



# ELEVEN ACTIONS

Implementing the proposals approved by Synod 2022

March 14, 2023



Anglican  
Diocese of  
Ottawa

## Introduction

At our Synod in October 2022, the three Shape of Parish Ministry Consultation (SPMC) Proposals were resoundingly approved—committing the people, clergy, staff, and bishop of our diocese to take significant steps to strengthen and nurture parish ministry, and to take new approaches to engaging with the world through our parish ministries.

This document outlines the *Eleven Actions* being taken to implement the SPMC Proposals:

1. **Building ministry resources and knowledge**
2. **Developing strategies to engage with the world**
3. **Guiding major parish changes**
4. **Stimulating innovation and collaboration**
5. **Reviewing parish fair share**
6. **Using dividends for parish ministry costs**
7. **Bringing clarity to parish governance**
8. **Training and support for parish leaders**
9. **Providing services to parishes**
10. **Equipping parishes to thrive**
11. **Funding parish engagement with the world**

On pages 2-4, the *Eleven Actions* are arranged according to when they will be addressed between now and Synod in October 2023. The *Lead* for each Action is also named, understanding that other people have been recruited to form teams where required.

A timetable for the *Eleven Actions* is shown on page 5.

The rationale for each Action is referenced and may be found in the original text of the SPMC Proposals on pages 6-16.

The *Eleven Actions* are the top strategic priorities of our diocese at this time, and they will be addressed in a timely and disciplined manner, with regular updates.

And, importantly, we will always strive to follow our *Diocesan Practices*:

- We will pray and listen for the prompting of the Spirit.
- We will work collaboratively.
- We will be courageous, embrace change and take risks.
- We will monitor, review and renew our ministries and initiatives.
- We will budget to implement our priorities.

## The Eleven Actions

### A) Immediate Actions

#### **ACTION 1: BUILDING MINISTRY RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE** *(see pages 13 & 16)*

*Lead: The Rev. Monique Stone*

A working group, appointed by the bishop and collaborating with Ascension House Staff and relevant diocesan bodies, will take on the following responsibilities, to be completed and presented to Diocesan Council for approval in April, 2023:

- a. Establish the process by which a network of resources and knowledge is to be formed;
- b. Create a template for the terms of reference for each element in the network;
- c. Create an initial set of pilot projects to test and refine the concept;
- d. Identify or create an on-going structure of support for the development, maintenance, evaluation, and accountability of elements in the network; and,
- e. Work with the Director of Communications and Development to develop a strategy for sharing materials, developed by the network, with the wider diocese.

*Note: resource hubs concerning **contextual mission and new worshipping communities** will be created by June 2023, to gather and share knowledge in these areas.*

#### **ACTION 2: DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD** *(see pages 14-16)*

*Lead: Archdeacon Mark Whittall*

By June 2023, a working group appointed by the bishop will facilitate one or two pilot projects as part of the preparation of a detailed plan of action aimed at addressing our commitment to engaging with the world through the development of contextual mission and new worshipping communities. The plan will include provisions for a time of intentional prayer and discernment, and will be presented for approval by Synod 2023

#### **ACTION 3: GUIDING MAJOR PARISH CHANGES** *(see pages 8-9)*

*Lead: Bishop Shane Parker*

By June 2023, a guidebook will be developed and authorized to help parish leaders discern when the time is right to move into a different parish structure. Parish leaders, who have discerned that the time is right, will continue to be invited into active conversations with the bishop and their territorial archdeacon, with the intention to implement changes as soon as possible. A report detailing concrete actions taken will be presented to Synod in 2023.

#### **ACTION 4: STIMULATING INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION** *(see pages 8-9)*

*Lead: Bishop Shane*

By June 2023, an episcopal panel will be formed to develop and implement a plan for stimulating innovation and collaboration between parishes, including a forum of clergy and lay leaders with a mechanism to share experiences and learnings. The Panel will present the plan to Diocesan Council for approval in November 2023.

**ACTION 5: REVIEWING PARISH FAIR SHARE** (*see pages 9-10*)*Leads: Director of Financial Ministry, Sanjay Grover and Bishop Shane*

In April 2023, Diocesan Council will strike a task force, with membership approved by the bishop, to conduct a review, involving input from parish leaders, of the Parish Fair Share system vis-à-vis our diocesan operating budget as a whole, and to bring any recommendations to Synod 2023 for approval. This includes identifying alternative sources of revenue that could decrease PFS.

**ACTION 6: USING DIVIDENDS FOR PARISH MINISTRY COSTS** (*see pages 9-10*)*Leads: Sanjay Grover and Bishop Shane*

Beginning immediately, dividends from undesignated and bishop's discretionary trusts held by our diocese in the Consolidated Trust Fund will be used to contribute to the overall, shared costs of parish ministry, and will be factored in to the preparation of the 2024-2027 budget for adoption at Synod 2023.

**B) Actions Prior to Synod 2023****ACTION 7: BRINGING CLARITY TO PARISH GOVERNANCE** (*see pages 6-8*)*Leads: Executive Archdeacon Linda Hill and Canon Henry Schultz, Chancellor*

Ascension House Staff and relevant diocesan bodies, under the direction of the bishop, are undertaking the following, to be reviewed by Diocesan Council in June 2023, with any required approvals by Synod 2023:

- a. Develop a guide to be approved by Diocesan Council, defining and confirming the structures of parish ministry in our diocese, set out above, and the expectations related to their implementation: such as clergy deployment, scope of ministry, governance (e.g., numbers of officers and councils), administration, property management and finances.
- b. Review the Canons, Bylaws and Regulations (CBRs) to ensure completeness and coherence regarding the definition of parish structures, and requirements for parish membership, governance, management of buildings and real property, finances, and other responsibilities.
- c. Develop protocols that apply to implementing and administering each of these parish structures.
- d. Establish mechanisms to monitor the application of the CBRs and protocols relating to the parish structures (e.g., regional deans to conduct an annual or biennial check-in to monitor progress toward implementation within their deaneries).

**ACTION 8: TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR PARISH LEADERS** (*see pages 12-13*)*Lead: Archdeacon Linda Hill*

Staff and relevant diocesan bodies, under the direction of the executive archdeacon, have begun to prepare up-to-date resources and regular training sessions (using technology where possible) for parish leadership roles, to be reviewed by Diocesan Council in June 2023 and implemented in September 2023.

**ACTION 9: PROVIDING SERVICES TO PARISHES** (see pages 10-11)

*Leads listed below.*

Ascension House Staff, under the direction of the bishop and in consultation with relevant diocesan bodies, are developing plans to improve services and processes, including those identified below, taking into account associated costing, implementation, and evaluation considerations, to be approved by Diocesan Council in September 2023.

**a. Property and Asset Management**

*Lead: Director, Property and Asset Management, Joel Prentice*

Standardize rental licenses or leases; Establish vendor lists and agreements for common services such as snow removal, landscaping and tradespeople; Central lists of all building inventory and maintenance and inspection reports; Subject expertise to support development projects.

**b. Finance**

*Lead: Sanjay Grover*

Diocesan-wide web-based financial system with better reporting; Streamlined statistical returns process that reflects decision-based data requirements; Accounting support.

**c. Human Resources**

*Lead: Director of Human Resources, Ringo Morella*

Subject expertise and support in all search and recruitment processes as well as engagement contracts; Enhance the Human Resource Information System to create a database of talent.

**d. General Administration**

*Leads: Sanjay Grover and Joel Prentice*

Maintain central lists of members of the diocese and other key data; Arrange purchase agreements with major vendors at discounted rates, so parishes don't have to find vendors or negotiate prices; Identify other common functions that could be centralized or regionalized.

**C) Actions for Synod 2023**

**ACTION 10: EQUIPPING PARISHES TO THRIVE** (see page 12)

*Lead: The Rev. Kerri Brennan*

A working group, appointed and guided by the bishop and accountable to Diocesan Council, is developing a parish advancement program, including an implementation plan and provisions for how it will be evaluated, for consideration at Synod 2023.

**ACTION 11: FUNDING PARISH ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD** (see page 16)

*Leads: Sanjay Grover and Director of Communications and Development, Sandra Hamway*

The existing *Second Century Fund* held in our diocesan Consolidated Trust Fund will be renamed the *Future Fund*, to be dedicated to the funding of contextual mission and new worshipping communities. The Director of Financial Ministry and the Director of Communications and Development will oversee the preparation of a proposal for how this fund is to be used and further developed, which will be brought to Synod 2023 for approval.

## Timetable for the Eleven Actions 2023-2024+

1. **Building ministry resources and knowledge**
  - >Plan approval Diocesan Council (DC) **April 11**
  - >Implementation **June 2023+**
2. **Developing strategies to engage with the world**
  - >Pilot projects in place by **June 20**
  - >Plan approval Synod 2023 (**Oct 19-21**)
  - >Implementation **November 2023+**
3. **Guiding major parish changes**
  - >Active conversations are **ongoing**
  - >Guidebook by **June 20**
  - >Implementation **July 2023+**
4. **Stimulating innovation and collaboration**
  - >Panel in place by **June 20**
  - >Plan approval DC **November 2023**
  - >Implementation **January 2024+**
5. **Reviewing parish fair share**
  - >Task Force approved DC **April 11**
  - >Recommendations to **Synod 2023**
  - >Implementation **January 2024+**
6. **Using dividends for parish ministry costs**
  - >**Immediate action**
  - >Component of 3yr budget—approval **Synod 2023**
  - >Implementation **January 2024+**
7. **Bringing clarity to parish governance**
  - >Review by DC **June 20**
  - >Required approvals **Synod 2023**
  - >Implementation **January 2024+**
8. **Training and support for parish leaders**
  - >Review by DC **June 20**
  - >Implementation **September 2023+**
9. **Providing services to parishes**
  - >Approvals DC **September 12**
  - >Implementation **October 2023+**
10. **Equipping parishes to thrive**
  - >Approval Synod **2023**
  - >Implementation **January 2024+**
11. **Funding parish engagement with the world**
  - >Approval **Synod 2023**
  - >Implementation **January 2024+**

## Text of the SPMC Proposals approved by Synod 2022

(A complete version of the SPMC document presented to Synod can be found [here](#))

### PROPOSAL ONE:

#### Shape of Parish Ministry—strengthening for the future

Responses to the toolkit repeatedly raised concerns about long-term sustainability, volunteer fatigue and rising costs. Participants lacked clarity about the different types of parishes and the protocols and canons that govern running them, and also were not clear on how we create, modify, or conclude parish ministries.

There was, however, a clear desire to consolidate our energy and resources and to collaborate more effectively, creating greater interdependence as a diocesan church—to strengthen us for the future.

In response, the actions in this proposal are designed to:

- clarify our understanding of different models of parishes and how they come into being and operate;
- consolidate activities wherever possible to strengthen our overall parish ministry; and
- promote collaboration to relieve parish leaders of some functions and use our collective resources in ways that support and enable parishes.

#### 1) Bringing clarity

The SPMC team heard a need for our diocese to have a shared understanding of the structures our parishes can take and the processes that lead to their creation, modification and conclusion.

The first list below describes existing parish structures including a sub-parish structure, the chapel. The second list outlines various “life-cycle” processes parishes may go through.

##### 1.1. Parish structures

###### Single-point parish

A self-supporting parish, with one church and a full-time incumbent (sometimes with an associate incumbent, assistant curate or associate priest). Full liturgical, pastoral, and educational ministry. Governance: under the diocesan Canons, Bylaws and Regulations (CBRs) pertaining to parishes, led by incumbent and churchwardens, treasurer, lay members of Synod, vestry and parish council. Administration and finance: able to meet Equalized Cost of Priestly Services (ECOPS), Parish Fair Share (PFS) and insurance commitments.

###### Multi-point parish

A self-supporting parish, with two or more churches and a full-time incumbent. Full liturgical, pastoral, and educational ministry. Governance: under the CBRs pertaining to parishes with two or more congregations, led by incumbent and churchwardens, treasurer, lay members of Synod, a single vestry for the parish, parish central committee, congregational councils. Administration and finance: able to meet ECOPS, PFS and insurance commitments.

**Area parish**

A self-supporting parish comprising several churches across a wide geographic area, with a full-time incumbent and a number of associate incumbents, who serve the parish as a whole, and work as a team with lay leaders to provide pastoral leadership and ministry to every church in the parish. Governance: under the CBRs pertaining to parishes with two or more congregations, led by an incumbent and associate incumbent(s), churchwardens, treasurer, lay members of Synod, a single vestry for the parish, central parish committee, congregational councils. Administration and finance: able to meet ECOPS, PFS and insurance commitments.

**Pastoral parish**

A smaller, self-supporting parish unable to support a full-time incumbent, but with sufficient members, strong lay leadership, and financial resources to provide for some aspects of pastoral care and liturgical leadership, as well as their administrative and property needs, and to meet their ECOPS, PFS and insurance commitments. Governance: under CBRs pertaining to parishes, led by incumbent and churchwardens, treasurer, lay member(s) of Synod, vestry, parish council.

**Chapel**

A chapel has a sponsor (usually another parish) which is responsible for it. Members of the chapel's congregation receive pastoral care from a designated priest, and some worship services over the course of a year—understanding that priestly services are limited, and require the approval of the bishop and sponsor per Bylaw 5.01.22-31. It has no formal governance responsibilities and is not entitled to elect or appoint members of Synod. The sponsor is responsible for keeping separate financial records and payment of all financial obligations, including building maintenance, insurance, and priestly services.

**1.2 Various “life-cycle” processes**

This is a list of processes provided for in our canons, bylaws and regulations. The list does not describe all “life-cycle” events, such as a multi-point parish deciding to become a single point parish, or the possibility of parishes moving back and forth, over time, between the structures listed above.

**Creation**

The Diocese of Ottawa is made up of specific geographic areas declared parishes by the bishop. In general, the boundaries of existing parishes can be changed and new parishes and new congregations may be created by declaration of the bishop. (*Bylaws 5.01.6 and 5.01.20*)

**Disestablishment**

When the time to close a parish has come, a vestry can resolve, by at least a two-thirds majority, that a parish be disestablished. With the approval of the bishop, the parish is closed, and all assets accrue to the central funds of our diocese. Sometimes a congregation will elect to disestablish with the intention of transferring their members or their assets to another parish. In other cases, the bishop may, with the approval of Diocesan Council, invite a vestry to voluntarily disestablish. (*Bylaw 5.01.10-19*)

**Amalgamation**

An amalgamation occurs when two or more parishes merge to become a single parish, often in one building and possibly with fewer clergy. After careful conversations and mutual



discernment, and with the consent of the incumbents and churchwardens of the parishes, the bishop may authorize an amalgamation as a new parish with the approval of Diocesan Council. (*Bylaw 5.01.7-9*)

### **Chapel designation**

When a congregation no longer has the people or resources to continue, it may apply to the bishop for designation as a chapel. The bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council may grant or refuse such application. (*Bylaw 5.01.25*)

To discern which of the above structures or processes is appropriate for each parish—and to ensure parishes are adequately supported to run effectively—we need to: 1) develop and communicate a shared understanding of each of these structures or processes; and 2) equip parish leaders to effectively implement them.

This applies in particular to area parishes and pastoral parishes because they are relatively new structures.

**P1A: That relevant diocesan bodies and staff, under the direction of the bishop, undertake the following before Synod 2023:**

- a) **Develop a guide to be approved by Diocesan Council, defining and confirming the structures of parish ministry in our diocese, set out above, and the expectations related to their implementation: such as clergy deployment, scope of ministry, governance (e.g., numbers of officers and councils), administration, property management and finances.**
- b) **Review the canons, bylaws and regulations to ensure completeness and coherence regarding the definition of parish structures, and requirements for parish membership, governance, management of buildings and real property, finances and other responsibilities.**
- c) **Develop protocols that apply to implementing and administering each of these parish structures.**
- d) **Establish mechanisms to monitor the application of the CBRs and protocols relating to the parish structures (e.g., regional deans to conduct an annual or biennial check-in to monitor progress toward implementation in their deaneries).**

## **2) Consolidating our parish ministry**

Our consultation revealed a significant number of our parishes and congregations believe they are in a time of transition and are open to moving into a different kind of parish structure. Many others are wondering about the possibility of being in transition sometime in the future. About a dozen parishes appear to be in a place where immediate action can be taken to consolidate. It is time for us as a diocesan church, the entire Body of Christ (people, clergy, and bishop) to take action.

Parishes in every Anglican diocese are directly connected to its bishop, who appoints priests to parishes to conduct a ministry which belongs to the bishop and the priests and is shared with the people of God. In our diocese, our bishop, in concert with diocesan council, has considerable authority concerning the overall shape of parish ministry (see Part 1 above).

Accordingly, Bishop Shane has already begun conversations, in consultation with parish leaders and territorial archdeacons, with a number of parishes where immediate action can be taken to consolidate ministries.

It is also possible for our bishop to enable and encourage innovative, collaborative work between parish clergy and lay leaders.

**P1B:** That Synod a) request a guide, authorized by the bishop, for leaders of parishes to help discern when the time is right to move into a different parish structure; and b) urge parish leaders who have discerned that the time is right to begin active conversations with the bishop and their territorial archdeacon, in consultation with parish members, with a view to effecting the desired changes as soon as possible; and that a report on concrete actions taken be presented to Synod in 2023.

**P1C:** That staff and relevant diocesan bodies, under the guidance of the bishop, take action to stimulate innovation and collaboration between parishes, including a forum of clergy and lay leaders in order to share experiences and offer recommendations to the bishop and to Diocesan Council.

### 3) Collaboration and interdependence

Concerns about financial demands, volunteer fatigue and the capacity of parishes to find volunteers for key roles were raised consistently during the consultation. Participants expressed a strong desire to become more collaborative and interdependent by uploading some responsibilities to Ascension House and to centralize or regionalize some other functions. This is seen as a way to give substantial support to leaders and volunteers who generously offer their time and gifts to the work of their parishes.

#### 3.1 Mitigating financial demands on parishes

The need to respond to our community in a variety of ways is ever-increasing and financing those ministries requires a re-examination of our sources of income and budgetary allocations. Further, there were observations that with changing circumstances, the process of calculating Parish Fair Share (PFS) requires a review.

In this light, we have looked at untapped sources of financial relief. There are several undesignated trusts held by our diocese, which are invested in the Consolidated Trust Fund as well as other designated trusts which may be used at the sole discretion of the Bishop of Ottawa, or for specific purposes. These trusts, totaling over \$3 million, have been carefully reviewed by our director of financial ministry, our chancellor, and our bishop.

Because many of them are not being used and have just been recapitalizing, they could provide a regular stream of new revenue for our diocese. The additional annual income from these trust investments could be applied to the overall, shared costs of our parish ministry when we prepare triennial budgets for approval by Synod.

**P1D:** That Diocesan Council strike a task force as soon as possible, with membership approved by the bishop, to conduct a review, involving input from parish leaders, of the current method of calculating Parish Fair Share, and that any recommended changes be brought to Synod 2023 for approval.

**P1E: That Synod approve the use of dividends from undesignated and bishop's discretionary trusts held by our diocese in the Consolidated Trust Fund for the purpose of contributing to the overall, shared costs of parish ministry.**

### **3.2 Areas for improvement**

Given the financial challenges many parishes in our diocese face, this is an appropriate time to improve how we provide some common services, where feasible. Many functions are duplicated across our diocese without added benefit, while opportunities to share resources and take advantage of bulk buying are missed.

Our diocesan team of professionals has the knowledge and expertise in non-profit administration and leadership we need to offer some improvements to the way we provide services and processes—and to offer options for financial relief.

The bishop and staff at Ascension House have identified several areas where improved support or options for relief can happen: property and asset management, financial and administrative services and human resource management (including some support for volunteer recruitment and management). The bishop and staff are also prepared to shift priorities in the short term, as required, in order to implement any improvements.

Consolidating services will require money and a careful review of which functions should be administered by Ascension House or by regions (with due regard for rural, town, or village situations), and what work should continue or be optional at the parish level.

Plans must be developed for any improvements, and should include training parishioners and parish staff how to use any common service platforms that are developed.

Each plan, accompanied by cost estimates and financing models, should be presented for approval by Diocesan Council as soon as it is completed, ideally no later than June 2023 to facilitate inclusion in the next budgetary process.

**P1F: That staff, under the direction of the bishop and in consultation with relevant diocesan bodies, be tasked to develop plans to improve services and processes, including those identified below, and that the plans include associated costing, implementation, and evaluation considerations, to be approved by Diocesan Council.**

#### **Property and asset management**

- Standardization of rental licenses or leases
- Establishment of vendor lists and agreements for common services such as snow removal, landscaping and tradespeople
- Central lists of all building inventory and maintenance and inspection reports
- Subject expertise to support development projects

#### **Finance**

- Diocesan-wide web-based financial system with better reporting
- Streamlined statistical returns process that reflects decision-based data requirements
- Accounting support

**Human resources**

- Subject expertise and support in all search and recruitment processes as well as engagement contracts
- Enhance the Human Resource Information System to create a database of talent

**General administration**

- Maintain central lists of members of the diocese and other key data
- Arrange purchase agreements with major vendors at discounted rates, so parishes don't have to find vendors or negotiate prices
- Identify other common functions that could be centralized or regionalized

**PROPOSAL TWO:****Lifelong formation: nurturing parish ministry**

The consultation team heard our diocese is ready to focus on our strategic priority of lifelong formation. There is a deep desire to nurture and honour the work of all the baptized, including lay people, deacons, priests and bishops—and to equip ourselves to live out the promises made in our church’s Baptismal Covenant, notably:

- To proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ;
- To seek and serve Christ in all persons;
- To strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being;
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth.

Participants, however, also talked about the fatigue and worry that accompanies this desire as people feel overburdened, isolated and under-equipped. This proposal seeks to address both the desire and people’s need for support through three initiatives.

**1) Parish advancement**

Nurturing the communities in which the baptized and seekers gather can happen through the work of parish advancement. It is crucial we understand how our parishes work and how to work within our parishes, particularly during times of significant change.

The accumulated knowledge and resources we gained from participating in the School for Parish Development for several years can be built on and expanded into a diocesan parish advancement program, designed for parish teams of clergy and lay leaders.

Our parish advancement program would include several modules that address key areas such as building trust and community; thinking strategically; assessing needs; managing changing; and effective stewardship.

The program modules would be offered with flexible timing and formats to maximize accessibility for all parishes in our diocese.

**P2A: That a working group, appointed and guided by the bishop and accountable to Diocesan Council, be tasked to develop and implement a parish advancement program for consideration by Synod in 2023, including provisions for how it will be evaluated.**

**2) Parish leadership training**

The consultations revealed a desire for increased training and support for parish leadership, to ensure people have the technical skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their responsibilities. There was particular concern with regard to the work and responsibilities of treasurers, wardens, head servers, parish administrators, music directors and parish council members. *(Note that licensed lay reader training is well established and managed by the Warden of Licensed Lay Readers, under the authority of the bishop.)*

**P2B: That the preparation of up-to-date resources and regular training sessions (using technology where possible) for parish leadership roles be undertaken by staff and relevant diocesan bodies, under the direction of the executive archdeacon, prior to Synod 2023.**

### **3) Resource Pods**

There is a great deal of expertise, experience and enthusiasm present in our parishes and in our college of clergy. Rather than attempting to centralize this expertise, we need to find ways to connect it so that all of our parishes benefit from all of the gifts that are present in the diocese and reduce the isolation sometimes experienced by individuals.

Intentionally creating “resource pods,” which gather people (lay and ordained) around areas of common interest and expertise, can offer a means to provide mutual learning and support to all members of our diocese. The Shape of Parish Ministry consultations identified many areas that would benefit from resource pods, such as children and youth, adult education, rural ministry, pastoral visiting, evangelism, food security, and mental health advocacy.

Resource pods would share best practices and failed experiments, discover opportunities for collaboration (especially on issues that cut across different pods), and offer the gift of collegiality.

Common terms of reference would be developed to specify how resource pods are created, supported, and monitored; how leadership and oversight would be provided; and how they would share their information and expertise with our diocese as a whole.

**P2C: That a working group, appointed by the bishop and collaborating with staff and relevant diocesan bodies, be tasked with the following responsibilities, to be completed and presented to Diocesan Council by March, 2023:**

- 1. Establish the process by which a resource pod is to be formed;**
- 2. Create a template for the terms of reference to be used by resource pods, including how they will be led, supervised, and monitored;**
- 3. Create an initial set of resource pods to test and refine the concept;**
- 4. Identify or create an on-going structure of support for the development, maintenance, evaluation, and accountability of resource pods; and**
- 5. Work with the Communications Panel and staff to develop a means for sharing materials or key findings developed by resource pods with the wider diocese.**

**PROPOSAL THREE:****Engagement with the world: contextual mission and new worshipping communities**

The Shape of Parish Ministry consultations brought good news to share—participants were clear our Christian faith is life-giving and has much to offer those seeking community and a spiritual home. Time and again, the consultation team heard of a desire to engage with the world in new ways, in our time, in a variety of expressions.

The Shape of Parish Ministry was the agenda, but during the consultation people’s thoughts and hearts raced ahead, and the SPMC team heard how much the people of our diocese want to welcome and include more people in our parish ministries—to share the thoughtful, open, compassionate, and diverse expression of Christianity we celebrate in the Anglican Tradition.

In contrast to the practical, concrete details of proposals 1 and 2, this proposal is intended to help us think about where we are headed once we have done most of the work on the first two proposals during 2022 and 2023.

**1) Contextual mission**

Contextual mission involves learning how to share the love of God in an age where many have given up on religion, where there are many kinds of religions, and where many are wary of religion.

We live in a multicultural country and every part of our diocese is diverse in its own way. Every parish is part of a local story that has history, hopes, needs, and fears. Contextual mission involves listening to the local story and seeing the situations of people who are not part of our church. It involves learning how to listen to God as we listen to and see what is happening around us.

Doing contextual mission requires building awareness of the wider community through new relationships that help us understand the needs of others and how God might be calling us to walk with them. It also requires taking time for a parish to become aware of the gifts and resources it possesses, and how they might be offered in new ways.

Contextual mission involves becoming aware of the boundaries that prevent us from building meaningful relationships with people in the wider community (especially boundaries we have created). It requires developing openness and humbleness, and a willingness to change ways of speaking or acting in order to reach others while being true to ourselves.

Contextual mission is about sharing the love of God by making good and trustworthy connections with others, and can involve anything from acts of loving service (without any expectation that this will lead to people joining our church), to partnerships with other organizations (that may reach well beyond the local community), to new worshipping communities.

Any parish of any size in every part of our diocese—country, village, town or city—can learn about and benefit from doing contextual mission.

## 2) New worshipping communities

We understand a new worshipping community to be a place where Christian faith is nourished and discipleship practiced, which has the capacity to evolve toward a community of word, sacrament and pastoral care.

These new communities come together to express our faith in varied ways, which can range from “messy church” services to engage people (especially families) more informally in worship to the launch of new congregations (such as the Church of the Epiphany in 1997 as a result of an amalgamation or the renewal of St. Albans when a new congregation was established in the building). Pub churches, outdoor churches, dinner churches, intentional communities—all these are new worshipping communities.

Different types of new communities, whether initiated by parishes, the bishop or other diocesan groups, can serve the mission of the church and help our diocese engage with people who are seeking a spiritual home.

Creating new communities can also help us connect with groups of people in rural areas, villages, towns, and cities who are not normally reached by our existing services and parish ministries.

We have identified three groups in particular who might respond to new worshipping communities in some parts of our diocese:

1. Young adults—the median age of our diocesan members is 64 years.
2. Global Christians (many of whom are Anglicans). In 2016, 25 per cent of the population of Ottawa identified as visible minorities, and that percentage is growing.
3. Seekers and those who have left our church or other churches. Many are open to Christianity but not participating at the moment.

There is good reason to believe that creating new worshipping communities is a good way to foster renewal in many of our parishes:

- They best reach new generations, new residents, new groups.
- They are agents of cultural change and aid in the renewal of the whole Body of Christ.
- They can respond to our region’s changing demographics.

## 3) Prayer and discernment

Identifying promising opportunities for contextual mission and new worshipping communities is about much more than making informed decisions based on demographics, geography, and population statistics. While that fact-based work certainly must inform any decisions on launching new initiatives, it is important to remember that building something new should fundamentally begin with identifying where God wants us to be and is already at work. This is best done through listening to the Spirit through an intentional period of prayer and discernment.

**P3A: That Synod declare its commitment to the strategic priority of engagement with the world through developing new worshipping communities and contextual mission, and that a working group appointed by the bishop to conduct one or two pilot**



projects in 2023 and prepare a detailed plan of action, including a time of intentional prayer and discernment, to be presented for adoption at Synod 2023.

**P3B:** That resource pods (as defined in Proposal 2) concerning new worshipping communities and contextual mission be created in April 2023, with the purpose of gathering and sharing knowledge in these areas.

#### 4) Funding

The ongoing and consistent funding of new initiatives is a best practice that is found in both religious and secular environments (think research and development). Creating new worshipping communities across our diocese will require a steady and reliable stream of funding. Dedicated and directed funding allows for leaders of new initiatives to focus energies on the initiative rather than competing for funding against other priorities.

The “Second Century Fund” is an existing trust held by our diocese of approximately \$1.5 million. Its original goal was to help to expand parish ministry in our diocese as we entered a second century of service in a new millennium. It could be dedicated to creating new worshipping communities.

**P3C:** That the existing “Second Century Fund” held by the diocese in the Consolidated Trust Fund be renamed the “Future Fund” and be dedicated to the funding of new worshipping communities and contextual mission, and that a proposal for how this fund is to be used and further developed be brought to Synod 2023.