



The Anglican Diocese of Calgary
The Anglican Church of Canada

A Pastoral Letter issued on the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, 2007

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in the Name of the glorious and mysterious Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - whose Advent we anticipate and in whose Coming we rejoice.

The Season of Advent is a Season full of darkness and light. It is a time when we are embraced by God's gift of Winter; a time of short days and long nights, a time of snow covered skies and glorious sunrises dancing across the sparkling landscape. I pray that you and your family will make time: to prayerfully read the Christmas Story, to identify some act of charity that you as a family can fulfil, to share the message of God's Love for the whole of humankind through the gifts and cards which you send.

In your prayers I ask that you lift up to God our Anglican Communion. Since 1888, when our Diocese came into being, we – Anglicans in Southern Alberta – have been reaching out to our neighbours, near and far, in a great variety of ways in order to share with them the Good News that God's only Son came into the world because God loved the world. As Anglicans we have been faithfully following our Saviour's footsteps by stretching out our arms as He did, and does. Pray that as a Diocese we may continue to do so.

At the closing Eucharist of our Annual Clergy Retreat at Mount Saint Francis I shared some information about our common life. One item had to do with visits from our Primate. Archbishop Fred Hiltz has said that he is open to receiving invitations to participate in parish Centennial celebrations. However he has asked that such requests be processed through the Diocesan Bishop. I would be happy to issue such an invitation to our Primate on your behalf, just send me the information. And, yes, the Primate's calendar does fill up quickly!

Maybe you are wondering why the Primate set up this process? In our Anglican Way of doing things no bishop, priest, or deacon may act in a diocese without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop. This practice was established at one of the early Synods of the undivided Church in the 4th century. It continues to be the basis for orderly church government in the Anglican Communion today. The

Primate was following our Anglican Way when he set forth the process for Primateial visits.

Similarly the Primate and the Metropolitans of the Anglican Church of Canada were following our Anglican Way when they asked the Diocesan Bishops to share their Letter of November 29 with the parishes. I was happy to give permission for the distribution of the Archbishop's letter and I hope that you will think seriously about what they say.

Just to be clear, there has been no change in where we are as a Diocese with regards to the concerns that are before us a church. As a part of the world-wide Anglican Communion through the Anglican Church of Canada we uphold the Anglican Way. As a member of the National House of Bishops I am committed to ensuring that we as a Diocese provide appropriate pastoral care to all people regardless of their sexual orientation, and that the moratorium on the blessing of committed same sex unions is followed. As a member of the General Synod of our Church I am guided by the decisions which focus our attention on the task of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in Canada, in the Americas, in the World, so that we may have Healthy Parishes...Healthy Diocese. We have been given a wonderful task by our Lord and it will take all of us working together to faithfully fulfil it.

As we begin this Season of Advent I encourage you to meditate on the great love of God as revealed in the birth of Jesus Christ and to prayerfully seek God's guidance as you prepare to share the Christmas message with family and neighbours.

May God give us the wisdom of the wise men, the joy of the angels, and the faith of the shepherds as we journey through the Season of Advent.

God be with you.

+Derek

The Rt. Rev. Derek Hoskin
Bishop of Calgary