



The Charge of Bishop Charlie Masters

Diocesan Bishop

Anglican Network in Canada

8th Annual Synod – October 21-23, 2015

Theme: *Thoroughly equipped for every good work*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

GREETINGS!

My dear bishops, clergy and people of this wonderful Diocese of the Anglican Network in Canada, and guests, it is my joy and delight to warmly welcome you to Vancouver. Ever since 2002, whenever I visit this great city I am always reminded that it was here, in Vancouver, that, what is often known as the Anglican Global Realignment began. The outcome of those events ultimately lead to the formation of the GAFCON movement, for which we are all so grateful; and to the formation of the Anglican Church in North America, with ANiC as one of its dioceses. Many of the key leaders in those days – who are truly heroes – are not only here at this Synod but are rightly some of our key leaders and are offering leadership and teaching to this Synod. Among them are both of my fellow bishops, Bishop Trevor Walters and Bishop Stephen Leung, our Bible teacher, Canon David Short and our preacher Canon J I Packer. So it is always a great joy for us to be in Vancouver and to remember the significance of what God did and continues to do here for the cause of the gospel and of Anglicanism worldwide.

I'm also delighted that our eighth Synod is hosted by Good Shepherd Anglican Church here in Vancouver. Bishop Stephen continues as Rector of this great church and, as a missionary bishop, gives leadership to what has become known as AMMIC, the Asian and Multicultural Ministries in Canada – with Good Shepherd serving as the anchor and flagship for this exciting movement. Truly one of the exciting realities of this nation is that virtually all people groups from around the world are streaming here to make Canada their new home, for which we're very grateful. We will all be always grateful to our founding Diocesan Bishop and Moderator, who is now our Episcopal Vicar, Bishop Donald Harvey, for his insight and foresight to appoint a missionary bishop to give leadership to reaching out to the many people groups. And lest we forget the very significant portion of our diocese that is in New England, it is a great joy that the newest congregation that is been planted as part of AMMiC is in Boston. It is a delight and entirely appropriate therefore that this Synod should be housed at Good Shepherd.

Bishop Stephen and people of Good Shepherd, we thank you so much for your wonderful hospitality. I'm delighted that, this evening, the celebrant for our opening service of Holy Communion for our Synod is Bishop Stephen.

THE THEME of SYNOD

My text for this Charge – which in fact it is intended to frame the theme for our whole Synod – is from 2Timothy 3:14-17 (NIV):

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Over the last several months I have been pretty well living in Paul's second letter to Timothy. I have found it to be extremely helpful and, at this stage, find virtually all roads, for me, lead to 2 Timothy. It is my hope and intention to continue to dwell in this great portion of Scripture for the next several months – so don't be surprised if, when we are together over the next while, you hear me repeatedly referring to 2 Timothy.

You may know that the situation in which Paul wrote to his young protégé was very grave. Paul makes it clear in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 that he is about to be martyred. It is also clear that the situation in the church in general was very discouraging. In verse 15 of chapter 1, he acknowledges with sadness that all of Asia has left him. He actually names names of some who have abandoned him and worse. The great church of Ephesus, which Timothy was now leading, was also in a desperate situation. Surprisingly, therefore, rather than this letter being a somber and sad reflection of defeat it is a powerful statement of victory and of the worthiness of the gospel, a gospel which Paul is suffering for and will soon die for, but also a gospel which he exhorts and charges Timothy to join in suffering for as well. He does so because he says in 2 Timothy 2:8-10: *"remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."*

I love that passage so much! I love it because it makes clear that salvation is found in no one else but in the Jesus who rose from the dead and, as prophesied in the Old Testament, was the offspring of David. I love it that when Paul speaks about his own calling as an apostle in the very first verse of this great letter, he says it is *"by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus."* Paul cannot speak in any setting or on any topic without being reminded that the gospel is about life in Jesus. I love it then when he challenges and exhorts Timothy he says: *"therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which she gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."* (2 Timothy 1:8-10)

My dear friends when we ponder the gospel we are dealing with something that is so precious and so completely needed and is the only way that the elect – that is those that

God will call to have life in him – are going to find the salvation which is found in Jesus alone.

2 Timothy, from beginning to end, makes it clear for you, as an individual my friend, for you as congregations of ANiC in New England and across the country of Canada, for you as clergy and Bishops – for everyone – the gospel is worthy of your life and even worth suffering for. Paul says, “...*which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.*” (2 Timothy 1:12 ESV)

It is my prayer and my hope that part of the outcome of this Synod will be a growing confidence in the worthiness of the gospel which will propel us to a deeper trust and joy in our lives and worship and also motivate us to preach the gospel in season and out of season, when it seems likely that it'll bear fruit and when it doesn't. And that we will guard the good deposit because “*there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we may be saved.*” (Acts 4:12 ESV)

What is also clear in Paul's great letter to his protégé is that the only means whereby the life of the Gospel can be delivered, and the only means through which people can be saved and then grow to full maturity in Christ and be thoroughly equipped for every good work is found in the Bible alone.

In the midst of a church which had deteriorated into arguments about words and could be described as “*having the appearance of godliness but denying its power*” (2 Timothy 3:5 ESV) Paul could say to Timothy, “*do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*” (2 Timothy 2:15 ESV) and again that familiar phrase which makes it clear this is for you, he says: “*but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.*”

One of the things which I have happily come to realize is that I will never ever have a new word for this Synod or any of our churches. The word that Paul gives is “continue” and that is the big thought that I bring before you tonight. What you have learned and have already become convinced of in the word of God dear friends... continue. And that means continue to make the Bible your home, that means meditate on it day and night, that means memorize portions, that means let it frame your understanding of who you are and what your life is... because, Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:14 to 17, the Bible is not only God breathed but, because we know it is God's Word, we understand it's profitable, it's effective, and it's the only thing that will have the desired effect. The effectiveness and sufficiency of the Bible is what Paul is declaring. People can only be saved by the wisdom that comes through the Bible. People can only be taught to understand the things of God through the Bible. People will only be corrected – because God's thoughts are not our thoughts – through the Bible. People will only live godly lives by the effect of the training of the Bible. People will only repent and change their lives as a result of the reproof of the Bible. And all ministries of any sort in all gifts are only equipped through the Bible.

For these reasons we have commissioned Canon David Short to open the word each day of our Synod and the Reverend Dr Craig Bartholomew to help us think about preaching the Bible and learning how to apply it wisely and faithfully. It is a first for us that Dr. Bartholomew has written a book specifically with this Synod in mind and each of

you should have received a copy. This is a tremendous gift to us all. I personally want to thank Dr Bartholomew and Lexham Press, the publishers who partnered with us to produce this wonderful book.

And what a joy it is and honour that the Reverend Canon Dr Packer is our preacher at our final service, again opening the Word of God. We are all so blessed to be part of a Diocese that includes this great and humble servant of the Lord.

Everything about life as a Diocese and this Synod is framed by the Bible. So, people of the Diocese, the challenge to us all is to commit ourselves afresh to going deeper in the word of God daily. Seek to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it. To all preachers, I call you also to growth in your study and preaching the Bible. Let us be like Ezra. *“For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.”* (Ezra 7:10 ESV)

During this past year, someone suggested to me that I, and we, are obsessed with the Bible. My response was delight and I said: *“guilty as charged”*. Having said that, I'm not convinced I, or we, are as guilty as I said so boldly that day. I believe we have a long way to go to make sure that every person comes to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as result of studying the Bible. I believe that biblical illiteracy continues to be our greatest vulnerability. I believe the word “continue” calls us back to the Bible in a deep, deep way.

It's all so simple isn't it! That's the point. We read in 2 Kings 5, that Naaman, the great military leader of Syria, was offended when the prophet Elisha offered him a solution for healing which, in his mind, was too simple and beneath him. May the Lord keep us humble enough to embrace a gospel so simple even a little child can receive it. Full maturity and fruitfulness in ministry is simply found by interaction with the Bible.

Surely when Paul wrote to Timothy he had in mind Isaiah 55 which makes it clear that the only food which satisfies our hunger and thirst is the word of God. *“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.”* (Isaiah 55:2 ESV) But, thanks be to God, the Bible always works in every situation (Isaiah 55:10, 11) and the transformation which we long for in our individual lives, and in our congregations, and in this continent is only to be found and discovered and experienced when applied through the word of God. *“For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace, the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees in the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”* (Isaiah 55:12 -13 ESV)

FIVE PRIORITIES

It is now just under a year since our last Synod which met in Ottawa hosted by St Peter and St Paul. It was there and then that our Primate and many of the Bishops of our province joined us, and Archbishop Foley installed me as the second Diocesan Bishop of this diocese.

At that time I reminded everyone that I was in the midst of a kind of tour which was visiting all regions of this diocese, to meet with clergy and spouses, to have a gathering for children at which the gospel was preached, to have a public meeting for any and all who were able and wished to gather together and worship at one of the local churches. When we met at Synod I was about halfway through that “tour”. I am so grateful that our Bishop’s Prayer Support Chaplain, the Rev Garth Hunt, join me for all these gatherings and also gave teaching specifically on prayer for revival which we so desperately need. I concluded that tour just six months ago, in the middle of April.

The message I wanted to bring, both to all the regions and in my charge last Synod, was to call for what I described as “five priorities” which would be foundational for our life together, which would so mark us, so characterize us that outsiders couldn’t help but notice. My prayer is that these priorities will so focus us on scripture that we would be prepared for the harvest I believe God will be pleased to send us – a people who are seeking to honour his name and his word. In my mind these five priorities are non-negotiable’s and are the things I am focusing on throughout the few years the Lord may be pleased to allow me to be your Diocesan Bishop. Like Elijah, by these five priorities, we are seeking to build an altar, and beg the Lord, expect him to send the fire of the Holy Spirit to bring about the harvest with eternal glory. That is what we labour for and that is why we endure all the struggles that come our way.

Though tempted, I resolved not to force the five priorities onto 2 Timothy or suggest that what Paul really had in mind were these five priorities. Having said that, certainly in my heart and mind, 2 Timothy is brimming with confidence in the Gospel and the need, therefore, to be bold witnesses. It is written to a young man who, from childhood, was taught the word of God – and confidence in the Word of God – by both his grandmother and mother. He was biblically grounded and the Bible was having its good effect in his life. The emphasis in 2 Timothy on suffering makes it clear that we are called to be on mission in a suffering world. And Paul is writing to Timothy because he has confidence that the hope of the nations is the planting of gospel churches.

Let me be clear these five priorities are not the latest fad but in fact are foundational to what the church has always taught and always believed. And when these priorities are evident in the church, life and fruitfulness follow.

My charge therefore to you this Synod is to continue in these five ministry priorities with all your heart. I believe these ministry priorities are already very much in evidence in our churches and I rejoice in that. But there is much more to do.

As you know we formed five national committees to be given the task of providing resources in the five areas to any and everyone who would like help as they seek to make these priorities part of the strategic ministry plan of their congregations. I hope you still own one of those blue book mark cards which we distributed liberally. If you remember on one side of the card we quoted the mission statement of ANiC which is that we are about: “*Building biblically faithful, gospel sharing, Anglican churches.*” On the other side of the card we listed the five priorities and above them we made this request: “*Pray that God will make our five priorities a transformational reality in the life of every ANiC congregation.*”

The two phrases in that request that I want to emphasize this year are:

First, "a transformational reality"... We have no interest in a lot of hype around a plan, no matter how inspirational it may be, if there's no reality. Our prayer is that these five priorities would become genuine marks of our life. And it is transformation that we're praying for – which only God the Holy Spirit can bring.

The second phrase is: "in the life of every ANiC congregation".

Please understand that it is not the bishop or the diocesan office for the national priority committee that actually does the work. We hope we can provide encouragement and resources and hold you to account but, in fact, the work is done only at the congregational level. I am charging you rectors and clergy, and people of each congregation to work at adjusting your life such that each of these priorities actually are marks of your life.

For instance- I am asking you to come up with a plan to help every member of your congregation be trained in how to share the gospel. There are many simple and effective ways. There are ways which are good for adults and good for children. Certainly you want to help your people learn how to prepare to share their own story or testimony in an effective way which gives glory to God and makes an example of how the gospel has worked in one situation and one life. You also need to figure out a means of helping your people fully understand and articulate the gospel. (Incidentally, clergy, you need to make sure you invite your people to respond themselves to the gospel regularly so that no one is trying to learn how to share what they have never received themselves.) You may well know that the method I learned as a young man and have used ever since is called the bridge illustration. It has been hugely helpful for me. In a multitude of situations, I have used it in speaking with people – some of whom were interested and hungry and thirsty, and others who were antagonistically resistant – but in all cases, I believe the gospel has been set before them and usually I invite people to respond. Many did and remain in Christ today.

Assuming we have 5000 people each Sunday in church, imagine if all 5000 were trained and engaged in sharing the gospel with the people around, what might God want to do? But how are they going to get equipped? It has to be you, the local congregation, setting your mind to make it happen.

I am serving notice that there is going to be, each year from now on, a questionnaire which will include specific questions around each of the five priorities. For instance, in this case, it might ask how many of your people are trained and equipped to share the gospel and their testimony? How many are actually sharing the gospel? How many have come to Christ? How many did you train in this past year?

Friends, what I'm trying to say is... my charge to you is that you actually do this. And I love it that as I across the country I can see it is actually happening.

I understand all too well that it is impossible to concentrate on all five in one go. So you work out the order in which you're going to concentrate on these, but once you have started working on one make sure you continue and follow through.

I am so excited about what God is doing. I have been very impressed by the level of commitment I have seen in church after church both large and small to these priorities. Bless you! Now continue!

I now have a number of areas that I want to address briefly which grow out of the five priorities but not specifically identified with them.

CLERGY DAY and WORKSHOPS

Though Synod begins this evening with this service of Holy Communion, I am so grateful that many of us have already enjoyed a couple of very important days. On Tuesday the clergy of the diocese gathered here at Good Shepherd. Given the immense distances, these times are very precious so I'm very grateful that we had the time together. Our guest speaker was Dr Rod Wilson, the recently retired president of Regent College. Among his many gifts he is a trained counselor. The topic that we asked him to address in two sessions was clergy care. The background is that, starting in March of 2015, the bishops and archdeacons have been praying about and working hard to know how we can better support our clergy and encourage them in their family lives, their ministry, and their congregational life. Dr Wilson added so much to our thinking. Please pray for our clergy families. Among the many things we were thinking about is rest. We are encouraging clergy and congregations to pattern their life around a day off every week, a Sabbath rest. Then take adequate holidays each year. We are also thinking about sabbatical leaves and you may be interested to know that Bishop Stephen, Bishop Trevor and I were all consecrated in November 2009 so as of November 13 we will be in our seventh year. All three of us, though enthusiastically grateful for the ministries that God has given us feel some measure of fatigue and the desire for refreshment. So, over the course of the coming year, 2016, each of us, at different times, will be off for some sabbatical leave beginning with Bishop Stephen in January.

Today was a day filled with workshops. I am so grateful that the morning sessions were all about the five priorities led by each of the five committees who are providing resources for us to move forward in these five areas. I am so grateful to them for their hard work and all that they have provided us. I am happy that each workshop has been recorded so that others can enjoy the benefits as well. We are all greatly indebted to the Rev Ray David Glenn for his and his committee's work on BOLD WITNESSES; to the Rev Canon George Sinclair and his committee for their work on BIBLICALLY GROUNDED; to Kimberley and the Rev Jeremy Graham and their committee for their work on LOVING CHILDREN; to Claus Lenk and his special ON MISSION committee for their hard work; and to the Rev Alastair Sterne and his committee for working on PLANTING AND GROWING CHURCHES. Joan Deeks as Diocesan Co-ordinator for Strategic Ministry Planning has helped me wonderfully by keeping us on track and moving forward. Bless you Joan!

In the afternoon today there were a number of other workshops each one of such great importance. I'm so grateful that incredibly helpful workshops were offered by both Bishop Stephen and Bishop Trevor; also by the Rev David Little on youth ministry; the Rev Garth Hunt addressed prayer and praying for revival; and Dr Joan and the Rev Dr

Ken Deeks provided more training for parishes undertaking strategic ministry planning. It is so exciting to me that a Synod whose theme is *“Thoroughly equipped for every good work”* would have such wonderfully equipping workshops available to us all.

PARTNERSHIPS

Speaking of the Church Planting workshop... In April of this past year, ANiC entered into a partnership for the sake of the gospel with a group or network of church planters founded and supported by the Mennonite Brethren Church called C2C Network. I'm very grateful that Mark Burch, representing C2C, is with us for Synod and on Thursday will bring greetings to us all. Already this morning, he shared in the workshop on 10 Best Practices for Church Planting. This partnership is very important for us. There are so many things that I've grown to appreciate about C2C: their love of the word of God and clarity on the gospel; their fervent prayer that Luke 10:2 would be fulfilled, that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more labourers into the harvest; their true gospel and Kingdom generosity and flexibility; and their track record of assisting church planters through regular coaching and involvement, improving their chances of success. In large part that success depends on serious discernment at the beginning. I believe we are very fortunate to be connected as partners with C2C.

What a joy that again this Synod that we are welcoming three new congregations, all three planted in the last twelve months and we are also rejoicing in a new configuration which under Bishop Trevor's wise leadership has caused a congregation to close but then with a new pastor join as a satellite of this amazing church called The Table.

Last Synod, Bishop Todd Atkinson of Via Apostolica and a number of deacons were present with us when it was announced that we had entered into what we call a "Common Cause" relationship. This relationship continues. Bishop Trevor Walters is a regular speaker at their major gatherings and will be again at the end of this week. Archdeacon Darrell Critch was appointed last year to be an ambassador on our behalf to Via Apostolica. This work has been very encouraging and will continue. Unfortunately our Synod this year coincided exactly with their clergy meetings and National gathering, so Bishop Atkinson and others were unable to be with us, but they do send their greetings.

MAJOR CONCERNS

Over the course of the year there have been two things that I felt as Diocesan Bishop I needed to respond to on our behalf:

1. In February, in response to the Supreme Court of Canada decision on assisted suicide and euthanasia, I felt we could not stand by and just allow this to quietly happen. The church must speak out and must be involved. More recently I signed on to an excellent statement on this issue which the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada produced to raise our concern to our government before it is too late. (As you know ANiC is one of the denominational affiliates of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.) I'm sure you're aware also that I have been encouraging the development of Anglicans for Life Canada under the leadership of the Rev Vicky Hedelius. I strongly encourage congregations to get involved with Anglicans for Life, and participate in the study they offer on life issues. We are pro-life because Jesus said: *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I*

came that they may have life and have it abundantly." We stand for life because Jesus loves life, is the author of life, and is the way the truth and the life.

2. More recently we witnessed the incredible phenomena of millions of people being dislocated and driven to dangerous migration in order to find a safe place to live as families. Again it did not seem possible to standby and simply watch this happening before us on the news every day. Again a letter was written to encourage us all to be praying and get involved as we're able. I'm so grateful that ARDFC is providing us a way to participate with our funds. And the Rev Rich Roberts, who has years of experience in refugee sponsorship work, is available to advise congregations, groups of congregations and individuals in this important work. I want you to know that very recently we adapted our plans for our Thursday evening banquet in response to this massive migration and refugee crisis. I am thrilled that Canon Jack Lumanog has agreed to address us all at the dinner on the topic of "compassion". "

CATECHISM AND YOUTH MINISTRY

One of the joys I had during that tour that I spoke of earlier was to present each clergy person with a copy of the new catechism "To Be a Christian" which has been presented to the Church on behalf of the College of Bishops of the ACNA. Two of the key members who helped draft this wonderful work are our own Dr James Packer and Bronwyn Short. I presented this catechism to each clergy in part because I wanted to give them a nice gift. But more than that, I hoped to encourage them to use it in their ministry of catechesis. I'm delighted also that a group has been formed now under the leadership of Bronwyn Short and the Rev Ben Roberts, called the Canadian Council for Catechesis. Ben will be giving a brief report later.

Right now, I simply want to say I'm delighted that as I travel around the diocese I find that virtually every congregation is making use of this incredible resource and I strongly encourage you to increase its use.

As you know, the third priority listed of the five is Loving Children. Thus far most of the catechesis work being done is about loving children at home, loving children in our congregations and loving children in our communities, with the focus being on younger children as opposed to youth. This work is of great importance and I'm thrilled that our committee is working on this and that congregations are addressing the need to reach children.

I am also so thankful that the Bishop Donald and Trudy Harvey Legacy Fund was established last Synod to support creative and sustainable ministry initiatives in ANiC that nurture and disciple children and young people.

We also need to increase our ministry to youth and I guess by saying that I'm thinking of from 14 years old and on into the 20s and 30s. The Rev Dave Little, who is working with our Province on the Young Anglicans Project, has kindly agreed to assist us in launching a ministry which helps congregations or groups of congregations get going in youth ministry.

I personally will always be grateful that, though I grew up in a wonderful Christian family where I heard the gospel from day one, the Lord used the youth group of a church my

family did not attend, where I personally receive the Lord Jesus. Also two groups during my university years disciplined me and, ultimately, during that time I heard God's call on my life. My guess is that I am not the exception but many, many around this room have had the same experience.

We must do better in our care of children and youth ministry. It not only is the right thing to do it is, strategically, absolutely essential.

FINANCES, TIME TO BUILD and DIOCESAN SYNODS

Though we are now in our Eighth Synod, finances continue to be an area that needs to be watched carefully all the time and prayed about constantly. We are very fortunate to have the staff at the office, our treasurer and Finance Committee administering our funds so competently and faithfully.

Personally I had prayed that we would end our financial year at least breaking even. I was very grateful for our Council and Archdeacons who joined me in the last weeks to pray and fast about this issue and also gave themselves very sacrificially.

Though we were incredibly blessed by some wonderful gifts that came in near the end of June, we still did not quite make the target we had prayed for.

Ron Bales and Ed Hobbs have picked up on Time to Build where Archdeacon Ron Corcoran left off and are working on this area and are seeking to raise some \$250,000 a year for the next eight years over and above the Parish Tithes.

Please be in much prayer. We can see that, every year, the Parish Tithes are covering more of our Diocesan expenses every year. It is projected that by something like 2021 the tithe of parishes will entirely cover our expenses but in the meantime we must pray for some direct givings over and above the Tithes to meet our expenses especially now that we are seeking to move forward boldly and strategically with the Five Priorities.

I wanted you to know that we have not yet set a place and time for a 2016 Synod. The reason is because before I make a decision on this, which is my responsibility under the Canons, I would like to receive some input from members of this Synod and your congregations before the end of November in order to make a decision.

What I am wondering is whether we should consider making our face-to-face Synods alternating years and the other years have an Electronic Synod and perhaps a variety of Regional meetings to help reduce the financial burden on congregations who otherwise pay for the travel and lodging of clergy and lay delegates every year.

Hopefully on Friday morning we can take some time to hear from one another on this question and then also receive further input from any congregations that may want to give their thoughts before I make a decision, Lord willing, by the beginning of December.

APPOINTMENTS

During the last year it was my joy to appoint now Canon Paul Donison to be Canon of Diocesan Events.

Today it is my joy to name Garth Hunt who has been serving as Bishop's Prayer Support Chaplain to now be the Rev Canon Garth Hunt serving as the Canon for Prayer Support. Also Brent Stiller who has been serving as Bishop's Clergy Support Chaplain is now the Rev Canon Brent Stiller and will continue to serve as Canon for Clergy Support. In all three cases these individuals are serving us all in a wonderful way.

RETURNING TO 2 TIMOTHY

The apostle Paul is very clear that the gospel ministry which he is charging Timothy to offer is one that can only be done through the Lord himself.

He says: *"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."* (2 Timothy 1:6,7) He goes on to say: *"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God."* This gospel ministry can only be done by the power of God.

Later he says: *"Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."* It is only by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us that we can do this work.

Paul's own testimony was: *"But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."* (2 Timothy 4:17,18 ESV).

My dear friends, we desperately need the Lord. What he is calling us to is so much bigger than our capacity to even think about doing it. Unless the Lord builds the house truly they labour in vain who build it. On our knees, with desperate hearts let us beg the Lord to do a glorious work. Let us pray that these priorities might become marks of our life and that by his mercy and grace he might bring a great harvest to his glory and the extension of his kingdom.

Let us with much joy do all this *"for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"*!

Dear friends, it is my great joy and honour to be partners in the gospel together with you and to share with you in this great work as your Bishop! Alleluia!

Respectfully submitted,

+ Charles