



Anglican Network in Canada NEWS RELEASE

Parishioners disappointed by court decision

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A judge in the Ontario Superior Court in Hamilton, Madam Justice Milanetti, has ordered three southern Ontario Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) parishes to share their building facilities with a diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada pending the resolution of a trial over who is legally entitled to exclusive possession.

Representatives of the parishes of St George's (Lowville), St Hilda's (Oakville) and Church of the Good Shepherd (St Catharines) had argued that sharing the church building created untenable conditions for parishioners. They are now considering their options.

"We are saddened and deeply disappointed that the judge ruled in favour of a sharing arrangement," said the Ven Charlie Masters, rector of St George's Lowville. "We attempted this arrangement on February 24th and found it to be terribly difficult. Our parishioners were deeply distressed by the damaging effect the arrangement had on the life and ministry of our congregations. The congregations have experienced much hostility from members of the diocese, particularly since our votes, and they go to church on Sundays for healing and restoration, not to be confronted by conflict and hostility. We are also deeply concerned about the disruption to the community ministries and mission work and those who have benefited from these ministries. We will be consulting with our leadership and congregations to determine the best way forward in light of this decision."

In all three instances, the Diocese maintains highly suitable alternative sites within the immediate vicinity of the contested parish buildings. With 98 churches in the diocese, there is no need for the diocese to use the facilities of the three congregations, especially when they have actually been closing churches and have other under-utilized buildings.

The experience of the past two months since the parish votes, has demonstrated how little need there is for the diocese to offer services in the three parish buildings. The few former St George's parishioners who wished to attend diocesan services have an excellent option just five minutes away in St John's Nassagaweya, a church building with facilities for 80+, but average Sunday attendance of less than 20. No parishioners attended the few attempts of competing diocesan services for St. Hilda's. No competing diocesan services were attempted for Church of the Good Shepherd.

The three congregations have traditionally held two or more services each Sunday morning to accommodate their growing congregations. At least one service per week for each congregation would have to be cancelled as a result of the ordered sharing arrangement while the diocese has few or no people to provide a service for.

"It is impossible to accommodate the diocese in the building without creating significant disruption," says Cheryl Chang, a director and newly appointed Chancellor of ANiC. "We are looking at the reasons for judgment carefully to assess whether it would be appropriate to appeal at this time."

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. Since it launched its ecclesial structure last November under the jurisdiction of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, ANiC has received two bishops – Donald Harvey and Malcolm Harding – and 15 parishes.

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