



## The 160th Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal

**The Bishop's Charge**

**June 15, 2019**

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we meet today on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:k (Montreal) is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community. May God our Creator guide us in wisdom, justice and love.

This Synod's theme is "The Challenges of Evangelism: What are we inviting people to?" The Synod Planning Committee has chosen this theme for the next three years or triennium. We are very pleased to welcome our Metropolitan, Archbishop Ron Cutler, Bishop of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and to hear him address Synod a little later today on this topic.

While we gather as individuals and representatives of ministries and local parishes, each with our own concerns and challenges, I have come to appreciate more fully our partnerships in the wider Church. The readings today are for the Feast of St. Barnabas, and I'm mindful that even the early Church was involved in and strengthened by partnership and mutual support... and that was true even in times of persecution and scattering. Devotion to the Lord, worshipping together, teaching and learning, prayer and fasting, generous giving – these all characterized the people who carried the mission of the Church. And the Holy Spirit inspired them and spoke to them and through them, and believers were made and people were ordained for ministry.

Our Diocese is called to grow in partnership and love with one another as we work through our own changing times and conditions. Instead of competing with each other, I believe that we are to share our strengths and gifts and faith with one another and consider how we can serve the mission of the church more creatively and faithfully.

There are encouraging signs in our Diocese, notably that our overall average attendance last year showed a 2% increase. More generally, our attendance has been stable for the last three years, even with some strategic merging or closing of congregations. On the other hand, we continue to spend more money than our revenue and that is not a sustainable practice.

After one year together, the newly merged Parish of the Resurrection, St. Andrew and St. Mark agreed on a new name this spring, All Saints by the Lake. I want to thank the Rev. Grace Burson and the wardens and leaders of the church for their hard work as they continue to grow together and position themselves to take on an invigorated mission in Dorval.

Another strategic and mission-focused merger recently took place when St. Peter's Church in Town of Mount Royal and St. Mark's Church in St. Laurent officially merged on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. This followed many months of discussion and worshipping together monthly. They have chosen to be known as the Church of St. Mark and St. Peter. Work is currently underway to make some improvements and changes to the building on Rue Decelles in St. Laurent. This is a bold move on the part of both congregations and one which has taken much prayer and courage. Although it has been very painful for some, both I and the leadership in each congregation believe that it is one that will serve the mission of the church for the years to come. I am grateful to the wardens of both congregations and to their clergy, the Rev. Dr. Chris Barrigar and the Ven. Robert Camara (interim) for their leadership and hard work.

L'Église de la Nativité, a largely Haitian congregation in Montreal North, has agreed to my suggestion to sell their building on Cobourg Street in Montreal North and to move to St. James' Church in Rosemere, in August. They will take over the care and upkeep of the building, and the existing small congregation of St. James has welcomed this. The people of La Nativité come from across all of Montreal and many actually live off the island. The church in Rosemere offers a larger space and good parking and potential to reach out and grow. I will be with them in August to celebrate in their new home. Please pray for them in the transition.

In each of these new arrangements, I hope you hear, as I do, the opportunity for new strength and increased resources for better and more purposeful outreach to the wider community, stronger evangelism, and the potential for new and sustained growth. That is the call of Jesus in our day, and in every day.

This past year saw several changes within the Diocese:

- The Rev. Grace Burson began work in Dorval in August.
- The Rev. Ryan Cook and his family arrived at the end of the summer to begin ministry September 1st at Christ Church, Beaurepaire.
- Two deacons were ordained in September and are serving as assistant curates; the Rev. Tania Lesack is in the Laurentian Regional Ministry and the Rev. Joel Amis is at St. Michael and all Angels in Pierrefonds. We expect to have an ordination to the priesthood in Lachute on Saturday August 24th at 2pm, and to ordain deacons and a priest at the Cathedral on September 29th at 4pm.
- October 15<sup>th</sup>, I appointed the Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor to serve full time as Congregational Development Officer. Since then, Neil has been helping parishes with their stewardship, Natural Church Development, conflict resolution and visioning. He has updated and improved the Diocesan web site with resources that parishes may find helpful. We believe that Neil can bring strategic and missional help when he works with you, and I encourage you very strongly to make use of his services.
- The Rev. Jean-Jacques Goulet retired from the Cathedral at the end of December. It turned out to be a short retirement.... On May 1st, I was pleased to appoint him to the Church of St. Cuthbert, St. Hilda's and St. Luke's, on De Lorimier Avenue, on a half time basis.
- The Rev. Gwenda Wells retired January 1st as incumbent of St. Barnabas, St. Lambert.
- The Right Rev. Annie Ittoshat was elected Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of the Arctic March 29th and was consecrated March 31st. We send Annie with our love and prayers as she and her family move to Salluit, Nunavut at the end of this month.
- The Rev. Canon Steven Mackison has accepted a new appointment as

Incumbent at the Church of the Redeemer in the Diocese of Toronto. His last Sunday here will be June 23rd and he resigns officially as of July 31st.

- I have appointed the Rev. Andy O'Donnell as the new incumbent of St. Stephens with St. James in Chambly, effective August 1st. His last Sunday in the Regional Ministry of Bedford and Stanbridge East will be June 30th.
- The Rev. Amy Hamilton resigned May 1st from the Cathedral, to take a leave of absence. She hopes to take up new ministry in the Fall.
- The Cathedral's new director of music arrived from Oxford this month. Please welcome Mr. Jonathan White, who played so beautifully for us this morning.

I have recently returned from being a guest at the Assembly of our partner Diocese in Canada, The Territory of the People (Anglican Church). Archdeacon Michael Robson, from our Partnership Committee accompanied me. Our Primate, Fred Hiltz and Archbishop Melissa Skelton were also present. This was my second time attending an Assembly as they hold full Assembly only every second year because of the costs involved. Almost all of those present travelled great distances and stayed in hotels. The parish of St. John the Divine in Quesnel hosted us for some meals and sessions of Synod and worship.

Formerly called the Diocese of Cariboo, and located in the British Columbia central interior, they have a story to tell of deep reconciliation and hope, of becoming stronger and deeper through their time of suffering. Almost twenty years ago, when the Diocese of Cariboo ceased to operate because of the cost of compensation for residential school abuse, some members made buttons for everyone to wear which said, "We're not toast! We're yeast!!" For many years they were known as the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior until they reached a level of health and proclaimed their new name and status as a Society at their Assembly in 2017.

Bishop Barbara Andrews has guided her people wisely for the last ten years, always encouraging them to live below their means, to not spend more than they have. That has meant that congregations have had to share clergy and make use of lay leadership, but I witnessed a welcoming and generous community full of grace and hope. They are not toast! They are yeast!! The theme of their Assembly this year was "Build, Renew, Strengthen, by Walking Together in Unity". They are not afraid of where God is leading them.

Our partnership relationship with The Territory of the People has been a warm one. Over the years, and with several bishops, clergy and lay people, visits have been made back and forth to each other. This summer, one of our postulants for ordination, Ben Stuchbery, is working as a chaplain at a historic village called Barkerville. The entire Assembly drove an hour or so to Barkerville to attend Evensong celebrating 150 years of ministry in the northern part of the Territory. It was followed by dinner and a musical show at the theatre in this 1860s former Gold Rush boom town.

At the Sunday closing service of the Assembly, the Primate preached and I celebrated Eucharist. At the end, Bishop Barbara announced her intention to retire by the end of the year. An episcopal election will be held September 28<sup>th</sup>. We wish her every blessing in this new chapter of her life.

Our other official partner, the Diocese of Masasi, Tanzania, has been in partnership with us, spanning ten years and two bishops in each diocese. I was pleased to be able to visit Masasi last summer. A mostly rural Diocese with many basic needs like water, medical care and education – and suffering from climate change too – the Church is growing and expanding. Their Anglo Catholic worship is full of boisterous singing and dancing, very different from anything most of us have seen, and yet still 100% Anglican!

Bishop James Almasi had prepared a challenging itinerary for us, meeting many parishes and ministries in his diocese and learning about generous African hospitality. While the Mother's Union is a key leadership force throughout the diocese, and there is a theologically trained woman catechist, there are no women even administering the chalice. Bishop James encouraged me to speak about my own sense of vocation to ordained ministry, and of the Church and the bishop's role in discerning it. For their part, the Diocese of Masasi treated me with utmost respect (as an honorary man, probably), and I was called Askofu Mary, Bishop Mary. The wife of a bishop is called Mama Askofu and a bishop is called Baba Askofu. Currently, seven women are away at college, studying to become catechists.

At a special Synod convened to celebrate our partnership, Bishop James and I signed an agreement to continue the partnership and the Diocese of Masasi presented me with a lovely crozier made by a local craftsman. Perhaps because of my memories of the early days of women clergy in this diocese, but also because I know how much will have to change in Masasi, I was profoundly moved by their generous gift and their acknowledgement of me.

I am so grateful to all who contributed to the Bishop's Blessings Fund – individuals and parishes. We were able to leave gifts of money for several medical dispensaries, new church buildings, a clergy and catechist duplex, a Cathedral ministry centre and a secondary boarding school for girls as well as some for the Diocese to disburse. They build as the resources become available. They finish building when the money for the roof or the donated materials arrive! We saw several partially built places and hopefully our gifts bought more bricks and moved things ahead. Part of partnership is concrete and strategic help!

The Rev. Victor-David Mbuyi Bipungu and Ms. Beth Reed, who was chair of the Partnership Committee, accompanied me and my husband Mark on this trip. We were blessed to be graciously hosted by the Canadian High Commissioner to Tanzania, Ian Myles and his wife Michelle on our arrival to, and departure from, Dar Es Salaam. Ian grew up in St. Barnabas, St. Lambert where Mark and I were married. Shortly after our visit, they were moving back to Canada for new work.

This autumn, Bishop James will be visiting friends in the US, and the Partnership Committee is flying him to Montreal from there in October so that he can visit us and tour the diocese for 2 weeks or so. There are also preliminary plans being made to bring a promising student from Masasi to study for a few years at the Montreal Diocesan Theological College. Sources of funding are being sought.

Partnership goes beyond formal relationships. It is about caring about the wider Church, sharing burdens and experiences and inspiring, praying for and encouraging one another. Next summer's Lambeth Conference will be an opportunity to meet more members of the wider Anglican Communion.

We have received the official invitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury and have registered to attend Lambeth from July 23 to August 10, 2020. It is a very expensive conference, and gathering Anglicans from around the world will be a bit complicated. Naturally there has already been some controversy over who is invited and who is not. While a married gay bishop was excluded from the last Lambeth conference in 2008, this year a few same-sex spouses have not been invited to attend. The question of whether spouses should even be included has been raised in the Canadian House of Bishops. I have observed, however, that in many parts of Africa and elsewhere in the Church, spouses are very involved in the ministry of the Church, alongside their husbands. Our cultures and expectations are very varied and so are the challenges that we face.

The Diocese of Southwark (in London, UK) has invited me and Mark to spend some time as their guests before Lambeth, and I have accepted, as this will broaden my opportunity to grow in fellowship with them and their other partner bishops, who are also invited.

Our Primate, The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, was our speaker at the Clergy Conference in September and spoke to us about vocation. He also led us in the exercise of reflecting on the Heartbeat of the Church. We were pleased that he could also visit in December to meet with Diocesan Council and to have a brown bag lunch and share in the Heartbeat exercise with members of the Diocese who were able to join him.

At the March meeting of the House of Bishops, a farewell dinner and presentation of gifts was made to him, with each bishop invited to give something from their own diocese along with a contribution to a purse: Montreal gave two handmade Mohawk gifts from Kahnawake and a Celtic pectoral cross, representing the original people of this land and the founding members of the Anglican Church in Montreal, many of whom were of Irish origin.

As you know, The General Synod meets this summer from July 10 to 16. We will vote on a motion to amend the Marriage Canon. The clergy and lay delegates will elect a new Primate and we will hear about plans for indigenous self-determination. The House of Bishops has nominated five people to be considered for Primate: The Right Rev. Jane Alexander, The Most Rev. Ronald Cutler, The Right Rev. Linda Nicholls, The Right Rev. Michael Oulton, and the Most Rev. Gregory Kerr-Wilson. Our delegates to General Synod are the Rev. Dr. Karen Egan, the Ven. Robert Camara, Mrs. Ann Cumyn, Mrs. Valerie Bennett and Ms. Eden Mancor. Please pray for this important meeting and all involved.

I am pleased to announce that this year's recipients of the Bishop's Awards are:

**John Clague**, Christ Church, Rawdon, Archdeaconry of St. Andrews

John is truly a dedicated pillar of the church. He is a Lay Reader, the Incumbent's "Right Hand Man", and the Parish Communicator.

He oversees production of the weekly bulletin, prepares copies of readings and intercessions, maintains the parish web site, records and posts the sermon online, collects the mail from the post office, checks and replenishes oil in candles and sees that all is in readiness for Sunday worship.

On Sunday, he makes sure that clergy, servers and organist all have the information and bulletins they need and he fills in for anyone who can't be there. He pays the organist and gets a receipt signed.

John has been very good at seeking out and getting other people involved in various aspects of church life and helping with their training as required. He has a strong spiritual life and participates in, and supports, the worship life of the parish well beyond that of the main Sunday services.

**Alice and Weldon Hadlock**, Bishop Stewart Memorial Church, Regional Ministry of Bedford & Stanbridge East, Archdeaconry of South Shore & Bedford

Alice and Weldon are long time members who have freely invested their time, talents and resources. Alice has been a People's Warden, part of the altar guild, and a Sunday school teacher. Weldon has been the treasurer for decades and is responsible for the cemetery. Together they are active in organizing fund-raisers. In recent major renovations to the basement, they sought funding from a variety of sources, funded thousands of hours of volunteer labour and acted as the general contractor.

They have a history of developing relationships within the Regional parish, deanery and the wider community. In the formation of the Regional ministry, they were part of the group that asked Janet Marshall, the congregational development officer at the time, for help. Both attend and participate in the mid-week Lenten services. Alice is a member of the weekly Bible study group. Both have rolled up their sleeves to help with the annual Shove Tuesday Pancake supper and the Flower Show at St. James the Apostle in Stanbridge-East.

On the Deanery level, Weldon and Alice have faithfully attended the Bedford-Brome-Shefford Deanery Chapter meetings and are often found attending fundraisers hosted by many churches in the area.

Weldon is a long time member of the Société d'Histoire et de Patrimoine de Frelighsburg. Both were also members of the Embellishment committee for Stanbridge-East.

Alice and Weldon have continually shown strength of character, integrity, thoughtfulness and prayerfulness and are a great help to the ministry at Bishop Stewart Memorial Church of the Holy Trinity, in the Deanery of Bedford Brome Shefford and the wider community.



**Elizabeth Ho-Wo-Cheong**, Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Archdeaconry of St. Lawrence

Elizabeth has served her parish in many capacities over the decades. Her key involvement has been as Chair of the Outreach Committee where she has coordinated and motivated her parish to be involved in mission and outreach to St. Michael's Mission (Back Packs with useful items, Christmas baking and Carols), Auberge Madeleine (Easter Baskets with needed items) and local organizations such as the West Island Mission and the West Island Assistance Fund (25 -30 Christmas baskets and personalized gifts prepared), and La Corde, an organization in the Cloverdale area of Pierrefonds that supports families living in poverty by offering a breakfast and lunch program for school children as well as an after-school program and a summer Day Camp.

There are many more organizations Elizabeth is in touch with, always in connection with mission and outreach, including the local Police Department, The Native Friendship Centre, and West Island Citizen Advocacy. Whenever there is a world disaster or local need that has been brought to her attention, she alerts the congregation, asks for help, and people respond.

All that Elizabeth does for Missions and Outreach she does out of her faith and commitment to Jesus Christ and her deep love for people. She involves the whole parish with joy and enthusiasm always giving glory to God.

**Valerie Taylor**, Crosstalk Ministries, Archdeaconry of Montreal

For decades, this faithful, creative and hospitable person has been managing Crosstalk Ministries Day Camps, recruiting and training leaders and running Day Camps. Some of the clergy and lay leaders in our Diocese first became involved in ministry through Day Camps. Valerie is passionate about seeing that the Message be presented to children and those working with them. Over the years, Day Camp teams have been sent to remote northern communities and to urban congregations throughout Canada. Valerie has also supported the Junior and Senior Camps put on by Crosstalk Ministries by leading workshops, particularly in liturgical dance. She has shared her sewing abilities with the Church, making and repairing vestments, and she has served as Lay Secretary of Synod. She currently hosts a house church called The Pod in her home.

Congratulations to these recipients and thank you to all who sent in nominations. Congratulations also to Mrs. Susan Winn who has been awarded the Anglican

Award of Merit by the Primate. I have known Sue for over 40 years. Her nomination for this award tells of her involvement in all parts of the Anglican Church of Canada and its governance, from Parish to Diocese to Ecclesiastical Province to General Synod, in formal Partnerships and beyond. We will try to post it online so that you may read it.

I hope that you are as inspired as I am by the witness and faithfulness to the Gospel that these award recipients have demonstrated, and will undoubtedly continue to demonstrate! Take courage from their example; be inspired by their faithfulness; pray for hearts that are open to serve in the same way. The call as disciples of Jesus, inspired and empowered by the Spirit, is a call to each of us.

In today's reading from Acts, the disciples in Antioch were so Christ-like that they were called Christians! And they were motivated and infectious! What do we want to be known as?

If things are not going well in your parish or congregation, I don't want you to just lie down and die. Please pray about it and call our congregational development co-ordinator. It will be less painful than death!

Our Diocesan Council spent a planning day in March trying to refine our Vision and Mission Plan. We had hoped that it would be ready by now but a sub-committee is still working on translating it into a message that is inspiring and motivating and that reflects the courage, hope and excitement from our day together.

It is my pleasure to announce that I am making the Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor, who is our Co-ordinator for Congregational Development a Diocesan Canon and I am appointing the Rev. Joel Amis as the Ecumenical Officer for the Diocese.

We have been blessed with the ministry of Spiritual Directors in our Diocese. Later today the Spiritual Directors will receive new three-year licenses from me. This group of individuals have all received training in helping people attend to their spiritual journey. Some call them Directors and some prefer the name Companions. Once again I have asked them to lead us in a quiet day and the date for that is November 9<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at All Saints by the Lake, in Dorval and details about registration will be published. I hope that many of you will take advantage of this opportunity for spiritual refreshment and growth.

Each member of the staff at Synod office brings their particular strengths and gifts and I am so very grateful to them for their loyalty and team work and for

the passion they bring to supporting the ministry and mission of our diocese. Each of them has had to adapt to the changing realities and needs of the Diocese.

Thank you to Maria Abate, Sophie Bertrand, Nicki Hronjak, Lee Ann Matthews, Jennifer James-Philips, Sandra Koukou, Stephen Tam, Neil Mancor, Ardyth Robinson and David Burnstun.

Archdeacon Robert Camara is a gifted, loyal and energetic priest with a great heart and much wisdom and I am blessed to have him working as my Vicar General and Executive Archdeacon. Thank you, Robert.

I want to thank my husband Mark, daughters Catherine and Sarah and Mother-in-law Anne for the support, love and encouragement they give to me.

Finally, I want to thank all those of you who pray for me and help me in this ministry as your bishop. I find this an enormously challenging ministry, one that calls from me every ounce of courage and ingenuity that I have, one that forces me so often to say, "Lord I am not able and I do not know what to do; but you are able, and you know what you want done. Be the Guide; be the Source; be the Power". I hope you know that I am challenged by these times and by the call to discipleship every bit as much as each of you, and that I, too, seek to be as faithful and as inspirational as our award winners.

May the Holy Spirit guide us in our work in this Synod and in the years to come. May His powerful presence be felt today and inspire every decision we face, our interactions in our families and communities and the development of our vision for the future of this Diocese. And may the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon us all, ever more.

Yours faithfully,

+ Mary

## Acts 11:19-30 The Message (MSG)

19-21 Those who had been scattered by the persecution triggered by Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, but they were still only speaking and dealing with their fellow Jews. Then some of the men from Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to Antioch started talking to Greeks, giving them the Message of the Master Jesus. God was pleased with what they were doing and put his stamp of approval on it—quite a number of the Greeks believed and turned to the Master.

22-24 When the church in Jerusalem got wind of this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to check on things. As soon as he arrived, he saw that God was behind and in it all. He threw himself in with them, got behind them, urging them to stay with it the rest of their lives. He was a good man that way, enthusiastic and confident in the Holy Spirit's ways. The community grew large and strong in the Master.

25-26 Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. He found him and brought him back to Antioch. They were there a whole year, meeting with the church and teaching a lot of people. It was in Antioch that the disciples were for the first time called Christians. 27-30 It was about this same time that some prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem. One of them named Agabus stood up one day and, prompted by the Spirit, warned that a severe famine was about to devastate the country. (The famine eventually came during the rule of Claudius.) So the disciples decided that each of them would send whatever they could to their fellow Christians in Judea to help out. They sent Barnabas and Saul to deliver the collection to the leaders in Jerusalem.

13 1-2 The congregation in Antioch was blessed with a number of prophet-preachers and teachers: Barnabas, Simon, nicknamed Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, an advisor to the ruler Herod, Saul.

One day as they were worshiping God—they were also fasting as they waited for guidance—the Holy Spirit spoke: "Take Barnabas and Saul and commission them for the work I have called them to do."

3 So they commissioned them. In that circle of intensity and obedience, of fasting and praying, they laid hands on their heads and sent them off.

## Matthew 10:7-16 The Message (MSG)

5-8 Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge:

"Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

9-10 “Don’t think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don’t need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light.

11 “When you enter a town or village, don’t insist on staying in a luxury inn. Get a modest place with some modest people, and be content there until you leave.

12-15 “When you knock on a door, be courteous in your greeting. If they welcome you, be gentle in your conversation. If they don’t welcome you, quietly withdraw. Don’t make a scene. Shrug your shoulders and be on your way. You can be sure that on Judgment Day they’ll be mighty sorry—but it’s no concern of yours now.

16 “Stay alert. This is hazardous work I’m assigning you. You’re going to be like sheep running through a wolf pack, so don’t call attention to yourselves. Be as cunning as a snake, inoffensive as a dove.

The Message (MSG)