

Dear parishioners of All Saints:

This Sunday, Feb 12, we are having the special vestry to vote on the motion to move forward in the next step to reduce the number of Anglican-Lutheran parishes from five to two. As Bishop White mentioned at our town hall meeting on Jan 29th where close to 90 of you were present, the vote must pass with a simple majority (50% +1 of those who will present at the special vestry). Please note we are having one service only at 9.30am and immediately following the liturgy will have the special vestry in the church.

If All Saints fails to pass the motion we are then choosing to “go it alone”. By allowing the motion to carry then we continue on the journey of discernment and conversation with our Anglican and Lutheran congregations here in Peterborough.

I would ask all of you to study Canon 13 of the diocese of Toronto to gain a fuller understanding of the next steps of the process (<http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/about-the-diocese/constitution-and-canons/>). As outlined in this canon, an assessment commission will be appointed by the diocese, which will comprise of lay and clergy from outside the Peterborough area including a Lutheran appointment. They will review that final recommendations of the Peterborough Covenant Commission and they make a recommendation to the college of bishops by the end of May. This commission will listen carefully to concerns from our respective parishes. At the end of the day this commission will recommend which of our parishes should amalgamate. We are on Feb 12 giving consent for this process to proceed. There may well be another special vestry at the end of May pending the final recommendation of the assessment commission.

The hope is that the beginning of the implementation of these recommendations would begin in earnest in September of this year. Much work will have to be done around the legal and financial implications of the proposed changes. Both the lay and clergy staff of our various parishes will be impacted by these changes.

We are a congregation that is struggling to live with transition. It will be important that we not be totally driven by process and programmes but by being in touch with each other via prayer and living out in practice the compassion that comes from our God. I believe that if we focus in on four

key things that may assist us in where God is at work during this transition we will be a more vibrant and alive community of faith. Will you join with me to

- turn us to a church shaped by the gospel
- to be a church shaped by locality
- to be a church shaped by friendships
- to be a church shaped by the Gifts of Gods people

I believe if we embrace these values then the journey ahead will lead us to a new and exciting future. We will be a different church, invited to let go and encounter the enormous grace of God. May we encounter God with each other; lift our thoughts beyond grief and sorrow, beyond anger and fear, beyond faith and doubt to the place of hope.

It is my strong conviction that these next few months are an opportunity to see signs of the kingdom of God. Here are three areas I trust we will experience those signs-

1. In our search after worship – the longing for God
2. In our willingness to serve the poor – longing for justice
3. In our obedience to walk in a humble manner – to have a right estimate of our own fragility and our dependence on the Grace of God.

Blessings to you all

Fr Geoff