

# Policy on Sustainable & Intentionally Missional Ministry

The Diocese of Central Newfoundland



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## Anglican Diocese of Central Newfoundland

“The Anglican Diocese of Central Newfoundland in response to the Love of God is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ by worship and sacrament, by word and action, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Following Jesus, we are led to be a Servant community which ministers and witnesses in the world to the transforming power of God’s Love.”

### **Policy On Sustainable & Intentionally Missional Ministry**

#### Introduction

Since our beginning as a Diocese, our way of life in each deanery and parish has been a strong expression of commitment to a shared missional focus. Now, in the midst of great challenge and change, the questions we are being forced to ask are very different. For years we worked together to move from a “Maintenance to Mission” understanding; now it seems our task is to move from “Survival to Mission”.

The changes and shifts in our Church that now challenge us do not mean we have failed. It means that we are being called to move forward in different ways.

#### **Here is the Basic Question:**

“ If we believe that the most creative spirit-led responses come in times of need, are the conversations we are having a focus on what we may see as a crisis, or leading us to Spirit inspired, courageous missional thinking?”

Either way we must take ownership of our present realities, diligent in seeking God’s will, courageous enough to make decisions and move forward in faith.

When I began my episcopacy I was asked by the Diocesan Executive to deal primarily with the pressing issues we are facing. Some of our congregations, and even parishes have reached a tipping point in terms of sustainability, others, although presently doing well, are expressing concerns about the future.

This document draws on years of regional and national workshops, consultations within our own diocese and beyond, and most importantly with the clergy and laity of our beloved Diocese.

Our diocese has never adopted or implemented a set of working definitions and principles to form a basis for assessing and making recommendations on congregational, parish or deanery ministry that is a standard for us all. It is time to do so.

It is time to build shared understandings of congregation and parish viability, challenges and possibilities. Here is a set of definitions policies and resources to facilitate a unified process that may be adapted for local situations and provide a launching point for meaningful conversation. This guide is a good resource for parish conversations and workshops. The policy outlined here intends to build diocesan expectations of a movement from being reactive to becoming faithfully proactive in fresh adventures of faith.

Let us be excited and not afraid because we are in an uncertain time. God will provide for the journey and building in the new places we shall go. We are the right people in the right time, chosen by God to answer our Creators call to proclaim Love and Peace to all.

We have a great work to do, and the Spirit of Jesus calls us onward.  
+ John, February 1, 2017

## Getting Started: Our Missional and Scriptural Context

The mission of The Diocese of Central Newfoundland is to proclaim the Love of God through worship, Sacrament and Action. As servants we do all in our power to enable God's reconciling love, justice, compassion and liberation, in each of our communities as an outward witness that we follow Jesus.

The Diocese of Central Newfoundland Mission Statement

### **A Work in Progress**

In the Diocese of Central Newfoundland, we are being called to build communities of hope through:

- Making our Anglican life authentically friendly and hospitable. [Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 5:38, Luke 14:28-30]
- Being, truly welcoming and supportive of all individuals in our communities that seek spiritual, social and/or physical nurturing.
- Recovering and nurturing the image that our Church is a place of light, good news and celebration. That it is a center of friendship and caring for all who look for a source of affirmation, joy and meaning amidst the noise of a modern world.
- Creating distinct and supportive ministries which respond to and reflect the diversity of our society [Matthew 28.1, Galatians 3:28]
- Encouraging and enabling new ways of ministry and expression that resonates with young people.
- Looking outward by sharing Christ's message as we influence social policy and realities [Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 4:17-19, Micah 6:8]
- Finding the homeless, the poor and the marginalized in each of our communities and being a courageous and persuasive influence for them by voice and action.
- Understanding that we are still called to growth and mission in our time. Through the ministry of a Church that has life and gives life.

Trusting that we are being led by the Spirit to new strategies and understandings through Christ's continual call to growth and renewal.

## Thinking about Healthy Congregations

Our relatively small diocese is made up of diverse parishes and congregations with unique senses of identity, culture and the things that stimulate growth, development, or change within each community. For that reason, it is important for discussions about change to come from local contexts. There are some basics that need to be considered for meaningful conversation.

### **A healthy church grows:**

- as an interconnected community of faith;
- as a deep spiritual resource for all enquirers and members;
- in evidence of faith and maturity of its members;
- as a strong witness to the world;
- and, if the demographics allow, it will grow numerically.

Numerical growth and congregational vitality are not necessarily synonymous.

**However**, mission-focused, effective churches “tend to grow as a consequence of what they offer their members” (Don Posterski, 1993), and much depends upon geographic and demographic context. Our call remains: “Here I am. Send me.”

## Where to Start (The Questionnaire included below will help facilitate these questions)

**Ministry Evaluation** Taking stock of all areas of congregational life and assessing overall effectiveness and health.

**Reality Check** Taking an honest look at population trends, our buildings, programs and finances. Discerning new possibilities OR accepting limitations.

**Vision** A clear and commonly agreed on Vision for the ministry and direction of the congregation and or parish.

**Liturgy and Worship** Is our Liturgy a worthy joyful inspiring and regular response to God’s love. When we evaluate our resources for worship, what is needed?

**Hospitality** No matter how large or small your congregation is, or how many people are moving into your area, the ministry of hospitality and welcome is vital. What do we offer the community around us, visitors, and our regular worshippers?

**Small Group Ministry** Individuals will deepen their spiritual lives through the relational connections they make with others. What are we doing with small groups?

**Gifts Discernment** Research shows that churches can come alive when the community affirms each other’s gifts and abilities. What processes do we have in place?

### **Equipping for Ministry**

It is important to equip people for their ministry by matching their gifts with the needs of the parish and training and supporting them. How are we doing with that? To answer these questions, review what you have been doing and take stock with a Ministry Evaluation.

## Our Foundation Principles

- We have a shared call to use the gifts entrusted to us for the glory of Christ throughout our Diocese. We are “members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him, the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord”. (Ephesians 2.19)
- Our reason for existing is well expressed in article 19 of the Book of Common Prayer. Church is “a congregation of the faithful in which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments duly ministered”.
- Our understanding of stewardship and our scriptural vision of extending the kingdom and building communities of hope calls us to work together to ensure that our ministries are as healthy and vibrant as possible.
- By virtue of our baptismal covenant every Christian is called to engage in ministry. Every local congregation has been given the mandate to build up the body of Christ so that Christians are equipped for mission work in the parish community.
- As an episcopal church we acknowledge that our Bishop has ultimate responsibility and authority for the mission and ministry of the Diocese. Parish ministries, boundaries and congregations are established with the permission of our Bishop to provide gathering places for worship in the community and to serve the local community as living expressions of ministry and mission.
- Our Bishop does not work alone. As a synodical church, authority and responsibility is shared amongst the laity, clergy and the Bishops. We work together to support the mission of our Diocese, each using the gifts we have been given by God to extend the kingdom.
- The parish church is a visible sign and tangible evidence of our active mission and of God’s reign here on earth. Each congregation and parish gives local expression and witness to the mission and priorities of the Diocese. Each witness is of importance to expressions of our unity.
- Although our parishes have a fairly autonomous (independent) form of governance and management, each parish exists in the context of the mission of the Diocese. It delivers ministry to the local community on behalf of the whole Diocese. In that respect, our parishes and our Diocese always exist and work together in mutuality of interest, and love.

## Hopes and Expectations

### **What we hope to see emerge in our faith communities as reflected by the aspirations of this policy:**

1. The nurturing of expectations that each baptized person, Clergy and Lay, parish or diocesan leadership team, will be supported by the diocesan structure, programs and episcopal ministry in efforts to dream, build and grow.
2. That we will search for tools that will lovingly challenge Clergy and laity to identify infrastructure and other community related realities, form action plans and work realistically and courageously toward what must be done to actively expand or change ministries.
3. An identifying and building of resources to enable each baptized person, Clergy and Lay, parish or diocesan leadership team, to articulate and share stories of progress and faith.
4. That we will search for tools that will help leaders will pay attention to shifting demographic and financial realities as a benchmark for defining potential ministries and facing the realities that limit or prevent certain types of growth or sustainability.
5. That we are nurturing courage in congregations or parishes that are suffering financial shortfalls to call people together in timely fashion to assess the appropriate response to the situation.
6. That we are nurturing courage when demographic shifts raise critical questions of how many churches a certain geographic area can sustain and people must be called together in timely fashion to assess the appropriate response to the situation.
7. That we are nurture courage and faith around discussions about how events of restructuring or closings should take place, and to clarify how surplus assets will be identified and applied to complete ministries or projects, or to support new ministries, initiatives and structures that will help achieve the intentionally missional goals of the Church in our diocese.
8. That we are nurturing values of respect, transparency and trust in all things throughout our Diocese.
9. That we are building on the life-giving faith and community stories of our past, which leave no doubt that we see ourselves as one family in our diocese. resources.

10. That our diocesan unity will help us to work together in shared intentions and agreed upon processes in each congregation, parish or leadership team, as we interpret and enact the intentionally missional priorities of our Diocese.
11. That we will grow in understanding and desire that every voice needs to be heard and respected, because of sincere efforts to find common ground in relation to the things we assume, expect and in the different realities of our local communities as voiced by the people who live in them.
12. That we will grow in a Safe to Fail attitude. Little is accomplished when energy is wasted looking for places to lay blame for failures. We pray for courage in our attempts to be non-judgmentally supportive of those who are moving forward.
13. That we will grow in faithful attention to the Great Commission,\* and work toward developing vital, mission oriented parishes and ministries that are visibly equipped and empowered to minister to the communities that make up the diocese and the larger Church. Mission first, over survival.

The definitions and principles of this policy will be used as a basis of communication, analysis and decision making about congregational parish or diocesan ministry.

\* (Matt. 28:19–20)

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Crossway Bibles. The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (Kindle Locations 39046-39048). Good News Publishers/Crossway Books. Kindle Edition.

## What is prompting us to do this right now?

- The Diocese of Central Newfoundland has experienced a profound shift in demographics. This has resulted in dramatic changes in the size and make-up of local communities.
- We are being affected by cultural shifts in societies, changes in religious commitments, and the changing needs and expectations of people in many communities.
- We see the need to have conversations in congregations and parishes about examining every possibility for each community of faith to continue to grow in ministry.
- Our Diocesan Executive and parish leaders have given voice to our people's concerns and asked the Bishop to focus on discerning the paths the Church in our Diocese is being called to travel as we carry out our mission through the local congregation in the realities of the many changes we are experiencing.
- We understand that it is important to help people who have found themselves in situations of having to provide leadership and ministries in situations for which they were not trained or prepared. If we identify and fill these needs, ministries may take on fresh starts and new joy.
- It follows that we need to bravely invest in new models of ministry, training, relationship and partnerships. This policy is not about addressing all that we have lost, but also what we need to do, and about faith that we can do it.
- We are seeing examples of a congregations or parishes established years ago, with a specific mission that no longer fit the local community's needs. The symptoms of this often show up in shrinking Sunday attendance, decreased financial resources and shortages of leaders.

- We are seeing deterioration of buildings and church fabric (Property) as some local congregations are unable or unwilling to maintain the “beauty of holiness”. Many of our buildings no longer reflect outward images of commitment, vibrancy and care. These buildings now impair the overall witness of the Church.
- We are seeing expressions of loyalty to buildings, dependency on government funding, conclusions that part time positions, use of retired Clergy, and eliminating replacement insurance premiums as permanent solutions, as over and above the importance of missional discussions.
- We are seeing that local adequate expressions of our mission and ministry have faded. There is a need for each congregation to understand local demographics and assess the possibilities for service and growth in their own local context, and be supported in that work.
- We are experiencing disparity within congregations and parishes when we find ourselves struggling with the concepts of financial viability, healthy congregations, visioning, and definitions of the mission of the Church.

**Most Importantly we are being prompted because:**

- **We Believe: God’s calling us to a vibrant life of faith has not changed.**
- **We Believe: We are still invited to be Ambassadors for Christ in this age.**
- **We Believe: that we are the right people at the right time to fulfill the great Commission in this generation, chosen and sent by the Holy Spirit**
- **We Believe: God will equip us for an exciting future as followers of Jesus.**

## Practical Considerations and Visioning

### How can we make this work?

- It is important for us to form a process and have people actively enabling our Diocese to explore key dimensions of sustainability in parish ministry, relationships between financial sustainability and vitality of ministry and mission, and enable proactive decisions.
- The possibility of this process being led by a person who has received training in Congregational development, missional approaches to ministry, and has experience in leading growth, and training leaders.
- Parish and congregational initiatives being supported financially by the diocese.
- Clarification of the function, purpose and potential of the network of relationships between congregations, parishes, committees and the diocese. For, healing, nurture, transparency and parity between all.
- Intentionally Missional and Sustainable Ministry Committees throughout our diocese, and in each deanery.
- Clear understandings of financial and stewardship processes.
- A renewed commitment to the Great Commission:

(Matt. 28:19–20)

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

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## Once the time has come to talk about change, “what do we do?”

- With the help of the diocese, a congregation (or parish) will undertake a self-evaluation by using the ‘Policy on Sustainable and Intentionally Missional Ministry’. Whether the congregation moves forward or understands that it has become unsustainable will be formed on the basis of the policy.
- The parish/congregation will spend time reflecting upon their story, and think about how the parish narrative was an important part of individual lives and the story of the wider community. The hope is to honour the past, and arrive at a realistic understanding as to how the influence of the congregation on daily lives has changed. What does the new picture look like? How do we move forward?
- By asking these questions the conversation begins to speak about how to prepare for the future witness of the body of faith we come from.
- Theological and scriptural reflection becomes part of the conversation to provide inspiration and confidence that it is okay to make changes and difficult choices.  
We need to answer these basic questions:
  1. How is this congregation living out its stated mission?
  2. What barriers exist that hinder the fulfillment of its mission?
  3. Can the congregation overcome these barriers?
- The Congregation will complete a survey (Below) on Congregational Sustainability.

Once adequate discussion has been held, a decisions and planning for the future will begin.

## Worksheet on Congregational Sustainability

### **(Please review the previous chapters for clarity and guidance)**

To give yourself a realistic picture, begin by using attendance figures for the previous ten years. A good resource may be the vestry books of each congregation. Chart your congregation's average attendance, then use the following questions as a basis for further discussion. This worksheet will help you take a realistic look at your congregational trends, to help discussion and determine your viability for ministry and mission.

### **The Community We Live In**

Our communities are diverse. Some of our smaller communities do not have young families living there anymore. Some of these questions may not apply to many of our parishes. *Questions below labelled A.B.C. are listed so that you do not have to answer questions that are not relevant to your reality.*

**What is important is to discover and engage our present demographic realities.**

#### **Key thoughts:**

If we have young families in our area, what is our potential for growth?

If we do not have young families, the question remains the same:

What is our potential for growth?

What can we do to recognize the needs of the community and become more visionary?

If you have a "No" answer, what can be done to discern ways to create positive change?

YES NO

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ A. Are there young families active in the church?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ B. Our community has young families that may potentially join us.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ C. Does our ministry reflect and serve the demographics of the community?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Is the parish aware of the demographics and needs of the communities they serve?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Does the parish engage with other community groups/organizations in by sharing resources or partnerships?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Are we experiencing the presence of first-time visitors on a regular basis?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Does 20-25% of our first-time visitors eventually join the congregation?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Is the congregation's main focus on outreach and evangelism?

## Infrastructure

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Our parish buildings are in good shape and present an image of care and vitality to the public.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. Is the present facility physically appropriate or adaptable for use? (do we have accessibility, washrooms etc....and CAN these things be accommodated in our building?)
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. Can the congregation afford the repairs that are needed to use these facilities for ministry?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. We have the funds to facilitate essential repairs such as steps, entrances, exits roofs etc., without stress on everyday functions and expenses.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. We never have projects on hold for long periods because of finances or lack of people.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Any decision we make about our buildings or regular worship is more about ministry, and not cost cutting or survival.

## Finances

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. We are consistently able to contribute toward parish expenses (assessments)
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. Our tradition of fundraising is primarily for fellowship and outreach we see fundraising as a missional effort to encourage the support and presence of those on the edges of our church.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. We have the desire, people and resources to increase fundraising efforts to meet our needs.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. There are sufficient funds and interested membership to do ministry within the congregation, as well as outreach and evangelism in our community and the world.

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 16. Has the congregation maintained a good level of stewardship (increasing offerings as people are made aware of rising costs) - including several families who tithe faithfully to the congregation?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 17. Can you afford to offer extra services such as funerals, baptisms and weddings as outreach and hospitality, or the use of parish buildings free of charge to non-profit groups without worrying about additional cost?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 18. Heat and Light expenses for regular worship are not a problem for us at any time of year.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 19. Our financial concerns have no effect on our relationship with other points in the parish, because we always meet our assessment and obligations.

### **Ministry and Leadership**

YES NO

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 20. We have a pattern of growth in Church attendance.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 21. Our trend of growth will allow us to thrive and develop new ministries for the future in this place.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 22. Our trend of decline still allows us to develop ministries and vision for our future in this place.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 23. Are new efforts in evangelism and Christian Education feasible?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 24. Can we maintain our own existence as a congregation, while providing outreaching ministry in the community, diocese, and beyond?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 25. Are our lay leaders consistently available, present and involved in church meetings, discussions, visioning and decision making?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 26. Do we have the ability to rotate leaders and involve new people following a term of office? (See Appendix B for details)
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 27. Do we have sufficient numbers of leaders to ensure we are constitutionally constituted as vestries? (See Appendix 1 for details)
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 28. Do we have sufficient numbers of people to volunteer for ministry within the congregation and for outreach into the community?

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 29. Our conversations are about ministry and worship more than about striving to trying to survive or keep the doors open.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 30. Has the congregation grown in the last five years?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 31. Do we have enough congregational members to do ministry well?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 32. Is the congregation willing or able to adapt its ministry, traditions and lifestyle in order to develop the ministries that will peak the interest and meet the needs and of our changing community?

### **Worship And Discipleship**

YES NO

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 33. We meet regularly for public worship
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 34. We meet regularly to discuss the content and flow of our worship
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 35. We meet regularly for parish fellowship events, bible study, and to discuss ways of enhancing our programs to enable people in Christian living and lay ministries.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 36. We are willing to adapt different types of worship and scheduling to reach out in different ways to our community.

**This Survey is intended to be a resource to all congregations. It can help us define area of potential growth, help us face realities and plan for the future. It can provide an objective view of areas for potential growth.**

- **If you marked 10 or more answers “No”:** It does not mean that you are in a crisis situation, but that it is time to look courageously and honestly at your situation, and consider what options you have as a congregation or parish.
- You may discover that you may have many potential opportunities for growth!

## The Mechanics of our Policy:

### **Diocesan Partnerships**

There are certain parish ministries which may be seen as intentionally missional or essential to the mission of the Diocese and can be designated and recognized as such.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Bishop in consultation with the executive and local members of the households of faith to make such a designation. Those whose parish ministry is intentional to the mission of the Diocese have a right to call upon the wider church for help if they lack sufficient resources to sustain themselves.

In all cases there is a promise that the needs will be prayerfully considered, but no assurance that such help will be available.

### **Definition of An Intentionally Missional Parish Ministry**

An Intentionally Missional Parish Ministry is defined as a congregation, cluster of congregations or parish ministry that has several of the following characteristics:

- The activities of the parish ministry make a discernible difference in individual lives and in the larger world around it. The Five Marks of Mission will form a guide for discussion.  
(See appendix A)
- It is mission-focused and in alignment with the vision and priorities of the Diocese.
- It is outward-looking, geared to mission and active in extending God's reign in their community.

## Sustainable and Unsustainable Congregations and Parishes

**Sustainable Parish Ministry:** Many parish ministries will be able to provide all the resources they need to grow and prosper in their work.

That includes vision as well as finances. These parish ministries will be considered self-supporting or “sustainable”.

**Not all parish ministries are sustainable:** When a parish ministry is found to be unable to sustain itself financially or build a vision for the future, representatives of the parish ministry and the Diocese will work together under the direction of the Bishop and Executive Officer to bring about a resolution. Basic definitions are:

### **Crisis Driven:**

The decision to reconfigure is driven by the recognition that the parish is in a crisis from which it is unlikely to recover. The parish or congregation, if able will be engaged in an evaluation and planning process.

### **Mission Driven:**

The congregation has realized there is a problem. There is a spiritual restlessness.

The leadership recognizes that it will be facing sustainability issues down the road.

The decision to evaluate and change the current configuration of their ministry is understood in terms of mission.

**In both cases, unanimity and clarity of the message by all parties is critical**

## A Deeper Explanation: Sustainable Parish Ministry

A Sustainable Parish Ministry is defined as a congregation, cluster of congregations or parish ministry initiative that has many of the following observable characteristics:

- It has clergy and active lay leadership with the skills to manage the programs and property of the parish ministry to meet its own sense of mission.
- It has a sense of Mission and is constant in planning for growth and outreach.
- It has the energy and resources to meet the challenges of the community it serves.
- Encourages freewill offering and teaches methods of stewardship for its core financial support.
- It has the resources and appropriate leadership necessary to carry out its calling.
- It can provide for the future well-being of congregational or parish life.
- It generates financial resources from its members and those it serves, and does not deplete capital reserves or assets by diverting them from purposes and goals for which they were created.
- Has no fear of depleting capital reserves or assets by diverting them from purposes and goals for which they were created because of a vision and hope for the future.

## A Deeper Explanation: Unsustainable Parish Ministry

An Unsustainable Parish Ministry is defined as a congregation, cluster of congregations or parish ministry initiative that has been through a process of discernment and has realized that it exhibits these characteristics

- It is not mission-focused and unable to connect with Diocesan intentionally missional priorities. (the understanding here is that Diocesan priorities emerge from the common life of the diocese, and as such refer to the larger vision of who we are becoming.)
- Has not been able to develop intentionally missional ministry.
- It is inward-looking and makes little difference in its surrounding community.
- That out of necessity, changes are about cost cutting as opposed to outreach, proclamation and service.
- It is depleting its capital assets to pay for its current expenses.
- It is unable to maintain its property and have sufficient capital reserves for its longer term property needs.
- The Visible image of infrastructure (the outward appearance of our buildings, which were originally built as a sign of our devotion to the Christian way), are more symbolic of a dying community rather than an energized, vibrant one.
- It cannot cover current operating expenses without cutting back on important ministry.
- It is unduly reliant on sources of funding outside the freewill offering of its members.
- Leadership discussions focus primarily on buildings and or survival.

## Policy: Unsustainable Parish Ministry

Where a local parish ministry is no longer intentionally missional and not financially self-supporting, it cannot be supported indefinitely and absorb resources that would otherwise go to ministries in our Parishes and Diocese that are intentionally missional. Such a parish ministry will be considered to be “unsustainable”.

### **The Sustainability Discernment Process may reveal a difficult path, but it is God’s path, and we will not walk alone.:**

When a community of faith begins to talk about sustainability and change, the motivation is usually out of a sense of missional thinking or out of a crisis. Our hope is that regardless of the reason, missional thinking will become the guide and reason for change.

When facing change, we must arrive at a foundational question:

***“What is God calling this body of faith to do?”***

**The closure or restructuring of a congregation or parish does not signify failure.** Any study of Church life will prove that congregations have life cycles. The Church of ages past looks nothing like the Church of today, but the legacy of past faith and service lives on in our fellowships today.

## Policy:

### Allocation of Property and Resources of a Closed Congregation or Parish (see Appendix C)

Our Constitution states that all Church property is registered to the Diocese of Central Newfoundland, and is held in trust for the parishes, congregations, or organizations of the Diocese.

#### **In every case:**

Decisions are made for allocation, sale or use of Church buildings and other fabric through diocesan administration.

In the same way:

Decisions are made for allocation and administration of funds received through the sale of property through diocesan administration.

#### **Intent:**

1. To use if possible, the available resources to equip a closing or restructuring congregation to fulfil any debts or obligations.
2. To use if possible, the available resources to equip the parish for intentionally missional ministry.
3. If the parish has not developed a vision, to allocate resources to the deanery if the deanery has an intentionally missional vision.
4. If there is no intentionally missional vision, any funds realized from the sale or closure of a congregation will be placed in a Ministry fund to be allocated through the ministry of the diocese.

## Appendix A

### The Five Marks of Mission

The Five Marks of Mission are an important statement on mission which expresses the Anglican Communion's common commitment to, and understanding of, God's holistic/integral mission.

The Five Marks of Mission are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

(Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)

source: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/marks-of-mission.aspx>

## Appendix B Term of Office

13.1 Elected members of the Vestry, including the representatives of congregational organizations, if any, may serve in that capacity for three consecutive years; following which, if they are not appointed or elected to one of the positions of ex-officio membership, they must retire and shall be ineligible to serve as a Vestry member until one year shall have elapsed. Small congregations may be exempted from this requirement by the Officers of the Diocesan Executive Committee.

Elected members, at the expiry of their three year terms, may be appointed or elected to one of the ex-officio memberships; however, at the expiry of the term of that ex-officio membership they are not eligible for appointment or election to any other position on Vestry, ex-officio or elective, until one year shall have elapsed. Small congregations may be exempted from this requirement by the Officers of the Diocesan Executive Committee.

In the case of the death, resignation, refusal or neglect to serve, or transfer from the congregation, of any elected Vestry member, the other members of the Vestry may appoint a qualified member of the congregation to fill the vacancy until the annual congregational meeting. Such service shall not be counted towards the three-year maximum service provided for in Section 13 of this Chapter.

Congregations may provide for staggered terms, but in no case shall an individual member of the Vestry serve more than three years without retiring in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

### VESTRY MEMBERSHIP

12. In every congregation there shall be a Vestry, which shall consist of members of the congregation as follows:

.1 Ex-officio members: the Incumbent, the Curates/Associates/Assistants, persons licensed by the Bishop and employed by the parish, the Church Wardens, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and, where there is only one congregation in the parish, the lay members representing the Parish in Synod.

.2 Elected members: Up to twelve members shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 6 of this Chapter.

.3 A quorum for a meeting of the Vestry shall consist of one third of its members.

## Appendix C

### Allocation of Property and Resources of a Closed Congregation or Parish CHURCH CLOSURES (FROM THE CONSTITUTION)

#### CHAPTER 16 CHURCH PROPERTY TITLE, OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

1. Title to all Real Property and buildings located thereon in the Diocese shall be registered in the name of the Diocesan Synod of Central Newfoundland which Synod shall hold such Real Property in trust for the parishes, congregations, or organizations of the Diocese, as the case may be.

2.1 Ownership of other chattels, furnishings and personal property shall be held by a parish, congregation, or organization, as the case may be.

2 Upon disestablishment of a parish, congregation, or organization, title to all property of the parish, congregation, or organization shall vest in the Synod and any trust in favour of the parish, congregation, or organization shall thereupon terminate.

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