

**REPORT ON THE 144TH SYNOD OF THE
DIOCESE OF JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
APRIL 22-25, 2014**

THE FIRST DAY – APRIL 22, 2014

The Synod began with an Opening Service at the St. Ann Parish Church on Tuesday, April 22, 2014 under the theme **“Affirm the Past, Engage the Present and Envision the Future.”**

The Service was attended by clergy and lay representatives from churches across the Diocese. Special guests included the Chief Justice, The President of the Court of Appeal, Custodes, a representative of the JDF Chief of Staff, as well as, members of the Ecumenical fraternity and their spouses.

The Bishop of Jamaica & the Cayman Islands, the Rt. Rev. Howard Gregory, delivered his ‘Charge’ which is a special message to the church and the nation. The Charge was based on Nehemiah 2:17-18 which tells of the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem after the city had been invaded and overrun by Persia. He noted that Jamaica faces the same problem today as the Israelites did; in that the nation is experiencing a moral crisis, violence and corruption, among other challenges.

Bishop Gregory referred to a recent call by national leaders for the church to engage every sector of the society to rebuild the nation. He noted that despite resistance, Nehemiah shared his vision with his people in order to achieve his goal. Similarly, he suggested that we need to examine ourselves, both as a nation and a church, and to take the necessary steps to bring about change. Bishop Gregory stated: “Needless to say, whatever vision we may have for the renewal of this Church, it will not come about by the effort of a few leaders or sections of the Church without the full involvement of all who take their baptism into Jesus Christ seriously.”

Music at the Service was provided by a combined choir accompanied by organ, piano, violin and trumpet.

THE SECOND DAY – APRIL 23, 2014

The second day began with Matins (Morning Prayer) followed by Holy Eucharist led by the Montego Bay Region. The Rt. Rev. Leon Golding, Suffragan Bishop of Montego Bay was Celebrant and Preacher at the Eucharist.

Bishop Golding based his sermon on the passage in Luke 24: 33-35 which tells how Jesus renewed the hope of the two disciples who were running away to the village of Emmaus, following his death and resurrection. He noted that the men were depressed by the events

surrounding Jesus' death. However, following their conversation with the risen Lord, they returned to Jerusalem with a new sense of purpose.

Bishop Golding encouraged members of the Synod not to be discouraged by the problems facing the Diocese. If we have experienced the risen Lord, then we, like the two disciples, will be able to see a new future for our Church that is not a copy of others, he said. Bishop Golding also expressed the hope that members would return to their local communities and work with members of their local church to face the challenges, inspired by Jesus Christ.

The Business Session of the Synod was held at the Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort and Spa in Ocho Rios; and was attended by 263 Clergy, Church Workers and Lay Representatives, as well as 13 Youth Representatives.

It began with Part Two of the Lord Bishop's Charge in which he reported on developments in the Diocese, the Province of the West Indies and the wider Anglican Communion during 2013.

Eight Resolutions that had been presented at Pre-Synod Conferences were tabled for discussion.

Financial Statements for 2013 and Estimates of Expenditure for 2014 were presented by Chairman of the Diocesan Financial Board, the Hon. Michael Fennell. Mr. Fennell cautioned that the Diocese was in crisis, as churches were not meeting their obligations. Current Account Balances had increased from J\$157.4 Million at the end of 2012 to J\$193.1 Million at December 31, 2013. He said the challenge in 2014 was to control expenses, improve financial management and put the Church on a path for growth.

A Panel Discussion followed, with the Hon. Paula Llewellyn, Director of Public Prosecutions, as the main speaker. Her subject was "The Justice System and the Jamaican Family." She mentioned the recent Vybz Kartel case, and noted how hard it had been for everyone who participated. Miss Llewellyn commended the jurors and witnesses on their courage in coming forward to see that justice was done; and she urged other people to display similar courage in speaking out against wrong-doing.

She quoted several passages from Scripture to illustrate how we should follow the example of Jesus, and respond as a Church family to the moral challenges confronting the society.

There were three other panelists. The first - the Rev. Canon Abner Powell of All Saints Church, West Street, Kingston, spoke on "The Family in the Context of the Inner City." He mentioned some of the challenges, including inadequate social facilities and opportunities, as well as, the influence of politics and community dons, that contributed to crime in the inner city.

The Rev. Edward Jennings, a member of the Anglican clergy who works in the prison ministry, focused on the ways in which imprisonment affects families. Noting that many prisoners were unable to see family members because of the complicated system for visits, he

pointed to the need for the Anglican Church to take greater interest in the prison ministry, as is being done by other denominations.

The fourth presenter, Mrs. Rose Robinson-Hall, who is a social worker and Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, spoke on “Neglect, Abandonment and Abuse” and how the lack of love and care destroys the lives of our children. She called for more specialized training in listening to children as they record, store and retrieve memories of abuse in a different and sensitive way.

Two of the resolutions tabled earlier in the day were passed. The first authorised the Diocesan Financial Board to arrange General Banking Facilities, such as overdrafts, if necessary. The second provided for the re-introduction of the Diocesan Stewardship Programme.

A second Panel Discussion, in the afternoon, was led by Dr. Anna Perkins, a Roman Catholic theologian. Her subject was “The Changing Moral and Religious Landscape.” She spoke of Jamaica suffering from a disease demonstrated by a “dis-ease” that resulted from disrespect, murder, corruption and other anti-social behaviours. She asserted that the church should not withdraw, but should seek to understand the changing popular culture and use it to convey the message of God’s salvation, as well as to prevent the spread of the disease.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson, Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, then spoke on “Engaging the Changing Landscape.” He mentioned the need for the church to take a new direction at both the theological and pastoral level. Bishop Thompson recommended a radical shift from the rigid administrative structures of the church towards Total Ministry. He explained that this model will facilitate mission and specialized ministries, drawing on the resources of the laity, and allowing them to feel they have a stake in the process and are partners in God’s mission.

The final presenter for this session was Dr. Las Newman, President of the Caribbean School of Theology. His theme was: “Fresh Expressions and Emerging Churches.” He contended that the Church has always had to respond to changing views and values. Noting that people want different ways of experiencing God, he suggested that Anglicans try to understand the current social context and be flexible in meeting people’s needs.

The day continued with the second and third readings of bills to amend some Canons (Laws) of the church. The amendments allow for: a) extension of the retirement age for clergy from 70 to 75; b) granting of the Bishop’s Licence to trained Associate Evangelists and c) changes to the Regional boundaries to create three Regions instead of the present four. The three regions are: Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay, and each will be supervised by a Suffragan Bishop.

Further presentations followed Evensong. These dealt with “Education - the Way Forward.” Mrs. Gloria Gascoigne, Director of Schools, and Dr. Fitz Russell, educator shared with Synod delegates the findings of a recent survey of educational institutions in Jamaica. The Anglican Church is responsible for 202 schools, the majority of which are Primary Schools. While the performances in the 11 Diocesan High Schools are commendable, the Primary Schools are

not doing as well. A stronger Anglican presence in our schools was recommended; and the management of the institutions is also to be reviewed in relation to the Diocesan Education Policy and mission.

Mrs. Beverley Lawrence, Lay Representative from Kingston Parish Church, presented a review of the Reports in the Synod Handbook, and she suggested that the method of reporting be re-considered to reflect performance in relation to established targets and the Diocesan Vision. She also did a presentation on the ecclesiastical returns for a period of up to eleven years, indicating the pattern of decline in membership, baptisms, confirmations and Sunday School students.

THE THIRD DAY – APRIL 24, 2014

Like the second day, the third day of the Synod began with Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist, conducted by the Kingston Region. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson, Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, was Celebrant and Preacher at the Eucharist.

In his sermon, Bishop Thompson referred to St. Luke 24: 36-38 in which Jesus appeared to his disciples, following his resurrection, and showed them his wounds. After 350 years of Anglican worship in Jamaica, Bishop Thompson said the Church must also look at its wounds. He noted that Jesus would not wait for us to recover from our challenges before setting us to work; and while the Anglican Church was not as secure as it was in the past, there were still exciting opportunities to witness. However, he said many members had not learned about our faith; and so, could not confidently proclaim the Good News. At the same time, he emphasized that a witnessing Church must reflect the standards and values of the Gospel.

Quoting the Archbishop of York, the Most Rev. & Rt. Hon. John Sentamu, Bishop Thompson said *“we must either evangelise or fossilise.”*

The chief business in the morning session was the Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Church Missionary Society (JCMS) of which all baptized Anglicans are members. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson, Chairman of the JCMS, presented the Report.

He stated that the current priority of the JCMS was to build up local leadership for missionary activity. To this end, Bishop Harold Daniel and Sister Norma Thompson of the Church Army will be developing a Training Manual to teach local church communities to witness and evangelise.

A major achievement in 2013 was the establishment of a Mission at Longville Park, Clarendon, which is being coordinated by Sister Alvarine Roberts of the Church Army, with assistance from the Venerable Winston Thomas and members of the St. Gabriel’s Church, May Pen.

Restoration work on St. Alban's Mission in Denham Town, which began in 2012, is now in the final stages.

Bishop Thompson commented on the significant decline in contributions to the JCMS and noted that this negatively affected the Society's outreach programmes, including the running of Diocesan Children's Homes. In response to this information and a stirring appeal from Dr. Horace Phillips, Lay Representative, Holy Trinity Church, Old Harbour, a voluntary offering was made by Synod Representatives in the amount of J\$369,600.

The main speaker for the next round of presentations was Professor Maureen Samms-Vaughn of the Department of Child Health, Child Development and Child Behaviour at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona. Speaking on the topic: "What of the Next Generation?" she used slides to demonstrate the findings of her study on how children aged 6 to 16 years are affected by family structures, poor parenting, differences in health and educational opportunities, social class, violence and abuse.

The other panelists were the Rev. Michael Allen, Rector of the Church of the Ascension, Mona Heights; Dr. Derrick Aarons, Medical Consultant and Family Practitioner; and Mr. O'Dayne Plummer, Actuarial Scientist and Anglican Youth Fellowship Leader. The themes covered were: "Sunday School - Christian Formation of the Next Generation;" "The Challenge of Parenting the Next Generation;" and "A Voice from the Youth." Each speaker highlighted the relationship between parents and children/young adults.

Rev. Michael Allen emphasised the fact that the Church's development depends on the strength of the Sunday School which influenced the formation of the faith community. He noted that parents and adults in the Church were important in this process.

Dr. Aarons presented suggestions from his daughter, a psychologist, regarding parenting. She pointed out that young adults appreciated parents who set boundaries, insist on discipline, and offer guidance – all with 'tough love' even though they may resist this at first.

Mr. Plummer charged that the Church is not open to youth and, therefore, does not provide a welcoming environment for them. He said that although clergy may be supportive of youth, the congregations often are not. He noted that sacrifices and adjustments would have to be made, both by parents and members, to get youth back into our churches.

Elections to Diocesan Boards, Councils and Committees followed.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, the Lord Bishop announced that Chancellor, the Hon. Mr. Justice Lensley Wolfe, had resigned his position with immediate effect, after having served for 18 years.

Bishop Gregory paid tribute to Mr. Justice Wolfe for the quality of his advice to the three Diocesan Bishops he served.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson, Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, and the Hon. Michael Fennell, Chairman of the Diocesan Financial Board, spoke on behalf of the clergy and laity,

respectively. They commended Justice Wolfe on his contribution to the Diocese and his deep Christian faith which guided his work.

In his response, Justice Wolfe referred to his life-long relationship with the Anglican Church and his pleasure in being given the opportunity to serve the Diocese.

After Justice Wolfe's departure, the Lord Bishop announced that Mr. Peter DePass had been appointed as Acting Chancellor.

A highlight of the afternoon's proceedings was an Awards Ceremony for Clergy and Church Workers who retired during the past year. The awardees were: The Rev. Dr. Marion Sutton, the Rev. Dr. Venice Guntley-McKenzie, the Rev. Robin Samuda, Sister Cynthia Lue-Bernard, and the Rev. Margaret Jean Forbes. A special presentation was made to Mr. Karl Fuller, who served as organist for the annual Synod for the past 18 years.

Awards were also made as follows:

- Church of the Holy Trinity, Westgate, Montego Bay - Lead Contributor, JCMS, 2013
- Church of the Holy Trinity, Retreat, St. Mary - Outstanding Mothers' Union, 2013
- Brotherhood of St. Andrew, St. Margaret's Branch - Outstanding Award, 2013
- AYW Kingston - Area Council of the Year, 2013

Group Discussions and Reports

The final exercise of the day involved break-out sessions to examine the Five Marks of Mission in relation to the Panel Discussions and the Diocesan Vision. Reports and draft resolutions were delivered to the general assembly by leaders of each discussion group. Following are highlights of the Group reports:

Group 1: To Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God

Led by: Rev. Michael Allen; Rapporteur: Mr. Sterling Soares

- Develop a profile of congregations to determine how best to meet their needs;
- Strengthen training in Evangelism; train trainers, so that each congregation has at least one trained evangelist; develop Lay Ministers and expand the Volunteer Chaplaincy Programme;
- Affirm the youth by developing targeted sports and social programmes; expand their role in church services, beyond the fifth Sunday; and promote/strengthen the Teacher Education Fund in order to increase the number of Anglican teachers in Diocesan educational institutions;
- Make the Book of Common Prayer more user-friendly;
- Work through the Mothers' Union to bring members of the community to Christ;
- Enhance communication through radio broadcasts and increased use of social media channels

Group 2: To Teach, Baptise and Nurture New Believers

Led by: Rev. Sean Major-Campbell; Rapporteur: Miss Tanya Tomlinson

Consider this: How can we achieve the goal of this mission, if we do not know about and/or permit injustice in our society?

- Live an exemplary life; and nurture present members before looking outside the Church;
- Focus on Confirmation Classes, Refreshment Services, Alpha Courses;
- Establish satellite Sunday Schools (outside of the church and in the community); also, move Bible Study sessions into homes and make them age-appropriate;
- Use technology in Sunday School classes and make lessons age-appropriate;
- Establish links with civic/community organizations, and invite them to address members of the church on topical social issues, to ensure understanding of related factors and guide possible action;
- Work through the Mothers' Union's Parenting Programme to attract and strengthen new believers;
- Discontinue Youth Sunday and include youth fully in worship Services and other activities, for example: form a combined choir;
- Envisage each child in an Anglican school as a potential member

Group 3: To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service

Led by: Sister Norma Thompson; Rapporteur: Mr. Odane Hamilton

- Establish/strengthen feeding programmes; conduct parenting workshops; collaborate with service clubs and community organizations, where possible, to establish mentorship programmes; and implement outreach initiatives for teenage mothers;
- Identify members skills, and/or areas of interest and provide relevant training; develop a Skills Bank;
- Members should willingly use their talents to share the gospel;
- Establish Hospitality Teams to make churches more welcoming to visitors; develop a ministry for new members;
- Minister to youth on their turf (where they are, for example, on the street corner or the ball ground). Do not drive away boys who come to play football on the church grounds. Try to understand and respond to their needs before introducing spirituality;
- Establish programmes that develop and use the skills/talents of youth, for example: a Music Ministry and other performing arts;
- Include youth in the planning process. Do not develop programmes, and then, seek their endorsement;
- Clergy should empower members for ministry as disciples

Group 4: To Challenge Violence, Injustice and Oppression, and Work for Peace and Reconciliation

Led by: Rev. Richard Tucker; Rapporteur: Lt. Col. Norman Tomlinson (Presentation supported by Miss Mickole Powell.

- Charity begins at home. Sometimes, the Church contributes to oppressive structures – all members are equal and should, therefore, have a “voice” in their church and be treated with equal respect;
- Expand and involve more members in existing social programmes, such as, the prison ministry, and the HIV/AIDS initiative;
- Collaborate with existing interest groups, ecumenical partners (other denominations) to address violence, injustice and oppression in the society;
- The Church is a spiritual body and not a social agency. There must be constant prayer, even as we adopt a more practical approach to ministry by taking the Message into the streets;
- Work with Area Leaders to bring about positive change in communities;
- Affirm youth by sharing testimonies with them; allowing them to express their views and to feel that they are a part of the church; and delivering sermons to which they can relate;
- Establish specific targets and timelines for the Visioning exercise so that churches/the Diocese can monitor progress.

Group 5: To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and to Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth

Led by: Rev. Charles Danvers; Rapporteur: Miss Angelique Davidson

- The Church has been weak in addressing environmental issues. Circulate the Diocesan Environmental Policy to all churches and plan a structured roll-out of strategies;
- Develop and implement strategies at the personal level, in the local church and at the Deanery, Diocesan and national levels;
- Introduce a plastic-free bottle recycling drive; use bio-degradable materials (that will not harm the environment, for example, paper bags instead of plastic bags);
- Convert electrical systems to solar power;
- Mount a public education programme in local church communities, including school visits;
- Highlight the environmental message in sermons;
- Mount a landscaping exercise in churches across the Diocese on Labour Day.

THE FOURTH DAY – APRIL 25, 2014

The Synod's final worship session was led by the Mandeville Region. The Ven. Winston Thomas presided and delivered the Sermon at the Sung Eucharist.

Archdeacon Thomas who based his Sermon on St. Luke 24: 38-48, said that as we celebrate the Great 40 days of Easter, we have the opportunity to witness to the Resurrection. He noted that Jesus appeared to his followers 10 times after his Resurrection; and each time, he gave the command: **“Go and tell.”** As people of God, we have a story to tell to the nations and a gospel to proclaim. The story about the call to repentance and the offer of God's love is old, but the message is ever new, the Archdeacon said.

He declared that as Christians, we are agents of Jesus; and there was no holiday from his command. “We must leave the security of our church buildings to go into the mission field.” Jesus gives us the resources to perform our duties; and we must be prepared to wait on him, Archdeacon Thomas stated. “We retreat to advance,” he said.

As occurred on the previous days, the Business Session began with prayers by the Rev. Garth Minott, Anglican Warden at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI), followed by the reading of the Minutes.

Alternate Synod Venue

The Lord Bishop spoke about the cost of Synod at the hotel, and noted that this was proving to be burdensome for some congregations and Cures. He said a Committee led by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson had considered the options; and two were presented at the meeting. The first by Bishop Thompson recommended the Jamaica Conference Centre for daytime meetings at a total estimated cost of J\$3.5 million, with meals, compared with the J\$14.3 million charged by the hotel.

The second option was presented by the Diocesan Secretary, the Rev. Canon Denzil Barnes. This would involve accommodation at Church Teachers' College, Mandeville, which had good conference facilities. However, participants would be required to share bathrooms and take their own sheets, pillows and towels. The total estimated cost would be J\$3.3 million or J\$14,000 per person, with meals.

Members were asked to indicate their choice on the forms distributed to them.

Resolutions

This discussion was followed by the reading of the Minutes for Day 3 and voting on Resolutions 3 – 11, which were passed with minor amendments. Resolution number four was withdrawn. Those approved were:

- Resolution No. 3: Review of the Method of Assessment
- Resolution No. 5: Establishment of a Diocesan Policy on HIV/AIDS
- Resolution No. 6: Establishing a Commission on Social Justice

- Resolution No. 7: Establishing a Human Resource Policy for approval at the 145th Synod of the Church
- Resolution No. 8: Strengthening Vocations and Discernment in local congregations
- Resolution No 9: The Mission of the Church with respect to the Jamaica Church Missionary Society (JCMS)
- Resolution No. 10: Implementation of the Diocesan Education Policy
- Resolution No. 11: Implementation of the Diocesan Policy on the Environment

Election Results & Appointments

The results of elections to the following Diocesan Boards, Committees and Councils, held on Day 3, were announced:

- The Board of Nominations
- The Canons Committee
- The Diocesan Council
- The Diocesan Financial Board
- The Church Army Council

Members of the following Committees and Boards were also announced:

- The Board of Mission & Ministry
- The Education & Youth Board
- The Schools' Trust
- The Nuttall Memorial Hospital Trust & Board
- The Selection Committee
- The Incorporated Lay Body, on which Mr. Earl Jarrett, General Manager, Jamaica National Building Society, replaces Mr. Eldon Forrest who has migrated

Rural Deans for 2014, including four new appointments, were named as follows:

- Kingston: The Very Rev. Dr. Alton Tulloch
- St. Andrew: The Very Rev. Franklyn Jackson
- St. Mary: The Very Rev. Canon Charles Manderson
- Portland: The Very Rev. Vinton Greene
- St. Thomas: The Very Rev. Jean Fairweather-Wilson
- Portmore: The Very Rev. Robert McLean
- St. Catherine: The Very Rev. Canon Collin Reid
- Clarendon: VACANT
- Manchester: The Very Rev. Barrington Soares
- St. Elizabeth: The Very Rev. Peter D. Clarke
- St. Ann: The Very Rev. Richard Tucker
- Trelawny: VACANT
- St. James/Hanover: The Very Rev. Annett Brown
- Westmoreland: The Very Rev. Hartley Perrin

BISHOP'S CLOSING REMARKS

Bishop Gregory expressed his satisfaction with the work of the Synod. Commenting on the resignation of the Chancellor, he noted this was a reality with which we had to deal.

He said the Church must relate to what is happening in the Society; and the presenters in the panel discussions had assisted this process. He also noted that positive messages, with a common theme, were delivered at all the Synod Services, and he thanked the preachers, as well as, the panelists.

Commenting on the “call to action” by Lay Representative, Dr. Horace Phillips, the Lord Bishop said the challenge was to communicate this important message and “fire up” our local congregations.

Bishop Gregory emphasised the need for change and the adoption of a Vision for congregations and the wider Diocese; and he urged members to play their part in achieving positive change. He noted that we would make mistakes during the Visioning process, but we should learn from our experiences and pursue Best Practices. “If we don’t act, we will be betraying the present generation and the ones to come,” the Lord Bishop concluded.

He thanked clergy, laity and officers of the Diocese; as well as, visiting presenters, clergy spouses and the hotel’s staff for their role in the successful conduct of the Synod. The Hon. Michael Fennell, in turn, thanked Bishop Gregory for his leadership throughout the Synod.

The proceedings were officially closed with the Bishop’s blessing and the singing of the Doxology.