

A COVENANT AMONG THE FOUR PETERBOROUGH CONGREGATIONS

This covenant defines the terms of agreement for mutual ministry with the City of Peterborough among the Anglican clergy and laity of the four congregations in the city -- All Saints, St. Barnabas, St. John the Evangelist, St. Luke the Evangelist -- and the Diocese of Toronto.

We are guided by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada report *A Call to Human Dignity: A Statement of Principles for the Anglican Church of Canada in Dignity, Inclusion and Fair Treatment*.

The Vision

The covenant relationship among the clergy and the four congregations will be a shared ministry of love and trust to which Christ is calling them.

The vision we hold for this co-operative model is to sustain and strengthen the ministry of the Anglican Church within the City of Peterborough. The Anglican Church is committed to foster new and renewed ministries among our four congregations. We will build on the foundation of our existing ministries.

This covenant opens the door to limitless possibilities.

Affirmations

Given this vision, we make the following affirmations:

1. We affirm that for the duration of this agreement, the four Anglican congregations in Peterborough will remain distinct within the Diocese of Toronto.
2. Each congregation will be governed by its own corporation and annual vestry and will be responsible for its own budget and for the maintenance of its property.
3. Each congregation will continue to worship in its accustomed location. Any exceptions will require consultation with the Advisory Boards/Parish Councils.
4. The four congregations will seek ways in which their ministries may mutually support and enhance one another and will work together and with others as often as appropriate. When relationships become stressed we are committed to finding an appropriate forum to ensure that all have the opportunity to be heard when seeking a solution to their complaint.

5. The Clergy Team will consist of stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy (priests and deacons) whose work will enhance the ministries of both.

Principles

Given this vision of a cooperative model, the clergy and laity will adhere to the following principles at all times, taking particular care to adhere to them when conflicts arise:

1. **Transparency of Decision-making** -- Assumptions, expectations and obligations among the clergy and laity must be clear and openly shared. They must work to achieve clarity about the ways in which decisions are reached and carried out. The Biblical foundation of our commitment to this principle is that we promise to value one another as gifts from God and will endeavour to live and work in a respectful relationship. (*So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.* John 13:34 New Living Translation and *Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honouring each other.* Romans 12:10 NLT).
2. **Intentional Listening** -- When relationships become stressed we are committed to finding an appropriate forum to seek a solution to a complaint. The clergy and laity are committed to respect and will facilitate opportunities to be heard when feelings and criticism are expressed and reconciliation is sought. We are to be guided by what St. Paul writes (*Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.* Romans 12:18 NLT).
3. **Empathetic Companionship** -- We are one body; all are affected when one is wounded. (*Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace. We are all one body, we have the same spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.* Ephesians 4: 2-6 NLT)
4. **Clear and Prescribed Avenues for Challenging Decisions** -- In addressing conflict within the Church, Jesus highlights the importance of beginning with face-to-face encounter and hearing the evidence. If this is unsuccessful, a facilitator will be involved. (*If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offence. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.* Matthew 18:15-16 NLT).

Responsibilities and Accountabilities:

1. The Clergy Team will consist of those stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy in Peterborough City holding licence under the authority of the Bishop of Toronto. The Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge of the four congregations together will be responsible for seeking opportunities for shared worship, pastoral care and Christian education. One of the priests will be appointed as Co-ordinating Chair of the Clergy by the Area Bishop in consultation with the priests. They will meet for mutual support and regular planning as mutually determined.
2. The Clergy Team will consult with the Deacons and Area Bishop to facilitate extension of diaconal ministries across the congregations in outreach and pastoral care. The deacons will work collaboratively with one another and the Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge.
3. Deacons will function liturgically in their own congregations and only in other congregations with permission of the Incumbent/Priest in Charge of both congregations.
4. All clergy (Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge/Associate Priests/Honorary Assistants and Deacons) will meet together at least twice a year to ensure planning and enable best use of gifts of ministry.
5. The Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge will continue to meet weekly for prayer, mutual support and planning.
6. The priest of each congregation has authority to minister throughout the four congregations and to perform those offices and services that are performed by an incumbent in all the congregations. However, in a congregation other than his or her own, the priest must act in accordance with the directions of the incumbent of that congregation; and it is the duty of all clergy to assist one another so as to provide the best possible care for congregants throughout the area of the ministry.
7. A Group Council will be created with equal representation from the four congregations -- Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge, one Churchwarden (determined by the Churchwardens) and two others (lay or clergy) elected by each Annual Vestry. In 2014, the two others will be elected by the special vestries adopting the covenant. A chairperson will be elected by the Council.
8. The Group Council will seek opportunities for deepening shared relationships through: Advising the Incumbents/Priests-in-Charge on matters of worship, pastoral care and Christian education to encourage co-operation and sharing; and seeking and recommending shared opportunities in administration and property management to the Churchwardens.
9. The Group Council will submit a written report to the Annual Vestry of each congregation.
10. The Group Council will set goals and benchmarks for the duration of the Covenant.

11. The Churchwardens of the four congregations will meet together at least quarterly at a convenient location to discuss matters of mutual concern.
12. The Area Bishop is a participant and key member of the covenant -- to approve its commitments, particularly with clergy appointments and covenants, to establish review processes, and to ensure co-ordination with the Diocese.
13. Amendments to this Covenant may be requested by any of the parties (Area Bishop, clergy and congregations). Changes will take effect only with the consent of all parties and following a face-to-face meeting of all parties.
14. The Covenant will be reviewed after at least two years but before the end of the third year.

Motion to adopt the covenant:

Each congregation will present the following motion to its vestry:

“We support and adopt the Peterborough Anglican Churches 2014 Covenant.”

Upon all four congregations passing the above vestry motion, it will be deemed to be in effect.

APPENDIX

The resources used in drafting this covenant among the four Anglican congregations in the city of Peterborough arose from: a two-day retreat of the priests at Stoney Lake in early September 2013 with Bishop Linda Nicholls and a facilitator; the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada; the Church of England resource around collaborative ministry that comes out of Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Recommended Practice; conversations among clergy and laity of the Peterborough Anglican congregations commencing in June 2012 and in weekly conversations since then; and close consultation with the Area Bishop, Linda Nicholls. In part, it is also based on a draft covenant between two congregations in the city of Rochester NY (The Episcopal Church).