



4729 Ellsworth Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

March 13, 2008

Dear Clergy and People of the Diocese of Pittsburgh,

We are writing to you at this time as members of the Steering Committee of the recently formed group *Coalition for Realignment*. We are pleased to inform you that plans for the realignment of the Diocese of Pittsburgh are moving steadily forward and continue to have a strong, broad base of support throughout the diocese. We are further encouraged that realignment extends far beyond our diocese and is part of a worldwide movement of reformation in the Christian Church, which means there is a hopeful and vibrant future for biblically orthodox Anglicans.

Much has occurred in the Anglican world since we gathered in Johnstown this past November and took the first vote toward the realignment of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. In December, the Dioceses of Recife in Brazil and the Diocese of San Joaquin in California realigned to become dioceses of the Province of the Southern Cone (the most southern third of South America). In mid February the largest parish in the Anglican Church of Canada and a half dozen other Canadian parishes also realigned with the Southern Cone. In addition the Anglican leaders of the churches of Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Southern Cone, Uganda and the Archbishop of Sydney, Australia announced that they will not attend the Lambeth Conference in the summer of 2008 due to the actions of the American Episcopal Church. These countries represent well over half of the world's active Anglicans.

Sadly, in the midst of these historic developments, the leadership of The Episcopal Church has continued its move away from mainstream Christianity and stepped up its efforts not only to "walk apart" but also actively to block the decision many of us are making to remain loyal to historic Anglicanism. In early January the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Katharine Jefferts Schori, and a majority of the Title IV Review Committee charged our Bishop, Robert W. Duncan Jr., with "Abandonment of Communion." Lawsuits against those who have realigned are being carried forward by the national church's legal advisers at great expense, but, thankfully, with little success. Efforts are underway to rewrite the national church's disciplinary canons in such a way to make future dissent from the pronouncements of the church's bureaucracy all but impossible.

Although Bishop Schori issued the charges against Bishop Duncan, the alleged evidence of them was submitted to her by a tiny minority of lay persons and clergy within the Diocese of Pittsburgh who have previously tried to interfere with the legitimate exercise of authority by our bishops and other elected clergy and lay leadership of the diocese through the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County. Having failed in the secular courts they now attempt to accomplish the same through the ecclesiastical courts of the Episcopal Church.

We in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are aware of what is occurring in the wider Anglican world and how powers outside of the diocese are attempting to influence the decisions we make about our future. During these difficult "in-between" times we are humbled, hopeful and even excited about what God is doing with Anglicanism.

Locally, we have not been idle. The Steering Committee of the *Coalition for Realignment*, comprised of lay and clergy members from across the diocese, has been meeting to help navigate the path forward to the next annual convention when the second vote on realignment will occur. Our goal in these meetings is to help implement within the diocese the wisest possible action by the largest possible majority. The Steering Committee contains members of the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor of the Diocese, rectors and lay leaders of the four largest conserving parishes, and diocesan lay leaders of the Cursillo movement.

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In the coming weeks and months we will communicate more with you – both personally and through larger gatherings by invitation. Resources and other information will be made available on the web in the coming weeks and months. We, in turn, look forward to hearing from individuals and parishes. We invite you to contact the Steering Committee should you need additional resources, or if there are specific anxieties within your parish needing to be addressed. If you (individual or parish) would like to be recognized as part of the growing *Coalition for Realignment* and receive future communications, you may do so by visiting our website www.re-align.org.

Many of us in the Diocese grieve the breakdown in The Episcopal Church, and the great pain that is felt locally. Nevertheless we also look forward with profound hope and expectation to the good things that God has in store for us and for the work and mission of our diocese as it realigns. Please be encouraged that in the days, weeks and months ahead we will stand by all those who will join us as we heed God's call to follow our bishop and to reject the false teachings of The Episcopal Church. In the coming days we will also be seeking to address the many practical questions and issues before us.

We are convinced that we have a great future as faithful followers of Jesus, and that for the vast majority in our diocese, that future will best be served by realigning with part of that large majority of Anglican Christians around the world who are unashamed of the Gospel. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...” Romans 1:16.*

Faithfully in Christ,

The Steering Committee:

The Rev. Geoffrey Chapman, Convener
Rector, St. Stephen's Church, Sewickley
Member Standing Committee

The Rev. Jonathan Millard, Spokesperson
Rector, Church of the Ascension, Oakland

The Rev. Dr. Eric Taylor
Rector, St. Philip's Church, Moon Township

Mr. Robert G. Devlin
Fox Chapel Episcopal Church, Fox Chapel
Chancellor, Diocese of Pittsburgh

The Rt. Rev. Henry Scriven
Assistant Bishop, Diocese of Pittsburgh

The Rev. David Rucker
Rector, All Saints Church, Rosedale
President, Diocesan Council

The Rev. Donald Bushyager
Priest in Charge, St. John's Church, Donora

Mr. Kenneth Herbst
St. Peter's Church, Butler
Diocesan Lay Leader Pittsburgh Episcopal Cursillo
Member Standing Committee

Mr. Battle Brown
Seeds of Hope Missionary Fellowship, Bloomfield
Church of the Ascension, Oakland
Member Board of Trustees

The Rev. Karen Stevenson
Rector, Trinity Church, Washington
Member Standing Committee

The Rev. Paul Cooper
Rector, St. Christopher's Church, Cranberry Township

Mrs. Marilyn Clifton Chislaghi
Parish Administrator, Church of the Ascension,
Oakland

Mr. Stuart Simpson
Fox Chapel Episcopal Church, Fox Chapel

The Rev. David D. Wilson
Priest in Charge, St David's Church, Peter's Twp
President, Standing Committee