

The Bishop of Barbados

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DIOCESAN SYNOD 2026 COMMUNIQUÉ

The Anglican Diocese of Barbados placed children and young people at the centre of its opening service and deliberations during the recently held Synod, May 17–19, 2026, convened under the theme, “God’s Missional Church for God’s Children: Gathering in Community, Grounding in Faith, Going Forth in Love and Service.”

Against the backdrop of growing national concern over gun violence, gang activity, drug abuse, incarceration, and other social challenges, Synod explored practical and faith-based approaches to supporting, protecting, and guiding children and young people during this critical period in the life of the nation.

The opening service at the Cathedral Church of St Michael and All Angels on Sunday evening, May 17, reflected the Diocese’s strong commitment to the engagement and inclusion of children and young people in the life and worship of the Church. The service featured the presence and active participation of Sunday School children, liturgical dance ministry, and vibrant intergenerational worship led and accompanied primarily by the Christ Church Youth Choral together with young organists, setting the tone for a Synod focused on nurturing and empowering the next generation.

Delivering his eighth Charge to the Diocesan Synod, The Bishop of Barbados, The Right Reverend Michael Bruce St John Maxwell, described the Church and nation as being at “a defining moment” marked by social instability, violence, mental health struggles, declining values and other challenges facing young people, who are seeking love, identity, belonging, and purpose. He called the Church to respond with intentional discipleship by placing children and youth more at the centre of its mission, affirming them as full members of the Body of Christ. Emphasising the need to gather them into caring communities, ground them deeply in faith, and empower them for service, he urged stronger support for families, safeguarding and relevant teaching. The Bishop challenged the Church to partner with schools and community organizations to offer parenting workshops, breakfast and after-school programmes, mentorship opportunities, and counselling initiatives, among others. His call was for a renewal of the Church’s commitment to forming spiritually grounded, mission-minded young people equipped to transform Church and society.

*“Being a Unified, Missional & Resilient Church:
Embracing, Serving, Transforming & Uplifting Our People & Nation for God”*

The business sessions of Synod, May 18 and 19, took place at the Church of Christ the King, Rock Dundo. On Monday, May 18, Synod received reports from various diocesan committees and organisations for review and deliberation. A highlight was the report from The Barbados Diocesan Trustees which outlined plans for the redevelopment of the Diocese's Mandeville Property, in Lower Collymore Rock, into a modern commercial and residential complex. In that report, members were also updated on refurbishment work at St Gabriel's Chapel, including the plans to transform part of it into a media production facility aimed at enhancing diocesan communication and outreach while retaining the main section of the worship space. The Trustees informed Synod that Letters offering the Glebe lands for sale were sent to eligible tenants residing in the five glebes. The Finance Committee reported a general improvement in the payment of assessment during the past two years as churches made efforts to reduce their indebtedness to the Diocese. An incentive is available to churches with outstanding arrears which take decisive steps to eliminate them.

Besides the reports, Synod received a presentation from the Diocesan Youth Representative to Provincial Synod, Mr Bevan Niccolls, entitled "The Future is Now!", which offered a candid and visionary reflection on the current state, challenges, and future direction of Youth Ministry within the Diocese of Barbados. The presentation called the Church to move beyond event-based ministry toward a more intentional, relational, and discipleship-focused approach that genuinely values, forms, mentors, and empowers young people as active members and leaders of the Church today, with the ultimate goal of nurturing spiritually grounded and mission-minded young Anglicans equipped to serve both the Church and wider society.

During the Tuesday meeting, Synod received presentations on (1) the development of a Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, (2) the Government's Grant facility for youth development projects, and (3) the Village Builders Training Programme. The presentation on Safeguarding was offered by the Chancellor, Mr. Michael Alleyne, who informed Synod that in keeping with a mandate from Provincial Synod, the Diocese will be developing a Safe Church/Safeguarding policy aimed at ensuring safe spaces, responsible ministry practices among vulnerable persons, and clear procedures for addressing misconduct. A special session of Synod will be convened in the near future to continue the work of sensitizing and informing members of the implementation of this policy.

The Synod concluded with delegates being organised into six clusters within the House of Clergy and six clusters within the House of Laity to engage in focused discussions on practical strategies for the gathering, grounding, and sending forth of children and young people within the life and mission of the Church. The proposals and recommendations emerging from these cluster discussions will form the basis for further deliberation at a subsequent session of Synod in June and will contribute towards the development of a comprehensive diocesan Action Plan for children's and youth ministry.

The Anglican Diocese of Barbados commits itself to continued prayerful discernment and decisive action as it seeks to faithfully nurture, protect, and empower the next generation for God's mission in Church and society.

Yours in Christ,
+ Michael Barbados

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