

Report on the Synod of the Diocese of Yukon
April 24-25, 2015
By Dean Sean Murphy

The Synod was held in Whitehorse at Christ Church Cathedral. The theme was *“Reaching Out...Because We Care.”*

Some highlights:

- (1) The Rev. Lesley Wheeler-Dame of the Diocese of Athabasca led a workshop on pastoral care before Synod began. We were encouraged in this workshop to be good listeners, work on communication and to be intentional, practical and faithful in ministering to the hurts and needs within our parishes. We were reminded that it is not just the clergy who do pastoral care, but many others who have gifts to do it and need to be trained for this ministry. In a larger sense, we all minister to one another in different ways.
- (2) In his charge to Synod, Bishop Robertson called us to continue to reach out because we care in a time of diminishing resources but also of great spiritual need. He spoke of two committees he asked to be formed to address how we can define our ministry and do the best we can with what we have in the future – the Shaping of Our Future Committee and the Committee to study the training of the Bishop's School of Ministry and make suggestions for the future. A number of the decisions of Synod mentioned below emerge from, or relate to, the work of these Committees. He expressed concern about the lack of indigenous leadership in the diocese, and informed us that Bishop Mark MacDonald (National Indigenous Bishop) and other members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples would be coming up to lead a training workshop in June. He has asked, he said, Bishop Mark to help us in addressing this concern. He said as he concluded his charge, of the diocese as a whole, that we are a family and that we need to support one another and work together and avoid the go it alone mentality as parishes.
- (3) A key decision of Synod was to “support our Bishop taking a parish on a trial basis of three years after set-up, provided the parish has a strong ministry team and that the community offers a suitable base for travel within and beyond the diocese. The bishop has the prerogative to shorten the three year term.” The main impetus for this move is that it would put one more trained clergy in local parish ministry. Our Bishop has written to all the vestries of the diocese asking whether their respective parishes would be suitable residences for him in the future. Please pray for our vestry as we consider this matter at our October meeting.

- (4) Another motion was to have “the Executive of the Diocese of Yukon explore the possibility of moving the Synod office and the administrative officer to another location, and to undertake such a move if the need arises.” One rationale for this motion is the need to trim costs in a time of diminishing resources; another is that technology now makes such a move more than possible.
- (5) Our Bishop's School and present efforts to re-examine its curriculum was also affirmed, with a “request that the diocesan office send the completed revised curriculum to all incumbents to be used for training clergy and lay leaders.
- (6) Reflecting our Synod theme, Reaching Out...Because We Care,” parishes were encouraged to develop at least one outreach ministry in the coming year, already existing or new, and report progress to the diocese on a regular basis.
- (7) Supporting our Bishop's call to get what's happening in our parishes out there, a motion passed for “parishes to submit at least one good news story per month to the Synod office and the Northern Lights editor.”
- (8) In keeping with the ongoing importance of local leadership training and mutual ministry development, also stressed by our Bishop in his charge, parishes were encouraged to identify folks called to take part in training events, and the diocese was asked to develop curriculum to meet the needs of the participants.
- (9) Sarah Usher was ordained a presbyter, or priest, in the Church at our closing Synod service on Sunday.