



Anglican Network in Canada

News release

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Victoria parish votes to join the Anglican Network in Canada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8 March 2009

The congregation of St Matthias Anglican Church, in Victoria, British Columbia voted decisively on Sunday, March 8, to come under the episcopal oversight of Bishop Donald Harvey, Moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC), and under the Primatial authority of Archbishop Gregory Venables of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone.

St Matthias, which is one of the largest Anglican parishes on Vancouver Island, is the 16th former Anglican Church of Canada parish and the third on Vancouver Island to join ANiC in the past 13 months. The official vote taken in the special vestry meeting today – which was called in careful compliance with diocesan canons (bylaws) – was 94.4 per cent in favour of realigning with ANiC – excluding spoiled ballots. Of the ballots cast, 170 were in favour and ten opposed. Seven ballots were spoilt.

In addition, a declaration with 32 signatures was received which expressed opposition to the meeting and the vote. Letters of support were received from 20 members who were unable to attend, but affirmed their support for realigning with ANiC.

“I am delighted to welcome this parish which is so well known for its solid Bible teaching and prayer ministries,” said Bishop Harvey. “By aligning with the Anglican Network in Canada, they join a growing movement of Anglicans throughout North America seeking to remain in the mainstream of global and historic Anglicanism.”

St Matthias Anglican Church is an evangelical parish with deep roots in the community. Founded in 1911, this alive, growing parish numbers 375 members – ranging from young families to retirees – and has an average attendance of over 200 at its two Sunday morning services. In addition, St Matthias offers a mid-week service, 12 home Bible fellowship groups, active youth and seniors programs, and outreach and mission work locally, provincially and internationally. It is well known for its vibrant Biblical teaching and prayer ministries, with a focus on healing.

The people of St Matthias acted because they are determined to remain Biblically faithful and true to historic Christian and Anglican doctrine. It was a decision they took after months of systematically examining all sides of the issues, searching Scripture for direction, and seeking God’s leading.

St Matthias’ rector of 15 years, the Rev Ronald Corcoran together with the three other clergy in the parish – the Rev Rodney May, associate priest, and the Rev Glenn Sim and the Rev Dr Michael Pountney, both honorary associate priests – had earlier offered their resignations to the Anglican Church of Canada, asking for an effective date of March 8. However, the Bishop’s Commissary of the diocese chose to make the resignations effective February 26th and ordered the clergy to leave the church premises immediately. All four clergy members have applied to Bishop Harvey for ANiC licences and will receive these tomorrow.

The congregation of St Matthias will meet in the Fairfield Community Centre beginning March 15. During March, Sunday worship will be held at 1pm. Beginning April 5, worship services will be held at 8am and 10am.

The Primates recently acknowledged that members of ANiC are fully Anglican, and that the global Anglican Communion is clearly divided over these serious theological differences, particularly in relation to the authority and interpretation of the Bible. While orthodox Anglicans may be in the minority in Canada, they are the overwhelming majority worldwide.

The decision to join ANiC demonstrates the deep faith, conviction and courage of the people of St Matthias. Parishes that earlier made this decision have faced hostile court proceedings, eviction and other punitive action by Anglican Church of Canada bishops simply because they seek to continue worshipping in their buildings – which they paid for and maintained through the years – while the Anglican Communion addresses the theological divide in the global Church.

Today, ANiC numbers 28 parishes, three bishops, 73 priests and deacons and 3500 Canadians in church on an average Sunday. Members of the Anglican Network in Canada are committed to remaining faithful to Holy Scripture and established Anglican doctrine and to ensuring that orthodox Canadian Anglicans are able to remain in full communion with their Anglican brothers and sisters around the world.

ANiC is under the Episcopal authority of Bishop Harvey and the jurisdiction of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone – one of the 38 Provinces in the global Anglican Communion – which encompasses much of South America and includes Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay and Argentina. The Anglican Church of Canada is also one of these 38 Provinces.

Archbishop Gregory Venables, Primate of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, has responded to the need of Biblically faithful Canadian Anglicans for spiritual protection and care on an emergency and interim basis – pending a resolution to the crisis in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

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