

Synod Manual

For Delegates and Members



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Introduction

For many people, attending a synod for the first time can be an intimidating experience. This guide will prepare you to fulfill the role with confidence.

Chapter 1: The Business of Synod

1.1 Kinds of Sessions

The Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia comes together for one of three reasons:

1. An extraordinary session, to elect a bishop (Canon 1.7).
2. A special session for a particular purpose (Article IX of the Constitution).
3. The regular session, which takes place every two years. This guide is about the third kind of session. (Article VIII of the Constitution)

1.2 Regular Sessions

Canon 4 sets out the rules and operation of Synod.

Regulation R4.6.1 presents a long list of things a regular session may do. It really boils down to the following seven activities:

- a. Bishop's Charge
- b. Reception of reports and motions arising out of reports
- c. Elections and Appointments
- d. Budget and financial concerns
- e. Motions arising
- f. Education
- g. Prayer, study and worship

This can all happen in one session of Synod, but sometimes Synod will meet in two or more sessions separated by some time.

a. Bishop's Charge

A "charge" can be understood as a command or exhortation; in the context of Synod, it is the bishop's opportunity to tell us what they think is important for the future. The Bishop's Charge will vary according to the personality of the person delivering it. Sometimes the charge is nothing more than an extended sermon, in other cases it is a series of instructions to clergy and laity.

The charge itself is not debated, but a Committee on the Bishop's Charge may sometimes be struck to respond to it, and its recommendations are debated.

b. Reports and Motions Arising out of Reports

Synod is the venue for the various diocesan ministries to make reports (For example, Diocesan Council, Committees or Ministries etc.). These reports are distributed electronically to delegates in advance of the first session.

The report of Diocesan Council is not only distributed and received, but its decisions since the last Synod must be ratified by Synod.

Reports can also include motions to be presented at Synod. These are dealt with after the report is presented. Motions arising out of diocesan committees take precedence over motions coming from members. Canonical amendments take precedence over anything else, except routine administrative motions.

c. Elections

The Nominations Committee receives nominations for Diocesan Council, various diocesan committees and for membership of both Provincial and General Synods and collects information on nominees. Nominees are usually registered members of Synod. Information is then posted where everybody can see the information. We vote by secret ballot, and the winners are announced.

d. Financial Concerns

Current financial statements are usually presented. Synod does not usually approve the budget –that is left to Diocesan Council. Synod does, however, determine the diocesan plan of apportionment.

e. Motions Arising Out of Correspondence

When people think of synods they often think of motions brought by delegates and clergy from their parishes or regions. Members of Synod are asked to forward "Notices

of Motion” through the lay and clerical secretaries before Synod, and these are distributed in the *Convening Circular*. The Bishop may get a deadline for the submission of motions, often a few weeks before the Convening Circular must be published.

f. Education

Another reason we gather, but which is not explicit in the Canons, is to learn. Very often we have visitors address us at Synod, or there are informational videos and presentations. The purposes are not motion or report driven, but are simply to allow us to know a bit more about what the church is doing at various levels.

g. Prayer, Study, and Worship

All of the activities of Synod are surrounded by prayer, worship, and study. We begin and often end with prayer and the Eucharist and we sometimes have a member of Synod lead us in a Bible Study. While some people see much of this as being secondary to the business of Synod, as Christians worship is always our first business.

Chapter 2: Responsibilities of a Member of Synod

OK, so you are a delegate or member heading off to a synod. What are you supposed to do?

Before Synod

- When you receive the Convening Circular, read the reports. If there are things that seem important, but you have questions about, ask one of the other synod delegates or clergy.
- Complete the various forms that the synod office asks you to and return them in a timely manner.
- Make sure that you go to Parish Council meetings; as a synod delegate you are a member of it automatically.
- Attend the regional gatherings. There you will have an opportunity to meet with other delegates and members of Synod and discuss relevant issues. It's also when you will elect the clerical and lay members from your region to Diocesan Council as well as the regional youth delegate to Diocesan Synod.
- Meet with the other delegates from your parish to discuss the business that will be discussed at Synod (remember, once at Synod you represent only yourself—not your parish).
- If a matter which is important isn't represented in the Convening Circular, consider drafting a motion and send it into the lay and clerical secretaries of Synod.
clericalsecretary@bc.anglican.ca or laysecretary@bc.anglican.ca
- Either download the Convening Circular from the diocesan website bc.anglican.ca onto your mobile device and organize it into folders or print it and organize it in a binder. Pre-organizing your material will make things easier for you when you are on the floor of Synod.
- Review a copy of the Canons and Regulations. You can obtain a copy from the diocesan website.
- Pray for the bishop, delegates, clergy and other diocesan leaders.
- Consider letting your name stand for a committee.

At Synod

- Listen carefully to the Bishop's Charge.
- Participate in worship.
- Listen carefully to presentations, motions and debates.
- If you feel moved to speak to a motion, consider carefully what you will say (writing it down also helps). Identify yourself by name and parish. State whether you are speaking for or against the motion. Give your reasons. Speak to the issue at hand, not some related one. If somebody has already said what you want to say, consider whether you really need to speak too.
- If someone has said something in a debate with which you agree, it is acceptable to say "hear, hear," or clap. It is inappropriate however, to mutter under your breath when someone is saying something less agreeable. Once a vote has been taken, do not clap or boo—Synod has stated its mind on a subject, and we are all bound by its decision.
- Vote as you see appropriate for the good of the whole church, based on your study before Synod and what you have learned at Synod. Strictly speaking, abstentions are not permitted, so be prepared to vote on the motions before you.
- Consider standing for elections.
- Vote in the elections. Look at the information provided and get to know the candidates. Don't be afraid to ask questions of them or about them.
- Ask questions. If you don't understand something, chances are there a lot of other people who don't either.
- Visit with other members of Synod during breaks and meals.
- Pray for members of Synod and our bishop.

After Synod

- Be a positive ambassador for Synod in your parish. Support Synod decisions even when you personally disagree.
- Report back to the congregation on the events and decisions of Synod (a "Synod Highlights" newsletter may be sent to you from the synod office to assist you).

- If any of the motions request members of Synod to do things, review those motions and act accordingly.
- If you are a member of a committee or Diocesan Council, attend regularly and report back to your parish.
- Continue to pray for the church.

Chapter 3: Who Are These People?

3.1 Bishop

A "diocesan bishop" is entrusted with the care of a local Church (diocese). Bishops are responsible for teaching, governing, and sanctifying the faithful of their respective diocese, sharing these duties with the priests and deacons who serve under the bishop. Only a bishop has authority to confer the sacrament of holy orders.

It is the expectation of the Canons that the bishop will chair Synod and Diocesan Council. Listen carefully!

3.2 a) Chancellor

The chancellor advises the bishop on procedure during Synod and is the chair of the Canons Committee. As well, the Committee on Resolutions vets all proposed motions with the chancellor. Outside of Synod the chancellor vets any legal deeds or documents which involve the synod. If your parish wants to purchase or sell property, the chancellor will act as your lawyer, as it really the diocese doing the buying or selling. The position of the chancellor is essentially volunteer.

b) Vice-Chancellor

The bishop may appoint a vice-chancellor. The vice-chancellor is also a lawyer and assists the chancellor and acts on the chancellor's behalf, during the absence or inability of the chancellor to attend to matters.

3.3 Executive Officer

The position of the executive officer was created in 1997 to assist the bishop. The executive officer is an extension of the bishop's office, and does numerous tasks to free up the bishop to do what is essential to that office.

3.4 Dean

The dean is the senior cleric of the diocese, after the bishop. If the bishop leaves the chair of Synod, the dean may be asked to take over. The dean sits ex-officio on certain diocesan committees.

If the bishop retires, dies, or is declared to be medically incompetent, the dean would take over as administrator until a new bishop is elected or the bishop's health recovers.

3.5 Clerical and Lay Secretaries

The secretaries give notice of Synod, take minutes at Synod and Diocesan Council, correspond on behalf of the Synod, read motions and arrange meetings of Diocesan Council. The clerical and lay secretaries are elected at the beginning of Synod.

3.6 Registrar

The registrar is appointed by the bishop and maintains all orders, licenses, letters of institutions and other official documents on behalf of the diocese. The registrar is also responsible for the various official books of the diocese, including the one in which all the oaths of the clergy are kept. Like the chancellor and the lay secretary, the registrar is a volunteer.

3.7 Treasurer

Elected at Synod, the treasurer is a volunteer responsible for the financial books of the diocese, of receiving and disbursing funds and letting parishes know how much they are supposed to send in as part of their diocesan contribution. In practice, most of this is delegated to the finance officer leaving the treasurer to work on policy. The treasurer chairs the Finance Committee and sits on Diocesan Council and the Educational Trusts Board.

For a complete listing of synod staff and summaries of their roles, visit the diocesan website bc.anglican.ca/about-us.

3.8 Sessional Committees

There are certain committees which exist only for the duration of Synod, and are known as "Sessional Committees." These committees are appointed by the bishop.

a. Registration Committee

This committee keeps record of who attends Synod, and then, through the registrar, lets us know if we have a quorum, ensuring that all present satisfy the conditions for attending. This committee also hands out the registration packages. Members of this committee are not usually members of Synod.

b. Credentials Committee

If someone's right to sit as a Synod delegate is questioned, then the credentials committee would make the final determination.

c. Agenda Committee

This group comes into action if it appears that the published agenda needs to be altered. It determines what motions will be dealt with and when. The executive officer chairs this committee.

d. Expenditures Committee

If a motion comes to the floor of Synod which has a financial implication, it is the job of this committee to determine what it is, and let Synod know.

e. Resolutions Committee

Every motion which comes to the floor of Synod (Except for motions arising out of the report to the Response to the Bishop's Charge Committee) is reviewed and sometimes rewritten by this group. These are then shown to the movers for approval, to the chancellor for review, and then printed and distributed as part of the Convening Circular.

f. Scrutineers

Scrutineers are normally appointed from within the membership of Synod, but if there are elections, then rather than take members off the floor to count ballots, the regulation allows for non-members to be appointed scrutineers. In the past, members of the registration committee have done this important task.

g. Other Committees

Synod could direct a special sessional ad hoc committee for a particular purpose. For example, if a member moves that the diocese set up a homeless shelter. Someone else could stand up and refer that motion to a "Special Sessional Committee on Shelter Housing" which will meet during Synod and report on the proposal the following day.

Chapter 4: Rules of Order

The Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia follows parliamentary procedure, and for many delegates this is the first time they have functioned in that kind of environment. Although most meetings we attend in the church are informal, with large meetings like a synod, rules of order are needed to ensure the agenda runs smoothly and the gathering accomplishes its goals. (Canon 4.1E)

4.1 The Authorities

The Synod is governed by a hierarchy of documents. Most of them are contained in a book which every member of Synod should have, namely *The Canons and Regulations of the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia*. The documents which govern us are:

a. Legislation enacted by Governments

1881 Anglican Bishops' Corporation Act

1889 Anglican Synod of British Columbia Incorporation Act

These can only be changed by acts of the provincial legislature.

b. Constitution of the Synod

The constitution can only be amended by motion of two successive synods.

c. Canons of the Diocese of British Columbia

The canons can only be changed by a motion of Synod.

d. Regulations of the Diocese of British Columbia

Regulations are passed by the bodies which they affect, but must be approved by Diocesan Council and ratified by Synod. The Canons and Regulations are printed together for ease of reference. (Canon 10)

Canon 4.1E states that:

The rules of order governing the conduct of business of the synod shall be those contained in the regulations to this canon but in the absence of such rules or where such rules are silent regarding any matter of dispute or doubt, the rules governing the House of Commons shall apply.

Most people have probably heard of, and many are well acquainted with, Robert's Rules of Order, which is a system of rules based on those found in the USA Congress. Robert's Rules do not have authority over Synod. Instead, when our rules are silent on a matter, we refer to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. One of the chief differences between the Canadian and USA systems is that, in our rules, the chair's rulings cannot be appealed.

4.2 Rules of Order at Synod (With Commentary)

If you read nothing else before Synod, read Canon 4 and the regulations. They will give you a sense of how things happen.

a. When the presiding officer stands, all members shall sit and be silent.

This means that when Synod has come to order, we are to sit in our places and be quiet, unless we are standing to be recognized by the chair.

b. When any member is about to speak for the information of the synod, they shall rise and address the presiding officer.

Most people speaking at Synod begin by saying something like, "Bishop So-and-So, members of Synod, my name is Jane Doe and I am from St. Swithun, Swampland." Always identify yourself, even if you are well-known throughout the diocese. There will always be those who don't know who you are.

c. All motions and amendments to be considered by the synod shall be in writing and (excepting such as may be proposed by the bishop or Diocesan Council) with the names of mover and seconder. No motion shall be considered until the next sitting of the synod after notice thereof has been given, unless by consent of synod.

All motions and notices of motion dealing with business having financial implications, presented during synod, must be referred to the expenditures committee, who shall be responsible to ensure that before any such motion is adopted at Synod, all relevant information, financial or otherwise, is made available to Synod.

If you are presenting a motion that has financial implications, it would be wise to have all of those figured out ahead of time and worked out in the motion. If you want to spend money, tell synod where you want it to come from. Otherwise, the Finance Committee will say it doesn't know how your motion might be funded.

d. No member, save the mover of the motion, who is entitled to reply, shall speak more than once on the same question without the leave of synod, except in explanation of a material part of the speech which may have been misunderstood, and then the member is not to introduce fresh matter.

This says that you have but one chance to speak to a motion. If you sit down and suddenly remember a point you should have made, forget it. So, when you do speak, consider writing down the points you want to make on a piece of paper, and refer to them as you speak. If you have been grossly misunderstood, it is appropriate to stand up briefly and correct any such errors. If you are the mover, you may want to keep notes on people's comments, and then, if they are good points that you wish to rebut, reply to them at the close of debate.

e. When a question is under consideration, no other motion shall be received, unless:

This has to do with what motions take precedence over an "ordinary" motion.

(1) to adjourn;

To stop the sitting of synod, thereby stopping debate until synod recommences sitting. This is non-debatable.

(2) to lay it on the table;

This motion stops debate on the first motion, and puts it into limbo. The motion can then be "taken off the table" later in the sitting, or even at another synod. This is non-debatable.

(3) to postpone it to a certain time;

This is helpful if somebody needs to go out and get some facts straight, or if it appears that more time will be needed to deal with it than is presently available.

(4) to postpone it indefinitely;

This is effectively the same as (2).

(5) to refer it to a committee of the whole synod, or to a select committee;

Sometimes less formal rules are needed to deal with a motion, which can be done by a Committee of the Whole synod. Synod may also create a committee just to deal with a motion, and to report back at a certain time with recommendations. Or it may refer a motion to one of the committees already existing, such as Diocesan Council, Finance, Refugee, etc.

(6) to amend it,

Any member of synod may suggest amendments, or changes to the motion being debated. A "friendly" amendment is one which is agreeable to the mover and seconder, and does not change the nature of the motion. Otherwise the amendment must be moved, seconded, debated and then voted upon. If you have a suggested amendment, think it through and write it out. If you don't, you may find the motion referred to a committee.

(7) or to divide on it;

In other words, to vote on it. This is also phrased as, "That the question be now put." The term "divide" relates to the practices in the British parliament, where the members of the House of Commons get up from their seats, leave the chamber, and then come back through one of two doors, their votes for and against being tallied according to which door they reenter by. In Canada the clerk of the House of Commons simply calls the names of the members, and the members just say whether they are for or against.

and motions for any of these purposes shall have precedence in the order given above.

A motion to vote can be put on the back burner by a motion to amend, and that motion to amend could be stopped by a motion to table the whole thing, or to adjourn.

f. Motions to adjourn or lay on the table should be decided without debate.

In practice postponing a motion or referring it is usually non-debatable, but this is not in our rules.

g. When a notice of motion is given, it shall be read to the synod by one of the secretaries, after which it cannot be withdrawn by the mover without the consent of the synod.

We actually give notice of motion by photocopying and distributing it to the members or projecting it on a screen; this rule dates back to the days prior to photocopying. In practice, we always allow movers to withdraw motions until the motion is on the floor of synod.

h. Each member shall have the right to require, at any period of the debate, that a question in discussion shall be read for the members' information.

This is especially important if amendments have changed the published notice of motion.

i. A member called to order while speaking shall sit down unless permitted to explain.

You are called to order because you are "out of order" i.e. you are doing something which you shouldn't. It may be that you are debating a non-debatable motion or debating another motion.

j. All questions of order shall be decided by the presiding officer.

And there is no appeal, as is often the case in American assemblies. When the chair makes a decision, it's final.

k. An amendment to an original motion shall, in discussion, take precedence of such a motion; an amendment shall be first considered, then the amendment to the motion, and lastly the motion itself.

This means that you discuss and vote on an amendment to a motion, and then vote on the amended motion.

l. When a proposed amendment is under consideration, not more than one amendment to such amendment shall be in order, yet a substitute for the whole matter may be proposed and received, providing that it deals with the matter in hand.

One can not only move an amendment to a motion, you can move an amendment to the amendment. However, only one amendment will be permitted (this is to stop opposing sides from moving endless amendments). The rule does allow for someone to move "a substitute for the whole matter."

m. Except with the consent of the synod, the mover of a motion may not speak for more than five (5) minutes and the seconder for three (3) minutes, and each speaker thereafter for three (3) minutes. The mover may speak for three (3) minutes in closing the debate.

This is an elaboration of d. above. If the mover needs additional time to rebut comments, they may wish to ask for a time extension from synod before beginning to speak. The secretaries are responsible for keeping time, and usually ring a bell to signify that it is up.

n. When a division takes place, the votes of the members of the clergy and of the laity shall be taken in accordance with Article XIII of the Constitution.

Article XIII states that votes are normally taken collectively, but if the bishop or any two members of synod request it, the votes will be taken separately by clergy and laity, and that a double majority of both "houses" will be required.

o. In voting, those who vote in the affirmative shall first rise, and then those who vote in the negative.

In practice, we vote in three ways—by voice (and the chair determines by volume who is the loudest); by raising hands (this is the usual way); and by standing up (we do this when the vote by hands appears to be so close that we must count). If you think you want to abstain, see w. below, but, in general, if you are seated as a member you are

expected to vote. If you have reservations about a measure, try to amend it in debate, refer it, or do something, but don't just sit by and then withhold judgement. As a member of Synod, you are expected to be involved.

p. A question being once determined, shall not once again be brought into discussion in the same sitting, except with the consent of the synod.

In other words, if a motion has been passed, the matter cannot be reintroduced by another motion. This implies that notices of motion dealing with similar matters should be merged; otherwise the first one that gets to the floor of synod preempts the others.

q. No protest or dissent shall be entered on the minutes of the proceedings, but when required by any two members the number of the affirmative and negative votes and the names shall be recorded.

You may not like what happened, but synod having made up it's mind, your personal opposition is not considered to be significant to posterity. What is significant is the relative numbers involved for and against.

r. When the synod is about to rise, every member shall remain seated until the presiding officer has left the chair.

This is a traditional custom of courtesy.

s. Any of the orders of routine business or the rules for the preservation of order may be suspended by unanimous vote on the motion without notice.

On rare occasion it will be necessary to do this.

t. All committees, other than standing committees, unless named by the synod, shall be appointed by the presiding officer, and the names shall be publicly announced while the synod is in session, together with the name of the convener, who shall be chairperson of such committee.

u. Every report of a committee shall be in writing, and shall be signed by the chairperson. It will be included in the Convening Circular.

This means people can read it ahead of time, and know who is responsible.

v. The chairperson of the committee or some member on the chairperson's behalf shall explain to synod the bearing of any portion of the report, if requested by any member of the synod.

In the past we have set aside time for people to ask questions.

w. Abstentions:

(1) When the question is put, every member present, except the presiding officer, shall be required to vote on the same, provided that any member who wishes to abstain from voting for reasons of conflict of interest shall be entitled to abstain on notifying the chair of his or her intention.

This section was added in the last revision of our canons. In the Parliament of Canada, a real conflict of interest exists when a member "has knowledge of a private economic interest that is sufficient to influence the exercise of his or her public duties and responsibilities."

(2) The orders of clergy and laity shall vote together unless a vote by orders is called for. In order to be passed the motion shall require a majority of votes of the orders of clergy and laity voting together, and abstentions shall not be counted in determining the majority.

4.3 How to Make a Motion

Not all members of Synod move resolutions. Let's suppose that you want to get an issue on the floor of Synod. How do you do it?

a. Drafting a Motion

Start by reviewing previous synods' minutes. You will see that there are motions which carried, and are now "Acts" of Synod. Consider using these as models. Then draft a motion.

Some Tips

- Request some action from Synod or one of its committees, or perhaps of parishes and individuals. If you don't ask for something specific, don't be surprised if nothing happens.
- If your resolution has financial implications, consider where the money is supposed to come from. Be as specific as possible, don't just say "general revenue," but say, "from the program budget" or by "eliminating such and such expenditures", or by "increasing revenues from parish contributions." Be clear how much money is needed.
- Do not use preambles ("whereas" clauses). Save your argument for debate.
- While you may have an explanatory note accompanying your motion, use it for clarification, not debate.
- While anybody can draft a motion, please ensure that the mover and seconder are (or will be) members of Synod; further, they must be physically present on the floor of Synod when the motion is considered.
- Get your motion in as soon as possible. Prior to Synod you can e-mail or mail the motion to the clerical or lay secretaries of Synod. It will be included in the pre-Synod package. At Synod, hand your motion over to the chair of the Resolutions Committee, if at Synod, it will require approval of Synod to consider it.
- Motions are usually dealt with in order of reception, but there is no guarantee of this. Please note that motions coming from committees will have precedence over "private" motions.

Resolutions Committee and the Chancellor

The Resolutions Committee's basic function is to make sure the motions are in proper order, and that similar motions can be combined. It will also screen out motions that, in its opinion, are out of order. This means that sometimes your motion will be rewritten, or you'll be told to approach the issue in a different way.

Once the motion is in order and properly written, the chancellor looks at it. It is then copied and distributed to members of Synod. Once they are distributed then Notice of Motion is considered to have been given. The motion is then dealt with as set out in the agenda, usually no sooner than the next sitting after distribution.

4.4 Canonical and Constitutional Amendments

Before any change can be made to the canons, it must be considered by the Canons Committee of the Diocese and then approved by the Diocesan Council. (Article XVI of the Constitution).