

Empowering Clergy and Lay Development

[This] was a tongue in cheek debate covering several issues including the accuracy of the creation story in Genesis, the obligation of man to subdue and dominate the world in Genesis, and the infallibility of our Bishop ... The point of the session was to identify the shallowness of much of the theological discussion in today's religious venues. The observation of Bishop Andrews was that ... we are all theologians and we all have a responsibility to acquire a foundation from which we can discuss our faith.... As we are members of a living faith, with a living leader Jesus Christ, we are called to continuous learning as his actions challenge the world in which we live.

Highlights from Maureen Vescio's Report on Synod 2011

Effective Social Action Through Mission

Beth Hewson shared a list of projects which various churches throughout the Diocese are participating in. Here are just a few examples:

- Community Education Services (providing scholarships);
- Hosting spontaneous events to fund-raise for world disasters;
- Sponsoring a child or a refugee family;
- Operation Shoebox (Samaritan's purse Christmas shoebox event);
- A plethora of environmental initiatives, everything from aggressive recycling, to the installation of solar panels, fair trade coffee, and composting;
- Integrated weekly evening meal: A diverse group of 25-30 people with different abilities have a Sunday evening meal at the church;
- After-school programs for young children

During this workshop I felt very happy about St. John's mission to our neighbourhood through St John's Cupboard, the Breakfast Program, and the Nearly-New. The focus on social justice and mission at St. John's fits well with Algoma's strategic plan.

Engaging Children and Youth:

There are new initiatives for children and youth underfoot in Algoma. Diocesan Youth Consultant Heather Manuel announced a new initiative. Each Deanery will be hiring a youth worker on a part time basis, to be shared among all the Anglican churches in a Deanery. This could potentially broaden the scope of activities currently available to Anglican youth in Thunder Bay. Churches with small numbers of youth will benefit from this initiative in addition to churches with large youth programs.

Strategic Plan:

Algoma is at the halfway point in the strategic plan which began at the last Synod in 2009. To jog your memory, the strategic plan is a 5 yr. plan from 2009-2014 that identifies where Algoma wants to be, and how it is going to get there.

Excellent progress has been made on each of the strategic objectives. I would like to speak to you about a couple of the objectives that are especially pertinent to St. John's, and provide a brief summary of where we are at: