

The Right Reverend
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Area Bishop of York-Scarborough
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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)

I have the privilege of writing once again as you gather for your annual Vestry meeting. Vestry is an important moment in the life of any parish. We are given the opportunity to look back with thanksgiving on the past year, and look forward with hope as we catch a vision of what God is calling us to be in the year ahead.

As I look back on 2019, I remember with joy and thanksgiving the opportunities to visit many of the 58 parishes and ministries of York-Scarborough. I was with you 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 people of the area for the warm welcome as I have travelled across the five deaneries of York-Scarborough. I have been grateful for your prayers, and your desire to be co-workers in the building up of God's Church.

One of the priorities I have identified over my three years as your bishop is being more intentional about mission. I often preach about the mission of the Church, grounding it in our baptismal promises. I am so pleased to report that there are now over two dozen parishes in York-Scarborough that have developed Mission Action Plans (MAPs) and have begun to implement them. Others are on the way. In 2019, the York-Scarborough Area Council set aside \$20,000 to assist parishes with the MAP process. Please consider applying for these funds through the Area Council.

As I look forward to the coming year, I want us to be people of hope. The statistical data about the Anglican Church of Canada released late last year paints a bleak picture. Yet my experience of being out and about in the parishes of York-Scarborough is that there is renewed energy, passion for the Gospel, and a commitment to try new things. We are not dead! Every time we celebrate a baptism, or welcome a newcomer, or allow the transforming love of Christ to work through us into the world, we are reminded that our Church is very much alive. I don't want us to live in denial about the realities around us, but I do want us to embody the living hope that is at the core of the Gospel. Please join with me in being agents of hope and positive change in our Church and in our world.

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 keep up with a ministry that has many moving parts. Sue works closely with our exceptional synod office staff. They are all just a phone call or email away.



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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 Lisa Newland (York Mills). The Reverend Heather Gwynne-Timothy became the Chaplain to the Retired Clergy of York-Scarborough in 2019, and I am so grateful for her ministry. Along with our area liturgical officers – the Reverend Canon Geoffrey Sangwine and the Reverend Greg Carpenter – our Regional Deans are excellent resources for parishes, and provide me with invaluable advice.

Our episcopal area is also blessed with many incredible youth leaders, who are ably led by our two York-Scarborough Youth Coordinators, Jillian Ruch and Ian Physick. Just a few weeks ago, I attended the 3rd 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: Bishops Andrew Asbil, Peter Fenty, Riscylla Shaw, Jenny Andison, and Canon Mary Conliffe.

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. Please be assured of my prayers each day as you carry out your ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

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 proclamation of the Gospel in every place, and for the renewal of the Church in our midst.

Yours faithfully,

The Right Rev Kevin Robertson
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