



SYNOD COUNCIL

Tuesday, 27 January 2026 – via Teams

Minutes

Present:

Bishop William Cliff, Chair; Ven. Jane Humphreys, DEO; Very Rev. Douglas Michael, Dean; Wayne Varley, Margaret Johnston-Jones, Jane Kirkpatrick, Don Aitchison, Brad Beale, Bill Clarke, Helen Cluett, Laurel Dempsey, Sharon Dunlop, Angela Kelman, Jon Lavelle, Brad O’Neil, Sue Orgill, Bram Pearce, Michael Read, Cathy Seymour, Marilyn Benn, Susan Withers,

Guests: Joyce Williams, Diocesan Financial Analyst

Regrets:

Alex Pierson, Greg Best, Matthew Wright, Mary Haigh, Rebecca Michael, Anne Striker.

1. Call to Order at 6:15.

Bp. William, Chair

2. Opening Devotions

Bram Pearce

Bram Pearce used the stories of James and John asking to be seated on either side of Jesus, and the blind beggar Bartimaeus asking for mercy (Mark 10) to focus on the question Jesus asked them: What do you want me to do for you? What would our answer be?

3. Agenda Review and Adoption

Motion: by John Lavelle and Sue Orgill, Be it Resolved that the Agenda be accepted as presented. **CARRIED**

4. Chair’s Remarks and Bishop’s Update

Bishop Cliff addressed the Diocese’s response to Alec Pierson’s illness and resulting absence. Written report included below. Joyce Williams has assumed much of Alex’s duties. The teamwork is “superb!”
Otherwise, the Bishop is visiting parishes and carrying on with his regular schedule.

5. Approval of Minutes 25 November 2025 Meeting

Motion: by Michael Read and Angela Kelman, be it Resolved that the minutes of November 25, 2025 be received as presented. **CARRIED**

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

Jane Humphreys



6.1 An Alongside Hope Representative is needed for the Diocese: if interested please speak to the Bishop.

7. Synod Planning Report

Michael Read

Planning is well underway with the venue confirmed (Ban Righ Hall at Queen's) and the keynote speaker (Rev. Scott Gunn) in place. The Bishop noted that lay delegates being elected at annual vestry meetings must be available for the Synod May 13 to 16, 2027.

8. Insurance Update

Joyce Williams

Joyce Williams and Archdeacon Jane Humphreys met with our insurance brokers. They are doing their absolute best for us. Invoices will be coming out to parishes shortly

9. Financial Report

Joyce Williams

Joyce Williams is working on year end and prep for the audit which will begin Feb 9. The Bereavement Authority of Ontario audit re: cemeteries in the Diocese is complete.

10. Ministry & Mission Update

Wayne Varley

10.1 DOORS: The 2025 report will indicate that there were applications for 41 people for admission to Canada, and that 33 people arrived in the Diocese. Emerging issues: employment instability, housing scarcity, language, socialization. DOORS is developing a group to work with refugees on language training for our arrivals who come primarily from Afghanistan, Somalia, Gambia

10.2 Thank you to Archdeacon Wayne Varley, his last meeting at Synod Council as he retires from this position. Thanked by Bishop Cliff for his 22 years on Synod Council.

11. Other Business

Angela Kelman brought up the subject of the demolition of Christ Church, Lords Mills. There has been a petition circulating to save the church, and many rumours abounding. The property is derelict and must be removed for safety. The Diocese is maintaining the cemetery.

12. Online meeting evaluation

Please take a minute to complete the form; it does help with planning these meetings.

13. Adjournment on motion of Michael Read @ 6:57 pm

Next meeting: 24 February 2026, 6:00 pm

St. Paul's, Kingston and online
Devotions: Bill Clarke



Attachment: Bishop's remarks to Synod Council, January 27, 2026

After Alex's sudden illness in December, I wanted to share with the Synod Council the steps we have taken to insure a consistent and stable business plan for the Diocese in this particular time of upheaval.

From the 11th December through to the new year, we were responding to immediate needs and parish requests as they came forward. We were aware that the time of year gave us some cover as the slowing down of things for Christmas would give us some breathing room - but we also knew that as January 5th arrived, we would need to make some decisions and make some plans.

The week of January 5th, Archdeacon Humphreys, Joyce Williams, Laura Conway and myself worked out a continuity plan that divided the work of the Finance Department into Immediate, Intermediate and then Longer term tasks.

We asked for meetings with members from the Audit Committee and Investment Committee and our Insurers over the following weeks to review this plan and seek advice and adjustments if need be. They were extremely helpful and encouraging.

We consulted with the bank, our software vendors, our IT needs and redistributed permissions to different officers in order to continue our payables and payroll systems. We assured that appropriate signing officers were available and Archdeacon Jane has been consulting our Solicitors as needed with regard to any legal matters that have been outstanding, though those have been quiet of late.

I am particularly grateful that Joyce Williams is with us and will be joining us for future meetings.

The Diocesan Audit with the BAO is now coming to a close, and Joyce Williams will be able to address that seperately.

The Annual Audit of our finances is being prepared, and Joyce may wish to update you on that as well.

Our long-planned migration of our email system has been completed, built on work that Alex began, it was carried through and heroically completed by Nishtha Nagpal. We have now fully moved away from the old email system which was becoming increasingly unstable.

We have been in contact with the Archbishop's office numerous times, and we have transferred back to the province the work that Alex was carrying for the Province. The files and work - particularly with regard to the BAO on the broader file which Alex was working with, have also been returned to the Archbishop, though Archdeacon Humphreys was brought up to speed on the situation if anyone is wondering.



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The Payables, Payroll, Receivables and other financial functions of the Diocese are continuing on normally.

We are in regular contact with Wendy, and there are a steady stream of persons visiting Alex who is still currently in KGH and will be transferred to Providence Hospital for Rehab later this week.

I must express how hard everyone in the office has worked to maintain and finish many of the tasks that were waiting for us. I cannot say enough about the team work and dedication that has been built in this last 6 weeks. My thanks to Archdeacon Jane, Archdeacon Wayne, Joyce Williams, Laura Conway, Mark Hauser and Nishtha Nagpal as well as committee members and others synod council members who have offered their help and their advice.