

RLN interviews former Synod Delegates

With Diocesan Synod coming up in October 2022, the Nominations Committee is looking for clergy and lay Synod 2022 delegates who are willing to let their names stand for election at the upcoming Diocesan Synod gathering. Rupert's Land News in partnership with the Nominations Committee decided to connect with some lay delegates from previous years and interview them about their Diocesan leadership experiences and stories including serving on, for example, Diocesan Council and serving as representatives from the Diocese of Rupert's Land to General Synod and Provincial Synod. We hope you will be inspired to serve the Diocese and look forward to your nomination.

Interview with Richard Pilbeam, St. Paul's Fort Garry

RLN: What motivated you to let your name stand to attend the Provincial and General Synod?

RP: I had been very active in my parish, as a Sunday School Teacher, Peoples Warden, Rectors Warden, and Lay Ministry. As Rectors Warden, I chaired the Vestry meetings for the parish, but I wanted to know how other parishes conducted their meetings. During the process of our AGM, I was approached by several members to let my name stand for Provincial Synod. Seeing this as an opportunity to meet fellow Anglicans from throughout the Diocese, I agreed and was elected.

Provincial Synod was a good learning experience and opportunity to learn about our Diocese. By being interactive in our breakout groups, I was asked to let my name stand for General Synod. I saw this as an opportunity to meet Anglicans from all across Canada and learn about their practices and procedures. I agreed and was elected.

RLN: What experiences impacted you the most at either Provincial or General Synod? Where did you see God at work?

RP: At General Synod, I got to observe how other Dioceses from across Canada interacted at Synod, and how some Eastern Dioceses tried to dominate the Synod. I viewed this as very political and undemocratic. After all, we were all there for the same purpose and all should have equal input in the daily meetings.

I got to meet numerous people and had the opportunity to have a chat with Ted Scott. I got to meet and listen to Desmond TuTu give a presentation. I saw God at work by listening to Desmond describe the situation in Africa and the role he played in that country. My interaction with Desmond was a major factor in my initiative to get Desmond to be a visitor and speaker at St. Pauls Fort Garry on May 9, 2004. My wife Dorothy and I were privileged to have lunch with Desmond the same day. A day I will never forget.

I also saw God at work by observing how Michael Peers conducted himself at General Synod. He was gentle and spoke from the heart.



I knew at that time that he would be the next Primate, and in 1986 he was elected Primate.

Experiences like those above have had a significant effect on my life and my focus more on God's world.

RLN: What factors might hold you back from letting your name stand in the future?

RP: Factors that might hold me back from letting my name stand in the future are age, we need to have more younger people involved. Also, there is a commitment to these positions that requires a certain amount of time from you to which you must be willing to commit. At this point in my life, I would only want to be involved in short-term projects.

If the opportunity comes along for you to be nominated as a synod delegate, I would strongly recommend you step forward and enjoy the experience. The opportunity you will get to meet different people, and their cultures, and learn from their experiences are enlightening. Do not be afraid to get involved as God sits at all meetings. You never know what paths or doors or experiences await you.

Interview with Tannis Webster, St Mary Magdalene Church

RLN: Where have you seen God at work within the Synod committees you have participated in?

TW: I have attended Diocesan Synod and from that was elected to Diocesan Council. I was also elected to attend Provincial Synod and General Synod and served on the Council of General Synod (CoGS) but, I want to specifically focus on Rupert's Land Diocesan Council.

The Council consists of approximately 30 members, both lay and clergy, and the commitment, dedication, and willingness to serve were evident from the first meeting. It is in this service that one could witness God at work. Most clergy on Council have a full-time job, whether as an incumbent in a parish or a hospital chaplain, a teacher, a youth worker, etc. and the majority of the laity also have full-time work. Yet, they all find time to come together to further the work of the Diocese.

RLN: What memories of sitting on these committees stand out for you?

TW: Some of the things that stood out for me at the Council meetings were humour, support for one another, willingness to accept and put forward new ideas, genuine love, and concern for one another and those with whom they came in contact, a love of their church and love of God. As well, meeting in different churches throughout the Diocese, I was aware of the many church members who came to the meetings early in the morning to provide coffee and snacks and remained to serve lunch and clean up afterwards.

RLN: What advice might you have for others who are asked to serve in these committee positions?

TW: While it may appear that I am a "meeting junkie" given the number of committees on which I've served, I felt encouraged and supported by several synod delegates to let my name stand for election.

Having been elected, I attended my first Diocesan Council meeting (with some trepidation) and felt welcomed, appreciated, listened to and part of a committed group. I was impressed that the meetings ran on time and were carried out in a respectful and caring manner. I felt confident in expressing my views and supported in presenting my thoughts and ideas.

My time on Diocesan Council gave me the courage to allow my name to stand for Provincial and General Synod and CoGS. These opportunities gave me a whole new understanding of the work being carried out by my church, my Diocese, the church across Canada and the church in the wider world. A humbling position in which I found myself, in the midst of so many committed Christians, working quietly, following in Christ's footsteps.