**REPORT ON THE 149TH SYNOD OF THE
DIOCESE OF JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
APRIL 23-26, 2019**

**THE FIRST DAY – APRIL 23, 2019**

The Synod, under the theme **“Intentional Disciples: Instruments of Grace & Hope,”** began on Tuesday, April 23 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 Bishop the Hon. Conrad Pitken, Custos of St. James, representing the Governor General; Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla, Chancellor of the Diocese; Mr. Peter DePass, Registrar of the Diocese;
Lt. General Rocky Meade, Chief of Defence Staff of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF); and His Worship Councillor Homer Davis, Mayor of Montego Bay. Also among the guests were Custodes and their spouses; His Grace the Most Rev. Kenneth Richards, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kingston; the Rev. Dr. George Mulrain, who represented Bishop Christine Gooden-Benguche of the Methodist Church; and other members of the Ecumenical Fraternity.

The highlight of the Service was the **‘Charge’** or special message to the church and nation delivered by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Howard Gregory, Bishop of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands. He noted that members of the church could only be engaged, as suggested in the Synod theme, if they had a clear sense of their identity as disciples of Christ. He said this required mobilization through discipling, evangelizing and advocating on behalf of the children of God.

He focussed on the Gospel reading from Luke 16:19-31 which dealt with the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, commonly called Dives, and which he said portrayed the life of the wealthy who are blind to the existence of the poor. Bishop Gregory pointed to the situation in Jamaica where there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor, despite improvements in the economy and labour market. He quoted a 2018 report from OXFAM which indicated that of 25 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Jamaica ranked 21 in terms of income inequality.

The Bishop also criticised employment practices in the area of Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO), the Hospitality Industry, as well as the Government Sector, which employ contract workers without the benefit of job entitlements such as pension plans, health insurance and vacation leave. He challenged persons who claim to be Intentional Disciples to advocate on behalf of these workers.

As Intentional Disciples, the Diocesan said we are called to be instruments that will bring the gospel of grace and hope to the life of the rich man, Dives, and Lazarus, in our nation.

Referencing the controversial debate concerning abortion, the Bishop urged members of the wider Christian Community to participate in respectful dialogue on the issue. He said the Anglican church forbids abortion as a means of convenience, but allows space for the procedure in cases of rape or incest, or where a mother’s physical or mental health is at risk, or in cases involving foetal abnormalities. He bemoaned the lack of compassion by many persons “who affirm the sanctity of life,” in their response to generations of women who had their babies under very challenging circumstances, only for their children to be given the dishonourable status of ‘illegitimate’ – a situation which was only corrected by state legislation.

As instruments of hope, Bishop Gregory maintained that our worship should also lead us to question the high level of corruption by public officials; and to be equally vigilant in addressing acts of corruption and the violation of trust by the church. He challenged members to change the narrative which has contributed to the spiralling crime rate, gender violence, gangs in communities and schools necessitating the introduction of States of Emergency and Zones of Special Operation (ZOZOs).

The Bishop asserted that to be instruments of grace and hope required commitment to the “transformation of the personal, social, economic, political and religious conditions which keep our people captives and prevent them from attaining the potential which God intended for them.”

Music for the Service was provided by a combined choir under the direction of Mr. Audley Davidson supported by Mr. Alex Grey and accompanying musicians from the Jamaica Defence Force.
***(The full text of the Bishop’s Charge and a recording of the Service are available on the Diocesan website –*** [***www.anglicandioceseja.org***](http://www.anglicandioceseja.org)***)***

**THE SECOND DAY – APRIL 24, 2019**

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 Montego Bay Region. The Rev. Kirk Brown, Priest-in-Charge of St. Michael’s Cure, Clark’s Town, Trelawny, officiated at Matins. The Rt. Rev. Leon Golding, Suffragan Bishop of Montego Bay, was celebrant and Preacher at the Holy Eucharist.

Bishop Golding based his sermon on Ephesians 2: 4-5, 8-10 in which St. Paul noted that we are saved by grace which is a gift of God; and we are created in Christ Jesus for good works. None of us is worthy of the Grace of God who has welcomed us despite our sins, the Bishop said. In the same way, he charged that the church must be willing to accept all persons, regardless of their failings and conditions in life, including members of the LBTQ community, who need the love of God.

He stated that the church had not been as forgiving as we should and he maintained that we should seek to make life better for persons who have been forgotten and pushed to the margins.

Bishop Golding explained that the Eucharist has its roots in the Greek word ‘charis’ which means grace. He noted that the early church grew because of those who suffered martyrdom with grace. As Eucharistic people we are also called to be instruments of God’s grace, expressing joy and gratitude, even in difficult situations and giving hope to the world, he said.

 **The Morning Session**

The business session of the Synod, at which Bishop Gregory presided, was attended by 200 clergy, church workers, and lay representatives including youth.

Following the opening Prayer by the Rev. Canon Garth Minott, Warden of Anglican Students of the United Theological College of the West Indies, **Part Two of the Lord Bishop’s Charge** was presented. The Bishop extended a special welcome to the first-timers at Synod, as well as the Rev. Dr. George Mulrain, Superintendent Minister in the Providence Circuit, representing Methodist Bishop, Christine Gooden Benguche. He spoke to the Anglican /Methodist Dialogue world-wide and the role of the Rev. Canon Garth Minott as the representative of the Anglican Communion in these discussions. Two meetings between both denominations have already been held in Jamaica. The Rev. Dr. Mulrain then greeted the Synod.

Events and developments highlighted in the Bishop’s presentation included the ordination of one priest and four deacons on July 1, 2018; the appointment of the first Human Resource Officer in the Diocese, Mrs. Donna Evelyn; consecration of the Rt. Rev. Michael Maxwell as Bishop of Barbados in January 2019; and the up-coming Provincial Synod at which the primary business will be the election of a new Archbishop of the West Indies. He also congratulated the Women in Ordained Ministry on the celebration of their 25th anniversary launched on February 6, 2019 at an Evensong at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Constant Spring; and Lieutenant Colonel the Rev. Denston Smalling, who is the first Anglican priest to be promoted to that rank.

Bishop Gregory commended the leadership of the Intentional Discipleship programme, which he said, was a high point in the life of the church.

He also mentioned the appointment of a Committee to plan for the celebration in 2020 of the 150th anniversary of the dis-establishment of the Church from England.

The Bishop expressed concern about the aging population of the church and the dearth of young people seeking to enter the ordained ministry. He noted that approximately half of the active clergy were over 70 years old, and this had a direct impact on the life of congregations. Under these circumstances and given minimal growth in the church, the sustainability of some congregations was at risk, the Bishop said.

Following the Charge, Resolutions 2-6 were tabled for subsequent debate.

The Diocesan Secretary, Mrs. Jacqueline Mighty, presented an **update on a resolution** from Synod 2018 **regarding the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the dis-establishment of the Church.** She reported that a 15-member Committee, headed by Bishop Gregory, met on April 4 to begin planning for year-long celebrations from June 2020 to May 2021.The estimated cost for activities, which will include a National Diocesan Service, Lecture Series and Exhibition, Talent Competition and Extravaganza featuring Diocesan Schools, and a newspaper supplement, is $5.5million.

Presentation of the **Audited Accounts,** produced by Crowe Horwath, was done by Mrs. Lisa Cousins, and the document was adopted by Synod.

The Hon. Michael Fennell, Chairman of the Diocesan Financial Board, then presented the 2018 **Financial Statements and Estimates of Income and Expenditure** for 2019. From a budget of $224.9 million in 2018, there was expenditure of $208.3 million. He explained that the under expenditure should not be considered as savings, as it related to salaries for posts not filled and programmes that were not implemented. There were record collections in the current accounts which moved from $128 million in 2017 to $141million in 2018. The surplus of $12 million will be credited to the accounts of churches in the same ratio as the Mission Share allocations. Mr. Fennell thanked the churches for settling their accounts and noted that there were only 17 churches with outstanding balances.

The draft budget of $240.3 million for 2019 represented a marginal increase on the $224.9 million in the previous year. Mission Share for 2019 will be $208.8 million, up from $198 million in 2018. Archdeacon Winston Thomas recommended training for responsible officers of Church Committees and the application of sanctions for churches with outstanding returns.

The Draft Budget was approved on a motion by Archdeacon Thomas and seconded by Mr. Vincent Chen, Lay Representative of St. Luke’s Church, Cross Roads.

**Resolution #1 re General Banking Facilities** to facilitate an overdraft of a maximum $10 million was passed. Mr. Fennell was returned as Chairman of the Diocesan Financial Board; however, appointment of the Auditors was deferred for decision by the Diocesan Council in light of changing trends in this sector.

Mr. Fennell, who also reported on the **Anglican Insurance Fund,** said that a proposed meeting with international consultants had not materialised; and he urged churches to review their property values to get the best estimates possible.

**DIOCESAN STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Diocesan Bishop gave a short presentation on the Strategic Plan after which the Synod broke out into six groups to discuss the Plan for subsequent presentation.

Synod then adjourned for lunch.

**The Afternoon Session**

The session opened with the **Report of the Board of Nominations.**

Mrs. Ena Barclay, Director of Schools, then reported on a **Conference**, hosted by the International Society for the **Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect,** which she attended in December 2018. The Conference was co-hosted by the Office of the Children’s Advocate.

Subjects covered included Corporal Punishment, Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect, Violence against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean, Trafficking of Children, Child Labour, Sex Tourism.

She noted that, although corporal punishment was prohibited in schools, Jamaica was singled out as a country whose children were suffering in this area; and direct intervention was recommended in all communities.

Mrs. Barclay said symptoms of physical and emotional abuse included broken bones, bruising, sunken and swollen eyes, defensive wounds, pain, and burns. She also noted that sudden changes in behaviour and school work, low self-esteem and attempts at suicide were among other negative outcomes.

She explained that parents often deny what is happening; blame the child for problems in school or home; ask teachers or caregivers to use harsh punishment; describe the child as worthless and demand physical or academic performance beyond the child’s ability.

The Director of Schools said that The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which Jamaica ratified in 1991, outlines the duties and responsibilities of governments and of adults to children and their families. She noted that the Child Care and Protection Act required citizens to provide a safe place where children can feel secure. Mrs. Barclay emphasised that members of the church should provide moral and spiritual guidance and protect children from traumatic situations. She said they should also be selective of persons placed in authority; educate children on how to protect themselves; and report perpetrators to the relevant authorities.

**MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIOCESAN PROPERTIES**

The Chancellor, who began the three-part presentation, informed the Synod that a Property Development Group was to be established with a view to centralising the management of Diocesan property. She assured members of Synod that the development would be undertaken in keeping with the provisions of the Canons. The proposed entity will have three divisions – Data Base Management, Maintenance Management, and Property Development – all headed by a General Manager.

The Hon. Dr. Vincent Lawrence, Chairman of the Diocesan Property Board, gave an overview of properties owned by the church, and lands that are being lost to squatters. He provided an update on two properties to which urgent attention is being given: The Cross Roads property, including the Nuttall lands, and holdings in Sav-la- mar. One-and-a-half acres of the Cross Roads property have already been sold to facilitate upgrading of the Nuttall Hospital. Two remaining lots, including Church House and St Peter’s Court, are being considered for further development.

There was robust discussion about the Cross Roads development. The Rev. Canon Georgia Jervis asked that consideration be given in the section of the development plan for #4 Caledonia Avenue to the role that Deaconess House played in providing pastoral care and a safe place for young people; as well as, to the5th Mark of Mission, which speaks to preservation of the environment.

There was further discussion concerning the sale of Farquharson House and provisions for retired clergy.

The Sav-lar-Mar property – Orolands, is owned by St. George’s Church; and covers 96 acres. It is proposed to convert these lands into commercial and residential development, with 16 acres being allocated for “green” space. It is estimated that this development could yield over $1billion.

Financial Returns

Mrs. Jaqueline Mighty reported on returns from the following developments:

**Bailey Suites:** Development cost $313 million

Sale profits $395 million (26% return)

**University Place:** Development cost $148 million

 With 80% occupancy $88 million (rental income)

 After 6 years 51% return

 As of April 1, 2019 all units have been rented.
This development facilitates a continuous flow of income for the Diocese.

The Synod next moved into Evening Prayer presided over by the Rev. Basil McLeod, Rector of Falmouth Parish Church.

**The Evening Session**

Synod resumed with the presentation of group reports on the Strategic Plan. There were 6 groups, each with a leader and a rapporteur as follows:

**Group Leader Rapporteur**

Mrs. Sandra Swyer-Watson Mr.Sterling Soares
Mrs. Ena Barclay Dr. Heather Brown-Henry
Rev. David “Tony” Reid Rev. Dwane Blackwood
Mr. Howard Salmon Mrs. Nadine Jones
Sister Andrea Taylor-Smith Dr. Annette Piper
Rev. Hilda Vaughan Justice Gloria Smith

 The following questions were considered by the groups:

1. What does a Diocesan Strategic Plan mean for you?
2. Are there elements of the Plan of particular relevance to your cure/congregation?
3. How has the Strategic Planning process impacted your congregation so far?
4. What are your hopes regarding the outcome of the Diocesan Strategic Plan?

The following responses were presented:

* The Plan is a structured and standardised guide; however, it should indicate timelines and deliverables
* Progress reports should be prepared on a quarterly basis
* The Plan should be tailored to meet the needs of specific congregations
* Small congregations, especially those without priests, would require assistance
* The document challenges churches to examine their ministry and operation
* It promotes unity among congregants as it encourages members to work together
* It provides a framework for succession planning
* The Plan has made Church Committees accountable to their congregation
* It promotes ministry beyond the walls of the church
* Elements of the Plan are already being implemented in some churches
* The deployment of human and other resources is recommended to support Missions and Chapels of Ease
* It is hoped that the Plan will encourage more persons to enter full-time ministry
* It is expected to be a catalyst for improved spirituality
* Some programmes currently being implemented have revitalised congregations; and as a result, members who had left, have returned.
* The proposed ministry for the elderly was being implemented in some churches, and had resulted in pairing young and old members for mentorship.
* It is suggested that grief support and parent support groups be established in volatile communities.
* It is recommended that Sunday school classes be conducted on other days.

The Strategic Plan was endorsed by Synod.

**INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP**

The Rev. Douglas Barnes, Director of Christian Education and Coordinator of the Intentional Disciple programme, reported that the initiative had gained momentum across the Diocese. The responses exceeded expectations and youth in the Vacation Bible Schools and AYF were extremely enthusiastic.

He presented a video report of the 2018 activities and said that the Diocese was now looking at modelling and equipping members to build relationships – not just with each other, but with God. He also disclosed plans to establish an Intentional Discipleship Secretariat for which budget funding was already in place. Special focus will be given to networking with schools and other Dioceses in the Province.

An Intentional Discipleship Leaders Guide, which provides religious instruction through question and answer, has been produced to facilitate work in small groups.

Father Barnes cautioned that not everyone is at the same stage of the journey and he encouraged members to follow Paul’s model of starting with one. In the discussion that followed, the need to train resource persons to teach the faith was highlighted.

Bishop Gregory told Synod Representatives that the work being done in the Diocese would be highlighted at the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Hong Kong in late April.

The session ended with the Assembly singing the Intentional Discipleship theme song ***“I pledge to follow you,”*** composed by Father Barnes.

This presentation ended the day’s activities.

**THE THIRD DAY – APRIL 25, 2019**

Day three began with Matins led by the Rev. Marjorie Downer of the Kingston Region. The Ven. Patrick Cunningham, Archdeacon of the Kingston Region, presided at the Eucharist which followed. The Very Rev. Canon Collin Reid, Senior Canon and Rector of the Spanish Town Cathedral preached.

Canon Reid explained that the text – St Luke 24:48 ***“You are witnesses of these things”*** is meant for persons who have seen, heard and experienced the risen Christ. He noted that this Mission Service was being held against the background of the church’s engagement in the season of Intentional Discipleship; and he pointed to the zeal and commitment demonstrated to the process by clergy and laity alike. However, he said the effectiveness of this thrust depended not only on engagement in Bible Study, but also in a readiness to disciple others.

“Witnesses are not just those who have seen an event as it unfolds, but whose lives have been so changed by the event that it must be told and retold.” He noted that it is not enough to believe in the resurrection. At some point we have to move from the event of the resurrection to experiencing the resurrection; and this begins with recognising the risen Christ among us. As he did with the disciples who were lost in despair following the crucifixion, Jesus longs to open all minds to understand and to give a response to the reason for our hope, Canon Reid said.

He concluded with the challenge that as Christ sent his disciples in the power of the Spirit, so He sends us as witnesses in our homes, church, community…and to be faithful in living out our called life.

Synod resumed after breakfast with Prayers said by Rev. Canon Garth Minott, followed by the reading and approval of the Minutes for the first and second days of the Assembly.

The Synod then resolved itself into Committee for the **Annual General Meeting of the Jamaica Church Missionary Society,** chaired by the Rt. Rev. Robert Thompson. He reported that the collection at the Eucharist was $56,300 plus US$20.00.

Bishop Thompson emphasised the Society’s reliance on every member of the church; but noted that despite its long history, many persons were still unaware of its function and their role in advancing the Mission of the church. He added that in this period of Intentional Discipleship, the Society would continue to partner with the education and Youth Department and the Church Army to help members to live Jesus shaped-lives. Bishop Thompson added that in light of the failure of some churches to hold annual Missionary Services, as required in the Canons, a resolution would be moved at the Synod to address this situation.

**Diocesan Missions**

Discovery Bay: The only Anglican presence in the area, the Discovery Bay Mission (DBM) is extremely active and gets oversight from clergy of the Brown’s Town and Ocho Rios Cures. In July 2018, it launched an outreach program in the Old Folly community with the objective of developing a “Home Relation Association.” As part of this initiative, the DBM has implemented a visitation programme targeted to homes and community business places. It has also identified potential for a vibrant Sunday School, and is working with parents in this regard.

Spot Valley: Activities at this Mission are on hold, with the Archdeacon of the Montego Bay Region holding responsibility for maintenance of the property.

Longville Park: Two major projects in 2018 were the establishment of a homework centre and a parenting programme. Since October 2018, the Mission has recorded an increase in the number of boys attending Sunday School – attributed to the inaugural Futsal Competition in which they were regional champions. During the year under review, one acre of land was acquired to build facilities for worship and mission outreach at lot 859 Jupiter Rd. in Phase three of the project. A fundraising programme will be mounted to achieve the $4m construction target.

 **Reclassification/Indebtedness of Missions**

In all, there were 14 applications for reclassification during the year – eight from Missions to Chapels of Ease, five from Settled Congregations to Missions and one from Settled Congregation to Chapel of Ease. Bishop Thompson referred to the Keucher Report of 2015 which suggested that some of the 300 buildings maintained by the church be closed; and others merged or placed under the leadership of one priest. He said consideration should be given to how the resources of buildings that have to be reclassified or closed would be liquidated**.**

**Disbursement of Funds**

Bishop Thompson commended the community of St. Barnabas in Enfield, St. Mary on its initiative in renovating the Church and recommended that funds be allocated to assist in relocating the altar which was incorrectly positioned in the building.

For the fourth year running, the Church of the Holy Trinity, West Gate Montego Bay, emerged as the top JCMS contributor with a contribution of $653,400.00. This more than doubled the second highest contribution of $303,315.00 by St. James Parish Church, Montego Bay.

The 2019 JCMS budget is $7 million. Bishop Thompson thanked churches for their support and urged members to look at how the Intentional Discipleship programme has influenced their ministry.

In the subsequent discussion, it was revealed the St. Phillips, Old Harbour Bay was inadvertently placed on the reclassification list; and this was corrected.

The report of the JCMS was approved by Synod, after which the Lord Bishop recommended that Bishop Thompson be reappointed as the Society’s Chairman.

 **VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY – DIOCESAN FOCUS**

Bishop Gregory addressed the Synod on the matter of the Viability and Sustainability of the Church. He noted that over the last decade, the Diocese had moved to an untenable position with respect to fiduciary accountability. He highlighted the following:

* High level of indebtedness by congregations
* Expenditure shortfalls
* Depletion of Diocesan investment incomes which would normally be used to reduce Mission Share
* Use of investments in Sustentation Fund
* Frozen accounts not being serviced
* Current Account debts rising to the level of Frozen Accounts
* No sign of strategy to curb the trend

**Contributory Factors**

* Demographic shifts
* Cessation of bauxite operations in some areas
* Decreasing membership and aging congregations
* Diminishing involvement of youth/young adults
* Reduction in candidates for ordained ministry
* Absence of intentional strategies for mission and evangelism
* Retention of strategies that have long outlived their usefulness
* Newer churches addressing contemporary challenges
* Investment in ministries that are unsustainable
* Failure to grasp new opportunities for ministry
* Limited use of technology

The Bishop noted that these issues affected the ability of the Diocese to function effectively; and are also evident in the wider Anglican Communion, with the result that Dioceses which were separated were being re-united; others were unable to afford a Bishop; many clergy were being employed part-time; some churches in the United States and Britain were being merged and others were sold.

Against this background, Bishop Gregory said the following measures of viability should be considered to determine the way forward:

* Is there numerical or spiritual growth, or are people just going through the motions?
* Are there adequate financial resources to meet the needs of the Church, and to support ministry and outreach?
* Are there adequate human resources?
* What is the ratio of adults to children?
* What is the average Sunday School membership?
* Are members of the local congregation/Cure interested in Supplementary Ministry?
* Are priests networking in the community? Do clergy have a passion for the work or do they feel ‘burned out’?
* Is the clergy willing to adopt new approaches, and liaise with colleagues?
* Has the clergy/congregation had enough time to make a difference?
* What is the distance between Anglican churches in the same geographical area?

 **The Afternoon Session**

Synod resumed with the **Awards Ceremony for Retirees and outstanding Organisations.**

Rev Mary Graham, Rector of St. Geopge’s Church, Grand Cayman, chaired the Session. The Very Rev. Franklin Jackson, Rural Dean for St. Andrew and Rector of The Church of St. Margaret, Liguanea, offered prayers.

Bishop Gregory recognised the contributions made by recipients and reminded the Synod that vibrant organisations set the tone of the church and the life of the Diocese.

Rev. Dwane Blackwood, Priest-in-Charge of the Santa Cruz Cure, St. Elizabeth, entertained with a dub poem entitled ***“We Blessed,”*** which was well received.”

Deaconess Dr. Elaine Cunningham, Principal of St. Hugh’s High School for Girls, read the citations to the three retirees:

* The Rev. Annett Brown, retired Rector of St. Augustine Church in Coral Gardens, Montego Bay, whose award was presented by Bishop Leon Golding and received in her absence by the Rev. Canon Dr. Georgia “Grace” Jervis.
* The Rev. Alton Tulloch, retired Rector of St. Michael’s and All Angels Church, Victoria Avenue, Kingston, whose award was presented by Bishop Robert Thompson and received by Mr. Daniel Strachan.
* Sister Myrel Moss retired Superintendent of St. Monica’s Home, Chapelton, who accepted her award from Miss Claudette Marshall, Director of Mission and Ministry.

Sister Myrel Moss responded on behalf of the retirees.

Bishop Gregory presented the awards to organisations as follows:

* JCMS lead church contributor 2018 – Church of the Holy Trinity, West Gate, Montego Bay, received by The Very Rev. Reverend Andrew Reid, Rector
* Outstanding Mothers’ Union – St. George’s Church, Grand Cayman, received by Mrs. Nadine Jones, former Enrolling Member
* Outstanding Brotherhood of St Andrew – St. Luke’s Church, Cross Roads, received by Mr. Lancelot Brim, President.
* Outstanding Women’s Auxiliary – Church of the Transfiguration, Meadowbrook, received by Mrs. Sonia Barnes, President
* Outstanding Anglican Youth Fellowship – Church of the Ascension, Mona, received by Mr. David Scott, President.

There was a special presentation to Holiday Inn for five years of excellent service to Synod.

The Ceremony ended with an instrumental presentation of the song ***“Wind beneath my wings”*** by the Rev. Leslie Mowatt.

The **Election to Diocesan Boards, Councils and Committees** followed.

**Group Reports on Viability and Sustainability** were then presented.

There were six groups which responded to the following questions:

* What role should size play in determining the viability of a congregation?
* What is the place of finance in determining the future of a congregation?
* Of what significance is leadership in determining the viability/vitality and sustainability of a congregation?
* Who determines if there is spiritual vibrancy within a congregation?
* What if there is no growth in the membership?
* What significance should be attached to the state of maintenance of the physical fabric of the facilities?
* Does life end where closure is being recommended?
* What should be the role of the Mother Church in situations in which the viability and sustainability of a Mission are being questioned?

The following is a summary of the group discussions:

* Be careful of numbers as workers may be few. Spirituality tells the story.
* Money is important to the operation of the church, but spiritual focus is more critical.
* Sacrificial giving should be encouraged among adults and children.
* Leadership of the priest is vital, but support of the laity is equally essential.
* The leader must be motivated with strong leadership skills, a consultative approach to management and a willingness to delegate.
* Spirituality is determined by the priest and the congregation, as well as the extent to which they engage the wider community.
* Without spiritual vibrancy, there will be no physical growth. If the church is stagnant, it must evaluate its position and plan renewal strategies.
* Evangelize the un-churched.
* If the physical structure of the church is not attractive, it won’t attract others, especially youth.
* Congregations should be encouraged to be good stewards and should do everything possible to maintain the physical condition of the church.
* The mother church should take the lead and initiate programmes to grow struggling congregations in its Cure. If the Mother Church also faces challenges, it should seek support from the Deanery.
* An oversight committee should assess the situation and plan the way forward for the struggling church.
* Life does not end where closure is recommended. Every effort should be made to find a strategic solution.
* Closure should not be a first option. A seed must die in order to grow and flourish.
* Education is recommended to ensure that people remain committed.

In closing these discussions, Bishop Gregory spoke about a number of churches that were forced to close because of the physical danger they posed to human safety. He noted that viability and sustainability is a multifaceted issue that needed further discussion.

There was spirited discussion following the Bishop’s comments and a young member, Miss Simone Lloyd from the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Merrivale Cure, pointed to the need to use data to drive informed decisions. She offered her services to train young members in the use of technology to map churches and their assets, as one means of engaging youth in the life of the Diocese.

The Rev. Canon Garth Minott reminded delegates that the Keucher Report pointed to the emotional impact which the downsizing or closure of churches could have on members.

The afternoon Session ended with Evensong which was led by the Kingston Region. The Rev. Howard Walters, Assistant Curate at the Cathedral of St. Jago-de-la-Vega, Spanish Town, presided.

**The Evening Session**

Bishop Gregory opened the final session of the day with an introduction of a presentation on **Christian Initiation and Holy Communion.** He explained that the House of Bishops was working to standardise the approach to these sacraments across the Province, based on a document prepared by retired Archbishop Drexel Gomez. It is being proposed that Confirmation would no longer be necessary before baptised members of the church can receive Holy Communion.

Bishop Leon Golding presented a historical review of the church’s baptismal and confirmation practices dating back to the 14th century.

The practice over many centuries is that baptised members had to be instructed in the faith of the church before being allowed to partake of Holy Communion. The more modern view is that one becomes a full member of the church at baptism and, therefore, to be denied the right to the sacrament of Holy Communion restricts participation in the full life of the church. This matter will be further discussed at the Provincial Synod in late May, with the choice being to either continue the present practice or to return to the ancient rite where all baptised persons are eligible for Holy Communion.

Synod was then adjourned for the day.

**THE FOURTH DAY – APRIL 26, 2019**

The final day of Synod began with Matins led by the Mandeville Region presided over by The Rev. Larius Lewis, Rector of St. Paul’s Church, Chapelton.

The Eucharist followed with the Ven. Winston Thomas as celebrant and preacher. The sermon was based on Luke 24:55.

He said that in the season of Easter, we celebrate the victory of life over death and the fact that we are chosen and empowered by Jesus to go out and spread the Gospel. Archdeacon Thomas noted that the resurrection turned despairing men and women into people of hope, joy and confidence. He explained that to think of Jesus in human terms is to go to the natural progression to death; but, in fact, Jesus is a living reality and is present in the lives of his followers.

“Jesus is more than a person whose life is to be studied whose words are to be examined and whose teachings are to be analysed,” he stated. Instead, the Archdeacon said: “He is someone to be met in his risen power and to be lived with daily in all our circumstances of life. He is, indeed, a living presence...Because he lives within my heart…within your heart.”

“Yesterday Jesus died for you and for me – that is history. Today, he lives for you and for me – this is victory,” Archdeacon Thomas asserted.

The final Business Session began with the Rev. Canon Garth Minott saying prayers.

The Bishop mentioned a few items that had been omitted from the second part of his Synod Charge. He extended congratulations to:

* The Rev. Canon Georgia “Grace” Jervis who had completed her studies for the Doctor of Divinity degree, which will be conferred in May 2019.
* Messrs. Mario Samms and Nicholas Rose who received the Governor General’s Youth Award for St. Thomas and St. Ann, respectively.
* Sister Melvorn Stewart who was recognised for 15 years’ service as Chaplain of the Cornwall Regional Hospital
* The Rev. Veronica Thomas who was admitted as Rector of the Little London Cure, Westmoreland on February 3.

The Minutes for the third day were read, amended and confirmed.

The Bishop further explained that the Strategic Plan, discussed earlier in the week, was a work in progress. He also noted that the discussion on Christian Initiation was still under consideration and a full document would be distributed to congregations following the Provincial Synod.

**Debate** on the following **resolutions** was the next order of business:

* Resolution #2: Re Proposal for a Diocesan Missionary Sunday/Month (Defeated)
* Resolution #3: Re The inclusion of the position of Diocesan Secretary as a member of Synod in said capacity (Passed unanimously)
* Resolution #4: Re Constitution of Deanery Councils to include a Sunday School Council Representative (Passed unanimously)
* Resolution #5: Re Deanery Youth Co-ordinators to become members of Deanery Councils (Passed unanimously)
* Resolution#6: Re The establishment of a Property Management Group (Passed unanimously).
* Resolution #7: Re Reclassification of Churches (The Assembly agreed to defer this resolution for decision by the Diocesan Council)

**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 Jamaica Church Pension Scheme
* The Selection Committee
* Representatives to the Provincial Synod

The legal firm Dunn Cox was retained as Attorneys for the Diocese; while the Hon. Oliver Clarke and the Hon. R. Danny Williams will continue to serve as Business Referees.

**RURAL DEANS**

Rural Deans for 2019 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
* Manchester: The Very Rev. Barrington Soares
* St. Elizabeth: The Very Rev. David “Tony” Reid
* St. Ann: The Very Rev. Richard Tucker
* Westmoreland: The Very Rev. Leroy Johnson
* St. James/Hanover: The Very Rev. Andrew Reid

The Deaneries of Portmore, Clarendon and Trelawny are vacant.

 **BISHOP’S CLOSING REMARKS**

Bishop Gregory thanked the Assembly for the spirit of co-operation demonstrated throughout the business session.

He acknowledged that the issue of Initiation and Communion was unsettling; but he urged members to assist the process.

Regarding the Strategic Plan, he said the Diocese was not starting from scratch as some strategies were already being implemented in some congregations who were aware of the need for change.

Responding to comments about the Charge, he explained that it was not intended to be a 20- minute Sermon, as it provided an opportunity to speak to both the Diocese and the nation on national issues. The Bishop said this was not done in a political or partisan way; however, he noted that, as Anglicans, we engage issues from different perspectives and speak the truth as we understand it.

He thanked the many persons who had contributed to the success of the Synod; and made special mention of his Administrative Assistant, Miss Rhena Williams, who co-ordinated arrangements for the Synod.

He also acknowledged the role played by the Chancellor, the Hon. Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla; the Chairman of the Diocesan Financial Board, the Hon. Mr. Michael Fennell; the Diocesan Secretary, Mrs. Jacqueline Mighty; The Ven. Justin Nembhard and members of the St. James Parish Church; special guest, the Rev. Dr. George Mulrain of the Methodist Church; Presenters; Clergy and Lay Representatives.

The Ven. Winston Thomas, Archdeacon of the Mandeville Region, thanked the Bishop for his spiritual and administrative leadership over the past year. He stated that Bishop Gregory’s Charge set the tone for the week; and he commended him for his patience and understanding in conducting the business of the Synod. He wished the Bishop belated birthday greetings and God’s Blessing as he continues his Ministry.

The Synod was prorogued and ended with the Bishop’s Blessing and the singing of the Doxology.

**Prepared by: Lady Rheima Hall**

 **Miss Beverley Newell**

**May 10, 2019**