

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH TO GENERAL SYNOD 2025

### **FOR INFORMATION**

Members of the Council of the North have been deeply moved by the care and concern expressed by Canadian Anglicans this past year. This is the same care and concern expressed by Canadian Anglicans for the ministry in northern and remote communities for over 50 years. The missional efforts of Christ's Church continue throughout this nation.

A brief synopsis of the history of the Council may be found on the national website and is shared here.

The Council of the North is a grouping of financially assisted dioceses, which are supported through grants by the General Synod. There are seven dioceses: the Territory of the People (formerly Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior) and the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh. The Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador is an affiliate member. (It does not vote nor receive funding.) They are in sparsely populated areas such as the Arctic, Yukon, Northern and Central Interior of British Columbia, Alberta, northern regions of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Council of the North comprises all bishops of the assisted dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada. The Council administers the General Synod's grants for northern mission and meets twice a year to share information about the unique challenges faced by smaller ministries in the north.

They work together to provide pastoral and sacramental ministry to all who are living in isolated communities in Canada's North. (see <https://www.anglican.ca/cn/>)

Membership of the Council also includes the General Secretary (The Venerable Alan Perry), the Chief Financial Officer (Amal Attia), and the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop (The Most Reverend Chris Harper).

Meetings of the Council are incredible opportunities for members to share the struggles and joys of ministry they are experiencing. In this mutual collegiality, isolation is reduced, and space is created for visioning and listening to the Spirit's leading.

All grants received by members must be accounted for. There are two types of grants – the Block Grant funding by the General Synod and Special Grants funding by generous donations to the Council. The Grants Allocations Committee (GAC) reviews the Block Grants from the General Synod. The Chief Financial Officer, Amal Attia, is central to this review process. Each member is given feedback from the GAC. The reporting includes both financial and narrative components. Members are invited to share ministry stories that are to be shared with the wider church. The Transformational Commitments are lenses through which these stories may be viewed.

***Invites and deepens life in Christ.***

In the Diocese of the Arctic - Partnering with On Eagles Wings and the Canadian Bible Society, the "Caring for the Wounded Heart" trauma healing program was offered in 4 communities across the North, and a

Wholeness Through Christ prayer ministry course was offered to a group of clergy and ATTS students. (ATTS is the Arthur Turner Training School.)

In the Diocese of Brandon - The LTh program through Huron University College, partially funded through grants from the Council of the North and Anglican Foundation, remains a bright star for local Christians. Without such a program, we would be lost. This provides an option and answer to the strong desire for further religious education for many people who cannot go away to seminary because of age or situation. The attendance for Council of the North students has been fantastic. We look forward to opening up further opportunities with other institutions which may serve our local communities, as well.

The Diocese of Athabasca - We continue to get energy from our Bible Reading Marathon held on-line during Holy Week, having Morning and Evening Prayer Monday to Friday via our Facebook page, as well as sharing stories and pictures of each other in our Diocesan Weekly Update, emailed across the diocese.

***Champions the dignity of every human being; works to dismantle racism and colonialism.***

The Primate's Commission put forth the dismantling of colonialism in the Council of the North as part of its seven hypotheses. When this was proposed, there was pushback from members. Part of this stemmed from the fact that nearly half of the membership is Indigenous, and the proposal came from a Primate's Commission that had no Indigenous participation. Additionally, the member's finances are scrutinized by the CFO annually in a way that no other diocese in Canada is required to. This process has a feeling of colonialism attached to it. One principle of the Council is that we do not tell members how they are to spend their funds but hold them accountable for how they said they would. The Council acknowledges the need for high-level accountability for the funds received through the generosity of many. Updating the Council of the North Handbook is part of this response, too. An intentional conversation with ACIP and the Council of General Synod about ministry in remote areas of all of Canada would be appreciated.

The Bishop of Yukon tells a story about flying into a remote community for the funeral of a person who completed suicide. During her visit, she felt called to do a prayer walk around the community. As she walked, members of the community joined her. There are no metrics to account for this powerful ministry. These moments speak to the deep desire of people in remote communities to be prayerful, cared for and supported by the wider church.

Offering dignity and support in death is a crucial part of the ministry in the Council. In Mishamikoweesh, this is particularly important among the small, close-knit communities looking for pastoral care. The bishops there are taxed with responding in these times of crisis and offer compassion with the Word of God.

***Embraces mutual interdependence with the Indigenous church (Sacred Circle).***

In the Diocese of Saskatchewan - We ordained 7 priests and 1 deacon in 2023. Of those, 7 were Indigenous. Our investments in Indigenous leadership are paying off. In just the last few months two northern Indigenous communities' services have begun regularly again for the first time in years. Hall Lake is considering expanding the size of its building to accommodate its swelling numbers under the leadership of an Indigenous minister educated at our diocesan school and only recently ordained a priest.

In the Territory of the People - This is the one church in Prince George willing to make its space available to Indigenous families who need a place for an extended Wake before a funeral. This started a couple of

years ago. It has led to further engagement with Indigenous leaders and community. St. Michael's has now opened its doors to an Indigenous-led Street Church styled in the format of a Gospel Jamboree that runs every Sunday evening in the parish hall with music, prayer, healing service and a meal.

The Council hears from Archbishop Chris in our meetings and members have been invited to participate in ACIP and Sacred Circle gatherings. There is an overlap in ministry between the Council and Sacred Circle. This overlap is a good thing as the parochial ministries of many parishes are supported by diocesan structures. The emerging Indigenous church offers a national voice and connection to Indigenous peoples both rural and urban.

***Nurtures right relationships among people of faith in local, national and global communities and networks.***

In the Diocese of Brandon - The ministry done through the camp is second to none. Because of it, we had a full contingent of youth delegates at our 2023 fall synod, we are able to send youth to national synods and other events, which then allows them to share the gospel nationally, and in return, locally. We have youth candidates on the PWRDF Youth Council, who have attended both the Provincial and General Synod, gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and been a steward at Lambeth...All because of the ministry and right relationships developed through our Anglican Memorial Camp.

In the Diocese of Caledonia – Online daily offices for the past 5 years have forged connections across the Diocese and around the world. The number of people joining in for a “Holy hug on the way to bed” has decreased slightly since the lifting of restrictions. Yet this time is highly anticipated and valued by many. Anglicans from around the world participate and join in praying for one another. This connecting, convening, and communicating ministry is made possible with generous support.

The Anglican Foundation in December 2024 gave the first grants to support Retired Non-stipendiary Clergy from the Council of the North. This fund was made possible by an initial grant of \$100,000 by the New Westminster Diocesan ACW. Other generous donors added to the fund over the past couple of years. These grants address inequity within the church and show a deep love for those ministering sacrificially in remote communities.

Through Giving with Grace, members have received grants for Training and Ministry events. These funds are given for specific events and are accounted for. Unused or leftover funds are returned. Part of these funds support the University of Huron LTh program, while others enable dioceses to gather for training and ministry events.

***Stewards and renews God's creation; protects and sustains the earth; pursues justice for all people.***

The Council moved to 1 in-person meeting per year, which is added to the end of the National House of Bishops (HoB) meeting. In terms of stewardship, this requires less air travel, shared financial resources with the HoB, and lower meeting costs. Other Zoom meetings permit the Council to meet and engage in special meetings to address particular needs of members and the Council.

In the Diocese of Moosonee - The Cathedral in Timmins is continuing its outreach ministry through a Friday lunch program providing wholesome meals for 50-60 people many of whom are homeless, struggle with mental health or addiction issues. This ministry is both needed and much appreciated. This ministry has

also enhanced the profile of the Cathedral in the downtown core of the city. It is a program that the diocese will need to continue supporting.

*Conclusion*

Thanks to generous Anglicans, the Council of the North can support the diocesan-based ministries in northern and remote communities. The change in leadership within the Council is profound. In this past year and a half, three new bishops have been consecrated. Within the next 6 months, an additional eight may be elected. It is exciting to have new leadership within the Council and to forge deeper relationships in this ministry with those in remote areas of this vast nation.

Thank you for your generous support and encouragement. We are deeply moved by your care that sustains a ministry to the vulnerable in remote parishes. God bless!

Council Members (as of March 13, 2025)

Diocese of the Arctic

Suffragan Bishop (Administrator): Rt. Rev. Annie Ittoshat

Diocese of Athabasca

Bishop: Rt. Rev. David Greenwood

Diocese of Brandon

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Rachael Parker

Diocese of Caledonia

Bishop: Rt. Rev. David Lehmann (Chair)

Diocese of Moosonee

Bishop: Most Rev. Anne Germond

Commissary: Most Rev. Fred Hiltz

Diocese of Saskatchewan

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Richard Reed

Bishop of Missinipi: Rt. Rev. Adam Halkett

Diocese of Yukon

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Lesley Wheeler-Dame (Vice-Chair)

Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Lydia Mamakwa

Suffragan Bishop for the Northern Manitoba Area Mission: Rt. Rev. Isaiah Larry Beardy

Suffragan Bishop for the Northern Ontario Area Mission: Rt. Rev. Morris Fiddler

Territory of the People

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Clara Plamondon

Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador\*

Bishop: Rt. Rev. Sam Rose

Anglican Council of Indigenous People\*\*  
The Most Reverend Chris Harper  
National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop

The Venerable Alan Perry\*\*  
General Secretary

Amal Attia\*\*  
Chief Financial Officer

The Rev Canon Patricia Dorland\*\*  
Grants Allocation Committee - Chair

\* affiliate member (non-voting / non-funded)  
\*\* ex-officio members

Respectfully Submitted by,

The Right Reverend David TJ Lehmann,  
Bishop of Caledonia and Chair of the Council of the North