



Council of the North

A Ministry of the Whole Church



New ministry made possible by a generous church

What do you do when you have an extraordinary gift of money? You start dreaming and planning and hoping for a better future. This is the recent experience of the Council of the North. Over \$80,000 has been donated to the mission and ministry of the Council through the generous donations of Canadian Anglicans from coast to coast to coast who participated in the 'Amazing Grace' project in November, 2008. Now what to do with that money?

The continuing members of the Council (bishops or their representatives and two General Synod directors or their representatives) met at the beginning of February in Edmonton, AB. At the meeting, which was facilitated by the Ven. Jim Boyles (from General Secretary of General Synod), Bishop David Ashdown reported to the members the amount of money donated through the 'Amazing Grace' project and extra donations that have come in as well over the last couple of years (about \$95,000) and asked the membership to consider how these gifts should be faithfully used.

Archdeacon Boyles led the continuing members of the Council through a process of identifying their goals for the meeting: these included making clear proposals on how to use the new money; to learn more about what it means to develop and indigenous diocese/province; to explore what it means to be a healthy church engaged in mission; and to begin to rethink the formula for distributing the grant from General Synod. They took time to identify those things in the environment, from the world, the church and the aboriginal world, that impact the ministry that takes place in northern Canada. These led into discussions about the health of each diocese – its strengths, weaknesses, trends and its hopes and fears.

This background led nicely into discussions on how to spend the new money that has been generated through the 'Amazing Grace' project and from other donations. Two programs were identified by the members present at the meeting. The first is a project on suicide and violence in northern and aboriginal communities, particularly focusing on prevention and the affect that suicide has on a whole community. The second is leadership training which is guided by the sense of equipping God's saints (clergy and lay) for mission and the development of a healthy church.

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The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council were asked to consult with the rest of the bishops in preparing a proposal to hire a consultant/facilitator for the first project and will be reporting to the bishops when they gather at the national House of Bishops meeting in April. All of the bishops have been asked to consider the question of leadership training and if they can identify a project put together a proposal which will need to come to the Chair by April 14th and that the decisions on the proposals be decided upon when the bishops meet at the national House of Bishops meeting.

The Council is looking forward to its meeting in September of this year. They will be meeting at the Sorrento Centre in the diocese of Kootenay. The centre has offered their facilities as a gift to the Council in support of the mission and ministry that is done in Canada's north.

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September will be Council of the North Month as part of the Anglican Appeal program

As part of the continuing support of the wider church of the mission and ministry of the Council of the North it has been decided by the Philanthropy Department that the month of September will be dedicated to fundraising specifically for its work. This month will be an exciting opportunity to share positive stories of ministry and allow the church to respond in a similar manner.

Highlights of the month will include the following:

- ☐ A weekly ministry story to be used as a bulletin insert
- ☐ Prayers written specially for the month
- ☐ A collection of hymn suggestions that come specifically from northern communities
- ☐ Sermon suggestions
- ☐ Sunday School materials
- ☐ A collection box with Council of the North buttons beside it
 - take a button and make a donation for the work
- ☐ Council of the North collections boxes for children and youth
 - probably with some sort of activity calendar to go with this
- ☐ The culmination of the month will be a community feast
 - congregations will be encouraged to make a stew that is traditional to their lives
 - they will be given bannock recipes to go along with the feast suggestions
 - at this feast it is suggested that pictures be taken and messages written to the Council, that can be sent in and be compiled to create a presentation on the website



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Partnership and Outreach Project in the diocese of Fredericton with Sunday Schools in the Council of the North



People in the picture above are The Ven. Richard McConnell, Priest & Rector, Tanya Pesklevy and Sharon Connors with the St. Martin's-in-the-Woods Church School kids part of the Shediac parish in the diocese of Fredericton.

The Parish of Shediac, in the diocese of Fredericton has undertaken an outreach called the January Project. It is part of our response to the tremendous report made to the last Diocesan Synod by Fiona Brownlee, Communications Officer, on the Council of the North.

She expressed the need for help for Sunday Schools in remote areas of Canada. After connecting with Fiona, the Parish of Shediac was given the names and addresses of 15 different parishes who fit the need. The congregation then rallied together and craft supplies were gathered, packaged and shipped out. The project began in January and will arrive as a surprise for these Sunday Schools just in time for Easter. 253 children will benefit from this exciting venture.

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Responding to a need: Virtual Church School

What do you do if your parish doesn't have enough money to pay the bills and you have lots of children who need to hear the word of God? You can hardly begin to think about providing an adequate ministry. This is the experience of many parishes in the northern parts of Canada that are part of the Council of the North.

Just over a year ago the diocese of Keewatin began an internet ministry called "Virtual Church School" that provided weekly Sunday School lessons usually based on the Gospel for the day. It can be found at www.dioceseofkeewatin.ca/virtual-church-school. These lessons include some form of opening worship, a story and three craft ideas. The surprise for everyone who discovered them is that they are free. That is right there is no cost to the parish or local leader who downloads them.

The news of this new ministry became more widely known throughout the Council of the North. People working with children in isolated parishes began to use the material. A lay reader from the diocese of Montreal who is French offered to translate the materials for free so that small francophone parishes in Quebec would have access to quality materials. A lay woman from the diocese of Brandon who is on the executive for the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer and has a keen interest in children's ministry offered to provide seasonal prayer ideas. As the ministry grew so did the enthusiasm for it.

At the end of 2008 the Council of the North decided that this program should become a ministry of the Council as a whole. It is one that meets Council mandate to provide pastoral and sacramental ministry to Anglicans living in isolated communities in Canada's north. As a result the program is being promoted within the Council dioceses widely. The Anglican Foundation has generously helped with the program for 2009 by providing a significant grant to the Council for this work.

The wider church has a hand in this ministry as well. Our church helps to support the ministry of the Council through a yearly grant from the budget of General Synod and through the generous gifts Anglicans across the country make to the Anglican Appeal. If you are interested in supporting this ministry directly then please do so through the Anglican Appeal and indicate that it is for "Virtual Church School".

Are you interested in learning more about the Council of the North? Would you like to know what prayer concerns members of the Council of the North would like you to pray for? Would you like a presentation or informational materials for your parish, deanery or diocese?

Please contact Ms. Fiona Brownlee, Communications Officer for the Council of the North, to get more information, to be sent brochures, educational materials or a prayer cycle. You can reach her at 807-547-3353, ext. 5 or by email: fbrownlee@national.anglican.ca



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