

Bishop
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THE DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE *Anglican Church of Canada*

October 7, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, grace and peace be with you.

Further to my letter dated October 3, 2020 I write to share with you the name of your new parish and share that today I have also issued the parish Deed of Election.

Clearly much discernment has gone into the choice of a new parish name. From sixty-five names submitted by members of the five parishes, the renewal team and ministerial were able to narrow the choice to five. The Ministerial then shared five excellent video reflections on each of those names. A tabulated overview was compiled, recording the names you felt either, very strongly; strongly; or moderately in favour of, as well as recording the names you were not in favour of.

The naming of a parish is a very important task and I was requested to make the final choice from the five names submitted. Two names stood out, both receiving the top two 'in favour' votes and the same smallest score in the 'not-in-favour' column. After much prayer, I felt drawn to the name, Immanuel, the direct translation of the Hebrew text, meaning, God with us, (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23). Both the I and E forms of Immanuel were submitted but as '*E'mmanuel*', is a translation of a translation, I decided upon Immanuel. I chose this in order to be true, both to the direct translation of the Hebrew and, to differentiate from other churches and our seminary named, Emmanuel with St Chad, here in Saskatchewan.

In all of this process we have perceived that this journey, is a holy call upon a holy people, to birth in our midst a new church. We have recognized that the Immanuel, God, has been with us on this journey, most evident in the unanimous decision by your diocesan council last Saturday. Equally we remember well our Scriptures of the prophetic call announcing the one to be born 'Immanuel'. May we all continue to witness 'God with us' as we welcome the birth of the new church, Immanuel, in our midst.

Humble shepherds, often outcasts of their society, yet heralded by Angels, were the first to be invited to see and to bear witness to the Immanuel. The Magi, outsiders from other lands, an unknown number, were also drawn together to come and see, and to share their gifts with Immanuel. The emerging vision of your new parish is that regardless of anyone's present circumstances, you are to be welcoming and inclusive of all, in a place where all gifts can be offered and received in the service of the Immanuel, the babe of Bethlehem, Jesus.

In my prayerful discernment, I also saw further confirmation of the choice of this new name. Change is at the heart of the arrival of the Immanuel, the Magnificat and the Benedictus are evidence of that. Change that even meant that the Holy Family had to leave the comfort of a home and seek refuge in a strange place until it was safe to furnish a new home in Nazareth. At this defining moment, as you are called to journey from the spiritual homes that have birthed or nurtured you, I pray you will all embrace the call of Immanuel, the call to change, that in faithfulness to the vision you receive, many will be welcomed and experience the birth of the Saviour in their lives.

The days ahead will indeed have their challenges, but take courage, God believes in you and has called you for such a time as this. Remember our God, Immanuel, is with you. Therefore, I pray that you will birth and welcome in your midst this new parish church and always be mindful of the call of God upon you.

The diocese of Qu'Appelle and the angels of heaven celebrate this news with you this day and will continue to pray for you.

God bless you all.

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Rob Hardwick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

+ Rob Hardwick

Bishop of the diocese of Qu'Appelle