

A Report from the Pastoral Visitor, Archbishop Fred Hiltz

Synod Executive Council - June 23, 2026.

In April I was asked by Archbishop David Edwards to serve as a Pastoral Visitor to the Diocese of Western Newfoundland. Synod Executive Council extended a formal invitation and a contract was signed on May 16th. The term is for six months. The mandate is to enable conversations and discernment through what we are describing as a Season of Healing and Hope for the diocese. Much of the work of healing will be through opportunities for people to talk about their experiences and the hurts they absorbed and still carry, to talk about the current spiritual state of the diocese and challenges that need to be addressed. Much of the work of restoring hope will be through opportunities to talk about the vocation of the Church, the polity and long held traditions of our polity within the Anglican Tradition, the Anglican Church, and the nature of episcopal ministry and how it is exercised, using the Ordinal as our abiding point of reference.

In my first visit in mid-May I met with a number of individuals including The Diocesan Administrator, Mickton Phiri; The Co-Chair of Synod Executive Council, Cynthia Haines-Turner; The Diocesan Archdeacon Charlene Laing. I met with the Episcopal Search Committee and the Synod Executive Council. I met with The Rev. Kaye Short and with the Cathedral Vestry. In the midst of the visit we gathered in the Cathedral for a service celebrating the Ascension of The Lord, recalling his Great Commission to take the Gospel into the world and his Great Promise, “Lo, I am with you always...”

In this mid-June visit I have met with a number of individuals who had asked for a conversation. The Regional Dean of the Bay of Islands / Humber Deanery hosted a gathering of clergy, wardens, and synod delegates representing all of the parishes in the Bay of Islands / Humber Deanery. On Friday the Regional Dean of Gros Morne hosted a similar kind of meeting in Deer Lake. A meeting of the Cathedral Congregation was well attended; some fifty people present. All of these have been opportunities for me to listen and learn, to address questions, to offer guidance and encouragement. And here we are today in Synod Executive Council.

In late July - early August I will make visits to the two other deaneries, Bay St. George and The Straits. I will be requesting a meeting of Synod Executive Council at which time I will offer a summary of observations to date, and a few initial recommendations as we make our way through this season of healing and hope.

Looking ahead to a mid-September visit I hope we can have a Diocesan Clergy Gathering; and to a mid-October visit I hope we can gather in a Diocesan Assembly, marking the 50th anniversary of the diocese and charting ways forward with renewed hope.