

The Right Reverend  
KEVIN ROBERTSON  
Area Bishop of York-Scarborough  
Bishop Suffragan of Toronto



The Incorporated Synod  
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January 25, 2017

The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

Dear friends in York-Scarborough,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 1:2)

It is my privilege to write this first Vestry letter to you as your new area bishop. As a parish priest for twenty years, I was fortunate to have served for twelve of those years in York-Scarborough – first in the Scarborough Deanery and then in the Eglinton Deanery. I now look forward to ministering in new ways within the area, the diocese, and the wider Church.

Firstly, I want to thank you for your very warm welcome. I was delighted to see so many of you at the consecration of the new bishops on January 7 at St. Paul, Bloor Street, and then again at my service of installation at St. John, York Mills on January 22. I have been grateful for the many prayers and good wishes over the past few months. Ours is a tremendous corner of God's vineyard, and we are privileged to labour in it together, for the glory of God and the extension of God's reign.

Secondly, I have been asked about my initial priorities as I take on new leadership within our Church. One of my first goals is to get to know the clergy and people of the 55 parishes in this area. I have a rigorous schedule of parish visits, meetings, and conversations lined up for the coming months, and I am eager to learn about the joys and challenges you face in your own contexts. I cannot promise to “fix” everything, but I do bring a strong desire to build the Church, and I believe that nothing is impossible with God. I look forward to visiting with you as soon as possible to find out how I can support you in the work of ministry, and also to offer a word of hope and encouragement in challenging times.

Another priority is to be a bridge between people of different perspectives. The decisions arising from General Synod in July and our own Electoral Synod in September have created deep concern for some, and great joy for others. Regardless of the differing perspectives, I hear an earnest desire to be faithful to God, and to walk in the way of Jesus. This is a difficult time for us, and I am deeply committed to the unity of our Church. In these challenging times, I will endeavour, by God's grace, to be a bishop for the whole Church. I hope you will give me an opportunity to do so.

I would also like to convey my sincere thanks to Bishop Patrick Yu, our recently retired area bishop. For the past decade, Bishop Patrick has shepherded the people of God in York-Scarborough with faithfulness and courage. I served as Bishop Patrick's Liturgical Officer for many years, and then as his Regional Dean in the Eglinton Deanery, and I have been grateful for the opportunities to work closely with him. He has been a faithful servant of Christ and the Church.

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Please pray for the new College of Bishops of our Diocese. I am honoured to join Archbishop Colin Johnson, Bishop Peter Fenty (York-Simcoe), Bishop Riscylla Walsh-Shaw (Trent Durham) and Bishop Jenny Andison (York-Credit Valley) in the work of episcopal leadership in our Diocese. As we build a new team together, we are grateful for your prayers and support.

I want to thank Karen Isaacs, who has served as Administrative Assistant for Bishop Yu, and now for me. Karen so capably manages the office of the Bishop of York-Scarborough, and is always the friendly voice at the end of the phone when you call my office. Karen will be moving out of this role in the spring in order to respond to a call to ordained ministry in our Church, so please take a moment to thank her for her excellent work before she goes.

Finally, I want to thank all of you, and especially those who exercise leadership in your own parishes. In the course of my ministry, I have had the pleasure of working with deeply committed clergy, churchwardens, lay leaders and staff in every place. Whether you are stepping down from a particular ministry, or continuing on, or taking up a new role at this annual Vestry meeting, thank you for your commitment and faithfulness. You are a blessing to the Church in our Diocese.

I am writing this letter on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. As our Church celebrates the beginning of Paul's evangelistic ministry to the Gentiles, please join with me in praying and working for the extension of the Gospel in every place, and for the renewal of the Church in our midst.

Yours faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Kevin Robertson  
Area Bishop of York-Scarborough  
Bishop Suffragan of Toronto