



Archbishop Anne Germond's Report to
The Thirty -Seventh Session of the Provincial Synod
The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario
The Anglican Church of Canada
October 13th 2021

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4.7)

Introduction – Welcome at the beginning of Provincial Synod.

Welcome one and all to the 37th Session of the Provincial Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, held virtually in these extraordinary times. I extend a special welcome to honoured guests including the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, the National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald, the General Secretary of the Anglican Church Archdeacon Alan Perry, as well as the Executive Directors of the Anglican Foundation of Canada Judy Rois and PWRDF Will Postma.

For some of you this is your very first Provincial Synod, while for others it is your 9th or 10th – each one is welcome and I hope that you will find this an enriching experience. We are here from the dioceses of Niagara, Huron, Toronto, Ontario, Ottawa, Moosonee and Algoma for a gathering that was to be held in person where I am in Sault Ste. Marie or ‘Bawating’ in Ojibway, meaning the place of the rapids. Bawating has been an important gathering place of Indigenous peoples for thousands of years and continues to be to this time.

Bawating is on Robinson Huron Treaty territory and is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg, specifically the Garden River and Batchewana First Nations and the Metis. Bawating was once the home of Chief Shingwauk who represented the Ojibway in the signing of the Robinson Huron Treaty in 1850. One of the features of this Treaty was the

setting aside of Garden River for the Ojibways. Shingwauk was converted to the Church of England and before his death Chief Shingwauk, was baptised, and his final resting place is beneath the altar of St. John's Anglican Church in Garden River.

Shingwauk's passion was for education. In 1832 he snowshoed to York (Toronto) to petition the Lieutenant Governor John Colbourne for a school, styled as a 'Teaching Wigwam', which would be present throughout the Anishnabek Lands to provide a European style of education to indigenous children while still allowing them to maintain their indigenous rituals and hold onto the teachings of their grandfathers – the wisdom-keepers of his time.

Sadly, Chief Shingwauk's vision of a 'teaching wigwam' did not come to fruition in the way he envisioned as the government's policy of integration and assimilation clashed with his ideal. We are all aware of the legacy of the Residential Schools which is also part of the tragic history of the Anglican Church of Canada. We own our role in the past and through apology and commitment to education, awareness, understanding and relationship building the church is working to move forward on the path of truth, justice - seeking, healing and reconciliation in a good way.

This was my prayer as a few weeks ago I sat with indigenous and non indigenous people from all walks of life at a sacred fire in the arbour on the site of the former Shingwauk Residential School ahead of a ground search on those grounds for the remains of children who might be in unmarked burial sites. In the light and warm of that fire we asked the Creator to be our guide.

An 'in person' Provincial Synod would have seen us visiting these and other important landmarks in Bawating so that you could come to know something of its painful history as well as the great hope for reconciliation that is evident here today. We would have taken you to visit the Residential School Centre where the stories of residential school survivors are told in words and pictures on the hallways of the former school.

You would have walked from there to the Shingwauk Chapel, built by the children and teachers of the school with the words 'Looking Unto Jesus' imprinted on its walls. Survivors of Shingwauk say that the chapel was an important gathering place because it was on of the rare occasions that sisters and brothers could see each other. We would have prayed at the Shingwauk Cemetery for the children at Shingwauk who never went home to parents and loved ones.

And finally, we would have taken you to the newly constructed Anishinabek Discovery Centre designed to support Shingwauk Kinomaage Gamig the indigenous led institute which one day will be a repository for Indigenous information, research and scholarship.

While an in person Synod has not been possible this year, I pray that there will one day be an opportunity for everyone to gather at 'Bawating' – the place of the rapids, place of hope and healing.

Part Two: Report of the Metropolitan

Loving Our Neighbours – pandemic times

It is with great humility and a thankful heart that I offer my first report as Metropolitan to this Provincial Synod gathering with the chosen theme:

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4.7)

The phrase “Loving Our Neighbours” undergirded our lives as Anglican Christians in Ontario during this time of pandemic. The first pastoral letter from the House of Bishops on March 13th, 2020, reminded us that the ancient prophet Jeremiah exhorted God’s people in exile to ‘seek the welfare of the city’ (Jer. 29.7) in which they were living, and asked us all to do the same in Covid-time by staying home, staying apart when together, masking, handwashing and getting vaccinated.

I was never been more proud to call myself a Christian than I was during the pandemic as followers of Jesus in our churches became visible signs of God’s unconditional love to one another. As our world was being torn apart by fear, uncertainty, panic, and hopelessness, we had the privileged vocation of being living signs of a Love that can bridge all anxieties and heal all wounds. Many people said of us, “See how they love one another”, and in that catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of God that Jesus announced.

I know that I speak on behalf of all the bishops in the Ontario House when I express my deepest gratitude to the faithful, obedient and prayerful way in which Anglicans around the province responded during the last eighteen months to the many directives coming at them from every side - local health authorities, provincial and federal government, and of course the church.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. During the pandemic this meant setting aside the usual patterns of being church such as finding creative ways to worship beyond the walls of our church buildings ministering in ways which were different from usual. Some of those will be shared in the missional moments during this Synod.

Sadly, ‘Love of Neighbour’ was not everyone’s lived experience or reality during the pandemic. The last eighteen months have been a costly time in a world which has been laid bare through Covid -19 and also in unconscionable acts of violence, systemic racism and discrimination, in the reliving of traumatizing events of life in residential school following the discovery of unmarked burial sites on residential school properties, economic crises, the jeopardy of democratic institutions and natural disasters resulting from climate change.

We have seen with our own eyes the full impact of the pandemic on those who live on the margins of society. While the words ‘we are all in this together’ was the catch phrase in the beginning of the pandemic, the lived reality locally and globally was very different for poor families living in overcrowded conditions, for racialized communities, for the frail elderly living in long term care facilities or nursing homes, for those living with or experiencing homelessness, those who did not have access to health care and life saving treatments, for essential and frontline workers and those who could not afford to stay home and isolate because their country did not offer a wage subsidy program.

This backdrop with all its injustices and hardships, along with this ongoing time of pandemic being referred to by so many ‘as liminal time’ (Rev. Susan Beaumont; Fr. Richard Rohr) a time of waiting after an ending for something new to begin, needs both to inform and form our conversations next spring as we determine our priorities for the coming triennium.

The Ontario House of Bishops in pandemic times

The Ontario House of Bishops typically meets in person twice a year and corresponds via email, text or phone in between. Our ecclesiology is that dioceses operate independently of one another within the framework of national, provincial and diocesan canons and constitutions.

With so much at stake and not wanting our individual dioceses to be receiving conflicting or mixed messages about the pandemic as it unfolded quickly before our eyes, at the beginning of the pandemic we began conferring with one another on a daily basis. We made decisions about the closure or reopening of church buildings in consultation and collaboration with experts in their field keeping Anglicans across the province apprised of all changes. Not only did we work on pandemic matters together but we leaned on one another for support and regularly prayed for and with each other.

We worked on the precept that *‘A word from one was a word from all’* as we prepared pastoral letters on Covid protocols and guidelines for a three staged approach to re-entry into church buildings as we ‘sought the welfare of the cities in which we live’. The document “Road Map to Reopen” colour coded in RED, AMBER and GREEN stages remains an important guide to this day.

The Rev. Michael Garner, priest in the Diocese of Ottawa and our epidemiological advisor was quick to point out that public health was everyone’s business and our ministry during the pandemic. Our knowledge and understanding of viruses increased exponentially as we learned about how infectious the coronavirus was. Our lexicon increased too as we befriended new words and phrases like ‘social distancing’, ‘masking’, ‘pivoting’ ‘being nimble’ and ‘you need to unmute’. Prayer, and our faith and trust in God united us and held us together when everything around was out of control.

What a privilege it has been and continues to be to work with such a strong, gifted, committed and faithful group of leaders – Bishops, Executive Officers and other diocesan team members, Chancellors, Epidemiologists and Health Authorities, who advised us and worked tirelessly to do the very best we could during this time. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. There is no doubt in my mind that God’s prevenient grace has been at work during the last 18 months and that each person who has offered leadership was chosen by God for just such a time as this.

Even though we now have the vaccine to protect us from the virus we see that things are not yet back to normal. While most Canadians have the opportunity to receive full vaccine coverage there are many countries in the world where this is not the case. Virus spread is real possibility and we must prepare to be long haulers of this pandemic. Epidemiologists are predicting that it may be another two years before this is all over. As God’s faithful people we remain ‘joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer’ (Romans 12.12), lifting our eyes to God whose unending faithfulness, generosity and graciousness sustains us.

The provincial response during pandemic time has been prophetic, pastoral and prayerful - may this continue to be so as we live in this in between time and eventually move out of it.

I have invited the Rev. Michael Garner to be present at Provincial Synod during my report so that on behalf of all of us I can extend our deepest thanks for the generous way in which he shared his time and knowledge with us. Rev. Michael’s expert advice and the very helpful way in which he offered it was really appreciated. The information he shared with us became a key component of almost all of the protocols and guidelines for reopening that we have produced. Three weeks ago he drove to Niagara Falls to make a presentation to the National House of Bishops and it was as well received by the other bishops in the House.

And I would like to thank Archdeacon Bill Mous for his tremendous help in formatting and facilitating communications across the province, being the link Executive Officer between the Eos and House of Bishops. Archdeacon Bill has a fulltime ministry as the Executive Archdeacon for the Diocese of Niagara but is always available and willing to help, generous with his time and very patient.

Provincial Executive Council meetings and Small Committee Work in the last Triennium

While an in person Synod was not possible this fall, God- willing, the first gathering of the Provincial Executive Council will be in person in Toronto next spring. I look forward to welcoming the representatives who will be selected from amongst your diocesan delegation. We will begin the triennium in prayer and worship and placing the Gospel in

the centre of the sacred circle, and in our time of discussion and fellowship discern together what God is calling us to do as an ecclesiastical province as we emerge from the Covid -19 pandemic.

Selecting the priorities for Provincial Executive Council's work together has always been important in Ontario and there have been some very positive and collaborative initiatives being undertaken in areas of Homelessness, Elder Care, the TRC Calls to Action, Creation Care. Being a member of Provincial Executive Council is a day's commitment twice a year with occasional small committee work.

In addition to the important work of guiding the province through the pandemic other collaborative work is taking place. At the request of the Provincial House of Bishops the "*Ontario Safe Church Working Group*" was formed in June 2018 to make recommendations to the House regarding the risks facing the Church generally regarding Safe Church matters; how they may be addressed by a Model Safe Church Canon along with the risks and benefits of such a Canon, and whether opportunities exist to implement sharing of services across the Province regarding Safe Church matters (for example in carry out investigations).

The Provincial Chancellor Bryan Finlay will speak to this and other legal matters in the time he has on the agenda tomorrow. This will include the outcome of the Final Report of the Ontario Safe Church Working Group which was presented to the House of Bishops in September 2020. We are grateful for the expertise represented in the Working Group diocesan Chancellors Chris Sinal VC Huron) – Chair, Clare Burns (C Toronto), Greg Tweney (C Niagara) and Garth O'Neill (C Algoma) and for their time and wise counsel.

The House of Bishops has endorsed all four recommendations of the Working Group which are -

- That there be No Provincial Safe Church Canon
- That provincial wide Safe Church Training be implemented for diocesan officials managing Safe Church matters or conducting Safe Church investigations
- That there be Information Sharing between dioceses
- And that a Safe Church Resource Team (SCRT) be created which will be available to assist dioceses throughout the province in the event that a Safe Church matter arises requiring specialized expertise that is not locally available.

The Provincial Chancellor is taking the lead on this very important work, along with other Chancellors and some of the HR personnel and Executive Officers. A report on the SCRT will be brought to the spring Provincial Executive Council meeting.

The other area in which I would like to see collaboration between the dioceses is in anti-racism education, awareness and training. The Primate named this as a priority for her and the National House of Bishops devoted a whole morning to it at our recent meeting

in Niagara Falls. We heard from dioceses around the country who have already implemented or are engaged in anti racism training workshops, including three within the province of Ontario, with other dioceses in the early stages of this work. It would be really helpful for the dioceses who do not have the capacity or resources to lead their own programs to use resources developed by other dioceses.

We are fortunate in the province to have Secretariat members who act as liaison for each of the three political Parties at Queen's Park to advise me, the House of Bishops, and the Provincial Synod on matters relating to the Ontario provincial government. As the Executive Officer Archdeacon Harry Huskins notes in his report on Government Relations, the Secretariat, "keeps the Church informed of governmental matters and issues of emerging importance and they advocate the policy positions taken by the Synod and the House with their political parties." I am grateful to Donna Cansfield (Liberal Party), Terence Young (Conservative Party) and David Krause (the New Democratic Party) for their generosity of time and expertise over the years.

The Ontario House of Bishops

I am thankful more than I can ever properly express for the *koinonia* of my colleagues in the Ontario House of Bishops who have shared with me in witnessing to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the prayerful and practical support they have offered from the day of my election as Metropolitan for Ontario until now.

Bishop Andrew Asbil – Diocese of Toronto

Bishop Kevin Robertson – Diocese of Toronto

Bishop Riscylla Walsh – Shaw - Diocese of Toronto

Bishop Shane Parker – Diocese of Ottawa

Bishop Michael Oulton – Diocese of Ontario

Bishop Susan Bell – Diocese of Niagara

Bishop Todd Townshend – Bishop of Huron

Archbishop Fred Hiltz – Assisting Bishop of Moosonee.

Here is a photo journal of some of our activities from the last Provincial Synod in Ottawa until now. There have been several changes to the Ontario House since the last Provincial Synod through retirements or changes to their ministry.

Archbishop Colin Johnson, Metropolitan and Archbishop of Toronto and Moosonee retired at the end of 2018.

Bishop Andrew Asbil was installed as the 12th Bishop of Toronto on 13th January, 2019 at St. James Cathedral.

In July 2019 Bishop Linda Nicholls was elected Primate of Canada and Todd Townshend was elected the 14th Bishop of Huron on October 26th of that year. The service consecration on January 25th, 2020 was the last time the Ontario House of Bishops gathered together for an in person celebration of consecration.

Bishop Tom Corston, Assistant Bishop of Moosonee retired in May 2019. I invited Archbishop Fred Hiltz, former Primate of Canada to be the Assisting Bishop.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz accepted my invitation to be the Assisting Bishop of Moosonee in January 2020 and is leading that diocese through a 'Season of Discernment' about the shape of episcopal leadership and the future of ministry.

Bishop John Chapman (Ottawa) announced his retirement and on March 14th 2020 Shane Parker was elected the 10th Bishop of Ottawa. His consecration, livestreamed with the bare minimum of participants in Christ Church Cathedral, was filled with the Spirit as we experienced the presence of the prayers of the wider church and knew that we were in the great company of the heavenly hosts.

In July 2020 Bishop Peter Fenty retired as Suffragan Bishop of the York- Simcoe Area of Toronto and in March 2021 Bishop Jenny Andison accepted a new charge of being the Incumbent of St. Paul's Bloor Street.

Sadly, one of our beloved bishops, The Right Reverend Michael Bedford Jones died in April 2018. He served as Suffragan Bishop of Toronto from 1994 until 2008 as Area Bishop of York Scarborough and then Trent Durham. May he rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory.

Our 'House' has always enjoyed collegial working relationships and the best fellowship. We wanted to honour all of our colleagues who were leaving and had several online parties to give thanks for their ministries and to 'toast and roast them'.

In closing....

On behalf of the entire Province I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Jean Bedard for his faithful ministry as Provincial Chancellor from 2016 until this year. Jean is joining us for this portion of the Synod so that he can hear these words of thanks. In addition to attending Provincial Synod, Executive Council and the consecration of bishops in the province the Provincial Chancellor is there to advise the Metropolitan and Executive Council.

Like so many diocesan Chancellors Jean went above and beyond what was ever expected of him in his service to Ontario, making himself available at a moment's notice when needed. Jean, as many of you know has a brilliant mind having been blessed with the

spiritual gifts of knowledge and wisdom. He also has an amazing sense of humour using turns of phrase that have become part of the official lexicon of one or two of us. Jean and his spouse Michele are members of St. Thomas's Anglican Church in the Diocese of Ottawa.

Chancellor Bryan Finlay has accepted my invitation to be the new Provincial Chancellor. He already serves as the Chancellor for Moosonee and brings to every conversation his own deep faith and the greater good of the church.

To those who work closest to me in this role, Executive Officer Harry Huskins (This is Harry's 9th Provincial Synod), Treasurer Gilles Tessier, Prolocutor Laura Walton, Chancellor Bryan Finlay and Archdeacon Bill Mous – thank you for your steadfast faithful leadership in Ontario.

Respectfully submitted,

+Anne

13th October, 2021