



# Anglican Network in Canada

**Anglican Network in Canada NEWS RELEASE**

## **B.C. Judge Orders Congregation to Leave their Church Building**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 29 May 2008**

A B.C. Supreme Court judge, Madam Justice Allan, has ordered the congregation of St. Mary of the Incarnation in Metchosin (St. Mary's), to hand over their church building to the diocese of B.C. in the Anglican Church of Canada, pending the resolution of a trial over who is entitled to ownership of the building.

Like the two judges in the previous Niagara diocese's hearings, Mdm Justice Allan found that "the beneficial ownership of Church property is indeed an issue for future determination", and she was only deciding the issue of who should have interim use of the property while that process was ongoing.

Although there are two church buildings in the parish of St. Mary's, the larger building which houses up to 230 people and the smaller heritage building that houses 90 people and has a parish hall, Mdm Justice Allan decided that the diocese should have exclusive possession of both properties. St. Mary's congregation, which has a membership roll of 225 people, voted overwhelmingly (105 for / 14 against) to realign with the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, something the judge acknowledged was "unprecedented in the history of the Church". St. Mary's has an average Sunday attendance of about 130 to 150 people and use their church building throughout the week for mission and ministry. The small number of those who voted against the realignment could easily have continued to meet in the smaller heritage church and parish hall while the issues of ownership were being determined. Now, that building will remain empty as some 14+ people meet in the larger church and the larger congregation is completely displaced.

This will cause hardship to the congregation, as they will be forced to find alternate accommodations for Sunday services and to support their weekly ministries in the Metchosin area. "It is a great disappointment that the judge did not feel it appropriate to allow both congregations to continue meeting in the two church buildings while the issue of ownership was being determined", said Bud Boomer, spokesman for St. Mary's. "Many of us have paid for the building of this larger church and all of us have certainly maintained and supported it for many years. Now, we are being asked to hand it over to the Anglican Church of Canada, which in our view and the view of majority of global Anglicans, has left Anglicanism and abandoned the historic faith once delivered to the saints".

Rev Andrew Hewlett, associate priest of St. Mary's, said "We know that the secular courts do not understand or appreciate the deep and profound theological differences that have brought us to this point. Our Christian beliefs are at stake in all this and we have felt no protection within the Anglican Church of Canada. We are saddened that our ministries will be disrupted as we try to find accommodations for worship and mission while we know one building will sit empty and another will be under-utilized".

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Cheryl Chang, Chancellor for ANiC, said they will be applying for leave to appeal the decision.

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 16 parishes.

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