

Vote of Thanks Committee Report Diocesan Synod 2021

This Report was organized around the synod themes of Psalm 80:3, **Restore Us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved;** and the theme of leadership, as outlined in Dr. Susan Beaumont's work, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*.

We give thanks to our Creator God for all of God's many blessings through Christ.

We pray and give thanks for all Indigenous Peoples and Lands in the Diocese of Algoma. We acknowledge with gratitude that the lands on which we gather throughout the Algoma Diocese are on the traditional territories of the Atikameksheng, Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, Wendat First Nations and also Metis. These territories were the subject of Treaties 20, 60 and 61, also known as the Williams Treaty (20), the Robinson- Superior Treaty (60) and the Robinson-Huron Treaty (61). We recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples connected to and on these sacred lands. We are grateful for the opportunity to gather on these territories, and to serve in this Diocese as we commit ourselves to the work and ministry of justice, healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. May it be so.

Leadership in the Diocese of Algoma

We are thankful for the way God is leading us, guiding us, and blessing us in and through all the many and various challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic. We give thanks to God for:

- The encouraging and comforting words of the Psalmist, *Restore us O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved* (Ps.80:3)
- Our Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls
- Archbishop Anne Germond's steady, loving and courageous leadership in our Diocese during the many phases of the pandemic, and as we lament all that we have lost and endured in these last 18 months. Likewise, we are deeply grateful for the Archbishop's firm commitment to do all that she can to further our Parish and Diocesan efforts toward healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Also, as we prepare to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee that will mark the Queen's 70th year of reign, we are sincerely grateful that our Archbishop has invited us to celebrate "Treebilee" by asking each parish community to plant trees so to create a "great Green Canopy" in support of God's beautiful yet fragile creation.
- The Rev. Dr. Jay Koyle, who continues to work tirelessly as he helps parishes navigate through the pandemic with all the dos and don'ts in relation to all health and safety protocols in our parishes and communities.
- Rev. Michael Garner, priest and Epidemiologist Consultant to the Diocese of Algoma
- Rev. Dr. Susan Beaumont who led four excellent presentations on the challenges and joys of serving in leadership during liminal times, or times of uncertainty.
- Zoom, which makes being together possible in a new way.
- All members of the Synod Office Staff.
- All Tech support for Synod: EchoTechnology (Kris, Kate, and Sylvain) and for Daniel Klein (Chair of Elections)
- Pastor Brad Mittleholtz and Zion Lutheran Church in Sault Ste. Marie for hosting the local Synod Team
- All Sessional Committee Members who were willing to participate and be involved in this capacity.

Let us pray.

God our Creator, we thank you for all the ways you guide, challenge and direct your Church through generous, courageous and loving leadership and support in the Diocese of Algoma. When our Diocesan Leaders and Staff are sick, tired, weary or worn-out, Restore Us, O God,
let your face shine.

Liminality

We are grateful that with the support of our Archbishop and through the work of Dr. Susan Beaumont during the Algoma Pre-Synod meetings, we grew in our awareness and understanding of this being a “liminal season”. Recognizing that none of us can ever go back to the way things were before Covid-19, we learned that times of transition and uncertainty are often characterized by a state of ambiguity or disorientation referred to as “liminality.” The present time that we are in is particularly challenging for church leaders who now must lead on the threshold between knowing and not-knowing, between advocating and attending, and between striving and surrender. We give thanks for both the challenges and opportunities that confront us in this liminal season, and as we continue to persevere in hope through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Let us pray,

God our Creator, in you we live and move and have our being. We thank you for being ever-present with us, especially in times of transition and uncertainty. When we are lost and struggle to discern who we are and where we are going, Restore Us, O God,

Let your face shine.

Time to Lament, Ponder, and Celebrate

We give thanks that we are able to safely lament with one another for all that we miss, remember and have lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our hearts ache to sing together, to pray together, to eat together and to touch, hold, and hug one another. We thank God that we are not alone as we ponder all that we have been through as Church. And we raise our voices in gratitude and in celebration for all that we have learned during the pandemic: the use of Zoom and other forms of digital technology; providing online worship; identifying the gaps in our communities where ministry is so desperately needed, and our confidence in knowing that with God’s help, all things are possible.

Let us pray,

God our Creator, as we ride this *coronacoaster* together, we are all greatly impacted by the many thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative, that we experience at any given time, on any given day. When we are tired, sorrowful, or lack the energy to keep up with new ways of doing things, Restore Us, O God,

let your face shine.

Forgiveness

We give thanks to God for the gift of God’s forgiveness. During what has already been a very painful and challenging year, we were suddenly overcome with profound remorse as we began to learn of the ever-growing number of children who lost their lives in Residential Schools, and whose bodies were hidden in unmarked graves. We are grateful that our Archbishop and Diocesan leaders stand in recognition of September 30th as being a National Day of Mourning. Still, the sins of the past weigh heavy on us; sins that we could not bare without God’s promise of forgiveness.

Let us pray.

God our Creator, as the bones and bodies of more and more Indigenous children are discovered on the grounds of former Residential Schools, our hearts break with guilt, grief and with deep remorse. Strengthened by your promise of forgiveness and mercy, we pray that you will raise us to grow and to be and to become active agents of your love, healing and justice. When the sins of the past become so burdensome that we neither have the will nor the strength to proclaim, “never again,” Restore Us, O God,

let your face shine.

Care of Creation

We give thanks for the gift of love that God makes known to us in all of God's creation. We are grateful for the many ways we are being called to be true and loving caretakers of God's creation, as we take the steps so urgently needed toward restoring the health of this fragile earth, our island home. In this 2021 *Season of Creation*, and as we are all faced with the growing crisis of Climate Change due to global warming, we give thanks for this time of prayer and reflection so that we might discover what we might do differently as individuals and in our parishes. We are grateful that our Archbishop has challenged us to begin a new conversation in Algoma. This ongoing conversation in our Diocese will include viable, accessible solutions to the widespread, fast-paced issues of climate change.

Let us pray.

God our Creator, we are grateful for the many new possibilities for climate care in our diocese; possibilities that might lead us to become true advocates for climate care and environmental justice. When we are overcome with fear, worry, doubt, despair, and with feelings of helplessness for the future of our planet and for all life on earth, Restore Us, O God,

let your face shine.

This wonderful and most holy time of Synod in the Diocese of Algoma has once more reminded us that God truly blesses us when we bless one another, and for that, we give God thanks!

To God be the Glory
Thanks be to God.

Submitted in faith and with gratitude by the *Vote of Thanks* Committee for the Diocesan Synod of Algoma, 2021

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Green (Chair).
Peggy Morrison
Colin Edwards
Rev. Raymond Knight