**The Diocese of New Westminster Synod 2015**

**Longing for Community**

**Make notes individually, share in your parish group at the table and then share parish by parish at your table.**

1. What, if anything, was **the** **most memorable thing you heard** in the video or from the speakers on “longing for community”?
2. Picture the last Sunday you were present at your parish. **Describe the people who** **currently make up your church community**. Describe them in terms of age, ethnicity, cultural background, religious background prior to your parish, work status or vocation, and household configuration.
3. Who are the new people (in terms of age, ethnicity, cultural background, religious background, work status or vocation, and household configuration) that **you believe your parish community** **could appeal to** and offer a genuine sense of belonging to?

**The Diocese of New Westminster Synod 2015**

**Longing for God**

**Make notes individually, share in your parish group at the table and then share parish by parish at your table**

1. Describe **the God** **you, yourself,** **long for**.
2. **Where or how** are you experiencing **the God you long for** **in your parish**?
3. What are you hearing **from people who visit or who’ve recently come to your parish** about where or how they are experience God in your parish?

**The Diocese of New Westminster Synod 2015**

**Longing for Community and God in an Anglican Context**

**Make notes individually, then go around the table, allowing each person to share his or her responses to the first question only.**

Read through John Westerhoff’s list of descriptors of Anglican spirituality and temperament and their definitions (attached).

What components of Anglican Spirituality or Temperament are the most attractive to you and why?

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What components of Anglican Spirituality of Temperament are most powerfully expressed in your congregation? Where do you experience these?

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**Anglican Identity**

Anglicanism has its own personality, culture and ethos. The following is a shortened version of John Westerhoff’s articulation of Anglican spirituality and temperament.

***Anglican Spirituality***

**Liturgical/Biblical:** Anglican spirituality is **rooted in Holy Eucharist and a structured** **pattern of daily prayer**, both of which are **created from or** **shaped by the Scriptures**.

**Communal:** **For Anglicans,** **communal prayer comes before and shapes personal** **prayer**, that activity that connects us to God and to each other. Communal prayer surrounds and informs community gatherings and meetings in which decisions are made.

**Pastoral: Anglicans are relational** and tend to see their relationship to God as lived out and “measured” by their relationships to their true selves, other people and the natural world.

**Sacramental:** **Anglicans see the world, itself, as sacramental**, that is, capable of mediating the grace of God. Anglicans emphasize the two primary sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist as well as offer the other sacramental rites (confirmation, holy matrimony, reconciliation, healing, and ordination).

**Incarnational:** **Anglicans** **emphasize the incarnation**, God’s entry into human life and history. Accordingly, Anglicans have an earthy spirituality that affirms the goodness of life and the created world and believes that the extraordinary is to be found in the ordinary.

**Mystical:** **Anglicans experience** **union with God as happening over time**, bit by bit through a journey aided by spiritual discipline and prayer. Such a belief is consistent with the description of spiritual progress found in the mystics.

***Anglican Temperament***

**Comprehensive:** **Anglicans believe the** **truth is to be found in the tension between** **counter-opposites**. We affirm both sacred and secular, both the material and the non-material, both the mind and the heart, both the transcendence and the intimate closeness of God.

**Ambiguous:** **Anglicans are** **not “black and white” thinkers**, but instead affirm the ambiguity of experience and the value of learning to tolerate and embrace complexity and ambiguity in many aspects of human life and in the spiritual journey.

**Open-minded**: **Anglicans are people of a** **questioning faith**. We search for wisdom in many places and encourage people to listen to each other and to bring their honest questions to their spiritual life.

**Intuitive**: **Anglicans are** **at home in the world of image, symbol, myth, ritual, and the** **arts.** Very few Anglicans write systematic theologies. Instead we are writers, poets, pastors, and musicians.

**Aesthetic:** **Anglicans believe that** **beauty is the doorway** to truth and goodness and that beauty is a doorway to God.

**Moderate**: **Anglicans avoid extremes**, believing that a godly life is one that is disciplined, balanced and temperate.

**Naturalistic:** **Anglicans have a** **reverence for nature and its rhythms**. Anglicans believe in working to protect the natural world and its creatures.

**Historical: Anglicans** **value their historical roots** and learn from a careful reflection on the past.

**Political:** **Anglicans believe that** **Christian life has political implications** and that civic life is both a legitimate and important place for Christian’s apostolate to be expressed.