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Pastoral Letter to the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador

“Set Sail - What Does It Look Like in Your Parish?”

Pentecost 2026

My dear beloved family in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our risen, ascended, and glorified Lord!



Three and a half years ago, we lifted our sails together and set out on a shared voyage called “*Set Sail: Charting the Course for Christ’s Church.*” Since then, I have seen, prayed, and listened as parishes and Anglicans from across our Diocese have begun to live into the four ships: **Deepening Relationships, Transforming Discipleship, Renewing Stewardship, and Engaging Partnerships** - and the **Five Marks of Mission**.

Now, in preparation for our upcoming Synod in September, I am writing with a simple request. I want to hear from you what Set Sail looks like on the ground in your parish and community.

I know the wind of the Holy Spirit is moving. I catch glimpses in the reports that come across my desk, during parish visits, and in conversations with you. But I want the whole Diocese to see and celebrate what God is doing in your place - not just in the big moments, but in the everyday, ordinary ways you are living out your Baptismal Covenant right where you are. These stories will help shape our common life and our time together at Synod.

So here is my invitation: Please send me your stories, however small or large they may feel, by the **end of July 2026**. Every one of them is important!

These might be:

- *A Sunday School or Confirmation class that started again after years of no candidates.*
- *A new Bible Study or Fellowship group that brings people together;*
- *A garden planted on church property that now feeds families;*
- *A partnership with another church or community group that is making a difference;*
- *Any moment when you have seen one of the Five Marks of Mission (Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, Treasure) come to life in your corner of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador.*

You do not need to write a long essay. A short note, a couple of sentences, a photograph, or even a brief video from your phone is more than enough. If your parish has been using the **Set Sail Parish Tracking Template** (<https://anglicanenl.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Set-Sail-Parish-Tracking-Template.pdf>), feel free to share one or two of the concrete steps you've identified. I would love to see them!

Send your stories to me at bishop@anglicanenl.net. We will collect them, celebrate them, and share them across the Diocese on our social media and website, and as part of our upcoming Synod, so that we can encourage one another and give thanks together for the ways the Spirit is filling our sails.

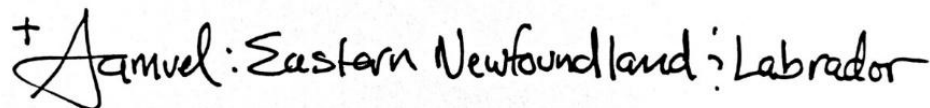
None of this ignores the real challenges many of us still face in our Diocese: the decline in numbers, the cost of maintaining aging buildings and the grief that comes with making hard decisions. I walk through these struggles with you. Yet I am convinced that the same resurrection life that raised Christ from the dead is already breaking through in the most common places in our Diocese, and I want us to name it, claim it and give God glory for it as we gather at Synod.

My friends, your stories matter. Your faithfulness matters. Every baptized person in this Diocese is a vital part of the ministry of the Body of Christ, and I want to hear how the Holy Spirit is at work through you.

Will you take a few moments to reflect, then send me what Set Sail looks like on the ground in your church by the end of July? I am eager to read every single one and to carry them with us into our Synod conversations.

May the same Spirit who filled the upper room on that first Pentecost fill us now with courage, creativity, and joy as we chart the course together and prepare to meet in Synod.

Yours in the love of Christ,



+ Samuel: Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador

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