



Anglican Network in Canada

News release

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Parishes reach settlement with Anglican Church of Canada's Diocese of Niagara

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Burlington, ON – Three parishes of the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) – St George's (Burlington), St Hilda's (Oakville) and Church of the Good Shepherd (St Catharines) – have reached a negotiated settlement with the Anglican Church of Canada's (ACoC) Diocese of Niagara. This resolves a five-year legal dispute initiated by the Diocese of Niagara against the three parishes – and even against individual leaders of the parishes – for control of parish properties.

The settlement will be effective 1 June 2012 and entails the following:

- All three congregations turned over the keys to their long-time properties to the ACoC diocese today.
- Guarantees that neither party will initiate legal action against the other party.
- Agreement that each party will cover all its own legal fees.
- Each parish will retain specified worship, liturgical and memorial items which had been donated by members over the years for parish ministry, or which are of importance to the parishes' ongoing ministry.
- A financial settlement that includes the repayment to one parish by the ACoC diocese of the cost of specific property improvements, as well as a division among the parties of the proceeds of the sale of one of the rectories.

"We are deeply grateful to God for this settlement which frees us from the threat of further litigation," said Patricia Decker, People's Warden at Good Shepherd. *"We also are particularly thankful for the wholehearted support of parishioners throughout this difficult period."*

When the three parishes voted overwhelmingly in February 2008 to part ways with the Anglican Church of Canada's Diocese of Niagara this simply reflected a much earlier divergence on core theological issues as, over the preceding years, the ACoC diocese shifted its theology away from long-held Christian and Anglican doctrine. They responded by taking the matter to the courts – suing not just the parish corporations but suing individuals personally within the parishes. While parishioners were shocked initially that the courts did not see the matter as they did, they have come to the place where they can gladly walk away from the buildings they, their parents and their grandparents purchased and lovingly maintained through the years.

"We are not naïve about the challenges of continuing our ministry in temporary rented facilities," Patricia adds, *"but these inconveniences are completely overshadowed by the joyful anticipation of new ministry opportunities and the blessings God has in store for us as we take this step. I guess, in a way, we understand that we are giving up the building for the sake of Christ. It is a small sacrifice in light of what He gave up for us."*

About the parishes

St George's (Burlington) – www.stgeorgesonline.com – has been worshipping and carrying out its ministry from Crossroads Centre, 1295 North Service Road, Burlington since 2008. This congregation, which averaged 169 parishioners in attendance on Sundays, plans to build a new church facility in the near future.

St Hilda's (Oakville) – www.sthildaschurch.ca – averages 80 parishioners on Sundays and moved on Pentecost Sunday (May 27th) to facilities rented from the Knights of Columbus at 1494

Wallace Rd, Oakville. [Photos of this event can be found via the church's website.] St Hilda's has been deeply involved in its community, through the years, offering, among other services: free lunches and a safe place for high school students to gather and play each Friday; delivery of food parcels to local families in need; and monthly chapel services at a local youth detention centre.

Church of the Good Shepherd (St Catharines) – www.goodshepherdstcatharines.ca – averages 97 parishioners participating in worship services on Sunday. The congregation's new home, as of April 29th, is in the facilities of Grace Mennonite Church, 677 Niagara Street, St Catharines.

About the Anglican Network in Canada

The [Anglican Network in Canada](http://www.anglicannetwork.ca) now numbers 48 parishes with around 4000 parishioners in church on an average Sunday. Members of the Anglican Network in Canada are committed to remaining faithful to the established teaching of Holy Scripture and historic Anglican doctrine and to ensuring that orthodox Canadian Anglicans are able to remain in full fellowship with their Anglican brothers and sisters around the world.

ANiC is under the Episcopal authority of Bishop Donald Harvey and is one of 21 dioceses in the [Anglican Church in North America](http://www.anglican.ca) which unites hundreds of churches across the continent. The Anglican Church in North America has been growing at a rate of three churches per week since its inception and has set itself the goal of planting 1000 new churches within five years – primarily through reaching unchurched North Americans with the life-transforming Good News of Jesus Christ. ANiC is also affiliated with South America's Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, one of the 38 Anglican Churches officially in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

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