



Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

The Anglican Church of Canada

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Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and People of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

April 7, 2017

My Dear People,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I write at this time to reflect upon certain developments in the life of our Diocese and to keep you informed of changes going forward. It is not my intention for this (rather lengthy) letter to be read publicly but instead shared in whatever manner you deem appropriate.

Cathedral Chapter

On April 17, the present **Cathedral Chapter** will be dissolved with all titles and roles concluding on that date (Canons and Archdeacons). I appointed this Chapter for three years on April 17, 2014 and I thank the members for their service and commitment to our church. The members of the present Chapter are: **Archdeacon Sam Rose, Archdeacon Charlene Taylor, Archdeacon Sandra Tilley, Archdeacon Nellie Thomas, Archdeacon David Pilling, Archdeacon William Strong, Canon Gerald Westcott, Canon David Burrows, Canon John Courage (who retains his title in retirement), Canon Donna Ronan (who retains her title in retirement), and Canon Josiah Noel.** A new three-year Chapter will be announced after Easter.

Our Cathedral

Much work has been done over the past year on the future of our **Cathedral of St John the Baptist** in St John's. Part of that work has been to reflect upon the relationship between the Diocese and Cathedral, and the Bishop and Cathedral. As you know, since Dean Josiah Noel left the Cathedral Parish in May of 2016 to become Rector of the Parish of Spaniard's Bay, the office of Dean of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador has been vacant. This is one of the senior positions in the Diocese and one of the several offices over which I as Bishop have constitutional power of appointment. The office of Dean has historically not always been filled by the Incumbent of the Cathedral Parish. This office, in fact, was often filled by the Bishop, dating all the way back to Bishop Llewellyn Jones in the 19th Century, befitting the Cathedral's status as both the Diocesan and Bishop's church. Despite the fact that there has been an interruption in this practice, the Cathedral of St John the Baptist has always been, and remains, the Diocesan Church. As many of you may know, plans are now under discussion for the Bishop and Diocesan Synod Office to move back to the Cathedral property. In recognition of the planned physical and symbolic return of the Bishop and the Synod Office to the Bishop's Church, I have decided that it is appropriate for me to exercise my discretion as Bishop of the Diocese to personally fill the office of Dean of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador at the present time. I thank both Archdeacon Sam Rose

and Bishop Cyrus Pitman for their service to the Cathedral on an interim basis during 2016 and 2017. On Easter Sunday, April 16, I will announce the appointment of a new Rector for our Cathedral to oversee ministry there and to work closely with me in Cathedral and Diocesan matters.

Faith in the Public Square

I remind you of a conference hosted by the Anglican Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador on **Saturday, June 3**, called ***Faith in the Public Square*** to look at the contribution of faith communities to the wider social fabric of our province. With invitations extended to members of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist communities along with other community partners and representatives of municipal, provincial and federal levels of government, the conference will explore the place of faith in Newfoundland and Labrador and examine the ways in which faith is expressed outside of places of worship. Recognizing that most Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans identify with a church, temple, mosque or synagogue, we will investigate their social impact in areas like housing, poverty and mental health. With many thousands of volunteer hours freely given by members of faith communities every year, the monetary value alone of their time is in the millions of dollars. Our morning speaker will be **Sister Elizabeth Davis**, member of the Sisters of Mercy, former CEO of Eastern Health, and recipient of the Order of Canada. Our afternoon speaker following lunch will be the **Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson**, 26th Governor General of Canada. In the second part of the afternoon both speakers will share in a panel discussion moderated by me and responding to questions from the audience and media representatives.

Gathering of City Parishes

I invite those of you belonging to our churches in St John's and Mount Pearl to a gathering at the Church of **St Mary the Virgin on Craigmillar Avenue in St John's on Thursday, May 18, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.** The meeting that night will consider the social and demographic changes affecting the eight Anglican churches in St John's and Mount Pearl in recent years and will discuss the challenges before us today. Two areas to be considered are **Ministry** (What can we do together? What can we *only* do separately?), and **Facilities** (Dealing with over-capacity in some churches. Finding new ways to use old buildings.). Along with the Anglican Churches in the region I am also inviting representation from other Christian churches like the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church. As Bishop, I will expect all eight Anglican churches in St John's and Mount Pearl to be represented at the meeting and in particular the clergy leadership, wardens and vestry.

In closing, I thank everyone for their dedication and commitment to our church. I continue to hold you and your parishes in my prayers. During Holy Week, I will be sending a message for Easter to all of our parishes.

With my every blessing,

+Geoffrey: Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador