

COMMUNIQUE

2025 MEETING OF SYNOD

DIOCESE OF BARBADOS

Under the theme “God’s Missional Church: Looking Upward! Searching Inward! Moving Outward”, the 2025 annual meeting of Synod, the highest policy and decision-making body of the Diocese of Barbados, was convened over three days during this past week.

The meeting formally opened at 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 8, the Feast of Pentecost, with a celebration of Sung Eucharist at the Cathedral Church of St Michael and All Angels. The celebrant was the Lord Bishop of Barbados, The Rt. Rev’d Michael B. St. J. Maxwell, who also delivered the Seventh Charge of his Episcopate.

Bishop Michael noted: “This Year’s Synod takes place at a pivotal time in our Church’s history when our Diocese culminates its Bicentennial celebrations.....and prepares to step into its 201st year of mission and ministry; and then, within six months’ time, we move into the 2nd quarter of this 21st Century.”

Focusing on the Synod theme, he explained that it “invites us to continue our contemplation on the way forward by critically examining our levels of connection with our Divine Creator, with each other as a community of believers – our level of stewardship, and with the community and nation we are called to serve, as we seek to further strengthen, enrich and advance our response to God’s call in being His Missional Church.”

Pointing to a worrying rise in violent crime and other social ills affecting the Barbadian society, Bishop Michael announced the Anglican Church’s intention to become more visible in the communities of our nation and to undertake a more active and direct role in the search for solutions. Efforts will include the launch of a community-focused Vocational Diaconate Ministry which will prioritize identifying vulnerable and at-risk individuals and families and securing sustainable assistance for these groups.

Following the opening service, the Synod reconvened at the Ivan Harewood Centre, Church Hill, Christ Church, for two full-day business sessions on Tuesday, June 10, and Wednesday, June 11.

Day one, which commenced with devotions led by the Rev. Suzette Archer, focused on reviewing the business and ministry the Diocese offered in 2024. There were presentations, followed in some cases by lively discussion, of reports by the various standing committees, commissions, Diocesan organizations and ministries as well as the Diocesan Trustees. The Anglican Youth Ministry received considerable attention as the church explored various options in its bid to deliver more effective and meaningful support that is relevant to the changing needs of young people in the 21st Century. A number of challenges were identified, including the need for succession planning within

the Youth Department, greater support from church leaders, boosting participation in youth activities by data gathering to ascertain the interests of the youth and to tailor the focus of the Diocese in the design of initiatives that foster greater engagement.

The Report of the Diocesan Trustees who oversee the management of church's real property assets generated much interest. The Trustees presented proposals to dispose of some non-strategic assets while forging strategic partnerships to develop critical assets particularly at the Mandeville House and Bishop's Court sites. An update was also provided on the disposal of glebe lots and the delayed implementation of photovoltaic projects in St. Philip and St. Andrew.

Day two began with Said Mass in celebration of the Feast of St. Barnabas. It was conducted by the Rev'd Michael Walcott at the adjoining Christ Church Parish Church. The day's agenda focused on the mission and the future of the Diocese. The discussion, which took place under the below-mentioned headings, was led by three separate panels under the chairmanship of the newly-appointed Canon Missioner, Senator The Rev'd Canon Dr. John Rogers.

1. **WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL CONNECTION (Looking Upward):** The focus here was on the use of traditional tools like the Book of Common Prayer, modern digital platforms like social media and other available channels and seeking to craft our liturgy to include more authentic and indigenous expressions that reflect our heritage and creativity.
2. **STEWARDSHIP (Searching Inward):** This presentation examined the formal and informal faith formation within each of us, that of the nurturing of our discipleship and vocations; and the impact of such on the mission and ministry of the Church. There was also the call for greater hospitality and fellowship among members and the encouraging of ministry opportunities in our churches; parishes complying with the delivery of critical statistical information to better guide decision making and governance; and greater attention given to the care or maintenance of our Church's infrastructure, fabric and assets.
3. **OUTREACH (Moving Outward):** In this exposition and discussion, there was a spotlight on the vulnerable and at-risk youth and families and the manner in which the Church could continue its work in a more sustainable and tangible manner including forming key partnerships with the Government and social organisations in the delivery of the parenting education programmes. Focus for the future was geared towards the revitalization and re-branding of the Men's Fellowship and Mothers' Union and the deployment of the non-stipendiary Vocational Deacons, whose special emphasis is intended to be on sustained community outreach.

Synod will reconvene for an afternoon session, on a date to be determined by Bishop Michael, to address a few remaining items on the agenda.

June 13, 2025