

Press Release

Delegates to the 67th Session of Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown emanating from the length and breadth of the extensions of the diocese comprising 57 parishes (churches) converged on St Albans Anglican Church, Vincent in East London: in response to citations from the Diocesan Bishop The Right Revd Ebenezer St Mark Ntlali.

This is the triennial assembly of both clerics and laity where at issues of Church Governance, Spiritual Life and Societal Challenges are reviewed with the view of bringing about recitative measures for the church to focus on the Mission from our Lord Jesus Christ – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I’ve commanded you.”

As is customary the business of Synod tees off with the Bishop’s Charge – State of the Diocese Address (SODA) for the 3 year period from the last Synod and a visionary charting of the way forward by the Bishop. In his Charge at this Synod the Bishop emerged from the theme – GOD’S MISSION IN A MISSIONARY MODEL and launched the DECADE OF MISSION AND EVANGELISM.

The kernel of his message was the call for the Church to be the Church as envisaged by the Lord of the Church – He who has universal authority in heaven and earth.

Drawing from the foundational legacy left by of the first Bishop of the Diocese John Armstrong and his successors, the Bishop elucidated his vision for the Diocese namely the reincarnation of the missionary model that benefits the people of God in all spheres of their lives such as Education, Health, Food Security, Economic stability over and above spiritual fulfilment – what he characterises as bringing on board the horizontal dimension as well over and above the vertical dimension.

To give practical effect to this vision the Synod was graced with an array of eminent leaders from various spheres of society and speakers amongst whom were

- Bishop Patrick Matholengwe- Retreat conductor
- Chief Ngangomhlaba Matanzima – chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Eastern Cape
- Ms Gaga – Executive Mayor of Makana Municipality
- Revd Dr Henry Mbaya – Department of Missiology – University of Stellenbosch
- Prof Dr Peggy Nomfundo Luswazi – integrated Sustained Developmental Projects
- Mr Simpiwe Somdyla – CEO of Masisizane Fund – Old Mutual

The Synod Motion line-up was heavily packed with a diverse menu covering issues at the core of challenges faced by the people of God within their communities.

Members of the Synod embraced the Bishop’s Charge for the next 3 years of developing God’s Mission in a Missionary Model and committed themselves by rising at the final service in support and solidarity of his vision.

To the motion tabled “Status of the same sex relationships in the life of the Church” Synod concurred with the pastoral guidelines for those in civil unions adopted by the bishops in February 2016 and endorsed the need to consider exploring inclusivity.

The motion on the Environment alerted us to the urgency of responding to the challenges brought on by climate change and the Church's stewardship responsibility over all of God's creation.

The motion tabled "Standing by the Truth" affirmed the Church's prophetic role and voice in civil society.

The collegiality of the members of Synod being challenged by God's Holy Spirit to be obedient and follow the call of the Gospel.