Management

It is clear from analysis of the Parish Profiles that this diocese has too many buildings. Congregations and vestries have become fixated on maintaining the buildings that their ancestors have built. In some circumstances, the average Sunday attendance in a Mission Area would only half fill a single church building in that Area. But which buildings should close and what do we do with them? All church buildings and other property within the Diocese are owned by the Diocese and parishes are charged with the upkeep of these buildings.

One way to unburden parishes from property management and perform a valuable ministry could be to establish a social enterprise to provide property management services to parishes within the Diocese and outside. The main purpose of this venture would be to provide meaningful employment to the under-employed such as ex-offenders and people with cognitive deficiencies through providing property management services for a fee to parishes and other property owners. This entity could be contracted by a parish to maintain the grounds, effect minor repairs, and keep the property in a state of tidiness. Regular building inspections will ensure repair issues are identified and parish leaders can also contact the entity directly when repair issues are identified. If major work is required, the property management company could also do the work of getting quotes and working with the parish leaders and vestry to establish an action plan to effect repairs. If a parish wishes to renovate a building, the same process can take place, but after it is determined by the vestry and Synod Office that a renovation is appropriate as opposed to using another existing asset. If a congregation decides to divest of their building, the property management company can manage this process as well, taking the burden away from people emotionally invested in the building.

The benefits of creating such an entity would be:

- Provide meaningful employment to those that need it
- Provide skills and experience for employees that can be leveraged to find new employment
- Properties and buildings would get maintained without vestries and clergy needing to do the grunt work
- Savings can be found by consolidating services instead of a single parish trying to carry these costs alone
- Congregations can disassociate themselves from the upkeep of their buildings which can change their focus to the building being an asset to do God's work instead of a temple their family built
- This entity can become an organization like the Gathering Place or Home Again Furniture Bank that got its start from a faith community and is doing good work in the community
- It can serve any denomination or secular organization that wants to support this entity and the work it does. The more it does the more people are employed and more cost effective the entity becomes.

This idea is just a concept at the moment and a suitable business plan would need to be developed, but the money that parishes now spend on sextons, insurance, and repair and maintenance could represent the fee for service provided to support the operations of the entity. This would not eliminate the need for congregations to do some cleaning and decorating in their church buildings, but would be for routine cleaning, grounds keeping, and repairs and maintenance and other building management.

### Libraries

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has shown that one cost saving measure they are looking to employ is reducing or consolidating government services within regions with small populations. However, we know libraries can be a place to build community. In some small towns, the library provides essential services to the

communities around access to internet, learning resources and providing some educational and skill development opportunities in towns where these are needed the most. This is less of an opportunity in an urban parish, but in some rural parishes taking over the community library could be a mission that a congregation could lead. Through the use of volunteers, libraries could be staffed, and services provided while funding for rent, insurance, utilities, etc., could be supported by fundraising by the congregation and perhaps even through some government grants. This would be a great example of a congregation building a meaningful relationship with their community and filling a gap that government does not want to fill.

These are just two examples of mission work that could be undertaken by a parish or Mission Area. There are an infinite number of others. By getting into your community to assess the needs, your parish will be able to find a meaningful mission within your community.

## APPENDIX 3: Sustainable and Strategic Ministry Assessment Tool

Name of Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Congregations: \_\_\_\_\_

Average Sunday Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following questions are equally divided according to the three primary aspects of sustainability. Self-assessment is only as good as the honesty that is put into each answer. Please mark/check YES or NO to each question.**

**YES NO**

### MISSION

		Our parish has a Mission and Vision Statement with a plan for implementation.
		The percentage of young families active in the church (18-40 demographic) is greater than 25%
		Is the parish aware of the demographics and needs of the community it serves?
		Does the parish engage with other community groups/organizations by sharing resources or partnerships?
		Are we experiencing the presence of first-time visitors on a regular basis?
		Is the congregation's main focus on outreach and evangelism?
		We tithe for mission as a parish.
		We have a pattern of growth in church attendance.
		Our growth trend will allow us to thrive and develop new ministries for the future in this place.
		Our trend of decline still allows us to develop ministries and vision for our future in this place.

### RESOURCES

		Our parish buildings are in good shape and present an image of care and vitality to the public.
		Is the present facility physically appropriate or adaptable for use? (Do we have accessible washrooms etc. or can these things be accommodated in our building?)
		There are sufficient funds and interested membership to do ministry within the congregation, as well as outreach and evangelism in our community and the world.
		Can we maintain our own existence as a congregation, while providing outreaching ministry in the community, diocese, and beyond?
		Are our lay leaders consistently available, present and involved in church meetings, discussions, visioning and decision making?
		Do we have the ability to rotate leaders and involve new people following a term of office?
		Do we have sufficient numbers of leaders to ensure we are constitutionally constituted as vestries?
		Do we have sufficient numbers of people to volunteer for ministry within the congregation and for outreach into the community?
		Do we have enough congregational members to do ministry well?
		Our community has young families that may potentially join us.

(Continued...)

**FINANCES**

		We are consistently able to meet our parish expenses.
		Our diocesan assessments are consistently up to date.
		Our tradition of fundraising is primarily for fellowship, outreach and missional efforts and not for the regular operation of the parish.
		Has the congregation maintained a good level of stewardship (increasing offerings as people are made aware of rising costs)?
		Can you afford to offer the use of parish buildings free of charge to non-profit groups without worrying about additional cost?
		Heat and light expenses for regular worship are not a problem for us at any time of year.
		Can the congregation afford the repairs that are needed to use these facilities for ministry?
		We have the funds to facilitate essential repairs such as steps, entrances, exits roofs etc., without stress on everyday functions and expenses.
		We never have projects on hold for long periods because of finances or lack of people.
		Our conversations are about ministry and worship more than about striving to survive or keep the doors open.

**TOTALS**

Mission:      Yes \_\_\_                  No \_\_\_  
 Resources:    Yes \_\_\_                  No \_\_\_  
 Finances        Yes \_\_\_                  No \_\_\_

**(Results are to be submitted to the Mission Canon for evaluation.)**

After completion of the self-assessment, parishes will fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Healthy and Sustainable:** In addition to a clear mission/vision, this parish will have the resources (people, skills, buildings, programs, spiritual health, finances) to carry out its mission.  
(Requires an overall average of 70% or better on the Self-Assessment Tool)
2. **Strategic:** This parish is able to articulate and demonstrate a vital mission and ministry appropriate to its context but lacks some of the resources to carry out its mission. It may need some short-term assistance from the diocese to reach its proposed mission and goals.  
(Requires a 70% score in the Missional Aspect and 50% or better in both the Resources and Finances aspects)
3. **Fixed and Stationary:** This is a parish that shows little or no change. While it may have many of the necessary resources, it has no clear mission to context, is inward-looking and maintenance-focused. It needs to begin an immediate process of discernment with the purpose of crafting a vision statement with accompanying core values and a plan for implementation.  
(Scores 70% or more on each of Resources and Finances aspects, but weak on the Missional aspect)
4. **Alternative Model:** The continued existence of this parish is questionable since it lacks the necessary resources to carry out its mission, even if that mission/vision is survival. For continued ministry presence, this parish needs to work with Synod Office to find some alternative model of ministry. (For suggested models, see the report of the Commission on Parish Demographics, “Ministries in Action” October 2003.) The parish also needs to enter into a discernment process to articulate a ministry plan for its future.  
(Scores an overall average of 50% or less in all aspects)

## APPENDIX 4: Possible Mission Areas

The Commission feels that building collaboration between parishes will create a natural environment for parishes to come together to find new ways to do God's work in our communities. When we open dialogue with other parishes (inter-denominational and intra-denominational) we may realize that we have more in common than we have differences. We may be able to start thinking about new ways to deliver ministry in our community with less buildings, freeing up more financial resources to reduce the amount of efforts in raising funds to keep buildings open. The Commission recognizes there are more ways to align parishes than geographically. Parish culture, shared values or shared mission interests could be other ways of aligning into Mission Areas. However, as a starting point, the Commission presents what future Mission Areas could look like based solely on geography. There is an important role within Archdeaconry Councils to open dialogue on how Mission Areas should align within each Archdeaconry.

<b>St. John's - East</b>	St. Mark's
<b>St. John's Centre City/Downtown</b>	Cathedral of St. John the Baptist St. Thomas' Diocesan Office St. Mary the Virgin
<b>St. John's - Northwest</b>	St. Michael and All Angels St. Augustine's
<b>St. John's South - Mount Pearl</b>	New Hope The Ascension The Good Shepherd
<b>North East Avalon</b>	All Saints - Pouch Cove St. Nicholas - Torbay Bell Island St. Lawrence - Portugal Cove St. Phillip's
<b>Topsail - Paradise</b>	The Holy Innocents St. John the Evangelist
<b>Conception Bay South</b>	All Saints - CBS St. Peter's - Upper Gullies
<b>Conception Bay North</b>	The Resurrection Port de Grave Spaniard's Bay Upper Island Cove Bay Robert's-Coley's Point St. Mark's Shearstown/Butlerville

**North West Avalon**

Harbour Grace  
Carbonear  
Bay de Verde  
Heart's Content

**South West Avalon**

The Epiphany  
The Holy Trinity

**Isthmus**

The Living Water  
The Holy Cross  
The Holy Spirit

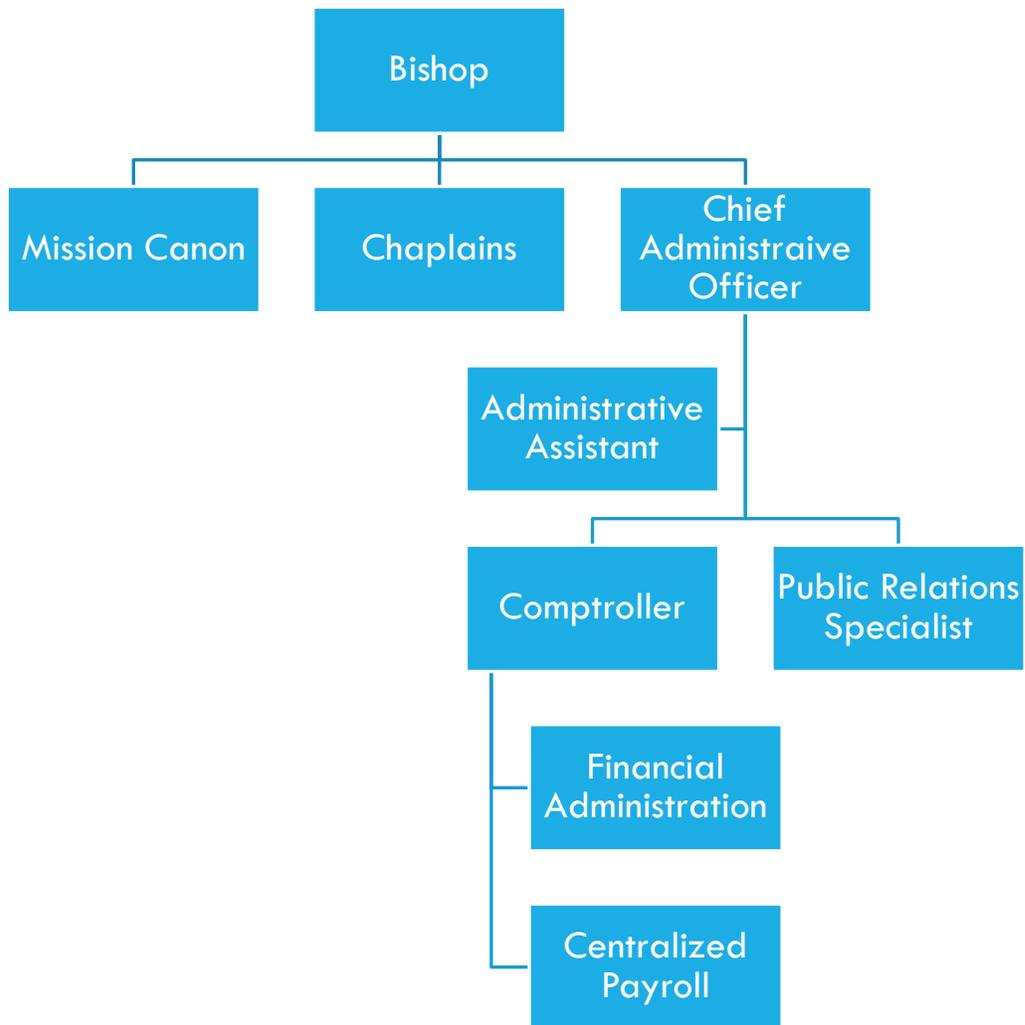
**Labrador**

Labrador West  
Lake Melville  
South East Labrador  
St. Timothy - Rigolet

## APPENDIX 5: Organizational Structures

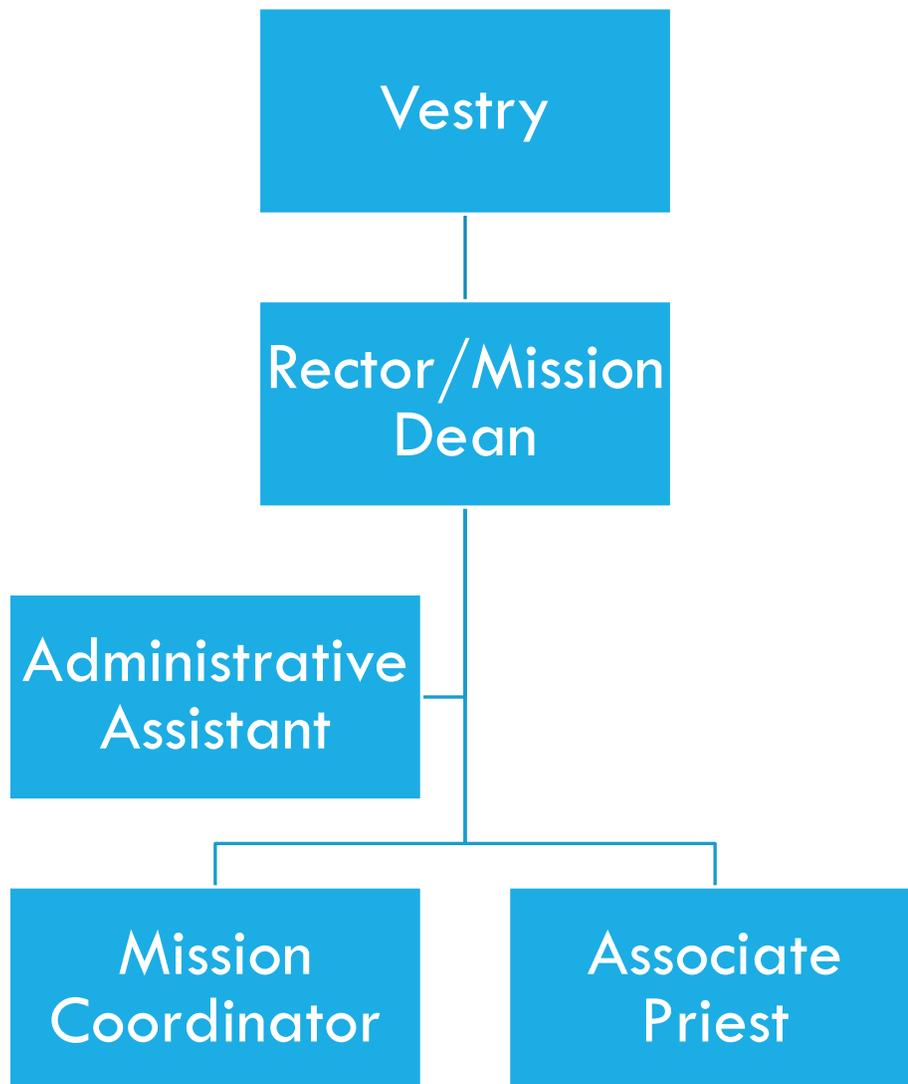
### Diocesan Office

- Chief Administration Officer – An administrative role to oversee the administration within the diocese.
  - Reports to the Bishop for daily management
  - Reports to Synod regarding financial management
  - Responsibilities
    - Human Resources management
    - Financial management
    - Communications/Public/Media Relations/Social Media
    - IT and Technology
  - Qualifications
    - Post-Secondary - Business Administration or combination of experience
- Public Relations Specialist
  - Reports to CAO
  - Responsibilities
    - Prepares press releases
    - Manages media inquiries
    - Manages social media for Diocesan Office
    - Manages Diocese website
    - Provides guidance and support to the Diocese for public and media relations
  - Qualifications
    - Post-secondary – Public Relations/Communications or combination of experience
- Comptroller
  - Reports to CAO
  - Responsibilities
    - Manages Finance Department
    - Prepare financial statements for Diocesan Office, Lavrock, Resource Centre
    - Financial analysis for Diocese
    - Manages audit for Diocesan Office
  - Qualifications
    - Professional Accountant
- Mission Canon
  - Reports to the Bishop
  - Responsibilities
    - Oversees missional work in Diocese
    - Supports Bishop in fulfilling responsibilities and duties



## Mission Areas/Parishes

- **Mission Dean**
  - Parish Rector appointed by Bishop in Mission Area
    - One per Mission Area
  - Encourages collaboration between parishes within Mission Area
  - Seeks partnerships within the community for missional work
    - Faith-based and non-faith-based
    - Community organizations
  
- **Rector**
  - Spiritual Leader of a Parish
  
- **Mission Coordinator**
  - Could be lay or clergy
  - Organization of Mission work within Parish
  - Paid position
  - Could be shared by smaller parishes
  
- **Associate Priest**
  - Some parishes can support more than one priest
  - As parishes decide to come together, we see this as an opportunity to free up more clergy resources for pastoral and missional work
  
- **Administrative Assistant**
  - Some parishes may require administrative support
  - Could be shared by parishes



## APPENDIX 6: Sample Job Description for Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

### Overview

The Chief Administration Officer (CAO) is responsible for the administration and financial activity for the Anglican Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. The incumbent will report to the Bishop as CEO for the Diocese but will also have direct reporting responsibilities to Synod for financial administration to provide a more robust oversight of financial administration within the Diocese. The CAO will work with the Diocesan Executive Committee to ensure continuity of financial administration between Synods. With expertise in Business Administration, the CAO will be responsible for human resource management, financial management, governance, and communications for the Diocese and will provide support to the Bishop and the Diocesan Executive Committee in these areas when decisions are required.

### Supervisor

The Chief Administration Officer reports to the Bishop on a day to day basis. The CAO will also report directly to and be held accountable by Synod for financial administration within the Diocese. The CAO will sit on the Diocesan Executive Committee and report regularly to this Committee on his/her activity.

### Job Duties

- Responsible for human resource management within the Diocese
- Responsible for financial administration within the Diocese
- Responsible for communications – internal and external
- Responsible for governance – policy management. Will ensure the Diocese has adequate and robust policies and procedures in place in the areas of Mission, Administration, Health and Safety, Governance, and Communications.
- Responsible for Lavrock. Will work with the Manager to ensure Lavrock Centre operates in a cost effective and efficient manner ensuring the highest customer service and satisfaction standards are met.
- Responsible for the Resource Centre. Will work with the staff to ensure the Resource Centre operates in a cost effective and efficient manner.
- As a member of the Diocesan Executive Committee, the CAO will regularly update the Bishop and the Diocesan Executive Committee on financial administration and any other administrative activity relevant to the Committee
- Will report to Synod on financial administration and the financial position of the Diocese.
- Will work with the Bishop and Mission Canon to ensure the administrative support is in place to fulfill the missional mandate of the Diocese and the Bishop.
- Will ensure adequate staff is in place to meet the mandate of the Diocesan Office.
- Will work with the Bishop to ensure a Diocesan budget is developed to meet the missional goals of the Diocese.
- Will work with the Public Relations Specialist to preserve a positive reputation for the Diocese with the public.

### Qualifications

- The preferred candidate will have education in Business Administration, ideally at a Bachelor or Master's level, or a combination of education and experience equivalent;
- The incumbent shall have a faith background, preferably in the Christian faith;

- The CAO shall have experience and expertise in:
  - Human Resource Management;
  - Financial Administration;
  - Governance;
- Experience with Communications would be an asset;
- Experience in the Not-for-Profit sector would be an asset;
- Experience with community-based organizations would be an asset.

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