

The Incorporated Synod of the  
**Diocese of Ontario**

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The Anglican Church of Canada - L'Eglise anglicane du Canada

**The Rt. Rev. Michael D. Oulton**  
**Bishop of Ontario**

**Monseigneur Michael D. Oulton**  
**Évêque d'Ontario**

December 3, 2011

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to share with you the decision made by Synod Council in adopting the 2012 diocesan budget and the resulting implications for some of our common ministries. The creation and adoption of this budget was the result of prayerful reflection, consultation and focussed engagement by many in the life of the diocese.

Bishop Bruce's Charge to Synod 2010 included the following direction: *"...we do need to reassess how we provide ministry and how we resource those ministries. I believe that what we need to do is to undertake a serious and speedy review of how we can most effectively resource ministry and at the same time meet our external commitments."* Following Synod, a series of Archdeaconry Conferences were held at which lay and clergy leaders provided input into the priorities and challenges of ministry in parishes and the diocese. Those conferences led in part to the establishment of the Task Force on Resourcing Ministry. Consultations undertaken by this Task Force with lay and clergy leadership throughout the diocese developed a report adopted by Synod Council this past August.

In August, Synod Council implemented one of the report's recommendations in establishing a Finance Committee of Council. The Finance Committee immediately began work preparing a strategy for addressing the projected 2011 budget deficit and crafting a draft 2012 budget.

The Finance Committee holds a clear mandate to create a **credible, balanced budget**, where expenditures are effective, financially responsible and in line with goals and objectives identified by the Synod Council. The budgeting process has been a balance of meeting these objectives while recognizing the diverse perspectives, challenges and opportunities across the whole diocese. **Our overarching goal remains helping to support and serve the needs of parishes, the diocese and our national Church.**

These decisions were made using some fundamental objectives:

1. Objective consideration of **all** areas of spending and program;
2. Provision of a **clear, operating framework** of our shared diocesan ministries;
3. Delivery of a **credible, balanced 2012 budget**;
4. Enable **future oriented diocesan discussions** leading to strategies and actions for key areas of program and ministry.

Synod Council meets these objectives in adopting the 2012 Budget. The full budget will soon be available for your information.

There are significant implications for providers and recipients of some key diocesan ministries about which I now wish to inform you.

1. A number of our shared diocesan programs and ministries have been placed in a “**suspended state**” for 2012 and will not operate. These include:
  - a. Camp Hyanto
  - b. The Dialogue newspaper
  - c. Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator’s position
  - d. New grants to parishes and ministries (not including existing commitments)

This “suspended state” is intended to relieve the financial load on the diocese, while together we engage in an open, forward looking discussion on needs, challenges, opportunities and options. This would lead to a strategy in all these areas of our common life, creating strategies and actions to faithfully achieve the strength and success we want for our ministries. This work will form key parts in the 2013 budget proposal that will be placed before our autumn 2012 Synod.

2. Salaries for all diocesan staff and clergy in 2012 are held at the current level.
3. Diocesan contributions on clergy benefits in 2012 are held at the current levels.
4. Bishop’s discretionary fund grant from diocesan budget is removed.
5. Social Action and Evangelism budget allocation is removed.
6. Extraordinary legal costs to be funded outside of diocesan budget.
7. Territorial Archdeacon and Regional Dean travel reimbursement is removed.

The effect of these cuts has taken us from a projected deficit in 2012 of \$186,000 to a projected surplus of \$108,000 which the Synod Council has allocated as follows:

1. Repayment of half of our 2011 fourth quarter fair share commitment to the National Church, which was held back at the direction of Synod Council. The second half of this deferred commitment will be paid in 2013.
2. Diocesan Communication Strategy in the interim as a new communications strategy is developed.
3. New Initiatives Seed Funding at the direction of Synod Council.

**It must be noted that these allocations are for planning purposes only and that an actual commitment of funds would require Synod Council approval.**

A further resolution of the November Synod Council provides for better transparency and a greater understanding the allocations of our Common Mission and Ministry. **Diocesan operations apportioned to the parishes will be shown their rate of 20.5%. The Diocesan share of clergy benefits including pension, health and dental will be shown their apportioned rate of 4.5%.** Formerly, these aspects of our shared ministries were shown together at an apportioned rate of 25%.

I and all those involved in these decisions are keenly aware that these changes and directives will be challenging for many faithful, committed Anglicans in the life of our diocese

as they are to us. I also know that we can rely on our shared faith and commitment as we move forward.

Let me be clear that the decision to move programs to a suspended state in no way reflects on the volunteers and staff and their faithful stewardship of these ministries. I thank each one of them for their commitment and dedication to work that God has called us to do together.

I want to thank the members of the Finance Committee for their commitment to the tasks at hand and those that continue to lie before us.

I also extend thanks to the members of Synod Council and all those who have engaged these issues over the past few months since our last Synod.

The 2012 budget only begins the work of discerning the next steps in our shared ministry. We now need to focus our efforts on the revitalization process that will bring us together in determining how best to fulfill the ministries that God is placing before us.

Please continue to hold us all in your prayers, private and communal as we move forward in the mission before us. For myself, I remain confident in our Church, for its cornerstone is Jesus Christ and faithful people are its living stones. The Holy Spirit remains our guide and beacon, a way forward is being laid. I eagerly look forward to walking the path with you.

In the Mission and Ministry of Christ,

Bishop Michael Oulton