

**REPORT ON THE 147TH SYNOD OF THE
DIOCESE OF JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
APRIL 18-21, 2017**

THE FIRST DAY – APRIL 18, 2017

The Synod, under the theme **“The People of God: Called to Transformational Mission,”** began on Tuesday, April 18 with an Opening Service at the St. James Parish Church, Montego Bay.

The Service, which was streamed live via the Diocesan website, was attended by clergy and lay representatives from churches across the Diocese. Special guests included the Custodes of Hanover, Westmoreland, St. Ann, and Trelawny; The Chief Justice and Chancellor of the Diocese; the President of the Court of Appeal; the Chief of Defence Staff of The Jamaica Defence Force; members of the Diplomatic Corps; the Deputy Mayor of Montego Bay, as well as the Ecumenical Fraternity.

Highlight of the Service was the ‘Charge’ or special message delivered to the Church and its Diaspora by the Bishop of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Howard K. A. Gregory. This year’s Charge highlighted the sense of urgency in God’s call to action by the covenant community, both in the Old and New Testaments, to address the challenges confronting them. He noted that it is in these situations that “God calls, commissions and empowers his leaders and people for action of a transformational nature.”

He drew examples from the Book of 1 Kings starting at Chapter 16; the Acts of the Apostles; and Luke 9 to support his point. The narrative in 1 Kings recounts the wilderness experience in which God prepared the prophet Elijah to restore religious faith in Israel. Despite the threat of persecution from the pagan King, Ahab and his wife Jezebel, God empowered Elijah to lead the change process by anointing new kings, and also selecting his own successor, Elisha.

Bishop Gregory said that in Acts 1, the disciples were equally devastated when the resurrected Jesus ascended into Heaven, leaving them with the daunting task of carrying on his mission. He noted that once they stepped out of their comfort zone, they positively impacted a world that was hungry for the message with which they were entrusted; and contributed to the spread of the church through the ages.

Likewise, Bishop Gregory charged that: “Standing by sky-gazing in face of the perceived daunting nature of the Mission, and in the hope of recapturing a good thing from the past, will not fulfill the mission to which God is calling the church in this generation.”

Lamenting the decline in volunteerism in the church and the nation, he likened this situation to the passage in Luke 9: 57-62 in which several persons offered excuses when invited by Christ to participate in his mission. However, he stated that excuses or suggestions that the moment was not right had no place in the Transformational Mission of God which required change that is radical and driven by the urgency of the situation and moment. He addressed several areas of concern in the nation and the church; and argued that the church must respond to these contemporary challenges in order to demonstrate to its members and the world that it is the community of love, compassion and reconciliation that it claims to be.

“The challenge for us today as a Diocese is whether we trust God to be faithful to his word and are prepared to venture forth with him in the Mission to which he is calling us at this time,” Bishop Gregory asserted.

Music for the Service was provided by a combined choir under the direction of Mr. Audley Davidson; with accompanying musicians from the Jamaica Defence Force.

(The full text of the Bishop’s Charge, as well as, a recording of the Service are available on the Diocesan website – www.anglicandioceseja.org)

THE SECOND DAY – APRIL 19, 2017

The Business Sessions of the Synod were held at the Holiday Inn Resort and Spa in Montego Bay.

The second day began with Matins (Morning Prayer) followed by the Holy Eucharist led by the Mandeville Region. The Rev. Larius Lewis, Priest-In-Charge of the Chapelton Cure, Clarendon, officiated at Morning Prayer. The Venerable Winston Thomas, Archdeacon/Administrator of the Mandeville Region and Rector of the St. Gabriel’s Cure, May Pen, was Celebrant and Preacher at the Eucharist.

Archdeacon Thomas based his Sermon on St. Luke 24:45, which tells how Jesus helped the two disciples who he met on the way to Emmaus to understand the Scriptures. He noted that the closing verses of the passage emphasise the resurrection and establish that the risen Christ was no phantom or ghost. He said that Jesus’ appearance to his disciples – five on the day of the resurrection and five other times subsequently – proved that he was real.

“The existence of the church today, you and I here in worship today, are enough testimony to the reality of the resurrection,” the Archdeacon stated. He further noted that Christianity was founded on one who, in historical fact, faced, fought and conquered death and rose again.

He said the author of Luke stressed that there was an urgent task for the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins to be preached; and the Church was called, chosen and commissioned to go into the world in the power and strength of God to proclaim the message.

Archdeacon Thomas noted that there are also times when we are called to wait on the Lord; but he said these times are never wasted as they enable us to be strengthened for the tasks ahead. During these times he urged members to listen to Jesus outlining the Scriptures; and to go and share the message, assured of his presence and power.

The Business Session of the Synod, at which Bishop Gregory presided, was attended by 230 members, comprising Clergy, Church Workers, and Lay Representatives, including youth.

Following the Opening Prayer by the Rev. Canon Garth Minott, Warden of Anglican Students at the United Theological College of The West Indies, **Part Two of the Lord Bishop's Charge** was presented. Bishop Gregory welcomed members of the Assembly, especially first-time participants and the newly ordained; and he mentioned appointments, retirements and leave of absence for clergy and church workers. He also offered condolences with respect to members of the Diocese who passed in 2016.

Among the highlights of his review was the celebration in May 2016 of the centenary of the death of Archbishop Enos Nuttall. Mr. Simon Costa, the great-great grandson of the Archbishop, was the special guest of the Diocese during the celebrations.

Bishop Gregory gave an update on the reconstruction of the Wortley Home for Girls, in Kingston, and the Clifton Boys' Home, in Westmoreland, both of which were destroyed by fire. He reported that the Auchtembeddie Primary School in Manchester – one of several primary level institutions closed by the Government – was being refurbished as a camp site for use in Summer 2017.

Of note at the international level was the participation by the Rev. Canon Garth Minott in the ongoing dialogue involving the Anglican/ Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission (AMICUM), which has resulted in the sharing of ministries. Arising from this initiative, a Day of Reflection and Dialogue is scheduled for clergy on Tuesday, May 16 at St. Gabriel's Church, May Pen.

In November 2016, Bishops Gregory and Thompson, as well as the Rev. Sean Major-Campbell and Mr. Patrick McIntosh attended a meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Partnership, sponsored by Trinity Wall Street in Panama. A wealthy Episcopal Church in the Lower Manhattan area of New York City, Trinity Wall Street is well-known for its philanthropic,

missionary, and fellowship programmes around the world. Another meeting will be held in Jamaica from October 26-31, 2017.

The Charge was followed by the tabling of five resolutions (#2-6) for debate.

The Rt. Rev. Robert Thompson, Suffragan Bishop of Kingston and Chairman of the Communication Board, tabled a Report regarding the development of a **Diocesan Communication Policy**. The Policy was formulated in response to Resolution #4 which was passed at the 2016 Synod concerning Technology and the Media in the Mission and Ministry of the Diocese. It seeks to support implementation of the Diocesan Strategic Plan, strengthen awareness about the Church, engage active participation by members and improve communication, transparency and accountability at all levels of the establishment. It is proposed to share details of the Policy with members at the Regional and Deanery levels throughout 2017.

The **Auditor's Report**, based on new international standards, was presented by Mrs. Lisa Cousins of UHY Dawgen, and adopted by the Synod.

Financial Statements for 2016 and Estimates of Expenditure for 2017 were presented by the Chairman of the Diocesan Financial Board, the Hon. Michael Fennell. He noted that 2016 was a difficult year in which expense control was a major focus for the Budget Committee. Expenses stood at J\$170.6 million from the budgeted figure of J\$189.8 million. Mission Share amounted to J\$169.6 million. However, Current Account balances deteriorated to J\$272.8 million at the end of 2016. The Budget for 2017 is J\$203.3 million representing an increase of approximately 7.8% over 2016; and Mission Share of J\$178.7 million is projected..

Resolution #1 was passed by the Synod to facilitate an overdraft of no more than J\$2 million, if needed. Mr. Fennell was returned as Chairman of the Financial Board, and UHY Dawgen was retained as Auditors.

The morning session closed with a presentation on "***The Distribution of Anglican Churches in Jamaica***" by Dr. Parris Lyew-Ayee Jnr., Director, Mona GeoInformatics Institute. With some 298 churches covered in the mapping exercise, Dr. Lyew-Ayee noted the strong presence of the Anglican across Jamaica. Seventy-two of these were located in urban communities with 217 in rural communities. As a result of their distribution pattern, he said Anglican churches were exposed to the full range of societal challenges in Jamaica. Against this background, he suggested that Anglican congregations should provide strong leadership to enact change, in conjunction with other denominations and stakeholders.

In the discussion which followed, Dr. Lyew-Ayee highlighted the importance of data-driven planning to guide project implementation. He identified the number of under 15 youth in Jamaica as a potential concern and pointed to the development of sports and music ministries as areas to be explored.

The Afternoon Session

The Report of the Board of Nominations was the first agenda item for the afternoon.

This was followed by an **update from the Education & Youth Department**, which is celebrating 30 years of operation. The presentation was led by the Rev. Douglas Barnes, Director of Christian Education, with inputs from Mr. Craig Mears, Director of Youth Ministry and Mrs. Ena Barclay, Director of Schools. Fr. Barnes paid tribute to former Directors and noted that, over the years, the mandate of the Department had expanded with several beneficiaries becoming leaders in the Diocese.

Mr. Mears highlighted Youth Ministry programmes under his portfolio. These span Youth Worker Training in several areas, including Entrepreneurship; the Anglican Youth Fellowship; Talent Jamboree; and Summer Camps, which he said would cater to three age groups in 2017. Among the other initiatives are the “I Believe” Retreats – a programme of intentional discipleship for the newly-confirmed and prospective confirmands; Public Forums; and Environmental Programmes through which several AYF Groups are engaged in beach clean-up activities.

Fr. Barnes listed eleven programmes spearheaded under the Christian Education umbrella. These include: Servers Training and Retreats; Sunday School Teachers’ Workshops; Bible Reading and Bible Quiz Competitions; Adult Education such as the recently introduced Advent and Lenten Studies; the Adult Christian Encounters (ACE); and the Chaplaincy Programme which currently involves 24 active lay members who serve in schools which have no Chaplains. The Learning Together Series, which features pamphlets addressing issues relating to the faith, is another area of focus.

Mrs. Barclay explained that capacity building was a major objective for the Schools Division as it seeks to make Diocesan institutions schools of choice, which produce students who are well-rounded, technologically savvy and prepared for the world of work. She listed school rebranding, Maths and Literacy Programmes, Dispute Resolution, Early Childhood Education and instilling the Anglican Ethos among the current priorities. She appealed for material and moral support from congregations across the Diocese.

In conclusion, Rev. Barnes said the Department was strengthening its online capabilities by using Facebook, Skype, YouTube and Oovoo to communicate with its various stakeholders.

Following these presentations, the Synod met in five Cluster Groups to discuss the presentation by Dr. Lyew-Ayee and prepare reports to be shared with the entire Assembly in the evening.

The afternoon session ended with Evensong led by the Rev. Basil Grant, Priest in the Supplementary Ministry attached to the St. Mark's Church, Mandeville.

The Evening Session

The proceedings resumed with a video presentation entitled "*The Anglican Church: Our Mission, Our Gifts.*" The production highlighted the work of the Diocese and the activities to which Mission Share is allocated.

Cluster Group Reports

Deaconess Elaine Cunningham, Principal of St. Hugh's High School for Girls, was appointed Moderator for the presentation of reports by the Cluster Groups.

The Groups were led by Rev. Michael Allen, Rev. Annett Brown, Mrs. Sandra Swyer-Watson, Rev. William Willis and Rev. Charles Danvers. Rapporteurs were Rev. Mary Graham, Dr. Jennifer Cadogan, Mrs. Veronica Morris Lynch, Rev. Lorraine Geddes-McDonald and Mr. Sterling Soares.

They were charged with examining issues raised which impact the life of the Church; the mission implications and imperatives relating to the Five Marks of Mission; and developing a possible Action Plan. Following is a summary of the presentations:

Issues which Impact the Life of the Church

- Anglican churches are located throughout the country and are exposed to the full range of societal challenges
- The Church's widespread presence gives it an opportunity to impact persons in every social strata
- The colonial heritage of the churches is evident given their location in Parish capitals. The urban drift has changed that dynamic with populations around many churches becoming sparse
- With the population shift, the mission field has changed and the church has an opportunity to do mission work in the emerging communities
- Mapping of churches in the Diocese highlighted the potential societal challenge posed by the increasing number of under 15 year-old youths, many of whom are "lost."

Mission Implications & Imperatives

- Expand our mission field. Ours is not a visible Church; we are too complacent and our presence is not felt in the wider community. The Church should be more than just a worship space
- Educate members about our Anglican traditions and faith, as well as the Mission of the Church
- Encourage members to use available opportunities for evangelism training
- Live the Word, change our mindset and biases
- Use our skills to impact the community
- Welcome visitors and ensure that this extends beyond Sunday
- Re-think the Church's strategy regarding young people and align its objectives with theirs
- Ensure that leaders do not block the Church's mission and drive people away
- Collaborate with stakeholders within and outside of the Diocese
- Care and maintain our cemeteries which are a rich source of history

Imperatives & Our Vision/Marks of Mission

- Get out of our comfort zone and take the gospel message into our communities where the people are (*Mark of Mission #1*)
- Use social media to educate, motivate and expand our outreach (*Mark of Mission #2*)
- Demonstrate that we care by identifying and assisting with the social and physical needs of our members and persons in the community, in particular, persons living with disabilities, who are often ignored (*Marks of Mission #3 & #4*)
- To challenge injustice and violence, we must identify members with the necessary skill sets to intervene and abuse potential abusive situations and or establish working relationships with organisations that can assist (*Mark of Mission #4*)
- Establish environmental programmes, such as compost heaps and recycling projects (*Mark of Mission #5*)

Action Plan

- Set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound (SMART) objectives. Identify specific persons to monitor the process at Cure and Deanery levels. Schedule periodic reviews
- Train and equip Church leaders and other members for ministry so they can confidently take the message out and defend the Mission
- Form partnerships, where necessary, in order to achieve objectives
- Encourage mentorship of members in order to nurture new and existing believers
- Engage in outreach programmes that demonstrate in a tangible way, that we care
- Re-visit the Music Ministry with the emphasis on engaging youth
- Deliberately engage visitors with follow-up calls and visits
- Use the Diocesan website to promote the work being done in our churches

The evening ended with a discussion about the role of youth in the Church, following impassioned pleas from several Youth Representatives for greater support from adult members of their congregations.

THE THIRD DAY – APRIL 20, 2017

Day three began with Matins led by the Kingston Region and presided over by Rev. Dwane Blackwood, Assistant Curate at the Spanish Town Cathedral. The Rt. Rev. Robert Thompson, Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, celebrated the Holy Eucharist.

The Reverend Prebendary, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Chaplain to Queen Elizabeth 11 and the British Houser of Commons, preached the Sermon.

She noted that although Jesus had prepared them before his crucifixion, the disciples to whom he appeared after his resurrection were shocked. Like them, she said members of our Church today, “fail to get it” and understand our mission. Rev. Hudson-Wilkin admonished the Assembly that that they ran the risk of looking on at things happening in other places, and not recognizing that in our own Church, we have everything we need to go forward. We simply lack the boldness and confidence to go forward, she asserted.

“We are called to walk in the way of Christ, and to do this requires intentional discipline to love one another and to serve. It’s not a half-hearted thing; we have to do this all our life. Our worship should demonstrate mission at work, and we all have a strategic role to play and to be ready,” Rev. Hudson-Wilkin said.

Noting that the mission was God’s and all members of the Church were partakers, Rev. Hudson-Wilkin encouraged the Synod delegates to work together, to worship, serve and teach.

In a reference to Ezekiel’s prophecy of the dry bones which predicted the return of the Israelites, from a seemingly hopeless situation in captivity, to the Promised Land, she encouraged the Assembly to confidently prepare to play its part to achieve renewal in the Church. “Don’t look at what this church or that church is doing. Look within,” she charged.

Following Breakfast, the Business Session began with Prayer led by Rev. Canon Garth Minott, Anglican Warden at the UTCWI. The Minutes for April 18 and 19 were read by the Rev. Michael Elliott, Assistant Secretary of Synod, and were approved by the delegates.

The Session was suspended for the **Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Church Missionary Society (JCMS)** chaired by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson, who reminded those present that all members of the Diocese were members of the JCMS.

A major discussion point in the Report was the proposed reclassification of several Missions to Chapels of Ease. The Bishop attributed the proposed change of status to the inability to make the minimum payments for Mission Share; growing indebtedness to the Diocese and severe reduction in membership. At the end of 2016, Missions owed a total of J\$22.7 million to the Diocese; and Bishop Thompson said an Oversight Committee would be established to address this situation. He encouraged members to seek opportunities for mission in the face of demographic shifts and their impact on congregations, and he suggested that targeted training be undertaken in this regard.

The JCMS Chairman said work progressed at Longville Park Mission, Clarendon in 2016 with residents of that community playing an active role. During the year, a Steering Committee led by Rev. Lorraine Geddes-McDonald was established to support the work of the Mission. The Mission House is also being extended to facilitate the increased activities and accommodation by Sister Alvarine Roberts, the Church Army Officer assigned in that community.

The Bishop commended the congregations of St. Matthias and St. Boniface Missions in Middleton and Whitehall, St. Thomas which were being revived with the active participation of the laity; and he reported that local leadership was to be identified for the Spot Valley Mission in Montego Bay, as the Church Army Officer was being re-assigned.

The Church of the Holy Trinity in West Gate, Montego Bay was recognized as the top Church Contributor to the JCMS for the second year running, with a total of J\$476,795. The St. James Deanery also led the way once again with a total donation of J\$832,195. The projected quota for Deaneries in 2017 is J\$6.89 million.

Bishop Thompson thanked JCMS General Secretary, Mrs. Carmen Bromley, for her ongoing zeal for God's work. The President of Synod, in turn, thanked Bishop Thompson for his leadership of the Society, and proposed his re-appointment, which was approved by the Assembly. The appointment of Deanery representatives to the JCMS General Council was also confirmed.

The traditional JCMS collection at the Eucharist Service that morning yielded J\$151,560; US\$10 and 20 pounds sterling and was designated for the Clifton Boys' Home, in Westmoreland, which was destroyed by fire in January 2017.

The Business Session resumed with a presentation titled: ***“Bringing Healing to Gilead: Tasks and Challenges.”*** It was delivered by Dr. Peta-Ann Baker, Social Worker and Lecturer in the Social Work Unit, University of The West Indies.

Dr. Baker drew her theme from Jeremiah 8:22. *“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my people not been restored?”*

She shared the results of a survey she conducted among lay and clergy leaders at Pre-Synod Conferences. Of particular significance was the fact that 122 persons or some 50.83% of the 327 respondents were between 61 and 90 years old.

Dr. Baker was supported in her presentation by Miss Rochelle Grey, Programme Coordinator of Eve for Life, an organization which serves adolescent mothers living with HIV, 45% of whom were sexually abused in their pre-teen years. The organisation is not funded by government and relies mainly on donors overseas to finance its counselling and other support programmes. Both presenters lamented that, generally, the local Church swept child abuse under the carpet; and they said the organisation even had to rent Church Halls in order to conduct meetings and other activities. The need for a Safe House for victims and the strong culture of silence were among other challenges identified.

Dr. Baker concluded her presentation with a list of discussion points for consideration by the Cluster Groups. These included: Introspection guided by the Five Marks of Mission; moving away from complacency; challenging injustice; listening to and believing the reports of children; and forming alliances inside and outside of the Church.

Miss Grey presented Bishop Gregory with a book titled: ***“I Am Now Free,”*** which records the trials of an abused female. Copies of the publication are available from Archdeacon Patrick Cunningham at St. Luke’s Church, Cross Roads.

The Afternoon Session

Following the lunch break, Synod resumed with an **Award Ceremony for Retirees and Outstanding Church Organisations.** The proceedings were chaired by The Hon. Michael Fennell with the presentations being made by Mr. Earl Jarrett, Member of the Incorporated Lay Body and Miss Pamiel Scott, Lay Representative, Church of the Holy Trinity, Retreat, St. Mary.

Bishop Gregory thanked the recipients for their contribution to the life and work of the Church, and noted that the Synod provided a good opportunity to honour them as it represented the widest cross section of the leadership of the Diocese. Awardees were: The Rev. Peter D. Clarke, former Rector of the Black River Cure and Rural Dean of St. Elizabeth; and Mrs. Laceta Morlese-Brown, who served the Diocese for 50 years as Secretary to five successive Lord

Bishops. Plaques were presented to: Church of the Holy Trinity, West Gate, Montego Bay – Lead Contributor to JCMS; Christ Church, Port Antonio, Portland – Mothers’ Union Branch of the Year; St. Michael’s Church, Clarke’s Town, Trelawny – BSA Chapter of the Year; St. George’s Church, East Street, Kingston – AYF Branch of the Year.

The Rev. Leroy Johnson entertained with his dub poem “Weh dem tek pason fa” – Part 3.

An update on the **Strategic Visioning Process** was provided by The Hon. Dr. Vincent Lawrence in the absence of Mrs. Fay McIntosh, the Bishop’s Nominee. He reported a slow response from congregations, with only 23 plans completed and 13 still being formulated. The Committee led six meetings across the Diocese in 2016 to assist with the preparation of Strategic Plans. However, several congregations requested additional sessions, while others suggested that an overall Diocesan Plan be developed to guide the process.

Dr. Lawrence presented highlights of the Strategic Plan formulated by the St. Andrew Parish Church, to demonstrate initiatives that can be adopted by individual congregations.

Dr. Lawrence then presented the **Report from the Diocesan Property Advisory Board** of which he is Chairman. The presentation was delivered under three headings: Property Sales, Property Development and Property Data Base; and he recognized the contribution of the Rev. Ralph “Jim” Parkes, who serves as Property Development Manager at Church House.

Property Sales: The Bishop Swaby Camp site in Negril was sold for J\$35 million and the proceeds are being used to convert the Aughtembeddie Primary School in Manchester as the new Diocesan camp site. Elizabeth House, in Mandeville, a former Home for the Elderly, was sold to Church Teachers’ College for J\$105 million; negotiations are also underway for the sale of Farquharson House, in Cross Roads and divestment of the Bishop Gibson Home for the Aged, both of which are not self-sustaining. The sale or development of 35 acres of land adjacent to St. Dorothy’s Church, Old Harbour; as well as a portion of the 100-acre Orolands property in Savanna-la-Mar, Westmoreland, are also being considered.

Lease/Rental: A third tenant is being sought for the property at 3 Duke Street, Kingston, the current office of the Bishop of Kingston.

Property Development: Thirty-three of the 36 units at the Bailey Suites at Kensington Crescent, Kingston have been sold and the building is now occupied. The Diocese has already earned J\$30 million for the land value, and projects a further net income of J\$40 million from this project. Approval is awaited from the Kingston & St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC) for the development of 16 Super Studios at University Crescent, in Kingston. Construction is expected to begin in July 2017.

Property Data Base: This shows that 889 parcels of land have been identified as belonging to the Anglican Church, and 33% of these have registered titles. Dr. Lawrence emphasised that establishing verifiable records for all Diocesan properties was a priority in order to obtain titles to Church lands; and he urged Church Committees to ensure the protection of properties under their charge.

The Election to Diocesan Boards, Councils and Committees followed, after which Cluster Groups met to discuss Dr. Peta-Ann Baker's presentation.

The afternoon session concluded with Evensong led by Sister Andrea Taylor of the Church Army and St. Andrew Parish Church.

The Evening Session

On resumption of the Synod, the Agenda was amended to facilitate **debate on Resolution #6** which was moved by Mr. Earl Jarrett, who had to depart the Synod that night. The Resolution regarding "Operation of Human Resources of the Diocese of Jamaica and The Cayman Islands" was withdrawn and replaced by an amended Resolution #7, which was approved by the Synod.

Dr. Vincent Lawrence, who is also Chairman of the **Nuttall Memorial Hospital**, presented a **promotional video** on the ongoing upgrading programme and extensive range of services offered by the institution, which is well known for its nursing and maternity care. He encouraged members to use the facility; and explained that Rectors would be required to certify the membership of prospective patients on the card provided by the Hospital in order for them to access the 10% discount offered to Anglicans and Senior Citizens.

Cluster Group Reports

Deaconess Elaine Cunningham expertly guided the presentation of the Cluster Group Reports.

Issues which Impact the Life of the Church

- Exploitation of the vulnerable is more widespread than we think
- Sexual abuse is insidious. It affects multi-generations at all social levels, including members of the Church; and it is difficult to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse
- The culture of secrecy resulting from the fear of possible repercussions for persons who report child abuse
- The vulnerability of children left in the care of relatives
- The need to trust the child's word
- The lack of engagement of the Church which has led to the perception that there is no empathy from this source
- The imbalance in the System of Justice

- The stigma related to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Mission Implications & Imperatives

- Members of the Church have an obligation to report suspected cases of child abuse – at least to the Priest if there is fear of repercussions from external sources
- There are scarce human resources to respond effectively to this human crisis
- Lack of education about STDs leads to stigmatizing of victims
- Training and sensitization of church workers, with an emphasis on prevention, intervention and support for victims is necessary
- The Church should become a voice for the voiceless

Imperatives & Our Vision/Marks of Mission

- The Church must establish support systems that allow members to reach out to victims – not just as a one-off project, but to work with them to regain self-esteem, independence, etc. (*Marks of Mission #3 & #4*)
- We need to know our members and create an atmosphere of trust in which children feel comfortable and are able to speak freely (*Mark of Mission #3*)
- We need to break the culture of silence which hampers investigation into cases of abuse and the presentation of evidence without which the courts cannot act (*Mark of Mission #4*)
- Support efforts to improve the environments/situations which contribute to these crimes (*Mark of Mission #4*)
- Work towards reversing the culture of violence and abuse – ministering both to abusers and victims (*Mark of Mission #4*)

Action Plan

- Develop a Policy of reporting abuse. The Church could appoint Child Protection Officers who would communicate with the authorities regarding cases of abuse
- Provide moral and spiritual support for victims through counselling.
- Establish a support system within churches utilizing the skills of trained members in the congregation. This could include the formation of support groups which can work with victims over time
- Sensitize/educate our congregations, stakeholders in our schools and members of the community about sexual abuse and its negative impact. Collaborate with Government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide educational material for distribution
- Work with other churches at the Cure and Deanery levels to boost resources and the impact of the initiatives spearheaded.
- The Mothers' Union can also assist through its Parents' Place

- Offer church buildings/facilities for community meetings dealing with this matter
- Identify available church property that may be used as Safe Houses
- Establish safe after-school facilities

Following the presentations, Bishop Gregory suggested a review of Resolution #4 regarding violence against persons, in light of Dr. Baker’s presentation and the issues raised by the Cluster Groups.

THE FOURTH DAY – APRIL 21, 2017

The fourth day of Synod began with Matins and the Holy Eucharist led by the Montego Bay Region. Matins was conducted by the Rev. Ula Ruddock, Priest in the Supplementary Ministry attached to the Grange Hill Cure, Westmoreland. The Rt. Rev. Leon Golding, Bishop of Montego Bay, presided and peached at the Eucharist.

Bishop Golding challenged the members of Synod to be agents of change and transformation “shaping our society to become a more wholesome place for all God’s people.” However, he warned that: “True mission is never a tidy business. True mission will cause disturbance.”

He pointed to the experience of Peter and John, who in Acts 4: 1-4 were imprisoned by the priests and Sadducees after they healed a crippled man at the temple gate, in the name of Jesus, and also preached about resurrection. The Bishop noted that the resurrection made a difference in the lives of the early disciples and the persons who joined the New Testament Church, as a result of the witness of the disciples.

He asserted that transformational mission begins with converted lives and lives that are being transformed into the image of Christ. “Transformational mission is not about gaining members, membership and finances...It is not simply to have persons say Jesus, but to live Jesus. Our lives must reflect the person we claim to believe and follow.

“We can begin a revolution, a transformation of our society by the way we do business, the quality of our family life, by the moral values that guide our lives in all places of endeavour... There will be rejection and acceptance but we do so as disciples of Christ and for the Kingdom’s sake,” he stated.

The final Business Session of the Synod began with prayers by the Rev. Canon Garth Minott and the reading of the Minutes of the third day by the Rev. Michael Elliott.

Following a brief discussion regarding the security of Information on the Internet, the Communication Policy was adopted by the Assembly. The Reports in the Synod Handbook were also tabled and approved.

Resolutions were debated and passed as follows:

- Resolution #2: Re Publication on the History of the Cathedral
- Resolution #3: Re Use of the National Family Planning Board Protocol for Confidential Referral of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS
- Resolution #8: Re the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children (Replacing Resolution #4, which was amended)
- Resolution #5: Re Change of Status of Churches (Re-classified as Missions)
 - St. Boniface in Mount Industry, St. Catherine
 - St. Faith's in Glengoffe, St. Catherine
 - St. John's Old Parish Church in Guanaboa Vale, St. Catherine
 - All Saints' in Fellowship, Portland
 - St. Paul's in Moore Town, Portland
 - St. Patrick's in Providence, Manchester
 - St. Phillip's in Brandon Hill, St. Andrew
- Resolution #9: Re Establishment of a Safe House for Women who are Victims of Gender-Based Violence

Election Results & Appointments

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

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

Members of the following Committees and Boards were also announced:

- The Board of Mission & Ministry
- The Education & Youth Board
- The Diocesan Schools' Trust
- The Jamaica Church Missionary Society
- The Nuttall Memorial Hospital Trust & Board
- The Hillcrest Diocesan Retreat Centre
- The Anglican Church Insurance Fund
- The Selection Committee

Rural Deans

Rural Deans for 2017 were named as follows:

- Kingston: The Very Rev. Sean Major-Campbell
- St. Andrew: The Very Rev. Franklyn Jackson
- St. Catherine: The Very Rev. Canon Collin Reid
- St. Thomas: The Very Rev. Jean Fairweather-Wilson
- St. Mary: The Very Rev. Canon Charles Manderson
- Portland: The Very Rev. Vinton Greene
- Portmore: The Very Rev. Robert McLean
- Manchester: The Very Rev. Barrington Soares
- St. Ann: The Very Rev. Richard Tucker
- St. James/Hanover: The Very Rev. Annett Brown
- Westmoreland: The Very Rev. Leroy Johnson

The Deaneries of Clarendon, Trelawny and St. Elizabeth are vacant.

Bishop's Closing Remarks

Bishop Gregory commended members on their participation and expressed the hope that the information to which they were exposed would stir them to transformational mission in their congregations. He noted that the Diocese was operating in a difficult environment, and mentioned, in particular, the uncertainty regarding taxes on church properties. However, he was optimistic that, with the combined effort of all stakeholders, the Diocese would overcome the challenges. He also encouraged congregations to continue work on the Strategic Planning process.

The Bishop acknowledged the contribution of persons across the Diocese, the visiting presenters and employees of the hotel who played an integral role in the success of the Synod.

He informed members about the upcoming Clergy in Concert series being planned for July 9 and 23 in Kingston and Montego Bay, respectively, the proceeds of which will go towards the rebuilding Fund for the Clifton Boy's Home. He also encouraged participation in the Summer Music Camp and Choir Workshop also scheduled for July.

Bishop Golding thanked Bishop Gregory for guiding the business of the Synod.

The proceedings were officially closed with the Blessing by Bishop Gregory and the singing of the Doxology.

Prepared By: The Editorial Committee

- Lady Rheima Hall
- Miss Beverley Newell