

COUNCIL OF THE NORTH REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2019

April 2019

The Council of the North dioceses represent a ministry as diverse as the land we stand on. The ministries which the General Synod supports through the annual block grant to the Council are diverse, wide ranging, and vital to the life of the church. From the Arctic to the Pacific, arcing across the prairies and through the Boreal forest to Northern Ontario and Quebec, surrounding Hudson Bay, the Dioceses and ministries of the Council of the North are Church in some of the most beautiful, and some of the most remote parts of the country.

The Council of the North is comprised of the:

- Diocese of the Arctic;
- Diocese of Athabasca;
- Diocese of Brandon;
- Diocese of Caledonia;
- Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh
- Diocese of Moosonee;
- Diocese of Saskatchewan;
- Territory of the People; and
- Diocese of Yukon.

The Council of the North represents 85% of Canada's land mass and is home to 15% of our country's population. The communities served by the Anglican Church in Canada's north are staggeringly diverse, as are the terrain, cultures, languages and the methods of proclaiming the Gospel. Some of the assisted dioceses have thriving urban centers; others are much more decentralized with many smaller groups of believers distributed across great distances. Mountain ranges, inland deltas, huge tracts of forest, and sheer vast distance characterize much of Canada's north.

The block grant of approximately \$2.1 million to the Council of the North, is a single grant to the collective Dioceses of the Council and serves to support mission and ministry in each diocese. With differences in need, culture and focus within each Diocese, the use of the grant is not directed by the Council, but is distributed through a process of accountability on a yearly basis.

In order to both keep accountability at the forefront of our mandate and to stabilize funding changes, the Council formed a Grant Allocation Committee populated by members of the Council, and supported by General Synod's Treasurer. Each diocese is able to submit an application for funding to the committee each triennium.

The committee then considers each application and applies a long formula to the application criteria, taking into account a large number of variables some of which are: land area served, number of congregations, the number of clergy (both stipendiary and non-stipendiary), the number of bishops, and the financial statements of each member diocese. This process produces a number which is the amount of the block grant allocated to the member diocese for their work in service to the Gospel.

It is important to the Council of the North that we are transparent in the use of the block grant and that the Council of the General Synod and the members of General Synod understand that there this dual annual and triennial calendar of mutual accountability. This cycle rolls forward with each year's financial, statistical and narrative reports from each diocese and are submitted to the Grants Allocation committee by June 15th. We are extremely fortunate that the Treasurer of General Synod is part of that Committee which reviews each report, gives feedback to the reporting jurisdiction and recommends the proportion of the Grant for the coming year to our fall meeting. This triennium's cycle is now underway as it began with reports in June.

The block grant has been stable for a number of years, and the members of the Council of the North are profoundly grateful for the confidence and trust that the Church has given them - challenges remain. Expenses continue to rise, rural de-population continues to challenge large geographic areas within our Church, and the serious considerations of non-stipendiary ministry and the justice of such arrangements continue bring themselves forward. In fact, it may be the Council of North lives through and adapts to changes that the rest of the Church may face in the future before other parts of the church because of our situation. We hope that some of the experience we share might be a source of wisdom and instruction for the rest of the body of Christ.

Initiatives which are born from our experience and are already being shared across the Church include the Indigenous Vocational Discernment Circle in the Diocese of Brandon which we called *Vocations North*. This initiative adopted an Indigenous form of teaching and listening to call out gifts in the community and discern who among us may be called to Christian leadership. Another example would be the Western Canada Educational Co-operative (WECAN) formed by all the Diocesan Schools of Ministry throughout the west who are responsible for lay and clergy training both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members. Some of these groups are from outside the Council of the North, but their situation and requirements for training are similar to our own. This is an initiative that is bringing some life and light to our situation in leadership training.

On behalf of the Council of the North I want to thank General Synod and the entire Anglican Church of Canada for the ongoing, generous, and sacrificial support you give to our Church's ministry and mission in the North. We are most grateful for your commitment and partnership. Every Anglican financially supports the Council of the North through their parish offering, diocesan and national apportionment. Approximately one cent of every dollar of regular offering goes through our dioceses and General Synod to support the work of our church in the North. Thank you.

Our Primate has provided support and encouragement to the Council throughout his years and in that time we have developed a growing and cooperative relationship with every Department of General Synod and with a large number of Church House Staff. We are most grateful for the extraordinary support we received from our Treasurer, Ms. Hanna Goschy, who is committed to providing the Council with generous amounts of her time and counsel. The Council has benefited especially from the work of Resources for Mission and from Communications and Information Resources. Thank you.

Our story is one of faithfulness and challenge. Faithfulness to Christ’s mission to love and preach and serve all God’s people, and the challenges that history, distance, finance, and training present us. Specific bequests and assistance from Resources for Mission and other supports have been made available to the Council outside the funding of the block grant as well. Using a formula to calculate the amount available for special training and ministry projects, grants have also been made for specific programs in the last three years from these designated bequests. Below is a small report on the ways in which the Council has distributed and used the resources that have been made available to us in the last triennium.

In combing through their trusts, sometimes dioceses find trusts with conditions that could no longer be met. Principal amounts have built up over many years because the terms of the trust cannot be met in the geographic area of a diocese that has urbanized or no longer has missionary posts. In one case, the Diocese of Huron contacted the Council of the North to see if we could use the funds in a way that kept to the terms of the trust. We could, and a new fund for granting assistance with housing in northern parishes or for retired or non-stipendiary clergy was born. With gratitude to Bishop Linda Nicholls and the Diocese of Huron, we wonder if there are other trusts out there in the rest of the Church that might similarly be employed as their long past donors might have wished.

The Council of the North Training and Ministry Fund was born of a bequest a number of years ago. Each year, the Council spends 15% of the principal, plus accrued interest accrued unspent funds from previous grant cycles. These funds are specific and set aside for projects that further the training and education or programs of the Dioceses of the Council of the North. In the last three years, the Training and Ministry fund has granted funds for the following projects:

2016

\$24,000	Lay Reader Training (Moosonee)
\$45,000	Teens encounter Christ (Arctic)
\$10,000	Youth Conference (Brandon)

2017

\$15,000	Year I Training (TOTP)
\$14,286	Parables of Jesus Conference (Yukon)
\$14,000	Clergy Training Support (Athabasca)
\$15,000	Adagio Training support (Mishamikoweesh)
\$51,000	Kinavunga Youth Event (Arctic)

2018

\$15,000	Year II Training (TOTP)
\$4200	Training (Moosonee)
\$10,000	Bishops of Small Dioceses note: \$6403 returned
\$13,000	WECAN Education
\$20,000	ASIST/Youth Training (Arctic)
\$17,915	Indigenous Youth Conference Support (Brandon)
\$20,000	Regional Circle in Mishamikoweesh

Translation Fund

2017

\$20,000	Translation of BCP into Inuktitut (Arctic)
\$19,000	Translation of BAS into Oji-Cree (Mishamikoweesh)
\$16,000	Translation of Materials into Cree (Saskatchewan)

2018

\$20,000	Translation of BCP materials
\$25,000	Translation of materials into Oji-Cree (Mishamikoweesh)

The Council still faces challenges which are daunting. Housing the clergy adequately in areas that are isolated or that have been affected by natural disaster or disrupted through circumstances beyond our control is a heavy burden for congregations and dioceses to bear. Reliance on non-stipendiary positions is becoming more and more prevalent, which also raises the issues of justice with regard to clergy remuneration. It is our contention that while we continue to struggle through the detail and the practical matters of ministry, it is also our responsibility to live faithfully with the resources we have been given, give thanks for them and steward them wisely.

Respectfully submitted

+WGC