



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

The Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick, Jr. D.D., *Provisional Bishop of Fort Worth*

TO THE CLERGY AND DELEGATES OF THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION:

You are all aware that, after the actions of former diocesan leaders on November 15, 2008, exigencies in governance still exist in certain congregations in the Diocese where the parish property remains under the adverse control of those who claim to have left The Episcopal Church. Under this adverse control these parishes have temporarily ceased to function as Episcopal parishes, and they are presently served by clergy under discipline which is in direct violation of the discipline of the Episcopal Church. The loyal Episcopalians remaining in these parishes have not yet been able to reorganize to elect a qualified vestry and to obtain clergy in good standing in The Episcopal Church in order to adequately protect the parish property and to continue the worship and mission of the parishes as part of The Episcopal Church.

It is my opinion that changing these continuing parishes to mission status would enable the Bishop and the Diocese to assist more directly in their reorganization. Diocesan Canon 34 provides the procedure for the Annual Convention to change parishes to mission status for circumstances other than non-payment of assessment under Canon 16, as follows:

CANON 34 CHANGES OF PARISHES OR MISSIONS

Sec. 34.1 In circumstances other than non-payment of assessment and the consequences thereof described in Canon 16, whenever it shall appear to the Bishop that the conditions render it advisable to dissolve a Parish or Mission or to change a Parish to a Mission status, he shall submit the matter in writing to the next Annual Convention. The matter shall then be referred to the appropriate Committee on the first day of the Convention where it shall lay over until the following day. The Committee shall then report its recommendation in writing to the Convention. In order to declare the Parish or Mission dissolved or changed, a two-thirds (2/3) vote by orders shall be required.

As a result I have determined that, pursuant to Diocesan Canon 34, conditions render it advisable to change the following parishes of the Diocese to mission status:

City	Mission Status
Arlington	St. Mark
Arlington	St. Peter and Paul
Bedford	St. Vincent

Breckenridge	St. Andrew
Brownwood	Good Shepherd
Brownwood	St. John
Cleburne	Holy Comforter
Fort Worth	St. Andrew
Fort Worth	St. John
Fort Worth	St. Michael
Gainesville	St. Paul
Grand Prairie	St. Andrew
Grapevine	St. Laurence
Mansfield	St. Gregory
Mineral Wells	St. Luke

Please note that this proposed change is not intended to be punitive or disparaging to any congregation in any way. Instead it is a pastoral attempt to recognize the unique reorganization struggles evident for each of these continuing Episcopal congregations and to enable the Diocese to provide more direct assistance to each congregation as needed for its governance, mission, and protection of real and personal property.

This proposed action also would not establish a new congregation or dissolve any congregation. Instead it would merely change to mission status these continuing congregations that have in most cases been Episcopal parishes since long before 1983. I would anticipate that after a congregation has formally reorganized and again meets the requirements of a self-sustaining parish in The Episcopal Church, the Convention would eagerly reconsider changing the congregation's status back to parish status.

Thus, pursuant to the requirements of Diocesan Canon 34, I am by this letter submitting the matter in writing to be considered by the Convention at its annual meeting on November 13-14, 2009. I ask that this matter be referred to the appropriate committee on November 13, 2009, being the first day of the Convention, where it should lay over until the following day, and on November 14, 2009, for the committee to report its recommendation in writing to the Convention. It is my recommendation and hope that the Convention will declare that these parishes be changed from parish status to mission status.

Very truly yours,

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The Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick, Jr.
Provisional Bishop