

Synergy



A daily report on Synod 2024
Diocese of Port Elizabeth

No 1 Thursday 24 October

Embrace unity in diversity

In his Charge to Synod Bishop Eddie shared that his heart is filled with a multitude of emotions - Gratitude, for the journey we have shared; Hope, for the future that lies ahead; and Love, for this diocese and all of you, which words can scarcely convey.

Bishop then gave us 10 Commandments 1 Embrace unity in diversity

He went on to exhort us to, 'Embrace unity in diversity' saying "I urge you to continue in the spirit of unity that has been our strength, even as we celebrate our diverse gifts and perspectives. Remember, it is through our varied lenses that we gain a fuller understanding of God's purpose for us. Let us then move forward as a diocese, united in our diversity, striving always to be the embodiment of Christ's inclusive love in the world."

He reminded us of 1Cor 12:4-6 that every part of the body is needed for it to work as a whole saying, "This passage is not merely a testament to the variety of gifts bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit, but a clarion call to recognise the inherent beauty and strength that lies within our differences, united under the banner of our shared faith."

He enhanced this by saying, "In this era, our world is rife with divisions and discord, sowing seeds of distrust and disunity among peoples and nations. Yet, it is precisely within this context that our message of unity in diversity becomes not just relevant but essential. We are called to be beacons of light in the darkness, exemplars of love that transcends boundaries, and architects of bridges over the chasms that separate humanity.

Our mission is to demonstrate that unity does not necessitate uniformity, and that in our loving embrace of diversity, we echo the divine harmony intended by our Creator.

Therefore, as we deliberate, discuss, and discern the path forward for our community, let us do so with hearts open to the diversity amongst us. Let us listen with empathy, speak with kindness, and act with love. Let us remember that in every face,



there is the image of God, and in every voice, there is a reflection of His word. Our unity in diversity is not merely a goal to aspire to; it is the very essence of our identity as a faith community.

So, may our discussions be fruitful, our resolutions inspired, and our actions guided by the Holy Spirit. And may we, through our embrace of unity in diversity, become a living testament to the power of faith to unite, heal, and transcend all barriers."

2 Seek discernment with open hearts

Bishop Eddie then spoke about seeking a new Bishop and the need for us to engage in a period of discernment with open hearts and minds allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us. We are to, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6).

3 Renew your commitment to mission and service

He called on us to obey, "Our Lord Jesus Christ's mandate to His disciples, to go forth and make disciples of all nations, remains our imperative. It is a charge that transcends time, cultures, and changing seasons of life, including this season of transition for our diocese.

Renewing our commitment to mission and service means recommitting to the Gospel in its fullness, embracing both its comfort and its challenge. It means reaching out to the marginalised, the forgotten, the 'unlovely', and the suffering with the compassionate heart of Christ. It means standing for justice, peace, and the dignity of every human being. And it means nurturing our communities of faith so they may be places of welcome, healing, and transformation."

4 Prioritise spiritual growth

Bishop Eddie then extended an exhortation, "a call to prioritise spiritual growth as the bedrock upon which we embrace God's mission for God's world ... For it is from the wellspring of our relationship with the Divine that we draw the strength, wisdom, and compassion necessary to carry out God's work in the world."

5 Cultivate a life of prayer and worship

Quoting Matthew 18:20, he said, "Jesus reassures us, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' This profound promise invites us to understand that our collective worship has the power to invoke the presence of Christ in our midst, igniting our hearts and emboldening our spirits for the tasks that lie ahead."

He continued his Charge by speaking on -

6 Engage with scripture and tradition

Saying, "The 39 Articles remind us that the teachings of Scripture are not just historical accounts but living truths that continue to shape our lives today. They encourage us to interpret Scripture through the lens of tradition, acknowledging the wisdom of those who have gone before us while remaining open to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit."

Bishop's Charge continued

7 Live out the call to service

On which he said, "As we grow in our relationship with God, let our faith manifest in acts of love, justice, and mercy in our communities and beyond. Christ himself came not to be served, but to serve. Let us be the hands and feet of Jesus, serving those in need, advocating for the voiceless, and stewarding the creation entrusted to our care. Service is faith lived out in action, a dynamic expression of our call to love our neighbours as ourselves. In this way, we embody the Gospel and participate in God's work of healing and reconciliation in the world."

8 Foster community and unity

Bishop then reminded us, "In this sacred mission, we are not solitary travellers. Rather, we are integral members of the body of Christ, where every individual plays a vital role in the overall health and effectiveness of the whole. As Paul reminds us, 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it' (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Therefore, we must prioritise the cultivation of community and unity, recognising that our strength lies not in isolation but in our interdependence."

9 Be Open to the leading of the Holy Spirit

Bishop asked us to ever open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, trusting in God's guidance and provision, saying, "Our plans, while important, must be held loosely, ready to yield to the Spirit's promptings. For it is God who directs our path, and His ways are higher than our ways."

10 Face change with courage and hope

Bishop Eddie concluded by speaking about change, saying, "As we stand at the crossroads of change, a profound truth emerges: our journey with God is marked by a blend of uncertainty, anticipation, and,

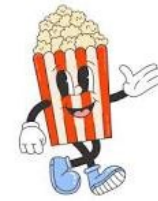
at times, fear. Yet, within the heart of our faith lies the promise of God's enduring presence and the constant renewal of His creation. Change, while unsettling, is also the fertile ground from which new beginnings spring forth ... It is equally shameful that our metro political leadership was reprimanded for failing to utilise the full allocation of funds from the Treasury, a failure that underscores the urgent need for accountability. Good stewardship and the proper use of resources in service to the community would have likely mitigated much of the hardship too many woke up to today. As the church, we must stand firm in our call for integrity and responsible governance, ensuring that those in leadership are held to account for the sake of the most vulnerable in our society. This is not just a political issue; it is a moral imperative, deeply rooted in the Gospel's call to justice, compassion, and care for those in need.

Moreover, we cannot separate these local crises from the larger issue of environmental stewardship. The increasing frequency and severity of floods are clear signs of the environmental challenges we face globally. As a church, we have a corporate responsibility to care for God's creation. The way we treat the earth reflects our respect for God's handiwork and our commitment to future generations. We must advocate for sustainable practices, not only in our personal lives but also within our communities, urging our leaders to prioritize environmental resilience and the wise management of natural resources. It is incumbent upon us to recognise the inter connectedness of our well-being with the health of the planet."

This is but a smidgen of what Bishop Eddie's Charge contains. Please visit our Web page

www.anglicandiocesepe.org.za

and read the full Charge



Popcorn Man

We've noticed a Popcorn Man wandering around the Synod hall ... trying to catch the news! - So, please, anyone

who hears or sees something worth reporting on during Synod pop along to the editor, or her assistant, Andrew White (that baldhead ou in the front row) and let them know.

We do especially like to hear the lighter side!

The editor needs to be fed with news in order that this Synergy portrays what is happening.

• Lay members, remember there are two of you to one clergy person. The Anglican Church has always said it needs to hear the laity ... so please DO NOT be intimidated. Speak out. You are the voice of the members of your parish.

- At the first Synod I attended in 1983 there were FIVE lay representatives from every parish - that is an indication of how important lay participation is.

- Ladies, play your part - we fought hard to be heard! There were only six of us at Synod in 1983 ... and we had to dress formally, no jeans allowed - later, under duress they allowed us to wear slacks suits!

- Also showing how important the laity were - I was on the resolutions committee at PSC for five years running. A member of the laity always chaired the committee, and for two years I was the chair ... with people like Bp Michael Nuttal as members.

Popcorn Man reports that Synod received greetings from, the Ven Bubele Mfenyana, Vicar General of the Diocese of Grahamstown.

Popcorn Man promises the next Synergy will not have an overload of photos of Bishop Edward!



Popcorn Man is wondering what naughty thought is going through the Bishop's mind.

Lawyers lead the procession



Important Notice:
Please make sure that you wear your name badge at all times throughout the duration of Synod.

A visitor to Synod



Ds Danie Mouton of the Dutch Reformed Church Synod attended the opening of our Synod in support of Bishop Edward.

Editor: Frankie Simpson assisted by Andrew White
Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Bishop nor the editor.