



LEANDRA LEWIS, MSc., EMBA
DIOCESAN YOUTH DIRECTOR

268-462-0151
youthdirector@dneca.com
P.O. Box 23, St. John's, Antigua

DIOCESAN YOUTH MONTH 2024 MESSAGE
FROM LEANDRA LEWIS
DIOCESAN YOUTH DIRECTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the Diocesan Youth Office as we observe Diocesan Youth Month under the theme, **"We are DNECA Youth: Living Together in Unity as God's Children"**. As young members of the Anglican community, we are called to live as reflections of God's love and grace, especially in these times when many of our peers are struggling with the effects of violence and division in our Caribbean region. Now, more than ever, we must embrace our calling to be agents of unity, hope, and peace.

The Bible teaches us about the importance of unity. In *Psalm 133:1*, it says, **"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"** Unity is more than just a word — it is a way of living, a commitment to love and respect each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. As God's children, we are united through our shared faith and belief that we are all made in His image.

One of the most pressing issues we face today is youth violence, which has brought pain and separation to many of our communities. It is easy to feel powerless in the face of such struggles, but scripture reminds us that we are not alone, and we have a role to play in bringing peace and reconciliation. *Matthew 5:9* says, **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."** As young people, we can be peacemakers by promoting understanding, patience, and forgiveness in our schools, churches, and neighbourhoods.

Here are some ways that we can bring unity and address the issue of violence among our peers:

- 1. Be Kind and Forgiving:** One of the simplest ways to bring unity is by showing kindness to everyone, even those who may have wronged us. Forgiveness is key to breaking the cycle of anger and violence. As *Ephesians 4:32* teaches us, **"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."** By forgiving, we open the door to healing and understanding.
- 2. Encourage Peaceful Communication:** Sometimes conflict arises because we don't take the time to listen to each other. Make an effort to listen to others' opinions and calmly share your own. By promoting peaceful dialogue, we can help prevent misunderstandings from escalating into violence. *Proverbs 15:1* reminds us, **"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."** Let our words be used to build bridges, not break them down.
- 3. Stand Together Against Violence:** As young Anglicans, we can be role models by refusing to engage in or support any form of violence. Instead, encourage your friends and peers to resolve their differences peacefully. When we stand together, we show others that there is a better way. *Romans 12:18* tells us, **"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."**

4. Get Involved in Positive Activities: There are many opportunities for us to make a difference through our schools, churches, and communities. Whether it's through youth groups, sports, or community service projects, we can bring people together and show that unity is possible. Let's use our talents and energy to create positive spaces where young people can thrive.

Let us remember the words of 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, "**Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body.**" We are all part of the body of Christ, and when one part hurts, we all hurt. But when we work together, we can heal, grow, and bring about the unity that God desires for His people.

May we be guided by the Holy Spirit as we seek to live in unity and peace, being a light to those around us. Together, let us show the world that as God's children, we are united in love, committed to peace, and devoted to each other.

Leandra Lewis
Diocesan Youth Director