

Presidential Address
to
The 39th Session of the General Synod
Halifax, Nova Scotia

“The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

It is a great joy to welcome you to the 39th Session of the General Synod, gathered under the theme of “Feeling the Winds of God: Charting a New Course”. It is a wonderful nautical theme, and certainly in keeping with meeting in this grand old diocese bound by the sea on every side. I cannot tell you how good it is to be home for these nine days. It is so good to stand on these old eternal rocks, to smell the deep salt sea, to hear again the sound of the horn through the late night fog. It’s good for my soul and I hope it will be as refreshing for you as for me.

We are just delighted to be here and to share in the celebrations of the 300th Anniversary of continuous Anglican presence and worship in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. On Sunday, June 6th we will join Bishop Sue Moxley and Bishop Ron Cutler and the diocesan family for a great Service of Thanksgiving and Witness. Its theme: “A Journey Just Begun” calls us to thank God for all our forbears in the Faith, to renew vows made in our baptism and to rejoice in the Spirit “who comes sailing on the wind, her wings flashing in the sun, on a journey just begun, she flies on”. (Hymn 656, Common Praise)

As I look out over the Synod, I see you first as friends in Christ, - some whom I’ve known for a very long time, some whom I’ve come to know in the last three years. I see partners and guests from around the world. I see young and old, I see evangelicals and

Anglo-Catholics. I see liberals and conservatives, I see those who embrace tradition with a passion, I see those who are eager to embrace fresh expressions of the Church. I see those who are exploring a mixed economy – a blend of both. I see indigenous and non-indigenous. I see all the orders of the Church. I see members of Synod, seasoned with experience. I see members finding their way for the first time.

You have come, dear friends, as delegates to Synod. Now you are members of Synod and together we are called to take counsel over matters in any way affecting the life and well-being of the Anglican Church of Canada, its commitment to God's mission in the world, its place in the Anglican Communion, and its relations with other churches in the Service of the Gospel. Our care for the whole Church is reflected in the very way we are sitting in this Synod. For some substantial matters to be decided by resolution we shall remain in diocesan table groups. For major presentations in plenary we shall gather in groups, representative of a number of dioceses. In keeping with our theme they are called, Galley Groups. I hope we will enter into these various ways of meeting and doing our work together in a spirit of adventure and partnership in the Gospel.

The Spirit by which we have been called into this Synod, and to whom we pray for wisdom and direction is the very one of whom we read of in the Scriptures.

By this Spirit every thing in creation was brought into being, balance and beautiful harmony. By this Spirit, Moses was raised up to lead his people from slavery to freedom in the Promised Land. By this Spirit, the prophets were inspired to speak the Word of the Lord – admonishing, consoling, comforting the people with the promise of a new covenant to be written on their hearts. This same Spirit overshadowed Mary and conceived in her the Son of God Our Saviour. That same Spirit has come upon men and women in every age and through them, God's holy purposes have been accomplished. That same Spirit comes to us. Sometimes she rests gently as she did on Jesus at his baptism. Sometimes she carries us away into times of discernment for the kind of ministry to which we are called. Sometimes she rests decisively on us as on Jesus when he returned from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. (Luke 4: 14)

“The wind blows where it wills”, Jesus told Nicodemus, “you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes” (John 3:8). So it is in parish life sometimes. The Spirit comes like the wind and quietly sweeps through the congregation. We cannot easily explain what has happened but we know we have been changed, never to be the same again. We are renewed and re-invigorated for our work in the service of Christ and his kingdom.

Sometimes as modern hymnody puts it, the Spirit comes as a healing breeze,

*“streaming gently through our troubled days
to set us on our feet again with confidence,
delight and praise.”* Hymn 650, v4

Sometimes the Spirit comes as a rising gale,

*“tearing down our false tranquility
surging through our settled minds
and demolishing our complacency.”* Hymn 650, v1

Sometimes the Spirit comes as an icy blast,

*“striking through the scorching enmity that
burns our human love to ash, extinguishing
all hostility.”* Hymn 650, v3

Sometimes the Spirit comes like a gentle breeze to cool the heat of our tensions and debates.

And sometimes, as on the Day of Pentecost, she comes on the rush of the wind, setting hearts on fire and empowering us for witness in ways far beyond what we would ask or imagine.

And so we come to this Synod. We come

*to feel the winds of God
to lift our sails*

to lean into the direction of the Spirit's leading.

Much of our work in this Synod comes to us as a result of direction and mandates from the last session of the General Synod held in 2007 in Winnipeg. I refer particularly to VISION 2019, Governance, and a review of the roles and responsibilities of the Primate. These task forces consulted broadly. They engaged last year's Provincial Synods in focused conversations and they listened with diligence. My sense is that many of you will recognize in their reports and recommendations a genuine reflection of your own insights and input.

VISION 2019 represents a trajectory for our national ministries under the auspices of the General Synod. I am absolutely delighted that the Marks of Mission are at the heart of VISION 2019 and that there is a call to adopt them as guiding principles for our life and witness as a National Church. The report names priorities for the Church at this time and identifies a number of practices to equip us as "a people seeking to know love and follow Jesus in serving God's mission".

VISION 2019 highlights Congregational Vitality, Leadership Development, Stewardship Education, Youth Ministry and Indigenous Ministries. Having invited grass roots input and received well over 1,000 responses it is not surprising that these topics have surfaced as priorities from the perspective of the local Church. We need to be about the work of building vibrant parishes for they make for a vibrant diocese; and vibrant dioceses make for a vibrant church across the country, a church that is making a real difference in the lives of its members, the community, and the world.

Some have suggested that VISION 2019 is weak when it comes to our witness in the world, not as out front as some would have with respect to global relations, and partnership in the work of long-term development, peace and justice. My own read is that these matters do have a place in VISION 2019, particularly through the call to adopt the Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion and to put in place a comprehensive education program about the local, national, and global ministries to which these Marks inevitably call us.

I really believe VISION 2019 holds huge potential for the renewal of our church in every sphere of its life and witness -- parochial, diocesan, national and international. To quote the Introduction, "Vision 2019 is a call to shape the life of our Church more and more deeply in paths of discipleship and mission."

Governance is a major issue at this Synod. The Working Group will be reporting on its several files. The composition of the General Synod and the size of its Council are likely to generate considerable discussion. A file which generated little response at the outset was the call for an examination of the structures and boundaries with which we work and the extent to which they are enabling mission in a contemporary context. Responses were rather sporadic. But as time has passed these conversations began to gain some momentum in three of the four ecclesiastical provinces. It is noteworthy that this matter has been picked up in VISION 2019 as a necessary conversation in the next triennium.

The Indigenous Ministry file prompted widespread conversation across the Church. The Governance Task Force is bringing before the Synod a proposed Canon entitled The National Indigenous Ministry. It would provide constitutional canonical recognition of the office of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Sacred Circle. This is an exciting development. Inspired and blessed by the Holy Spirit, it is as the Governance Report notes, "an important and historic step in honouring the 1994 Covenant entitled 'A Journey of Spiritual Renewal'."

On that journey there have been some very significant steps. Of particular note is the adoption by General Synod in 2001 of A New Agape – meaning a new relationship, a new love. It represented a renewed commitment to walk in partnership respecting the cultural, spiritual, social and economic independence of First Nations Communities. It still serves as an excellent education resource for the Church. I am very pleased to see the proposal from the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee calling the Church to designate June 21st in its calendar as National Aboriginal Day and authorize the propers recommended

By far one of the most significant steps in the journey toward self-determination was the call from the 2006 Sacred Circle for the appointment of a National Indigenous Bishop. As many of us will recall The Right Rev. Mark MacDonald was installed in that office in a moving ceremony at the last General Synod. Since then he has travelled extensively throughout Canada and visited many, many First Nations communities, meeting with elders, chiefs, Band Councils, members of the community and bishops. Using Gospel based discipleship he has drawn people into circles of conversation and discernment. His ministry has been very well received, recognized, celebrated and renewed in consultation with the co-chairs of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP). One of Bishop Mark's passions has been to enable new initiatives in the spirit of self-determination. The most exciting development in this regard has been in the Province of Rupert's Land where provisions were made for some flexibility in the Provincial Canon for the Election of Bishops to allow for an aboriginal bishop to be elected in accord with the traditional aboriginal ways for raising up leadership within the community. In the northern region of the Diocese of Keewatin, Lydia Mamakwa was elected as Area Bishop. I had the great privilege of participating in her consecration on May 4th in Kingfisher Lake, Ontario. Everyone was delighted that Dr. William Winter, a much respected elder of the community was able to attend. Many years ago he had a dream of establishing a program for training Indigenous people. A school for ministry named after him was established in 2003 and has since graduated many men and women for ministry in Northern Ontario and Manitoba. William also had a vision that some day someone from amongst his own people would be called and consecrated as their bishop.

At her installation as Area Bishop, Lydia knelt for prayer and blessing by William. It was so moving to hear his voice – so frail and yet so strong in spirit. He would utter a few sentences and then pause for breath. Then another few sentences and another pause. The rhythm went on until he finished praying. I shall never forget those moments – for what I saw was an old man and his grand-daughter, an elder and a new bishop. I saw love and blessing. I saw a vision realized, a dream come true, a prayer

answered. I witnessed a sacred moment in the story of the deep desire of Indigenous peoples for self-determination within the Anglican Church of Canada.

Alongside the journey toward self-determination for Indigenous peoples is the continuing journey of healing from the deep wounds inflicted through the experiences of so many in the Residential Schools. Children were taken from their homes and families and housed in schools designed to assimilate them into a Euro-Canadian way of thinking and living. Their hair was cut off. Their traditional clothes were taken. They were not allowed to speak in their own native language.

So, so many were abused, – physically, emotionally and sexually. Many are still too broken to tell their stories. Many have taken their experiences to the grave. It is a shame that we carry as a Church, as a nation.

As a Church, Primate Michael Peers offered an Apology in 1993 at a Native Convocation in Minaki, Ontario. Since then we have been trying to live that apology, as faithfully as we can. We raised the resources necessary for The Settlement Fund negotiated with the Federal Government some years ago and we continue to be diligent in honouring other terms of that Settlement Agreement. Our archivists are attentive to the disclosing of records concerning the schools. Many bishops, clergy and laity have sat in on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Independent Assessment Processes (IAP). Our Healing Fund continues to support numerous projects dedicated to healing within First Nation Communities. But still, my friends we have a way to go. There is still so much hurt. On numerous occasions I have seen how a word, a phrase, a perceived attitude can trigger memories and the pain of loss -- loss of family and culture and language, loss of dignity and self-worth. And long is the road to recover from such losses. For many it is a hard road to tread, one we can only travel with the Spirit as our companion. As the hymn writer puts it.

*“Darkened roads are clearer, heavy burdens lighter
when we’re walking with our Spirit Friend.”*

(Hymn 651, Common Praise)

As a nation, we are just beginning to come to terms with the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools. The Prime Minister's Apology on June 11, 2008 was an historic moment as was the announcement of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It will be a blessing to be honoured by the presence of representatives of the TRC Commissioners on June 10th, the eve of the National Aboriginal Day of Reconciliation. I pray, dear friends, that the commitment to walk the paths of healing and reconciliation, to walk the paths that will lead us to right relations will be after the manner in which the nation prayed during The Remembering The Children Tour in March 2008:

*“We dare to dream of a Path of Reconciliation
where justice walks with all,
where respect leads to true partnership,
where the power to change comes from each heart.
Hear our prayer, O God of hope, and guide this country of Canada
on a new and different path. Amen”*

A considerable amount of time in Synod is devoted to the issue of the blessing of same-sex unions. My observation is that wherever the majority of us are with respect to a theological position on this matter, there is less passion for resolving it through resolution and heated debate, and much deeper commitment to respectful dialogue and continuing discernment together. I have witnessed this shift in the House of Bishops, in the Council of General Synod, and in the context of many discussions during diocesan visits. I believe the Spirit has called us into this space for a time. We shall begin our work on this issue in the Synod with A Faithful Reporting on behalf of the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee, the Primate's Theological Commission, and the House of Bishops, and International Conversations. Rapporteurs will record our conversations then meet and report back to the Synod the common themes. Each time we meet in prayerful conversation, we will build upon the themes emerging. I ask all members of Synod to enter into these conversations in a Spirit of humility and a genuine commitment to listen and to learn from one another. I know that our deliberations on these matters will be watched by many within Canada and around the world. I hope they see no evidence of rejection, condemnation, or demonization but every evidence of

respect, charity, and patience. I hope they see a Church sensitive to the variety of contexts in which we are called to meet the pastoral and sacramental needs of those we serve. I hope they see a capacity for pastoral generosity. I hope they see us striving to live together with difference and to do it gracefully. I hope they see us “bearing one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3)

I come to this Synod mindful of the comments made by the Pastoral Visitors, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to visit the House of Bishops last fall. In their report to the Archbishop, they said, “General Synod will, indeed, be a watershed, both for the Anglican Church of Canada and for its wider relations within the Anglican Communion. At its worst it could lead to internal anarchy. At its best it could help us all to appreciate and practice a properly Christian style of inclusiveness.” I pray, of course, for the latter.

My earnest hope is that we will emerge from this Synod with a Pastoral Statement reflecting the mind and heart of the Canadian Church on this matter at this moment in time. I hope it can reflect our determination to never walk apart, but always to walk together, in that love Christ wills and prays for us and for the whole Church.

Another major topic before the Synod is the Anglican Communion Covenant. We are one of the first provinces to consider the final text. We are blessed to have had an Anglican Communion Working Group guiding our study of the drafts of the Covenant and inviting our input by way of critique and revision. And I know that those comments from our Church have been viewed by many within the Communion as constructive and helpful.

Section IV, Our Covenanted Life Together, continues to be challenging for many in the Communion. On the one hand it speaks of respect for the autonomy and integrity of each province in making decisions according to the polity reflected in its Constitution and Canons. On the other, it speaks of relational consequences for a Church should it make decisions deemed incompatible with the Covenant. These consequences could range from limited participation to suspension from dialogues, commissions and

councils within the Communion. In my opinion, they reflect principles of exclusion with which many in the Communion are very uneasy. For if one is excluded from a table, how can one be part of a conversation? How can our voice be heard, how can we hear the voices of others, how can we struggle together to hear the voice of the Spirit? How can we hope to restore communion in our relationships if any one of us cannot or will not be heard?

In his 2010 Pentecost letter, the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks of “particular provinces being contacted about the outworking of these relational consequences.” To date we cannot be identified as “a Province that has formally through their Synod or House of Bishops adopted policies that breach any of the moratoria requested by the Instruments of Communion and recently affirmed by the Standing Committee and the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith, and Order”. However the Archbishop’s letter also refers to “some provinces that have within them dioceses that are committed to policies that neither the province as a whole nor The Communion has sanctioned”. One is left wondering if provinces whose Primates continue to interfere in the internal life of other provinces and extend their pastoral jurisdiction through cross-border interventions will be contacted. To date I have seen no real measure to address that concern within The Communion. I maintain and have publicly declared my belief that those interventions have created more havoc in the Church, resulting in schism, than any honest and transparent theological dialogue on issues of sexuality through due synodical process in dioceses and in the General Synod. I also wonder when I see the word “formally” italicized in the Archbishop’s letter. It leaves me wondering about places where the moratoria on the blessing of same sex unions is in fact ignored. The blessings happen but not “formally”. As you will have detected I have some significant concerns about imposing discipline consistent with provisions in the Covenant before it is even adopted; and about consistency in the exercise of discipline throughout one Communion. There are also lingering concerns in Section IV on monitoring discipline and procedures for restoring membership in our covenanted life together.

All that being said, I have every hope that our Church will embrace the request to consider the Covenant. Our Anglican Communion Working Group is committed to

providing educational resources to aid our study. Bishop George Bruce will give us a brief overview of those materials in the course of Synod. I have every confidence we will use them faithfully and that we will offer valuable comments in response to the request for a Communion-wide Progress Report on the Covenant at the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012.

All of our work in this regard is in keeping with our commitment as a member church with The Communion.

“This commitment”, as our Pastoral Visitors commented, “is much more than an exercise of duty. It is accompanied by and springs from a genuine sense of affection which we found deeply moving ... Canadians really do want to play their full part and play it well.”

Dear also to our hearts is our relationship in Full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Their National Bishop, Susan Johnson and I have cherished our partnership in the ministries entrusted to us by our churches in 2007. It has been our joy to extend joint greetings to the faithful at Christmas and Easter and to encourage a living out of our Full Communion relationship in every circle of our life – local, national, global. We have seen a growing partnership in social justice work, in matters of faith and order, in liturgy, in youth work, and in communication. With our senior management staff, we are making plans for a joint meeting of our national Church Councils next year. We have begun a conversation exploring the possibility of a joint National Office. In the Spirit of Full Communion, I will welcome Susan to the Synod and together we will say something about our hopes for the General Synod and the National Convention when they meet in 2013.

As we know our Full Communion relationship is rooted in commitment to work for the visible unity of the whole Church. We remain deeply committed to a number of bilateral conversations, the focus of which is often matters of faith and order. We are also deeply committed to a number of councils, whose work is focussed in justice and peace. KAIROS is a primary example. In light of CIDA (Canadian International Development

Agency) funding cuts, KAIROS is in the process of redefining itself and its work. I hope our support for KAIROS will remain strong as it continues to be the venue for the churches to speak out together on matters of building healthy and just societies, and to address matters of concern to all nations, including the world economic order and the environment. Even as we meet, KAIROS is facilitating an all-churches letter to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs, calling on the Government to follow through on its commitment, in the March 3rd speech from the throne, to endorse without condition the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

For some time now we have been entertaining the possibility of establishing a government relations presence in Ottawa. This is named in VISION 2019 as an Anglican initiative. If that be so I would be very pleased. But let's just imagine the possibilities, the stronger voice with which we could speak, the enhanced capacity with which we could be heard, the greater impact we could have in influencing the shaping of public social policy, domestic and foreign if a government relations office was somehow representative of all the churches. I believe the Spirit is calling the churches to chart a new course together with respect to our witness as people of faith in the public square. We speak out of the tradition of the prophets and out of the imperative of the Gospel. Our commitment to social justice continues to be inspired by the text from Isaiah which Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind
to set at liberty those who are oppressed
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.”

(Isaiah 61:1-3)

Commitment to justice and peace is not confined to Christian witness alone. People of many faith traditions are committed to this call. This month religious leaders from

around the world will gather in a summit in Winnipeg on the eve of the G8 and G20 leaders meetings in Huntsville and Toronto.

Known as the 2010 InterFaith partnership, we will remind world leaders that we have reached the two-thirds point for the deadline to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, set in the year 2000 and we will urge the leaders “to work together for a future that allows all citizens of this planet to thrive”.

From our shared values we will call on leaders to take courageous and concrete actions:

1. to address poverty;
2. to address climate change, and to prioritize long-term environmental sustainability;
3. to address factors that feed cycles of violent conflict and costly militarism, and to invest in peace.

Our deep desire is that 2010 be a year of monumental progress in addressing these issues. We will assure world leaders of our commitment to pray for them, to follow their deliberations and to support new actions in working together for the good of all humanity.

We do all this in the spirit of what Bishop Ian Douglas has said of the Millennium Development Goals. “They serve as an invitation to get on with what God wants us to be about in the world, to join with sisters and brothers in Christ, with people of other faiths, and with global society to be about the repair of the world.”

The triennium that is passing has been one of unprecedented change in leadership in our Church. Thirteen dioceses have experienced change in episcopal leadership. All four Ecclesiastical Provinces elected new Metropolitans last year. In Church House there have been changes of leadership in every department except Communication and Information Resources. We welcomed new directors in Partnerships, Financial Management, Philanthropy and Faith, Worship and Ministry. We have seen a change in the office of Executive Director of the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund

(PWRDF) and are in the midst of a transition in the office of Executive Director of the Anglican Foundation. In the aftermath of a terrible car accident in which Archdeacon Michael Pollesel's wife, Gini was killed over Christmas, Michael has been on an extended leave of absence. Sam Carriere, the Director of Communication and Information Resources has stepped into the role of Acting General Secretary and done so with competence, grace and good cheer, assuring me that General Synod will be fun!

In the past triennium we have begun to come to terms with our financial picture. For a number of years the General Synod had been incurring deficits and then we slipped into a pattern of deficit budgeting. With the full support of the Financial Management and Development Committee, I challenged the Council of General Synod to reverse this trend and to set us on a path of sustainable budget equilibrium. In the past two years we have made significant cuts to the budget, resulting in reduction of program and cuts in staff. Needless to say, it continues to be an anxious time for staff as they await the outcomes of the deliberations of the Financial Management and Development Committee and the Management Team with respect to the budget for 2011. I hereby acknowledge the labours of all our staff and their capacity for working within limitations presented by the necessity for substantial cuts in the budget. I am grateful for their understanding, their patience and the grace with which they are coping in these challenging times.

Alongside these concerns, stand opportunities for realizing new revenues for the General Synod. We shall hear about some of the initiatives in a presentation from our Department of Philanthropy. These opportunities are grounded in a spirituality of fundraising, articulated perhaps most succinctly by Henri Nouwen who wrote, "When we seek to realize funds we are saying 'We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.'"

In this triennium we sang "Amazing Grace". We sang as the young and the elderly. We sang in places of quiet and we sang in places of danger. How moving it was to see our Canadian troops singing from Khandahr. We raised over \$100,000 which was

designated for the establishment of a Suicide Prevention Program for the dioceses of the Council of the North. For the DVD recording the story of “Amazing Grace” Anglican Video won a prestigious international award. It was wonderful to see Anglican Video so honoured in its 20th Anniversary year.

And this year marks the 135th Anniversary of our national church newspaper. It began in 1875 as The Dominion Churchman and thereafter it was known as The Canadian Churchman and since 1989 as the Anglican Journal. In 2010 we celebrate a re-design of the paper, the first in a decade. It has a “bold, new, reader- friendly look” a real credit to its new editor.

The triennium also saw the 50th Anniversary of the Anglican Foundation. There is not a diocese in the country that has not benefited from grants and loans through The Foundation. So that its good work may continue, The Foundation is in the midst of an endeavour to grow its membership and enhance its capacity to support the Church, its facilities and its ministries.

At this Synod we will be concluding the 50th Anniversary of the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). 50 Images tell the story, the 50 Leaders Project nurturing young people who have a passion for a better world is well underway. The 50 Refugees Project has taken off. There are 34 sponsorships completed and a number in process. We are confident that year end we shall surpass our goal! Across the country there have been many events to celebrate this anniversary – ranging from potluck suppers to gala dinners – all in the spirit of the theme of the 50th – “In Faith, Join Hands, Inspire Hope”!

Some have asked what the financial success of the 50th has been. Quite frankly the hope of generating a lot of new revenue in honour of the 50th did not materialize, given the downturn in the economy and the crash in the investment markets. But when an earthquake rocked Haiti on January 12th, 2010, Anglicans across the country responded generously. Over \$2 million was received in support of Help and Hope for Haiti. As President of the Board for PWRDF I thank you, one and all, for your generosity. It

continues to bolster the resilience of the Haitian people and their capacity to rebuild the infrastructures of their nations.

In the past triennium my focus has been primarily on enabling us to celebrate our identity as a national Church; to refocus our energies on mission; to affirm our place in the Anglican Communion as transparent, cooperative in efforts to maintain the bonds of affection, and generous in those works of love and justice to which the Gospel calls us.

It has been just an enormous privilege for me to travel our beloved Church from coast to coast to coast. I have appreciated the warmth of your welcome and the opportunity of worshipping with you.

I cherish more than ever the beauty and diversity of this Church. I cherish its deep commitment to the Gospel – from ministries out of Ward Five Community Centre Ministry in Halifax, to the saying of Morning Prayer by an aboriginal lay preacher in a log church in Megis Lake, to services associated with Aboriginal Friendship Centres across the country, to a priestly presence on the streets of the Eastside of Vancouver.

In the face of tensions and struggles across contentious matters, at home and within the Communion, I have seen us endeavoring to remain one with another in that sacred fellowship to which Christ calls us.

I have seen a Church endeavoring to befriend the world with the Gospel of Love and Justice for all.

In the next triennium I need to focus a good portion of my energy in consultation with others in charting a new course for our beloved Church, a course into which I believe the Holy Spirit is calling us. Giving ourselves to that call will require of us all humility, trust and courage. I enter this Synod sensing that we must spend not only these nine days but the next three years in devotion to our theme, “Feeling the Winds of God: Charting a New Course.”

So let's lift our sails!
Let's lean into the wind
and in the Spirit's leading – Rejoice!

Fred J. Hiltz
Primate