



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

Bishop Riscylla's Letter to the Vestries of Trent-Durham Area

Feast of St Peter ~ January 18, 2018

Dear Friends in Christ ~ grace to you and peace this day.

As I write this, please be assured of my prayers and best wishes as you gather for your annual Vestry meetings, and especially I thank all of you for your vision and work in fulfilling the mission of Christ.

It is with deep gratitude that I extend my Thanks to all retiring members of Vestry. Your labours and energy well spent have been to the Glory of God, and to the up-building of the reign of Christ here on earth. May you enjoy your new-found "free time," and be encouraged to continue to share your wisdom, insights and experience with your parish, who need your presence now more than ever as we work to do the business of Christ together.

We give thanks to God for the long and fruitful ministry of our Diocesan Bishop and the Metropolitan Bishop of our Province, Archbishop Colin Johnson. After more than forty years of ordained ministry, he has decided to retire at the end of this calendar year. He served as parish priest for many years in Ajax, and in his episcopal journey, Archbishop Colin first served in Trent-Durham as our Area Bishop.

Thank You to the faithful and dedicated clergy and laity of Trent-Durham. A word of welcome and appreciation to those who are newly undertaking positions of leadership and responsibility. Your service will be a blessing to God and to all of us here, as sisters and brothers in Christ together. Be strong and steady, knowing that you are doing a good work. From **2 Thessalonians 3:5** "May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ."

This is a time to be innovative, resourceful and healthy risk-takers as the body of Christ in the world – we are called to be wise stewards of the gifts and legacy with which we are entrusted. Our ways of doing church together are evolving – there will be change & challenge & growth & new development over the next year as we are engaged in responding to needs and anticipating together where there will be new opportunities to share the Gospel. Resilience and creativity are most commendable, and I assure you of my support in all that you do in the name of Christ.

Special mention goes to the work being undertaken by this generation's courageous congregations of St Barnabas & St John the Evangelist in Peterborough; with ongoing gratitude to Susan Abell who is facilitating their merger process, and a shout-out to the wisdom and humility demonstrated in the leadership of the Rev Mary Bell-Plouffe and the Rev Brad Smith. Everything is different as a result of the work being undertaken to right-size our Anglican communities in Peterborough, and yet, the miracle of coming together produces an even greater presence of Christians and witness to the grace of God in this community.

A word to strongly encourage your Vestries to pass the **Social Justice Vestry Motion**, which will in turn enable a strong voice of support in the Diocese for further lobbying purposes. The Diocese contains a large number of voters! When we speak, it carries weight, especially with those who listen to their constituents. The 2018 Vestry motion focuses on Quality Housing and National Housing strategies.

We hope that your parish will join in promoting this work by passing the motion and committing to continue working in advocacy and awareness for the increasingly desperate need for quality housing.

Our Trent-Durham Area Council continues to give meaningful and solid leadership in supporting morally and financially the many wonderful ministries taking place across Trent-Durham. Our Area Ministry day is coming up in early March. This provides both continuing education opportunities and community development in networking and fellowship.

With deep gratitude for their ministries and their deep commitment to **your** well-being,
to our Regional Deans

Victoria-Haliburton: the Rev Canon Ted McCallum

Durham-Northumberland: the Rev Jesse Parker

Wade

Peterborough: the Rev Gloria Master

and Oshawa: the Rev Canon Claire

to our **Area Liturgical Officer**

the Rev Gloria Master (whom you see at services of Celebration of New Ministry, Ordinations etc.)
and to our **Archdeacon**, the Venerable Stephen Vail.

The College of Bishops is most grateful and indebted to retired clergy who willingly serve interim ministries. I thank the clergy of Trent Durham who retired this past year, for their selfless and devoted ministries, and I wish them and their families good health and blessings in their retirement. Welcome to the clergy who have begun new ministries in Trent Durham and I wish them, their families and parishes fruitful and fulfilling ministries.

We remember in our hearts and prayers the loved ones who have died in our church families during 2017:

***Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let your light perpetual shine upon them.
May their souls, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.***

And now a piece of homework: Testify! (yes, this is the same homework as last year! If you missed the opportunity, here it is again. If you did share your story in 2017, go deeper in 2018.)

Please take and make opportunities this coming year, to share your personal stories of faith, miracles, answered and unanswered prayers, blessings, abundance and heart's desires – that is, share all or part of your faith journey with one another. Share in small groups, tell it in services, risk and dare to tell, out LOUD, what it is that brings you to church, that gets you up in the morning, that gives you hope.

May God bless you richly in 2018 and equip you in the work to which God has called you.

Yours faithfully,

Riscylla Shaw

Suffragan Bishop, Trent-Durham

Diocese of Toronto