



January 25, 2019

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)

As I begin my third year as your area bishop, I am reminded of the tremendous privilege of serving this part of the Diocese. York-Scarborough is the smallest area geographically, but we have the greatest number of parishes, and are home to more than a third of the Anglicans in the Diocese of Toronto!

In 2018, I had the opportunity to visit most of the 60 parishes and ministries of York-Scarborough by being present for Sunday worship, ordinations, confirmations, celebrations of new ministry, anniversaries, meetings with parish leadership, and many wonderful meals and receptions! I want to thank the clergy and lay people of the area for your warm welcome as I have travelled across the five deaneries of York-Scarborough. I have been grateful for your prayers and good wishes, and your desire to be co-workers in the building up of God's Church.

One of the priorities I identified a year ago was for us to become more intentional about mission. In March, I was pleased to gather with over one hundred clergy and lay leaders from across the area to share ideas, and develop strategies for mission. In May, I gathered the area clergy together for an overnight retreat in Niagara Falls with the purpose of learning about Mission Action Plans (MAPs). I am so pleased that a number of parishes have now developed a MAP, and have begun to implement the plan in their own context. For those who have not done so, or are still working away at it, there are resources available from the Diocese and the York-Scarborough Area Council to assist. Just call my office and ask! I was also pleased to be a part of the ministry of making disciples. I participated in the preparation of new candidates for baptism, confirmation and ordination, and was delighted to be in parishes to work alongside those seeking to deepen their Christian faith.

One of the highlights of 2018 in the Diocese of Toronto was the election of a new Bishop. On June 9, clergy and lay people from across the Diocese met at St. James' Cathedral and elected Andrew Asbil. Bishop Andrew was consecrated in September and installed as the 12th Bishop of Toronto just a few weeks ago. Bishop Andrew has stepped into the role with grace, humility and courage, and I am honoured to serve with him. We also had the opportunity to say thank you and farewell to Archbishop Colin Johnson, who retired at the end of 2018. Archbishop Johnson served our Diocese with faithfulness for over four decades, and we wish Colin and Ellen much joy in their retirement.

The Right Reverend Kevin Robertson
Area Bishop of York-Scarborough
Bishop Suffragan of Toronto



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As I reflect on my ministry over the past year, I realize that my work would not have been possible without the support of my amazing assistant, Sue Willoughby. Sue does a great job of managing my calendar and correspondence and ensuring that I am able to stay on top of 60 very different and dynamic communities. Sue works closely with our exceptional synod office staff. They are all just a phone call or email away.

I want to acknowledge the excellent work of our five Regional Deans: the Reverend Ian LaFleur (Eglinton), the Reverend Greg Carpenter (Scarborough), the Reverend Sherman Hesselgrave (St. James), the Reverend Shelley McVea (Toronto East) and the Reverend Heather Gwynne-Timothy (York Mills). Heather moves out of that role next month, and becomes the new Chaplain to the Retired Clergy of York-Scarborough. I am delighted to welcome the Reverend Lisa Newland as the new Regional Dean of the York Mills Deanery. Along with our area liturgical officers – the Reverend Geoffrey Sangwine and the Reverend Greg Carpenter – our Regional Deans are excellent resources for parishes, and provide me with invaluable advice.

Our area is also blessed with many incredible youth leaders, who are ably led by our two amazing York-Scarborough Youth Coordinators, Jillian Ruch and Ian Physick. In 2018, we increased their time in that ministry, and we are seeing the fruits of that decision. Just a few weeks ago, I attended the 2nd Annual York-Scarborough Youth Leaders' Summit, where those involved in this important ministry were able to share ideas and strategies for ministry with our youth.

In our Diocese, we are blessed with a College of Bishops, with whom the joys and burdens of episcopal ministry are shared. I am grateful to work alongside my colleagues: Bishop Andrew Asbil, Bishop Peter Fenty (York-Simcoe), Bishop Riscylla Walsh-Shaw (Trent Durham), Bishop Jenny Andison (York-Credit Valley), and Canon Mary Conliffe (Diocesan Executive Assistant).

Finally, I want to express my thanks to all those who exercise leadership in the parishes, missions, schools, “fresh expressions” and community ministries of the York-Scarborough area. 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.

As we move into a new year, may we do so with great courage and faith, confident that the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish us. (1 Peter 5:10)

Yours faithfully,

The Right Reverend Kevin Robertson
Area Bishop of York Scarborough
Bishop Suffragan of Toronto