

Report to Diocesan Council
From the Task Force on Budget Support
Final Draft
January 2009

Reviewed by Finance Committee and
Council Administration Team

Members of Task Force

Janis Branscombe
Lawrence Carpenter
Gil Carter
Gerald McConaghy
The Ven. Richard McConnell
Canon Fred Scott
Jackie Streight
Fr. Chris VanBusKirk

Report of the Task Force on Budget Support to the Diocese of Fredericton

This Task Force was formed as a result of discussions and resolutions at the 2007 Synod. The original Task Force on budget funding for the Diocese presented a report and resolution at Synod which was amended to the following:

Be it resolved that in accordance with the principles, definitions and processes described in the Report of the Budget Funding Task Force, that the bases for determining individual parish fair share contributions in support of the Diocesan Shared Ministry Budgets for the 2008 and 2009 be set as follows: 13.6% (2008) and 12.27% (2009) of parish operating income, and the “single” support request be eliminated.

That amendment was subsequently tabled and the following resolution was passed:

That this Synod refer this motion to Diocesan Council for further study and ways of implementation with the proviso that the mover and seconder be invited into the discussion process and that the recommendation arising therefrom coming before the next Synod for vote.

This became the mandate of the new Task Force formed in the fall of 2007 with the mover and seconder of the amended resolution being members of the Task Force.

Work of the Task Force.

The Task Force has held eight meetings and also held a joint meeting with representatives of the Task Force on Rural and Struggling Parishes. Our Task Force has spent its time examining two main areas: 1) the Diocese of South Carolina vis-a-vis the Diocese of Fredericton; 2) the impact of the tabled 2007 Synod amended resolution on the Diocese of Fredericton. The Task Force asked our Bishop to invite the recently retired Bishop of South Carolina, Bishop Ed Salmon, to New Brunswick to speak about how South Carolina developed their current system.

The 2007 Synod amended resolution spoke to the percentage of operating income that a parish should contribute to the Diocese for its shared mission budget and was based on the intention (as discussed at Synod 2007) of having each parish's support reduced over time to 10%. This was based on a model of 10-10-10 implemented in the Diocese of South Carolina, whereby parishioners are encouraged to tithe (10% of their net income), parishes are asked to give 10% of their operating income to the Diocese and the Diocese gives 10% of its operating funds to the national church.

- 1) **Study of the Diocese of South Carolina.** The Task Force has looked carefully at the South Carolina model and the immediate effects on the Diocese of applying the percentages put forward in the amended motion. We developed a list of questions that we thought would be helpful in coming to understand the system established in South Carolina and its relevance to our Diocese. Based on these questions we had telephone conversations with office staff in the South Carolina Diocesan office, an interview with a rector in one of the parishes and correspondence with Rev. David Thurlow, who is a rector in a South Carolina parish. We also looked at the 2007 Parochial Financial Statistics for the Diocese. (http://www.dioceseofsc.org/mt/archives/cat_administration.html)

Below is a description of various aspects of the Diocese of South Carolina and its 10-10-10 approach to funding:

1. The State population is just over 4,300,000. The Diocese of South Carolina is one of two Dioceses in the state and is in the southern part of South Carolina with 1,770,782 of the population being within the boundaries of that Diocese.
2. Population growth has been about 15% in the last 15 years with larger growth in coastal, vacation, and recreational communities. Parishes have grown by about 20%. In 2007 there were:
 - 31,559 members
 - 27,670 communicants in good standing
 - 13,461 average attendance
 - 6,650 pledging units (The Diocese does not keep records as to what the average pledge is.)
3. There are six deaneries ranging in size from eight to 17 parishes.
4. There are about 75 parishes. Parishes range in size from seven to 2300. Based on 2007 statistics (found on the Diocese of South Carolina's website) parishes range in size from less than 100 parishioners to 2300:
 - nine with less than 100;
 - eight between 100 and 200;
 - fifty between 200 and 1000.
 - five between 1100 and 1700;
 - three between 2000 and 2300.
5. In the early 1990's the then new Bishop Salmon introduced the 10-10-10 model; it is voluntary but most parishes participate.
6. Before the introduction of 10-10-10, the request of parishes for apportionment was in the 20 – 22% range. In 1990 it was 20%. Implementation has taken place over a number of years with the Diocesan office restructuring some positions and holding the line on its budget for a few years.
7. The 2007 Financial Statements on the South Carolina website show the following:
 - 2007 operating income for all parishes was \$34,243,339 with plate and pledges totaling \$30,991,880.
 - 2007 average support per parish to the Diocese was 6.98%
 - 2008 average support was estimated at 8.30 %. (The operating budgets of the parishes are large enough that the Diocesan budget does not require 10%.)
8. The Diocesan budget for 2007 was \$2, 887,800; the amount requested from parishes was \$2, 431,000 with the rest coming from investments. The amount given to the Episcopal national church (ECUSA) in 2007 was \$27,046 and \$35,638 in 2008. Parishes are able to redirect their 10% share to ministries other than the national church giving to other dioceses and ministries outside South Carolina. In 2007 the amount was \$190,366 and in 2008, \$198,535.
9. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the Diocesan budget is for Congregational Development. In 2007 that amounted to \$781,068 and was allocated to support the growth of ministries. David Thurlow reports that in 2008, 27% of the 2008 budget went to Congregational Development which is used in several ways:

- a. Growing congregations are often aided financially in major expansions of ministries and/or facilities that will allow them to grow into new and greater ministry presences in their communities. The results have been two fold: stronger local ministry with greater growth in attendance and giving which make them "ministry centers" of the diocese, and a concomitant increase of funds (resulting from increased parish budgets) going to the diocese for use by other congregations.
- b. Existing congregations that seek to begin new ministries or expand existing ministries are also aided by congregational development.
- c. Congregations that have chronic financial issues are aided through available diocesan consultants and through the establishment of partnering relationships with other congregations.

NB Rev. Thurlow goes on to say that these funds "should in no way be considered or confused with a life support mentality." Making pledges is a normal part of parish life. He says: "Most parishes regularly preach good stewardship throughout the year but will run their stewardship campaign in the fall as they begin to look ahead and plan for the upcoming budget year. Based on their budget, parishes and missions then allocate a percentage of their Net Disposable Budgeted Income (NDBI) to the Diocese and will send a declaration of intent to the diocesan office by mid-December in order that the diocese may then accurately prepare the Diocesan budget. The declaration of intent signifies to the diocese a parish's planned pledge. The 10-10-10 stewardship model is encouraged as the basis for the prayerful decision for determining pledges both on the personal level to the local church and then on the parish level to the diocese."

10. Each adult parishioner is asked annually to give \$25 and each child between \$1 and \$5 for a Builders in Christ program (recently changed to Builders for Christ). About \$100,000 is raised annually with the funds added to Congregational Development (see # 9 above).

The Diocese of Fredericton vis a vis the Diocese of South Carolina

The above shows that the South Carolina Diocese differs from our Diocese in a great many ways. The population of South Carolina that the Diocese covers is much greater than that of New Brunswick. The Diocese has a membership of just over 31,000 with about 13,500 making financial pledges. In 2007, the total income from all the parishes was \$30,991,880. The Diocesan population is increasing and many are financially comfortable Episcopalians coming from the North East to live in a warmer climate. Many of the parishes have their own parochial schools that help to ensure youth and young families in the church.

We, in contrast, are experiencing population decline along with diminishing revenue in many of our parishes. In 2007, we had 7903 identified givers and the total operating budget of all of our parishes was \$6,904,813. There are 85 parishes with the following numbers of identified givers:

- seven with over 200
- 24 between 100 and 199
- 33 between 51 and 99
- 21 between 7 and 50

There are a number of parishes without full time priests because the parish cannot pay for one and there are parishes experiencing difficulty in paying their assessment and mission outreach.

For years 2007 to 2009 the amount asked of parishes in support of the Shared Ministry Budget has been frozen at the 2006 amounts. Currently the “ask” averages 15.15% of parish income. Some parishes pay far more than the average while others pay far less or none at all. Overall, in the past three years the level of response to the ask has been about 91% .

At Synod it was proposed that over a 5 year period the rate for calculating budget support requested of parishes would be reduced to 10% target of parish income. The following chart shows the effect of that proposal in terms of the amount of budget funding requested.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Budget Request %'age	15.15%	13.64%	12.27%	11.04%	10.00%
Resulting Requested of Parishes *	1,526,600	1,415,700	1,310,600	1,223,700	1,138,700
Other Funding	247,350	247,350	247,350	247,350	247,350
Total Potential Income	1,651,822	1,549,794	1,453,102	1,373,154	1,294,954
Cumulative Reduction in Budget Funding **		- 110,900	- 216,000	-302,900	-387,900

* Assumes parish income rising by 2% annually

** Ignores the financial effect of parishes not being able to meet their requested share

As can be seen, by year 5 of the phase-in, the 10% calculation would result in about \$1.1 million of requested funding for the Shared Ministry Budget, a reduction of over \$387,000 from the current level of funding requested. This reduction, even spread over five years, would have a severe impact on the Shared Ministry Budget. It would mean that many of the mission, administrative and program efforts that reflect our mission and vision of our collective ministry would need to be curtailed or eliminated.

The norm in parishes in the Diocese of Fredericton is not to talk too much about money other than to indicate that there is a shortfall in revenue. Tithing is not part of the culture of this Diocese. There is one clear exception (and there may be others). One parish with 87 identified givers has an operating budget of \$259,593, representing just under \$3,000 per identified giver.

Our declining population and revenue problems are serious. If we look at the 10-10-10 model as a way for parishes and the diocese to save money, our decline will continue. Bishop Salmon's talks to the clergy and to the Diocesan Council to which all Task Force members were invited gave hope that our decline can be stopped and reversed. He emphasized the generosity of God and God's love for us. He spoke eloquently about how we should see giving to God as a joyous and natural part of our Christian experience. His message caused members of the Task Force to rethink what it should be recommending. More will be said on Bishop Salmon's message in the next section.

- 2) **Determining a process in which to develop effective diocesan budget support.** The original Task Force report in 2007 set out a number of definitions, values and processes, based on the assumption that these would be used as the basis for the new formula being proposed. While the formula was not accepted, the definitions and values were. Influenced

by Bishop Salmon's message, we felt that the principles that he focused on should be the template that informs the values and processes we would recommend for parish budget support for the Diocesan budget.

Below are the principles/values that he highlighted:

- 10-10-10 is a small part of a transformational process within a diocese seeking to bring about systemic change. It is not a technique to determine how much money a parish or diocese should have. Within systemic change 10-10-10 should bring about more funds at all levels.
- The principle of 10-10-10 is that increased funding at the grassroots level (parishes) will empower ministry and parishes will take ownership of it. 10-10-10 has been part of transformational change that has seen significant growth in members in most parishes in South Carolina.
- The diocese is the basic unit of the church catholic and parishes are the diocese. The diocese is there to empower congregational development. Parishes should be engaged in ministry and should not be there just to maintain themselves. Before transformational change can take place, a systemic change in the "headship" is needed. Leaders in the diocese and the parishes must be committed to working with congregations in becoming Disciples of Christ to proclaim the Gospel.
- Vestry members must be seen as leaders in the parish with a strong role to play in the spiritual development of the church. Leadership and congregational development has resulted in churches growing spiritually, financially and in membership.
- Our relations with one another (what Bishop Salmon called Spiritual Hygiene) should be based on trust, honesty and openness. Christians should not allow themselves to be receivers of third party information.
- We must be accountable for our actions not only to God but to one another. The church is the body of Christ with its headship and members. We need to be intentional in developing ministry which focuses on the message of Jesus Christ. This is the great responsibility of the church and its organization or system should reflect the vision that Christ has for us.
- It is the generosity of God and his love for us that has provided us with what we have. Our giving to the church should be seen as a reflection of that generosity. We should be giving from the "first fruits" of what we have, not from what we have left over. Clergy and church leaders should not be ashamed to talk about money for improving ministry.
- Anglican generosity should extend to working with parishes that need help – in finances and in ministry.
- God took the risk of sending Jesus Christ to become our Redeemer and we should take risks in proclaiming the Gospel message.
- In one of his talks, Bishop Salmon said that we should "work the good fields first." In ministry, the church congregations that are focused on ministry which reaches out

to people will be more fruitful than those which are preoccupied with keeping their doors open.

With these kinds of values/principles in mind, we have reworked the principles that were set out in the original Task Force report:

- § Transparency. Budgets must be clear as to how funds are being used and how the budget has been prepared. Our shared budgets must be built in partnership with parishes through their archdeaconry and representatives on Diocesan Council. The principle of Spiritual Hygiene becomes of paramount importance. We need to be open and honest with one another while respecting each other as Christians as we prepare budgets, provide support for them and report on expenditures within them. Conflict among us is inevitable but it can be fruitful if there is love and respect for each other as we discuss shared ministry and ways in which it is being carried out throughout the Diocese.
- § Integrity. Integrity comes where there are respectful relations, honesty and openness. Integrity in budget planning and building can only develop where there are these kinds of relations. In our desire to be transformed we all must realize that our intentions and words are only validated by our behaviour. Budgets must be seen as a tool for ministry development in which parishes are an integral part.
- § Equity. As we work towards true equity, we need to be mindful of God's generosity and the message of sharing that Jesus taught throughout the Gospels. At all levels the principle of generous giving of the 'first fruits' rather than the 'remainder' should be evident. Equity is manifested through generous giving and sharing – by parishioners as they move towards tithing, by parishes as they work with and help one another -- and focusing on discipleship as we attract and bring more people to worship with us.
- § Accountability. As Bishop Salmon has articulated, the diocese is the unit of the church and the parishes are the diocese. In that sense, then, our diocesan mission is primarily carried out in the congregations and the Diocesan budget should be built on that principle. According to this transformational thinking, the needs of ministry must be identified at the local level, and communicated to the headship of the Diocese (Diocesan Council) which will have the responsibility for allocating funds. This sharing of responsibility for the overall ministry of proclaiming Jesus Christ will be a manifestation of who we actually are: the Body of Christ. A body lives and breathes as a system; and a system will only produce what it is designed to produce. This is the heart of the challenge we have received from Bishop Salmon; and it follows our Lord's new commandment of love, as well as the teaching of St Paul, who said, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." (I Cor 12:12). It also means that every parish should accept its responsibility to giving its fair share to the diocese for the Shared Mission budget.
- § Communication. As stated elsewhere, effective communications must take place within a framework of trust, openness, integrity and accountability. Communications flow in many directions and can be blocked or diverted by misperceptions, misunderstandings and lack of trust. Communications about budgets need to be continuous to ensure that misperceptions are rectified, that reasons for budget items are clear. Communications also mean that messages are not only sent but are received and acted upon at many levels – diocese, archdeaconries, committees, parishes, congregations, etc.

The Task Force believes these principles need to be in practice if there is to be budget support to the Diocese that will help parishes carry out Christ's mission.

In the 2007 Task Force there were definitions to help explain the formula that was being proposed. In this report the only definition that we feel is necessary is on Parish Income and it remains as defined in the original document:

Parish Income is all income available for the general use of the parish, regardless of source and with the following exceptions:

- a. flow-through gifts (such as PWRDF)
- b. donations limited for use in funding a Specific Capital Project approved by the Bishop
- c. funds used to pay the principal portion of loans for capital projects
- d. funds received by way of bequest
- e. funds for cemeteries and memorials (except those taken into general operations)

Recommendations. Based on our study of South Carolina and the principles/values that we have reflected on, we make below a number of recommendations. In doing so, we are aware that the Diocese of Fredericton is distinctly different from that of South Carolina and that developing a new system of proclaiming the message of the Gospel will not be an easy task. We believe that with faith and a commitment to a collaborative ministry within the Diocese, these recommendations can be successfully implemented over time.

- I. That the tabled resolution of Synod 2007 be withdrawn and that the Diocese of Fredericton take the risk of moving toward a 10-10-10 model, recognizing that this is a goal that will take years to accomplish and that it is not a technique but part of a major reshaping of ministry within the Diocese, based on the values enunciated by Bishop Salmon to both the Clergy and the Diocesan Council in August, 2008.
- II. That the current system of apportionment and mission outreach be replaced with a "one-ask" fair share (single allocation) beginning with 2010 budget planning.
- III. That parishes now paying above 10% continue to pay the same amount as in 2006 until such time as the 10% of their operating income equals or exceeds the 2006 amount. We know that for some parishes this will be difficult to sustain. We ask those parishes that can pay more than the 2006 request to do so, in keeping with the principle that we are all part of the Anglican community and should work together to help one another.
- IV. That parishes paying below the 10% take all necessary measures to move to the 10% within the next three years.

NB *In making recommendations I to IV, we are aware that adequate funding for the Diocesan shared ministry budget is being put in jeopardy, at least in the short term. While budget support has been frozen at the 2006 level, expenses for salaries and for committee work, etc. continue to increase each year. All alternatives will have to be explored to find ways to improve the funding necessary to carry out the shared ministry budget. This may mean a reorganization of activities or deficit financing or other forms of raising money.*

We wish to reiterate that the 10-10-10 model is not being recommended as a way for parishes to provide less financial support to the shared ministry budget. We see the Diocese initiating a long term process of renewal that involves all clergy and laity recommitting ourselves to proclaim Christ's message as we work together to bring lapsed Anglicans and new members into our churches. An outward manifestation of our commitment will be in giving generously to our parishes and our diocese.

- V. That parishes encourage parishioners to think about the generosity of God and that their generosity be expressed in more generous giving in accordance with a recent Diocesan Council resolution which affirmed the biblical tithing as the diocesan standard of Christian giving.
- VI. That the Diocese begin the process of training leadership within parishes to become leaders in moving the congregation towards a greater participation in ministry, emphasizing the generosity of God through financial giving, time and talents.
- VII. That the Diocesan budget reflect the vision of the Diocese, its mission, its shared Ministry plan which is to help all parishes grow and develop spiritually. Parishes should be encouraged to work with one another at the Archdeaconry level so that specific plans can be made, shared and supported.
- VIII. That apart from the existing funding for the Diocesan budget, an appeal be made to parishioners to establish a Congregational Development Fund and Builders for Christ program and that it be overseen by a committee of clergy and laity for the whole Diocese.
- IX. That a concerted effort be planned and implemented to increase the attendance in churches. The census indicates that many more New Brunswickers identify themselves as Anglicans than those attending church regularly. Ways should be explored and processes put in place in parishes to increase membership.
- X. That goals of our common, collaborative Shared Ministry be clear and measurable and be continuously evaluated.

Respectfully submitted

Janis Branscombe
Lawrence Carpenter
Gil Carter
Gerald McConaghy

The Venerable Richard McConnell
Canon Fred Scott
Jackie Streight
Fr. Chris VanBusKirk

**“SEE, I AM MAKING
ALL THINGS NEW”
(Revelation 21:5)**

**REPORT OF
THE TASK FORCE
ON
RURAL AND/OR STRUGGLING PARISHES**

**PRESENTED TO BISHOP CLAUDE MILLER
&
THE 2009 SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON**

February 12, 2009

Members of the Task Force

The Ven. Pat Drummond, Chair

The Rev. Rod Black and Louise Whalen – Archdeaconry of Chatham

The Rev. Dr. Ranall Ingalls and Shara Golden – Archdeaconry of Fredericton

The Rev. Chris Hayes and Martin MacMullin – Archdeaconry of Woodstock

The Rev. Eileen Irish and Robert Cormier – Archdeaconry of Saint John

The Rev. Canon John Matheson and Doug Goss – Archdeaconry of St. Andrews

The Rev. Chris VanBuskirk and Cheryl Young – Archdeaconry of Moncton

The Rev. Allen Tapley – Archdeaconry of Kingston/Kennebecasis

Ex-officio Members

The Ven. Geoffrey Hall, Executive Assistant to the Bishop

Hazel MacKenzie, Chair of the Parish Support & Development Team

Jim Morell, Facilitator

Executive Summary of the Report on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes

As a result of a motion that was approved at the 2007 Synod, Bishop Claude Miller set up our task force to prepare a report in response to the question of "... how best to continue this Synod's historic commitment to rural and struggling parishes."

As the task force consulted with parish leaders it became clear that most of the 85 parishes in the diocese are struggling in one way or another, not just those in rural areas. Our people share a deep concern about our future, and there is a growing recognition that, if we don't begin doing certain things differently, the very future of the Anglican Church in New Brunswick is at risk.

Certainly there are many, many good things happening across the diocese, thanks to our clergy and people. Nevertheless, statistics and information gathered from our own annual reports from the past 10 years tell us we are a church in decline: for example, Sunday attendance is down 16.2%, there are 17.6% fewer identifiable givers, the total number of individuals and families has decreased 11.2%, in percentage terms the total of parish contributions to the diocese has declined about 2%, for most parishes and the diocese income is insufficient to meet budgetary requirements (despite a 35% increase in annual giving), approximately one third of our parishes cannot now afford a full-time priest, our 85 parishes have a total of 312 properties and leaders report that costs associated with maintenance are becoming a real burden, there are 34% more funerals than baptisms, over half of our baptized children do not go on to become confirmed, and we (especially our elderly members) do not seem to have the time, energy, skills or commitment to do youth work or engage in mission/outreach/evangelism.

It is important to understand that societal changes over the past 30-40 years have contributed to what is happening at the parish level. For example, New Brunswick's overall population has been declining for the past 11 years, in part because the provincial birthrate is 66% less than what it was 40 years ago. Our rural communities are in decline – many rural residents, especially young people, are moving to urban areas and many NBers are leaving the province in pursuit of job opportunities elsewhere. And as we know only too well, fewer people go to church on Sundays.

There is little value in looking in the rear view mirror and saying 'we should have done this or that differently'. We must look forward with confidence that God will lead us ... if we will let Him ... and we must embrace the idea that systemic change is needed if we are to grow spiritually, numerically and financially and become a stronger and healthier church.

Following many hours of discussion and much prayer, the Task Force has concluded that we need to go back to basics and begin a new phase of our Christian journey. We need a period and a program of personal learning and self-examination to see more clearly what God is calling us to be and to do now. This will help us to rediscover our Anglican identity and relearn how to live out our Christian faith in today's culture. We are recommending that every parish enter a period of self-examination. Further, we are suggesting they use tools such as our "10 marks of a healthy parish" document (see appendix 2). Similarly our diocesan leaders need to reassess current administrative structures, programs and budgets to ensure we are efficiently and effectively contributing to the attainment of our stated mission ("to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the making of disciples") and our vision ("a diocese of healthy, mission-focused, welcoming and growing parishes").

Our task force has embraced the ideas and principles that Bishop Edward Salmon shared with our clergy and diocesan council. His wise counsel is that the diocese is the fundamental unit of the Anglican Church, and it must be strong organizationally in order to fulfill its primary role – that of supporting and encouraging parishes in their efforts to become self-sustaining, strong and healthy. Indeed, the diocese and its parishes are inter-dependent. Both need to be strong.

Given our current situation, systemic change is called for. As we begin this process, we need to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as we consider what to do next and we need to use the gifts that God has given us. As individual parishes and as a diocese we are at the proverbial fork in the road. We have a choice – will we venture down the road trusting in God and supporting each other as we seek change, growth and renewal, or will we stay on the road we know, the road on which we have been travelling for the last many years? The Task Force believes we need to make an intentional decision to take a new road, in the hope and expectation of positive change, growth and renewal, according to God’s will for His church.

These recommendations are made with the belief that they will strengthen us as parishes and as a diocese, and help synod continue its historical commitment to rural and struggling parishes. *(Note: the rationale for these recommendations is included in the full report that follows):*

Recommendation 1 - Renewed as Christians & Unified as Anglicans

1. That we turn again to the principles of our Anglican Christian identity, especially through learning and self-examination, and a renewal of our minds and hearts; and that we begin with (a.) the study of, and adherence to, the “Rule of Life” (see appendix 3 - p. 555 of the BCP) and (b.) daily Scripture reading and daily prayer. *(Note: when possible and practical this should be through public Morning and Evening Prayer – wherever two or three can come together in His Name.)*

Recommendation 2 - Change needed at diocesan and congregational levels

2A. Now and on a regular basis, that the diocese and every parish conduct self-assessments to evaluate current ministries and ensure on-going organizational health.

- **In a review of parish ministries the “10 Marks of a Healthy Parish” could be a useful tool (see appendix 2), and the results could be used as a springboard to change and risk-taking;**
- **In a review of diocesan ministries there could be an assessment of current diocesan ministries (programs, budgets, staffing levels, outcomes, etc.) as well as administrative processes and structures to ensure they are making solid contributions to our mission and vision**

2B. That struggling parishes be encouraged and assisted as they examine different models of shared ministry, and that financial support be offered by the diocese to those that are ready, willing and able to change and take risks in order to grow spiritually, numerically and financially.

Recommendation 3 - More people involved in community outreach and mission
(& fewer people involved in “parish administration”)

3A. That the diocese immediately establish a Congregational Development Fund to support congregations (alone or in a shared ministry context) that make a decision to focus on growth through mission and community outreach; that funding for this program come initially from an annual appeal to every Anglican in the diocese; and that this whole initiative be overseen by the Parish Support and Development Team of Diocesan Council, whose membership would need to be expanded to include representatives from each of our nine deaneries;

3B. That parishes, regardless of size or location, be eligible to apply for financial support from this fund for a specific number of years – according to a clearly defined and time-limited plan;

3C. That all parishes in the archdeaconry/deanery of these risk-taking parishes, proactively and without hesitation, offer them as much support as possible in order to help them grow, become healthier and sustain themselves in the long term.

(Note: this concept of the diocese and neighbouring parishes actively supporting congregations grow has been an important part of our heritage and tradition. It began in the 1700’s and became stronger through Bishop Medley’s episcopate. The Task Force senses that it is time to reintroduce this concept.)

Recommendation 4 - Our leaders need support and new learning opportunities

4A - That diocesan council oversee the establishment of a five year clergy and lay leadership development program focused on systemic change;

4B - As part of this plan, that a “Leadership and Learning Weekend” be held on the same weekend each year and feature a variety of workshops and learning events for clergy and lay leaders (wardens, treasurers, Sunday School superintendents, mission/outreach coordinators, youth leaders, etc); and that these learning weekends be rotated among the archdeaconries;

4C - For the next several years, that the focus of the diocesan Clergy College be on growth and systemic change within the church, and the important role that clergy have to play in that process;

4D – That the efforts of the Parish Support and Development Team be supported so they can recruit and train (using existing budgets) a group of experienced and willing Anglicans capable of helping congregations and parishes deal with local challenges related to such topics as congregational growth, change, stewardship, visioning and planning.

Recommendation 5 - Money and teaching what the Bible says
about ‘giving’ and stewardship

5A. That we begin immediately in every parish – using a variety of methods – to teach and discuss what the Bible says about faith, money, ‘first fruits’ giving and the generous offering to God of our time, talent and treasure;

5B. That, within the existing budget, diocesan council ensure knowledgeable and experienced people are available to support and guide parishes in their stewardship and congregational development efforts;

5C. That synod be encouraged to endorse the 10-10-10 model of financial sharing used in the Diocese of South Carolina, and that we immediately start working toward it.

5D. That Greater Chapter representatives on Diocesan Council be charged with explaining the annual diocesan budget to parish representatives and then gather input that can be brought back to Council before the budget is formulated.

Recommendation 6 - Improved communication to help build a culture of caring & support

6A. That every parish vestry name a person, preferably a vestry member, as “the parish communications officer” with responsibility for (a.) ensuring its DIMS information is kept up to date, and (b.) gathering and sharing important parish, deanery, diocesan and national church information with the vestry and the congregation, and that this person be ‘technologically capable’ if at all possible;

6B. That the diocese continue to monitor and keep current the DIMS information as well as its various communication mechanisms such as the N.B. Anglican and e-news, and use them to effectively, efficiently and economically provide timely and important information to Anglicans across the diocese.

THE COMPLETE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON RURAL AND/OR STRUGGLING PARISHES

February 12, 2009

Introduction

The following resolution from the 2007 Synod of the Diocese of Fredericton led to the formation of our task force and guided us as we prepared this report and its recommendations:

“Be it resolved that this Diocesan Synod respectfully request the Bishop:

- 1) to appoint a committee to deal with the question of how best to continue this Synod’s historic commitment to rural and struggling parishes;*
- 2) to charge this body to undertake a wide-ranging diocesan consultation with rural and struggling parishes on his behalf, in order to gain the best knowledge possible of their circumstances, hopes, aspirations, and needs;*
- 3) to charge this body to draw up recommendations or proposals about how best to continue this commitment as soon as possible after this consultation, including cost estimates and suggestions as to where the monies might be found to cover costs; and*
- 4) to ensure that this body is charged with no other business, so that its members can devote themselves to this good work.*

It is suggested that another individual or group of archivists or historians might help this committee by drawing up a brief history of the forms this commitment has taken from our eighteenth-century beginnings up to the present.”

Very early on it became apparent to the task force that many, if not most, of our 85 parishes are struggling – regardless of their location. It also became evident that many of our clergy and lay leaders are worried about the health of our congregations, parishes and the diocese, and concerned about our future. We also learned that our parishes are seeking support and guidance as they try to maintain their presence and grow church ministry in times of economic and social uncertainty, and spiritual confusion.

Given all of that, we have tried very hard to produce a report that is Biblically grounded, consistent with Anglicanism and our faith traditions, realistically achievable, and beneficial to our parishes - both now and in the future. In order to do this we have considered synod’s historical commitment to rural and struggling parishes from the eighteenth century to the present. As well, the task force invited a number of people to share their knowledge and experience on such topics as: demographic/population trends, the layreaders program, the diaconate, and shared ministry/inter-parish cooperation. We have read and discussed the merits of several books (see appendix), examined various web sites to gather information on “turning around” ministry in rural and/or struggling parishes, and gathered research data. Three of our members attended an Atlantic conference on the subject of “Leading the Church Through Change”. We conducted a statistical analysis of the annual reports and financial statements of our parishes. And, most importantly, we held a series of regional consultations, which gave representatives of our 85 parishes a chance to tell us about their circumstances, hopes, aspirations, and needs.

Throughout the process we tried to “look deeper” to determine why so many parishes are struggling and also “look forward” to propose new directions that will help us reverse the trends that are causing us to struggle. We want our report to be positive in both outlook and focus –

concentrating, not on what may have gotten us where we are now, but on what needs to be done to strengthen our local parishes so that, in turn, our diocese will be strong as well.

We write our report with a belief that our diocesan vision is most appropriate: “a diocese of healthy, mission-focused, welcoming and growing parishes.” But how do we become such a diocese? This quote by the Rev. Dr. Herbert O’Driscoll, a recognized and respected Anglican Church leader, seems appropriate: “Many parts of today’s church need very badly to be addressed in this way (*see Isaiah 40:1-11*) not with condemnation or the laying on of guilt trips. People need to hear a voice that is comforting and tender but is also inspiring. There is no need to deny that much has been lost and much needs to be re-built. There is no need to deny that both leaders and people are weary and even despairing. What does need to be said again and again is that God is with us, whatever the situation. We possess everything that any former age possessed. We possess the word of God, the sacramental food and drink of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit of God, and the presence of the risen Christ. The Jerusalem we must build will not be the same as the Jerusalem we remember, but the point is that we should re-build it.”

Our Past & Our Present Situation

The synod of the Diocese of Fredericton has had a long-standing commitment to Anglican Church ministry in rural areas. From the late 1700’s, through the Loyalist period and the episcopacy of Bishop Medley, and on into the 20th century our smaller, often struggling and rural churches have benefited from the support of sister churches and the people of the diocese.

Some very important societal and cultural changes have taken place in New Brunswick over the last 40 or so years – and these changes have affected our church in a major way: for example, fewer people regularly attend church, our birthrate is declining, our average age is increasing, the population in rural communities is shrinking, local institutions are disappearing (local businesses, banks, schools, hospitals, grocery stores ... even gas stations) and many costs have risen quite dramatically (eg gas and oil, insurance, property maintenance, etc). Virtually all of these changes and trends are beyond the control of our local parishes, but they are having a dramatic effect on each one’s health, strength and future viability.

During the regional consultations the Task Force heard about many, many good things that are happening around our diocese. Our congregational representatives told us that we are blessed to have vibrant and active groups within our congregations – the ACW, youth groups, puppet groups, Mothers’ Union, Guilds of St. Joseph, mission/outreach committees, prayer teams, and so many more. Our Sunday worship services are a blessing to so many of us. Congregations and individuals are helping to care for those in need: we support the Rev. Paul Jeffries and the Bishop McAllister School in Uganda, we send money to PWRDF, we go on international mission trips and we are active in many community outreach ministries, just to name a few. Our church buildings, especially those built in Bishop Medley’s time, are important to us, and we are diligent in their care and maintenance, despite increasing costs.

While all that is positive, our consultations and our research has told us that all is not well for us as individual parishes and as a diocese. We are indeed struggling. Among the challenges and concerns raised during our consultations were these:

- Although retired clergy and layreaders are available to officiate at their Sunday services, many of our parishes are without full-time clerical leadership
- Many congregations see the rapidly rising cost of property maintenance and parish contributions to the diocesan budget as two particularly heavy burdens

- Our congregations are aging – there is often a notable absence of children, youth and middle-aged adults. Faithful Anglicans are concerned that their children and grandchildren are not worshipping with us on Sundays.
- We value our small community churches. Often our Sunday morning congregations are small. Those who love those churches seem reluctant to travel too far to worship with other congregations, even those within the same parish
- The traditional liturgies, patterns of worship and music that are loved by so many of us may not touch everyone’s hearts and minds the same way. This seems especially true for younger generations. Making changes in our worship patterns is often difficult and upsetting, especially for our long-serving members. Nevertheless, more and more congregations are using new liturgies and new worship music with positive results.
- Our parishes often feel alone and isolated – this is especially true of those in rural areas where so many community symbols (schools, businesses, banks, etc) are disappearing.
- Many smaller congregations know they need help – financial help to maintain ministry, improved partnerships with other congregations and more diocesan care and concern – but often don’t know to whom they can turn
- The church is no longer part of mainstream culture – Christians and regular church-goers seem to be in the minority. This is one of the main reasons our attendance is declining.
- Given today’s cultural reality, our people want to know how to “guard the faith” that has been given to us by the generations who have gone before
- Evangelism and encouraging people to “come to faith” or even to “come back to church” are seen as a difficult challenge for many of our people and congregations
- Communication, within our congregations, with other congregations and with the synod office, is a real concern. This ‘lack of communication’ seems to have resulted in fear and distrust, an isolationist approach to ministry and reduced personal/parish commitment to support ministry beyond the local level
- People are asking if the traditional leadership roles and duties assumed by clergy, wardens and vestry members are still appropriate in our current situation. Training for clergy and lay leaders is seen as a growing need.

Our Congregational Leaders Offered These ‘Main Messages’

Our task force asked congregational representatives this question: “What are the ‘main messages’ that you want the task force to hear?” Here is our summary of what we were told:

1. Communication needs to improve

We need to share information more transparently and openly, within our congregations and parishes, across our diocese and in our personal relationships with others. Neighbouring parishes need to talk with each other more often. Improved communication will help ensure that our clergy and lay leaders are aware of congregational needs and expectations.

2. Congregations need help – both resources and expertise

In most parishes income isn’t keeping up with expenses. Congregational leaders need help reversing this trend. There is a sense that parishes are being forgotten. People are willing to discuss “shared ministry”, but first people need to understand what that means. There is an openness to change – for example, new models for ministry, congregational visioning processes

and congregational growth initiatives. Our congregations often don't know whom to call when they need help "figuring things out".

Not surprisingly, given the tight economic circumstances, some are questioning the amount of money that leaves their parish to support ministry at the diocesan and the national church levels. As was the case at the 2007 synod, the idea of South Carolina's 10-10-10 formula was raised by several parish representatives. There were also suggestions that the diocese should re-establish a program of financial assistance for parishes that are struggling.

3. We need full-time priests and stronger lay leadership

Some small parishes seem content with part-time and fill-in (often retired) clergy. Others very much want full-time priests but do not have the resources at this time. There is confusion regarding the amount of money a parish must be able to raise to support a full-time priest. There is a growing recognition that our lay leaders need to play a greater role. To help that happen, Bishop Salmon has recommended clergy need to 'give up' some of the things they've traditionally done and 'raise up' lay leaders to new levels of responsibility. Lay people seem increasingly ready to accept this new role, but clergy first need to 'let go'. New leadership training and commissioning programs are needed.

4. Value small churches

Many small congregations are barely hanging on and want to know how they can maintain an Anglican presence – a footprint – in their (rural) communities. There is a fear that 'someone' (perhaps the Bishop?) is going to close our small churches. Many of our people have said they don't want to become part of what they call would call a 'mega-church'. Many small church congregations have indicated a willingness to look at new models of ministry, new programs and new organizational structures if that's what it takes to maintain local churches.

5. If it will strengthen local-level ministry there is a willingness to reorganize and restructure

While it may be difficult, many of our congregations seem ready and willing to change in order to grow. The regional consultations seem to have opened the door to parishes discussing common problems. Following these regional consultations there has been a renewed interest in archdeaconry and deanery gatherings to share ideas and look at shared solutions to common problems and challenges. The goal has to be to strengthen local congregations and parishes.

6. Let's act now!

Our congregations do not want their ideas to be lost, and do not want this report to gather dust. There is a sense of urgency and a desire to act on problems. Parish leaders cautioned our task force that "a one size fits all" approach will not work. People want to be involved in the processes that lead to solving problems and meeting challenges.

Facts That Help Us Understand Our Present Situation

The Task Force felt that it was important to gather factual information so we could understand the present situation and the trends that got us here ... before we formulated our conclusions and developed recommendations. So we examined New Brunswick's overall population trends and gathered data from the past 10 years of parish annual reports.

Here is some basic information:

- we are a diocese of 85 separate parishes in seven archdeaconries and these nine deaneries: Woodstock (10 parishes), Chaleur-Miramichi (10), Fredericton (9 – including the Cathedral), York (8), Shediac (12), Kingston/Kennebecasis (14), Saint John (9), St. Andrews (8) and Lancaster (5)

- we have 59 priests who work full time and five who work part-time in parish or diocesan positions; we have seven retired clergy who are in part-time, stipendiary parish positions
- at this time approximately 30 of our 85 parishes (approximately 35%) are not able, on their own, to raise enough money to have their own full-time priest
- collectively our 85 parishes have a total of 312 properties (162 churches, 76 rectories, 68 halls and 6 other buildings)

From research done on parish reports for the 10 year period from 1997 to 2006 we became aware of the following facts and trends:

- Total parish offerings increased from \$5.9 to \$7.4 million (+35%)
- Total parish income increased from \$8.5 to \$13.6 million (+60%)
- Total parish investment income increased from \$590,000 to \$928,800 (+57%)
- The contribution requested of the parishes to the diocesan budget, as a percentage of total parish income, has decreased about 2% (i.e. parishes are retaining a larger portion of income)
- Total parish expenditures increased from \$8.6 to \$11.9 million (+38.6%)
- Total expenditures on mission and ministry increased from \$2.5 to \$4.1 million (+61.6%)
- Total expenditures on clergy stipends and allowances decreased from \$2.98 to \$2.88 million (-3.4%)
- Based on reports from five of the past 10 years, the average combined annual expenditure on capital projects and property maintenance by parishes is \$3.2 million. (Note: recent fuel price increases have significantly increased annual maintenance costs for all parishes.)
- The total number of families and individuals in our parishes decreased from 17,297 to 15,367 (-11.2%)
- The total number of identifiable givers decreased from 8184 to 6741 (-17.6%)
- Average Sunday attendance decreased from 7697 to 6449 (-16.2%)
- Annually, on average, there were 34% more funerals (509) than baptisms (379)
- Annually, on average, the number of confirmations (169) is only 45% of the number of baptisms (379)

As part of its work the Task Force learned about various demographic trends that are affecting our whole province, and therefore our churches. Among them are the following:

- In 1960 New Brunswick mothers averaged 4.5 childbirths. In 2006 the average is 1.4 childbirths (i.e. there are 69% fewer births), just below the national average of 1.5
- New Brunswick's population peaked at 752,500 in 1997. It has since fallen to 749,200. Canada's overall population is up 1% over the same period.
- In the 1970's births outnumbered deaths by 7000 each year. Today births outnumber deaths by only 250.
- Births in 2005-06 (6800 per year) are just more than half of what they were in the early 1970's (12,000)
- Since the early 1990's there has been a steady increase in the number of New Brunswickers who are leaving our province, especially our young people.
- In 1976 the median age of our population was 25.7. 30 years later, in 2006 it is 40.8. On average we are two years older than people in the rest of Canada.
- In 1976 our young people (i.e. between 0-19 years) made up 39% of the population - today they make up 22%.

The Task Force’s Conclusions and Recommendations: Six Strategically Important Areas for Systemic Change

We have reflected on what the Bible tells us and we prayed for God’s guidance. We have analyzed all sorts of information and data, and listened to many gifted and dedicated people who have shared their ideas and experiences with us. We have thoroughly discussed our present situation and looked at different things that could be done to strengthen ministry in our diocese.

Despite the good things that are happening, as a diocese and as individual parishes, we are facing a number of very serious problems and challenges. What will we look like in 10 years? Without systemic change aimed at spiritual, numerical and financial growth, our task force has concluded there will be a slow and steady decline of the Anglican Church in New Brunswick

We cannot change demographic trends, but neither can we be spectators as the Anglican Church in our diocese continues to decline. We can pray and seek to act obediently and faithfully, always trusting God. We can use the gifts and talents He has given us to help transform ourselves into a stronger and healthier church. Despite the difficulties we face, our shared Anglican heritage gives us a depth of faith and an organizational strength that comes from unity. We have always had respect for diversity of opinion and we are willing to wait on the Spirit. On these foundations we can develop new strategies and plans that will lead to a brighter future.

The Task Force believes there is a new sense of urgency among our clergy and lay leaders and an openness to change. Even with this openness, we believe it will take several years to fundamentally turn ourselves around. We must all be involved, we must begin now and we must be strategic in what changes we make. And, of course, through prayer we need to seek God’s will and ask Him to help us in all we do.

Following are the six strategically important areas our task force has identified as being most important for us right now, along with recommendations that will launch us into a systemic change process:

1. Renewed as Christians & Unified as Anglicans

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Romans 15 v 5

For over 200 years the Anglican Church in New Brunswick has grown and flourished on a foundation of unity, tradition, trust and mutual support. However, it seems that, of late, our collective sense of who we are has been in gradual decline. There is a morale problem within the church, and we seem to have lost our identity as Anglicans. There are those among us who are dissatisfied with decisions made at diocesan, national or international levels. This has caused individuals and congregations to question their membership in, and their commitment to, the larger Anglican Church. As a result of all this many local congregations have retreated unto themselves, often putting congregational needs first.

It is important to remember that we are not a “congregational” church – we are an “Episcopal” church that holds many things in common – our Bishop, our liturgies, our sacraments, our creed, our articles of religion, and so much more. Beyond our basic beliefs, our many shared programs and services allow us to do, together, what few of us could or would want to do alone. We are also a “synodical” church – always guided by the will of God, spiritually led

by our Bishop and governed by our three houses (the Bishop, the clergy and the lay people – each represented on diocesan council). “The diocese” is the parishes, and “the parishes” are the diocese. If we are to do God’s will and prosper in the years to come, then we need to reaffirm our commitment to each other as we grow and rebuild our church, starting at the parish level. If we have parishes that are strong, healthy, welcoming and growing then we will be able to reach more people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Strong and healthy parishes will, in turn, lead to a strong and healthy diocese.

The Task Force believes that we need to begin this process by taking deliberate steps to reclaim, renew and relearn what it means to be “Christian” and “Anglican”. We can start by looking closely at the deeper meaning of various sections of the Book of Common Prayer, and we need to pray for God’s guidance.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

1. That we turn again to the principles of our Anglican Christian identity, especially through learning and self-examination, and a renewal of our minds and hearts; and that we begin with (a.) the study of, and adherence to, the “Rule of Life” (see appendix 3 - p. 555 of the BCP) and (b.) daily Scripture reading and daily prayer. *(Note: when possible and practical this should be through public Morning and Evening Prayer – wherever two or three can come together in His Name.)*

2. Change is needed at diocesan and congregational levels

*The One who was seated on the throne said: “See, I am making all things new”
Revelation 21 v 5*

The Task Force believes that our current situation points to the need for significant change at both the parish and diocesan/synodical levels. Despite the difficulties associated with change, we cannot afford to shy away from it because it might be unpopular or upsetting to some.

Almost all of our 85 parishes are struggling. Some are near dissolution. Because our parishes are struggling, our diocese is struggling. At the heart of it, there seem to be two main reasons: 1. we have aging and shrinking congregations, and 2. income levels for both parishes and the diocese are short of what is needed to maintain present ministries and programs. It is now time to answer the key question: “What should be done and who should do it?”

Each parish has its own set of circumstances and issues. The Task Force has concluded that “top-down” and “one size fits all” approaches will not work and could well be a source of disunity. The Task Force believes that individual congregations have to first accept the need for growth and change, and then develop strategies and plans that address local situations and challenges. While the Bishop, the diocesan staff and the synod can play a certain support role, local congregations need to take charge of their own futures.

Many parishes will be able to make changes on their own. Others, especially the smaller ones, will need to actively explore opportunities for cooperation and the sharing of ministries with other parishes or the diocese. We need to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and to new forms of shared ministry – for example: two or more congregations/parishes sharing clergy or youth leaders, clergy sharing leadership with lay readers and deacons, clergy working simultaneously in both diocesan chaplaincies and in parishes, Anglican congregations sharing clergy, buildings, programs and services with sister denominations, and so on. Within each of our deaneries and archdeaconries there are people and processes already in place that can help

parishes and congregations explore various options. We need to see it as our individual and collective duty to help and support each other as we seek growth through change.

As parishes conduct self-assessments and change, the task force believes that our diocesan leaders need to do likewise. There is a sense that programs, budgets, structures, administrative patterns and staffing levels that were put in place during a different period need to be re-examined. Given current financial realities, our collective expectations of the diocesan office and its budget may have to change. Of particular importance to parishes is the retention of a greater percentage of their income, a subject that has been more fully examined by the Task Force on Budget Support to the Diocese.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

2A. Now and on a regular basis, that the diocese and every parish conduct self-assessments to evaluate current ministries and ensure on-going organizational health.

- **In a review of parish ministries the “10 Marks of a Healthy Parish” could be a useful tool (see appendix 2), and the results could be used as a springboard to change and risk-taking;**
- **In a review of diocesan ministries there could be an assessment of current diocesan ministries (programs, budgets, staffing levels, outcomes, etc.) as well as administrative processes and structures to ensure they are making solid contributions to our mission and vision**

2B. That struggling parishes be encouraged and assisted as they examine different models of shared ministry, and that financial support be offered by the diocese to those that are ready, willing and able to change and take risks in order to grow spiritually, numerically and financially.

3. More people involved in community outreach and mission (& fewer people involved in “parish administration”)

*The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth,
whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'
Matthew 25 v40*

While most of our parishes are involved to some degree in evangelism, community outreach and mission we need to do more – we need to share ideas and programs, and train our people. We especially need to develop specialized local ministries that give us opportunities to share our faith by showing our love for our neighbours. Not only is this what God expects of us, but our mission and outreach initiatives can also be the catalyst that will lead to spiritual and numerical growth. As Bishop Edward Salmon told our clergy, it is what we do as Christians, not what we say, that will be noticed and emulated by others. This was reinforced by our own Anglican young people who said, during our diocesan Year of the Youth in 2001, that they want to be part of congregations that have an active outreach ministry.

But with aging and declining congregations ... who will do this work? At present, between five and seven hundred of our most gifted congregational leaders in our 85 parishes devote a good portion of their volunteer church work to the affairs of vestry – attending meetings, seeing to property management and finances, etc – and it is becoming more difficult every year to get people to fill key vestry positions. Many of our priests also devote a significant proportion of their time and talent to administrative functions. While people’s time and talent is

willingly offered and gratefully received, perhaps it is timely to ask ourselves: “Is this the best use of some of our best people?” The Task Force believes it is not.

The Task Force believes it would be a positive step if we were to reduce the number of “parish corporations” and therefore vestries. Reducing the requirement for so many vestry members would free up more of our best and most committed people for God’s work in the vineyards of our communities. In saying this, the Task Force wants to make it very clear that this is **NOT** a backdoor means of recommending a reduced number of churches or congregations. On the contrary ... we believe a realignment of administrative structures and requirements, and a new emphasis on mission and outreach, will help us “grow” our congregations and parishes, spiritually, numerically and financially.

The Task Force knows it would be a difficult decision for a parish to relinquish parish status and become a “congregation” within a multi-point parish. Parishes willing to take that step would have to have the support of the whole diocese and especially its neighbouring parishes.

As parishes and individuals, we need to be more mission- and outreach-minded. Many of us support foreign missions, which is a good thing. The Task Force believes that it is also appropriate, especially in our current situation, that we individually and collectively give new priority to financially supporting those of our own parishes that make a decision to grow and become stronger through mission and community outreach.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

3A. That the diocese immediately establish a Congregational Development Fund to support congregations (alone or in a shared ministry context) that make a decision to focus on growth through mission and community outreach; that funding for this program come initially from an annual appeal to every Anglican in the diocese; and that this whole initiative be overseen by the Parish Support and Development Team of Diocesan Council, whose membership would need to be expanded to include representatives from each of our nine deaneries;

3B. That parishes, regardless of size or location, be eligible to apply for financial support from this fund for a specific number of years – according to a clearly defined and time-limited plan;

3C. That all parishes in the archdeaconry/deanery of these risk-taking parishes, proactively and without hesitation, offer them as much support as possible in order to help them grow, become healthier and sustain themselves in the long term.

(Note: this concept of the diocese and neighbouring parishes actively supporting congregations grow has been an important part of our heritage and tradition. It began in the 1700’s and became stronger through Bishop Medley’s episcopate. The Task Force senses that it is time to reintroduce this concept.)

4. Our leaders need support and new learning opportunities

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.
There are different kinds of service but the same Lord.
There are different kinds of working but the same God works all of them in all men.
1 Corinthians v 4-6*

For the next 10 years our number one priority has to be restoring our parishes and our diocese to good health – spiritually, numerically and financially. To do this we look to our Bishop, diocesan council, parish priests, wardens and vestry members for vision and leadership.

The process of significant change is very difficult for people. We often want to “go back”, or just “carry on”. It is equally difficult for those in leadership roles. (Think about the Israelites’ criticism of Moses on their journey to the Promised Land.)

There is no easy way to go through change in the church. People have ideas and want to be heard, and leaders are often challenged. Clergy can fall into the trap of taking on too much responsibility and dominating the decision-making process. This can lead to discontent and a lack of support by the congregation. On the other hand, some lay people actively resist change or avoid responsibility and leadership roles. Others may become too strong and try to ensure certain things happen or don’t happen.

As a diocese, for the next several years, we need to give our clergy and lay leaders support and help them take advantage of learning opportunities and resources that relate to systemic change. The framework for this lies in two programmatic initiatives: a stronger and more formalized training program for both clergy and lay leaders; and finding talented people who provide ‘outside help’ to congregations and parishes.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

4A - That diocesan council oversee the establishment of a five year clergy and lay leadership development program focused on systemic change;

4B - As part of this plan, that a “Leadership and Learning Weekend” be held on the same weekend each year and feature a variety of workshops and learning events for clergy and lay leaders (wardens, treasurers, Sunday School superintendents, mission/outreach coordinators, youth leaders, etc); and that these learning weekends be rotated among the archdeaconries;

4C - For the next several years, that the focus of the diocesan Clergy College be on growth and systemic change within the church, and the important role that clergy have to play in that process;

4D – That the efforts of the Parish Support and Development Team be supported so they can recruit and train (using existing budgets) a group of experienced and willing Anglicans capable of helping congregations and parishes deal with local challenges related to such topics as congregational growth, change, stewardship, visioning and planning.

5. Money and teaching what the Bible says about ‘giving’ & stewardship

*And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop ... I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones ... But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.
Luke 12: v 16-21*

Many of the problems and challenges that our congregations and our diocese face have their roots in the fact that we do not have enough money to meet the cost of the ministry and operations that we want. Bishop Salmon told our clergy that we live in a culture where money is often a false god, and reminded them that many of Jesus’ parables and teachings were about money. Yet many of our clergy have been reluctant to talk about money, proportional giving and tithing. Similarly many Anglicans make it clear they do not want to be challenged by or listen to sermons about tithes and offerings. Across our diocese we seem to focus more on our budgets and spending patterns rather than on establishing personal giving patterns based on Biblical principles. Most of us make decisions on giving based on a false principle: we assume that all

that we have is ours and we have to decide what we will give back to God. In fact, in the Bible and in the BCP we are taught that all we have is God's. Our decision should therefore focus, not on 'what amount is appropriate to give?', but on 'what amount is appropriate to keep?'

If we are to deal with this problem we first need to acknowledge that money is an issue, and that it requires teaching and discussion. We need to understand why it is important for us to live out, in our daily lives, what we are taught in the Bible about giving and stewardship. We also need to ensure that our emphasis is on 'offerings for ministry', and not on 'balancing the budget' or 'keeping the church going'.

On a different level, the Task Force is aware that misunderstandings and misconceptions often surround parish and diocesan revenues and expenses, and decision-making processes. Open and honest communication is needed as we address difficult questions – to ensure people have the correct information and to offer a chance for meaningful input into parish and diocesan budgets.

The Task Force makes special note of two things: (a.) the need for a greater understanding of the diocesan budget and the importance of each parish's support of it and (b.) the need for increased congregational giving (sometimes referred to as 'the first 10%') so that more money is available to parishes for local ministry, to the diocese and to the national church.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

5A. That we begin immediately in every parish – using a variety of methods – to teach and discuss what the Bible says about faith, money, 'first fruits' giving and the generous offering to God of our time, talent and treasure;

5B. That, within the existing budget, diocesan council ensure knowledgeable and experienced people are available to support and guide parishes in their stewardship and congregational development efforts;

5C. That synod be encouraged to endorse the 10-10-10 model of financial sharing used in the Diocese of South Carolina, and that we immediately start working toward it.

5D. That Greater Chapter representatives on Diocesan Council be charged with explaining the annual diocesan budget to parish representatives and then gather input that can be brought back to Council before the budget is formulated.

6. Improved communication to help build a culture of caring and support

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, the Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4 v 15-16

The Task Force believes that, if we can increase and improve communication in our diocese, we will be better informed, more trusting and more helpful to each other. We need to give priority to improving three types of communication: first – communication between and among parishes; second – communication between parishes and our diocesan leaders; and third – communication with congregation members throughout the diocese.

More than ever there is a need for clergy and lay leaders from neighbouring parishes to know each other and to share ideas. We are a church family, but we are not acting as a family. This is hurting us in these difficult times. The Task Force believes that many of our parishes have become "silos"... standing alone, doing what they have always done, and wishing things were better. Congregations remain unaware that many, if not most, parishes are going through

the same things and are anxious to share ideas and support each other through difficult times. A top-down approach that forces meetings and discussions among parishes won't work. The Task Force believes it is up to our locally-based clergy and lay leaders to use archdeaconry and deanery processes to share information and ideas, and tackle common problems. To do so will build a bond of mutual caring and support and, hopefully, lead to stronger congregations.

The Task Force also believes that poor communication is contributing to unhealthy and unchristian relationships on many levels. In some parish-diocesan relationships, there seems to be a sense of distrust and a “we-they” attitude. Our collective morale has been adversely affected. If this is true, how do we address it? Bishop Salmon has suggested to our clergy that ‘speaking the truth in love’ and ‘the presumption of goodwill in others’ are essential ingredients of Christian communication. Frequent, honest and kindly communication is a critical need right now and each of us has to take personal responsibility for doing our part.

In the church and in secular life we elect leaders to act on our behalf, but we are often critical and questioning of their decisions. Within our church it seems many of our clergy and people have been second guessing the plans and decisions of our diocesan leaders. On the other hand our leaders may not have gone to sufficient lengths to gather input prior to decision-making or to explain why certain decisions have been made. Perhaps this is because leaders find it time consuming and difficult to inform and become informed.

The Diocesan Information Management System (DIMS) has to be at the centre of our diocesan communications ‘system’ and we need to take greater advantage of the opportunities that technology provides. DIMS needs to be up-to-date at all times and used more effectively by diocesan leaders. At present it is not being used to its potential – partly because too many parishes fail to provide up-to-date names, positions and contact information and partly because diocesan leaders aren't in the habit of using it. If we don't have a culture of frequent and transparent communication, then apathy, ‘we-they’ attitudes and misinformation will continue.

Likewise, at the parish level, our clergy and parish leaders need to do a better job of sharing both parish and diocesan information with their congregations. New ways need to be found to do so. While acknowledging that a large percentage of our older members do not have computers and must continue to receive written and verbal information, the Task Force believes parish and diocesan communications will steadily become technologically based.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

6A. That every parish vestry name a person, preferably a vestry member, as “the parish communications officer” with responsibility for (a.) ensuring its DIMS information is kept up to date, and (b.) gathering and sharing important parish, deanery, diocesan and national church information with the vestry and the congregation, and that this person be ‘technologically capable’ if at all possible;

6B. That the diocese continue to monitor and keep current the DIMS information as well as its various communication mechanisms such as the N.B. Anglican and e-news, and use them to effectively, efficiently and economically provide timely and important information to Anglicans across the diocese.

A Final Word

Given our current situation systemic change is called for. As we begin this process, we need to be open to leading of the Holy Spirit as we consider what to do next and we need to use the gifts that God has given us. As individual parishes and as a diocese we are at the proverbial

fork in the road. We have a choice – will we venture down the road trusting in God and supporting each other as we seek change, growth and renewal, or will we stay on the road we know, the road on which we have been travelling for the last many years? The Task Force believes we need to make an intentional decision to take a new road, in the hope and expectation of positive change, growth and renewal, according to God’s will for His church.

Appendix 1

BOOKS, WEB SITES AND PUBLICATIONS EXAMINED

These books were read and discussed by task force members:

- “Preaching and Worship in the Small Church” by William H Willimon and Robert L Wilson
- “Entering the World of the Small Church” by Anthony G. Pappas
- “Mission Shaped and Rural” by Sally Gaze
- “The Healthy Churches Handbook” by Robert Warren
- “Signs of Emergence” by Kester Brewin

Statistics Canada’s Census Data concerning religion and population from 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006 was obtained, analyzed and summarized for the task force

The content of this workshop was reviewed by members of the task force:

“Leading the Church Through Change” by the Alban Institute

The information on these websites was accessed by the task force:

“Missional Mapmaking” a web-based series by Allelon, a Movement of Missional Leaders

“Fresh Expressions of Church” an off-shoot of the Church of England website

“Vital Congregations” by the Diocese of Massachusetts

Diocese of Fredericton Map & List of Parishes - <http://anglican.nb.ca/links/didir.html>

Appendix 2

10 MARKS OF A HEALTHY PARISH

What are the marks of a healthy parish or congregation? Following a great deal of thought and discussion members of the Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes developed the following. It is offered as a description of what a “healthy congregation” in our Diocese might look like. We offer it as a guide, hoping it will be used as a self-assessment tool by parishes striving for growth and renewal:

We Are Christ-Centred

We are Christ-centred in who we are and what we do as Anglicans. We know Jesus is always in our midst. We continually turn to Him as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and we work together as the Body of Christ.

We Make Disciples for Christ

As a church congregation and as individuals, we are deliberately active in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ through the witness of our words and our daily lives.

We Offer Our Best In Our Worship Of God

Our worship services are to the glory of God and are the best that we can offer Him. Our worship touches our hearts and is personally meaningful. Respecting and building on our Anglican tradition of worshipping God “in the beauty of holiness” we seek not only to glorify God, but to encourage and edify those who worship with us.

We Are Intergenerational and Multi-Cultural

We recognize that the future of our church depends on bringing new members into our congregation. In worship and in parish life we invite, welcome and engage people from all age groups and cultural backgrounds. We are especially aware of the importance of attracting young families, children and youth.

We Share Leadership and Responsibility

We use all the gifts that God has given to us as we strive to build up the Body of Christ, which is the church. To that end our clergy and our lay members share leadership responsibilities, and work well together.

We Give Generously For The Work Of The Church

We recognize the need to give of ourselves and our resources, each according to our means, so that our church may prosper and grow in the service of God. We accept and teach what the Bible tells us about faith, money, ‘first fruits’ giving and the generous offering to God of our time, talent and treasure.

We Share What God Has Given Us As We Reach Out To Others

God's love in Christ is shown in our compassion for those in need, spiritually and materially. As a parish we reach outside our local church(es) to help those around us and in our community(ies). Through our contributions to the diocese and the national church, as well as other missionary and aid organizations, we show that love to the world.

We Want To Grow Spiritually and Numerically

We are addressing our members' desire to know and love God more deeply through prayer, study and encouragement. We are also striving to add to our membership both for our benefit and the benefit of those who are not yet active members of the Body of Christ.

We Communicate Positively & Live in Harmony With One Another

We accept the Apostle Paul's guidance that we "speak the truth in love." Presuming good will in others, we respect and see value in views that may differ from our own. We listen carefully and sympathetically to one another, and we regularly share information and ideas within our diocese, archdeaconries and deaneries as well as in our own parish/congregation.

We Know What It Means To Be Anglican and We Share Our Diocesan Vision

We know what it means to be Anglican, and we know we are part of a larger church family. We do all we can to support others within our diocese, through encouraging words and the sharing of our resources. As members of the Anglican Church of Canada in the Diocese of Fredericton, we affirm our commitment to work together to accomplish our shared mission, which is "to proclaim the Gospel for the making of disciples."

Appendix 3
The Rule of Life
(from page 555 of the Book of Common Prayer)

“Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself/herself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he/she may consider the following:

The regularity of his/her attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion.

The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his/her everyday life.

The boldness of his/her spoken witness to his/her faith in Christ.

His/her personal service to the Church and the community.

The offering of money according to his/her means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.”

An Executive Summary
of
The Planning Study Report
for the
Diocese of Fredericton

Draft October 2008
Final January 2009



Prepared by a consultant team from General Synod

Canon Geoff Jackson, Senior Development Officer of The Anglican Church of Canada
The Reverend Rob Waller, Project Consultant

Introduction:

A consultant team from General Synod's Letting Down the Nets (LDTN), an initiative of General Synod on educating and empowering church leaders to improve the ongoing financial capacity at all levels of the church, was retained by the diocese to conduct a Planning Study. The study was conducted by Geoff Jackson and Rob Waller from July 15th to August 30th, 2008 and consisted of 42 personal interviews and two focus groups, comprising 10 participants, with individuals associated with parishes in various parts of the diocese. The context and purpose of the Planning Study was presented in a document called *Our Journey Moves On!* that was prepared by diocesan leaders and is attached here for reference purposes.

The Planning Study offered a vital opportunity to analyze and test certain factors in the life of the diocese and its regions. Above all, the Study provides the kind of objective information needed by diocesan leadership to make decisions with confidence about how best to move forward with both the Shared Ministry Plan and the proposed stewardship education initiative.

It was the LDTN Consultant's Team task to identify how to best structure and position a stewardship education program within the diocese, as a component of the Shared Ministry Plan, and also to take the pulse on the ability and inclination of the diocese's lay and clergy leaders to provide leadership support. Not only is this information instrumental in planning for the future but it also builds the kind of ownership or engagement that is essential to a faithful and successful response to what God is calling the diocese to be and do together.

A General Comment:

In the opinion of the LDTN Team, the diocesan "family" is mired in a complex set of problems that is now at such a crisis point that a planned intervention is absolutely essential to the diocese's sustainability. We are of the opinion that the diocese will continue to decline dramatically unless there is a carefully planned intervention that....

- A. allows for new ways of acting together as a diocesan faith community in making meaningful decisions together at Synod that will shift the diocese from decline to a thriving faith community;**
- B. develops well-coordinated strategies and decisions for addressing conflicts, strengthening the role of diocesan leaders, diocesan relationships and communications with parish leaders;**
- C. consults with clergy and lay leaders and builds a foundation of trust and respect in developing genuine ownership of the diocese's Shared Ministry Plan;**
- D. implements a well-coordinated and well-resourced plan for strengthening parishes through a stewardship/congregational development initiative.**

Key Findings:

1. The Shared Ministry Plan.
 - o There is a general lack of understanding of what this plan is all about.
 - o There is not sufficient “buy in” within parish leadership at this time to move forward with this plan in an effective way.
 - o Many people see this is a plan to cut back on clergy and to amalgamate parishes.
2. There are those who feel that the Bishop spends the majority of his time travelling across the diocese “putting out fires” whereas others feel that they are neglected by the Bishop in times of need.
3. The majority of parishes do not currently have any kind of parish vision yet they are wrestling with significant challenges.
4. The number of parishes that appear to have fairly sizeable gatherings of youth and children surprised us. However, many interviewees were not aware of the existence of diocesan staff support for these areas of ministry.
5. There is a diocesan culture that avoids teaching parishes about holistic stewardship that has led to a focus on fundraising.
6. Recent Synods have been somewhat confrontational resulting in a level of distrust that inhibits the genuine sense of partnership between parish and diocesan leaders.
7. Parishes seem to be able to “get away” with not paying their fair share to the diocese without any consequences.
8. The diocese has a number of very respected leaders with acknowledged expertise that will be vital to the success of The Shared Ministry Plan and the proposed stewardship initiative.
9. There are a growing number of negative perceptions that the diocese is moving too slowly in addressing the issue of the number of church buildings.
10. 80% of those interviewed indicated that the proposed stewardship initiative is very important to their own parish’s future.
11. At this time only 12” of the parishes represented in the Planning Study indicated that they had either a stewardship committee or stewardship plan.

12. There is a belief that the diocese keeps asking for more money from the parishes through the current assessment and apportionment system. In fact, this is not true in that the parishes are retaining more of the income raised at the parish level.
13. The diocesan Proportional Gift to General Synod has been declining in percentage terms over the past 8 years. For 2008 the percentage of diocesan income is at 18.6% compared to the requested percentage of 26%.
14. Study participants acknowledged the huge, untapped potential of financial resources within some segments of the diocese for funding parish, diocesan and national ministries.
15. The majority of parishes have no clear sense of the value of what it means to belong to the diocese (and General Synod).
16. Some parish priests, especially those in the rural areas, feel that they are basically “on their own” without any tangible support.

Key Recommendations:

1. Establish a new group, The Sharing Ministry Task Force with a mandate to;
 - a. Coordinate and implement the significant initiatives of the Diocese, and;
 - b. Oversee the presentations to be made at Synod 2009 so that they are all seen to be part of the same overall plan.
2. Commission a total evaluation of the diocese in terms of governance, structures and systems to develop a structure that will lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Amend the membership of Synods by reducing the number of lay members and determine a date following which all retired clergy will no longer have membership at Synod, with existing retirees being “grandfathered”.
4. A diocese of this size should have a full-time staff person knowledgeable in stewardship and congregational development to support a Diocesan Committee.
5. As the Budget Funding Task Force prepares revisions to the report to be presented to the next session of Synod we suggest that any system of seeking funds from parishes to the diocese should be based on a mandatory practice as long as the system is considered fair and equitable. A mandatory system does not have to be a punitive system.
6. The diocese should consider again the possibility of changing its name to The Diocese of New Brunswick.

7. Consider the possibility of hiring AMB Research to undertake a review of every church building and parish and to produce a set of recommendations along the same lines as has been done for several other dioceses.
8. The proposed stewardship initiative be regionally based and implemented as pilot projects within two regions in the first year, with other regions participating in later years.
9. A clearly defined set of objectives for a gift-planning program is developed as part of the proposed stewardship initiative.
10. The Stewardship & Financial Development Team ought to give consideration to building upon the work already done in distributing a diocesan narrative budget to a wider audience than at present by developing a “Case for Support” that articulates a clear picture of both the diocese’s and General Synod’s preferred future.
11. There needs to be a Communications Plan developed for promoting the Shared Ministry Plan and all the various components of reports that will be presented to the next session of Synod.
12. The Diocesan Stewardship and Financial Development Team has been presented with a plan for the proposed stewardship initiative that they will be reviewing and implementing in the near future.

REPORT OF THE SHARING MINISTRY TASK GROUP

Diocese of Fredericton

CELEBRATING GOD'S GRACE
†
RESPONDING TO GOD'S CHALLENGE

"For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, for which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."
(Ephesians 2:10)

THIS REPORT IS SUBMITTED TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND CLAUDE MILLER,
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON

MAY 01, 2009

Members of the Task Group

The Right Reverend Claude Miller, Bishop
Gerry McConaghy, Chair – Task Force on Budget Support
The Ven. Pat Drummond, Chair – Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes
The Rev. Chris Hayes, Parish of Richmond
Jennifer Lister-Brown, Parish of Campbellton
Ann Fairweather, Chair of the Synod Agenda Committee - Synod 2009
Jim Morell, Chairman

REPORT OF THE SHARING MINISTRY TASK GROUP

Introduction

Last fall the diocesan executive committee was mandated by diocesan council to establish the terms of reference for, and the membership of, the Sharing Ministry Task Group (the SMTG). Consistent with its terms of reference (see appendix), this report by the SMTG is based on what has emerged from:

- the reports of two diocesan task forces: the Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes and the Task Force on Budget Support, both of which were established by the Bishop and diocesan council at the request of the synod of 2007,
- the stewardship-based ‘planning study’, which was requested by diocesan council and completed last fall by two representatives of the national church, and
- the teachings of Bishop Edward Salmon of the Diocese of South Carolina, who visited our diocese last summer.

In preparing this report, the SMTG first asked itself: “Based on these reports and what Bishop Salmon has said, how should our current situation be described and what are our main challenges?” Then the group focused its attention on developing a set of clear recommendations for the consideration of synod delegates who will be making decisions about the very important issues and challenges that we face as we do God’s mission in our diocese and beyond.

First, Let Us Celebrate and Be Thankful

There is little doubt that many of our parishes and our diocese as a whole are, in different ways, struggling. Despite our challenges and adversities, we have much to celebrate and much for which to be thankful. We know that the Lord is watching over us, is directing us and has plans for us – plans that give us hope and will lead us to prosperity (Jeremiah 29:11). Many good and positive things which are happening across our diocese are a sign of that hope and God’s mission. Here are but a few of them:

A new spirit of unity and cooperation

- Building on the spirit of cooperation that began at Synod 2007, the regional meetings that were part of the rural and struggling parishes review have prompted greater inter-parish communication and cooperation. Our parishes are discovering that they are not alone in their difficulties, and there is a renewed sense of mutual caring and support.
- Many parishes and archdeaconries are coming together regularly to share ideas and explore ways to share ministry.

Growth in ministry

- We are increasing our support of homeless shelters, food banks, transition houses, soup kitchens, disabled people, nursing homes, refugee families and Christmas food/gift programs.
- We steadily and generously support Bishop McAllister School and the Rev. Paul Jeffries.
- Our collective support of PWRDF continues to be strong with \$275,000 contributed in the last four years alone.
- Several congregations have organized mission trips that have allowed people of all ages to share their time, talent and treasure with those in need.

- There are signs of growth and strength in youth ministry in many parishes – youth leaders are being hired, young people are engaged in God’s work and our youth are more active in Sunday services.
- Our diocesan youth programs and Christian Education are gaining strength as we offer leadership workshops and various other kinds of programs.
- Camps Medley and Brookwood are growing spiritually and numerically.
- Our Bishop confirms many young people every year, and the letters he receives from the confirmands show a very strong commitment to their faith.

New and improved church properties

- Various building projects are an encouraging sign of growth and unity. Over the past several years the overall value of such projects is estimated to be \$8-9 million.
- Particularly noteworthy is the recent opening of the Church of the Resurrection in the Parish of the Nerepis and St. John, a new home for the eight congregations (in four parishes) that became one in 2003
- Many congregations have constructed new buildings or undertaken major upgrades to what they have, and more are in the planning stages.
- Over \$1 million has been contributed for construction and renovation to Camps Medley and Brookwood.

7,000 worship on Sundays

- We rejoice that, collectively, about 7,000 New Brunswick Anglicans attend some 200 services of worship every Sunday to worship and praise God. Clergy and lay leaders in all corners of our province work hard to ensure that worship and parish ministry continues, despite economic and demographic realities and other challenges.

Spiritual growth and learning

- Our parishes continue to offer a variety of Christian learning programs. Alpha is popular and some use The Purpose Driven Church materials. Vacation Bible schools, home study groups, prayer groups, new Sunday School initiatives and weekly Bible study groups are deepening our faith and commitment.

Bishop Salmon’s visit was a blessing

- Last August Bishop Edward Salmon accepted our Bishop’s invitation to share his experiences in leading a renewal movement in the Diocese of South Carolina. He left no doubt that the church has to look at systemic change as it confronts today’s realities and challenges. His teaching on the spiritual importance of stewardship was particularly well-received.

Still ... We Must Face The Challenges Before Us

Despite these and many other good things that are happening, the Anglican Church in New Brunswick is slowly losing strength and health. Many of us are discouraged and worried about the future. The stewardship-based planning study went so far as to say that we are “mired in a complex set of problems that is now at such a crisis point that a planned intervention is absolutely essential to the diocese’s sustainability.”

While parts of that statement could be challenged, the reports we have before us clearly indicate that our church is at a very a low point. Yes, we know the Anglican Church in New Brunswick will survive, but many of us worry about what we will look like in 10 or 20 years. People are asking themselves: Will we be strong and healthy enough to maintain a presence in

our rural communities? Will our mission and outreach ministry be strong? How many people will sit in our pews and how many children will attend our Sunday Schools? How many church buildings will we have? Will I be buried from the church I've attended my whole life?

Overall, the reports point to the need for systemic change – they say that unless we take immediate steps aimed at growth, we will continue our unavoidable decline. Spiritual, numerical and financial growth has to be our focus. As we look forward, we need to be strategic in our thinking and deliberate in our actions, at both the parish and diocesan levels. It is obvious that, without a deliberate decision in favour of changes that make a difference, Anglican ministry in many parts of our diocese will reach the point where it is simply no longer sustainable.

In times of difficulty it is quite natural to put personal and local needs first, and to think in the short-term. Many rightly argue that God is in control and we are not; and that we need to pray for God's guidance as we strive to become stronger and healthier. Further, it can be argued that it is impossible for anyone to predict what we will look like or what will happen in five or ten years. While these points are valid, it could also be argued that our problems and the downward trend lines that were identified in the reports are a message to us from God. Could He be telling us that we need to take action, and that these reports are pointing us in the right direction?

The report of the Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes identifies some undeniable and worrisome 10-year trends across the diocese:

- average Sunday attendance is decreasing
- the total number of families and individuals in our parishes is decreasing
- the total number of identifiable givers is decreasing
- even though fewer people are giving more, our offerings are not enough to keep up with operational expenses, so we are becoming more reliant on fund-raising and trust fund income just to pay the day-to-day bills
- total expenditures on clergy stipends and allowances is decreasing because we have fewer priests – in fact, about 30 (just under 1/3) of our 84 parishes are not currently generating enough income to have their own full-time priest
- annually, on average, there are more funerals than baptisms and more baptisms than confirmations

Changing provincial demographics, among other reasons, has contributed to declining attendance. New Brunswick's total population is staying even or declining slightly, but our rural communities are definitely shrinking. Community life – including church life – is being affected. The number of young people in N.B. has been declining steadily since the 1960's because, first, our birth rate is less than one third of what it was 40 years ago when our Sunday Schools were overflowing; and second, there has been a steady increase in the number of young New Brunswickers who leave our province. Finally, as we know only too well, fewer people are attending church on a regular basis.

These trends – in our church statistics and in provincial demographics – tell us that ministry in many communities and churches will not be sustainable much longer unless we begin to do things differently.

What is the likelihood that we will increase our numbers or that our people can or will give more? Those are difficult questions to answer. Stewardship education would certainly encourage increased giving, but in our diocese we have traditionally tended to shy away from any serious discussion of 'stewardship'. Even though Jesus spoke often about money and wealth, Sharing Ministry Task Group

we usually don't. Our clergy seem reluctant to preach and teach it – and many of our people have made it clear they would rather not hear about it. On the numerical growth side, while there are exceptions, we don't have a tradition of seeking and generously welcoming new people into our congregations.

Our parishes and our diocese are both struggling with budgets. Both report that, after meeting normal expenses, there are insufficient dollars for the true ministry and mission of the church. It is important to note that the Bishop and diocesan council are aware of the financial stresses that parish leaders feel. For the past four years parish contributions to the diocese have been frozen at 2006 levels. This has allowed parishes to retain a larger portion of their income. Of course, this has affected diocesan ministry, programs and services. The recommendations of the Task Force on Budget Support address this issue and, if accepted, will require us to put a much greater emphasis on stewardship.

The SMTG believes it would be counter-productive to spend valuable time and energy analyzing the past or trying to assign 'blame'. While our situation is difficult there are things that we can address. We need to look to the future, look to God and trust that the Holy Spirit, who has been leading us to this point, will continue to do so. As we look forward and as we make decisions about our future, it is important to focus on what God wants and expects of us, as individuals and as the church, and less on what we, ourselves, want or prefer.

Motions for Consideration by Synod 2009

In setting up the SMTG, diocesan council wanted to be sure that the commonly held and most important parts of the three reports, together with what Bishop Salmon advocated, would be presented to Synod 2009 in clear language, and that the most important recommendations would be the focus of synod's discussions.

The SMTG has concluded that the reports and recommendations of the Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes and the Task Force on Budget Support are based on the same foundational values and principles, and are leading us in the right direction. The SMTG therefore avoided the temptation to create a series of new or newly worded recommendations from the two reports. The SMTG felt that both reports are solid and that it is time for us to turn our attention to acceptance and implementation.

Taken as a group, the SMTG believes that motions below start our diocese on a path of systemic change that will, over several years, help ensure the strength and health of our shared ministry and mission and its long-term sustainability in communities all across the diocese and beyond.

An explanatory note: The SMTG sees three of the following five motions as "enabling motions." The word "affirm" was deliberately chosen to indicate "general agreement with and commitment to" what is proposed by the motion. "Affirmed" is used because it conveys a sense of acceptance – an acknowledgement that the recommendations of the two synod-requested task force reports are moving us in the right direction. The motions also propose that synod hand over responsibility for implementation of the motions to the Bishop and Diocesan Council, which is "the synod between synods". Enabling motions of this nature are consistent with the direction-setting role that synod plays and are confidently made with the knowledge that (a.) the two task forces involved clergy and lay people from across a wide spectrum of the diocese, (b.) compromises in points of view and priority setting have already been achieved, and (c.) the reports are reflective of what our people have said.

Motion 1

That this Synod affirm, and refer to the Bishop and Diocesan Council for implementation, the report and recommendations of the Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes.

Motion 2

That this Synod affirm, and refer to the Bishop and Diocesan Council for implementation, the report and recommendations of the Task Force on Budget Support, including its values and principles.

Motion 3

That this Synod affirm the need for a parish-based stewardship education initiative across the diocese, and refer this initiative to the Bishop and Diocesan Council for implementation.

Motion 4

That this Synod send a memorial to General Synod requesting that the national church investigate the adoption of the 10-10-10 giving and sharing model as the standard for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Motion 5

That this Synod request that the Bishop and Diocesan Council establish a task group to assess the value and the effectiveness of current diocesan governance structures and processes, with a view to improving administrative efficiency and reducing costs.

Conclusion

If our parishes and our diocese are to return to a position of health and strength, we will have to make some challenging decisions. As we look ahead to a better future, the SMTG thought it would be helpful to have a common and shared vision - a clear picture - of what that better future might look like. It is felt that such a picture, painted in words and with a strong commitment to pursue it, could give us direction and hope. It could also draw us together as parishes and the diocese – all of us focused on what God is calling us to be and to do God’s mission to this world.

The vision statement below may be challenging but it is achievable. The SMTG believes it is a fair reflection of what was said by Anglicans across the diocese during the broad consultations that were undertaken these past two years. It brings together in one statement the hopes and aspirations expressed by the people of the diocese, the main themes and ideas of the two task force reports and the stewardship-based planning study conducted by representatives of the national church, and many of the excellent points in Bishop Salmon’s teachings. Please note that it does not describe us as we are now. Rather, it is offered as a vision of what we could be, as individuals and as the church, with God’s help.

**What our Vision means
COULD OUR ANGLICAN CHURCH BE MORE LIKE THIS?**

Individually and as parishes, **we are doing our utmost to live up to God's expectation that we love Him, love our neighbours and make disciples.** We are Christ-centred as we daily live out our faith according to Biblical standards and Christ's teachings – focused not on what we want, but on what God calls us to be and to do. **We know what it means to be Anglican.** We understand our rich traditions and strive to use them to strengthen faith in a hurting world and a modern culture. On a personal basis **we follow the Rule of Life** (page 555 BCP), we pay special attention to daily prayer and scripture reading, and we support the mission/outreach ministry of our church. In our parishes we are taught these things and encouraged to live them in daily life.

We are focused, as our diocesan vision statement says, on having parishes that are stronger, healthier, more welcoming and growing. **We understand that spiritual, numerical and financial growth are essential if our parishes are to remain viable and able to maintain a strong presence in our communities.** We are convinced of the need for, and the benefits of, a **shared approach to ministry.** Our clergy and parish leaders actively communicate and cooperate with others from nearby parishes. As a diocese we are financially **supportive of risk-taking parishes** that want to grow. We are also supportive of processes that help parishes wishing to pursue amalgamation, either with nearby Anglican parishes or with congregations of other denominations. We recognize that, for some, this may be the best or only way for them to maintain worship and ministry in their communities.

Our people understand that all that we are and have are gifts from God. Through various means, including strong preaching, **we are being taught about, and are more accepting of, the Biblical standards related to stewardship,** including 'first fruits' giving and tithing. As a result, in our weekly tithes and offerings we are more generous than at present. Every year more and more of our people are tithing (i.e. giving the first 10% of their income back to God), or at least giving proportionally, in their weekly offerings. As individuals, as parishes and as a diocese, **we are committed to, and actively working toward, the 10-10-10 principle of giving and sharing** that has been so successful in South Carolina. This has produced a significant increase in the amount of money available for parish operations and local level ministry. It also means that diocesan and national church ministry, programs and services can continue to be more fully supported. Increasingly our leaders and our people are dedicating more time and money to ministry and mission (and less to administration and property).

As a diocese and as parishes we are unified and inter-dependent – **parishes willingly contribute to the ministry of the diocese and diocesan leaders are actively supporting our parishes,** especially those that are struggling. **We recognize the importance of shared leadership.** Our leaders, both clergy and lay, are supported, educated and well-prepared to lead us through a period of change focused on growth. We know that **transparency and open communication is important.** We respect the principles of "relational hygiene" and "speaking the truth in love" that were recommended to us by Bishop Salmon.

As parishes and as a diocese **we are looking for ways to be better stewards of God's gifts to us of time, talent and treasure.** By choice and because of economic realities, **we want our organizational structures and processes to be relevant to today's realities and to contribute meaningfully to the ministry and work of the church.**

Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sharing Ministry Task Group

Brief Description and Mandate

The Task Group, charged by the Diocesan Executive Committee, as delegated by the Diocesan Council in September 2008, will work with the Council, the General Synod Consultant Team and other groups to coordinate and implement the significant current initiatives of the Synod and the Diocese of Fredericton including: Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parishes; Task Force on Diocesan Budget Support; Partnership with General Synod - DC051109-18 (2007 Shared Ministry Plan, 2008 Planning Study, 2009 Stewardship and Congregational Development Plan); Potentially transforming teaching of Bishop Edward Salmon from August 2008

The Task Group will:

1. Co-ordinate the integrated thinking resulting in a single set of recommendations to the June 2009 Synod;
2. Assist the Bishop to guide the Diocese in its planning and communication approaching that Synod;
3. Monitor implementation of both current directions and the recommendations resulting from that meeting of the Synod.

On-going Responsibilities and Reporting

- Accountable and reporting directly to the Bishop and the Diocesan Council through the Diocesan Executive Committee
- Meetings as necessary as called by the Chair, to guide the planning and implementation processes required.

Membership

- Sharing Ministry Task Group Chair
 - The Bishop of Fredericton
 - Chair of the Task Force on Rural and/or Struggling Parish (from Synod 2007)
 - Chair of the Task Force on Support of the Diocesan Budget (from Synod 2007)
 - Chair of the 2009 Synod Agenda Committee
 - One cleric and one lay person appointed by the Chair and Bishop
- Ex-officio/advisory
- Secretary of the Synod
 - Treasurer of the Synod
 - General Synod Development Consultants (G. Jackson and R. Waller)

The Group will add resource persons or members as necessary to the tasks.

Budget

Meeting expenses as needed.

Sub-groups and Other Links

Strategic task forces and groups as named above, Diocesan Executive Committee, Diocesan Council (specifically the teams of Diocesan Council positioned to support implementation of particular recommendations)

December 11, 2008

Sharing Ministry Task Group

7