

Question #1

What would be your top Priority as a bishop for the Diocese of Western Newfoundland (Labrador Straits) over the first year of your episcopacy?

If elected my top priority as a bishop for the Diocese of Western Newfoundland (Labrador Straits) over the first year of my episcopacy, would be relationship building. I already know many of the clergy of our diocese, but I would be intentional in my approach of meeting very early with each one in person after taking office to establish a consistent, trustworthy relationship with each. In these meetings I would gather their strengths and needs, to pair them, in time, with diocesan committees and any parishes that are discerning a pastor. Also, in these encounters, I would aim to gather from them their parish information and what, if anything, I could do to help with any issues, challenges or needs within their parish, or to highlight their joys and good news stories. I would want to be visibly present to them, and for each one to know that I want to genuinely listen to their callings, journeys and what they have to offer to me as their leader, to their church family, their diocesan family, and ultimately to the One they are called to serve, Christ. I would want to build trust with the clergy first and foremost, for them to know that I care and support them, their families and parish congregations. I would want to provide encouragement, as I believe that it would in turn be passed on to their parishioners. What one receives, they pass on to others!

I would also want to build relationships with the lay people of the diocese and want to make visits not just for Confirmations and Sunday visits but also to be invited to any special occasions within the parishes, attending lay-gatherings and not just clergy focused events. I would want to spend time before and after services to have meaningful conversations with the people. Different areas of our diocese have different ways of carrying out their ministries. I would want to know their stories and not just their logistics and finances. This may mean sitting on the floor of a Sunday school room or at the bedside of a faithful member of a specific parish in a long-term care center. I would want to nurture relationships with those who have worked so hard to keep faith, love, and a church presence in their communities.

Being visible in the wider community building relationships with civic leaders, other denominations, and community groups would be key. I have found all these connections very valuable in my parish life as a priest. What happens in the community, with the government and with other denominations influences Anglicans all over our diocese. When asked to make a statement on day-to-day events, I would need to be well informed to respond formally and pastorally.

In all relationships, I would want accountability and transparency to be of the utmost importance. I would be dedicated to communicating clearly about decisions and to be honest about challenges facing the diocese. I would invite input on major issues facing the diocese and listen intently to all feedback. In all things, building secure relationships would be my number one priority. A bishop cannot build and keep a diocese going without a team to support all that transpires. At all times, my place of work, Synod Office, would have a welcoming atmosphere and be open to all, a place of Spiritual advisement, direction, confidentiality, and a place for people to find a haven and to explore unity, as what happens in one place affects the whole body.

Question #2

Our constitution requires a strategic plan for the diocese. What would be the main components of your plan for the diocese?

My main components of a strategic plan for our diocese would be the following:

1. Discipleship

- This component was identified in our last major study of the diocese. We have done much work in this area and the work needs to continue. The guests that we invited into the diocese in the last few years have laid the foundation and we need to continue to build on that work. Being a disciple of Christ is at the heart of our purpose in being a Christian person; it's our mission to preach, proclaim and live out the Gospel of Christ.

2. Strengthening each Parish

- This would involve covenants in ministry, where the Rector, the parish, individual congregations, and our diocese make a commitment of defining what we expect of one another. It's a tool that would need to be revisited on a regular basis and one that would need evaluation from time to time.
- It would involve training from qualified people to provide workshops around important components of finances, stewardship, outreach, mission, and vision.
- It could involve sharing resources with neighbouring parishes.
- It would include parish enrichment days, quiet days, and envisioning days.
- It would support workshops where individuals can identify their individual gifts.

3. Programs/Evangelism

- Having programs on a diocesan level for those seeking spiritual growth is critical. I remember programs like Teens Encounter Christ, Cursillo, Alive to Life and Alpha. We need to have encouraging and enriching programs like those again, so that individuals seeking or searching for spiritual fulfillment have options.
- Beginning with something like a Diocesan Bible Study that could be done by Zoom, Go to Meeting, or another tool would be a start. It may mean the study of a topic in each parish during Lent and then a concluding gathering of participating parishes for feedback.
- Using the diocesan Facebook page or website to keep people informed of these events will be beneficial.
- Using Facebook to provide quotes and uplifting statements to encourage Christians in their daily walk would be important. Having the clergy of the diocese take turns to provide weekly messages of faith, again would provide spiritual advancement.

4. Outreach

- Encourage our parishes to get involved or start outreach ministries like our current Open Door.
- Have Confirmation classes involved in outreach as part of their education. Also teach Outreach to Sunday school classes as starting young is very important to our future church parish families.

- Promote and support Indigenous ministries where they exist in the diocese. Sharing from my indigenous heritage would be part of that process.
- Support Food Banks and other initiatives to help with the rising cost of living.
- Have Sundays within parishes that focus on the diocesan work of Alongside Hope, Anglican Foundation, Canadian Bible Society, Queen's College, and other ministries.
- Have pulpit exchanges and times that parishes come together to work for outreach.

5. Justice/Governance

- Peruse the canons and constitution of the Diocese with a vision to any changes that need to be made.
- Have the Human Resources Committee look at the Handbook and see what could be added or no longer needed.
- Be in communication with the National Church and our Ecclesiastical Province of Canada to have workable canons in place around justice and accountability issues.

6. Stewardship

- Having Stewardship taught in each parish and congregation.
- Having Stewardship that involves every aspect of our lives. Included is our time, talent, treasure and even our tears.
- Having stewardship talks around our properties and other resources that could be shared.
- Having Stewardship taught in our Confirmation/Sunday School classes.

7. Wellness/Enrichment

- Have wellness/healing of our clergy and laity as a top priority, especially considering our most recent past and in some parishes, our present heartache. Have practical supports to prevent clergy burnout.
- Have retreats and workshops for both the clergy and laity throughout the year, as well as Diocesan activities to recentre the community in Christ.
- Have a diocesan wellness officer who is outside of synod office staff.
- Have a person designated to mentor any new deacons or priests in parishes for at least the first year.
- Promote our theological college as a place for learning, especially when people are discerning God's call.

Question #3

As a bishop, it would be your responsibility to further pre-existing relationships and develop new ones for the Diocese of Western Newfoundland. How would you work to build relationships with various groups and their leadership both within our Diocese and across the wider church?

How I would work to build relationships with various groups and their leadership both within our diocese and across the wider church is:

- Firstly, identify the relationships that already exist.
- Secondly, be open to what is already in place in these relationships and build upon it.
- Thirdly, be open to what I have to offer in these relationships.
- Fourthly, listen to places where we are not already at the table as a partner or a voice and reach out.
- Fifthly, look at the broader relationships that I presently have and which of these would be able to continue in my new role if elected bishop. The working relationship that I have with MHA Eddie Joyce, the member for Humber/Bay of Islands, the city of Corner Brook Mayor, Linda Chaisson, and with many organizations in my present City of Corner Brook, would be examples.

Communication and gathering information would be key to these relationships. Some relationships that we have in the diocese I am already a part of the conversations because of my committee exposure, and I would want to become even more involved if I was the leader/shepherd/steward of the Diocese.

The only way to build any relationship is to allow yourself to be fully open to it and to give time and energy for it to evolve. As I said, relationships would be a top priority for me as bishop, as it's always been a belief of mine that relationships are what God intended for us to have as His children, beginning with our relationship with Him.

Also, I would like to connect and form relationships with young people throughout the diocese as they are our present and our future. With the dynamics of Newfoundland and Labrador changing we are also seeing many people from other cultures and countries with whom we need to have relationships, to explore what they bring to our country, province, and Diocese. We are already in relationship with each person that calls themselves an Anglican and now it needs to be nurtured. In all relationships I want to establish from the first encounter a culture of trust and sincerity, such that my office would be one of openness and welcome.