



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF QUEBEC

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Friday 19 January 2024

Dear faithful people of the Diocese of Quebec,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

As congregations across the diocese once again gather for their annual vestry meetings, I'd like to express my particular gratitude to those of you who serve as wardens, deputy wardens, treasurers, secretaries, vestry clerks, and other such forms of lay congregational leadership.

Such work is almost always done on a volunteer basis—often by people who already have many other responsibilities and busy lives—and much of it is carried out behind the scenes. These aren't just "jobs" that need to be filled so a congregation can continue to legally function. They are baptismal ministries essential to helping a Christian community participate in God's mission. When writing to the congregation in Corinth, the apostle Paul called leadership and administration nothing less than a gift of the Holy Spirit. So I hope you'll find some time during your annual vestry meetings this year to give thanks for those among you who share such gifts with the church.

Synod 2024

Our diocesan Synod last met in 2019, and we are overdue to gather in this way as a diocesan family. That being said, the intervening time—especially the pandemic years—may help bring added clarity to some of our discussions, which will include a complete overhaul of our diocesan canons. Therefore the eighty-sixth ordinary session of the Synod of the Diocese of Quebec will gather in Quebec City October 31-November 2, 2024. As a result, it is especially important that congregational annual vestry meetings take place before the canonical deadline of April 15 so that the deanery-wide voting process for Synod members can occur as early and efficiently as possible. Attached to this letter is one from Secretary of Synod Stephen Kohner, outlining this process, which has been slightly modified based on our experience of using it for the first time in 2019.

Pooled Funds

A large number of congregations and cemeteries across the diocese invest their funds with the pooled funds administered by the Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec. The pooled funds remain a reliable investment vehicle that supports the ongoing life and work of both local congregations and the diocesan church. At the same time, they have not been immune from the financial realities

we've all been experiencing: increased inflation, higher interest rates, and an overall economic slowdown. In response to the current investing environment, the Church Society's Central Board, which oversees the pooled funds, made two decisions in December: 1) to reduce the management fee collected by the Church Society from 1.8% to 1.5%; and 2) to reduce the pooled funds' floating distribution rate from 5.5% to 5.0%, to a maximum of 84 cents per unit. For those congregations and cemeteries with pooled fund investments, this will likely mean slightly reduced quarterly distributions for the coming year, but with the aim of safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the pooled funds.

PWRDF and the Anglican Foundation

Even as budgets grow tighter, I still invite you to think beyond your congregation's immediate needs when determining your spending in the year ahead. Things like stipend, heating, and insurance bills obviously need to be attended to. However, there are organizations in every community that would welcome your support as they help people in need of food, shelter, companionship, and more. It's sometimes forgotten that such works of mercy are at the heart of what the church is supposed to be about.

One way to support such good works more broadly is through the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. Last year PWRDF provided more than \$8.7 million in support to humanitarian relief responses and development projects, both abroad and in Canada. Most recently, PWRDF has been assisting those suffering from the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza.

The Anglican Foundation of Canada generously supports mission and ministry across our church in a multiplicity of ways, including here. Since 2010, individuals and congregations in the Diocese of Quebec have received a total of nearly \$200,000 in grants and loans from the Foundation, to support everything from roof replacements to community farms, bursaries for theological studies to helping refugee children attend summer camp.

Please find room in your congregational budgets to support these valuable churchwide ministries that support so many others.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

After important feedback received after our last diocesan Synod, a working group was established to revise our church's policy on sexual misconduct. With the help of outside expertise, they worked diligently to update our diocese's policy so that it reflects best practices aimed at protecting the most vulnerable in our midst. The updated policy was approved by the Diocesan Executive Council in September and can be found online at quebec.anglican.ca/resources.

Quebec Diocesan Gazette

After a year-long hiatus, the *Quebec Diocesan Gazette* last year resumed publication on a quarterly basis in a magazine format—one of the many variations

our venerable diocesan publication has taken since it first hit the presses in 1894. The *Gazette* is published as an insert to the *Anglican Journal*, and subscriptions are free of charge to members of the church. To subscribe to the paper version, simply fill out the online form found at anglicanjournal.com/subscriptions, and make sure you click on “Quebec - Diocesan Gazette” when selecting which diocesan publication you’d like to receive. Each issue can also be viewed on the diocesan website at quebec.anglican.ca/resources/gazette. Submissions to the *Gazette* are always welcome, and can be sent to communications@quebec.anglican.ca or mailed to Church House to the attention of the editor.

New Staff at Church House

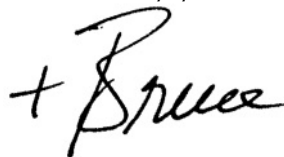
Through most of 2023, there was minimal administrative support at Church House, which placed a significant additional burden on our small-but-hardworking team at the office. We regret that this has sometimes made it difficult to reach us or resulted in delays having matters attended to. I am therefore glad to let you know that Dr. Sean Otto will be joining the team at Church House in the newly created role of Operations Coordinator. Many of you will know Sean through his work as our diocesan Registrar. He will be at your service at Church House, typically Mondays through Fridays, beginning this month.

A Prayer

As we together enter another new year—one with its share of uncertainty and unknowns—may we do so with the faith, hope, and love to which this prayer (by now familiar to many of you) gives voice:

*O God, you have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go forward with good courage, not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Myers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt. Rev. Bruce Myers
Bishop of Quebec