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Dear Fellow Anglicans of the Islands and Inlets,

Following the announcement in January of Bishop Logan's upcoming retirement, I wrote to you outlining the process that would be followed in the transition to new episcopal governance. I am writing now to address developments arising from the unprecedented public health emergency we are all now facing. Substantial changes to the proposed timing are required.

First, I will confirm that Archbishop Melissa Skelton commissioned the team required by the canons to assess the viability of the diocese to elect a new bishop. That work has been done, and approval has been granted to conduct an election. Within the diocese, much of the preparatory work has been done, some of the results of which are already on the diocesan website under "Electoral Transition."

Some of you may be aware that discussions took place recently about the possibility of asking Bishop Logan to defer his retirement, and to continue to offer episcopal leadership in these challenging times. I have to report that, acting on legal advice, the Archbishop has taken the position that extending an episcopacy beyond the canonical retirement age is not possible. Asking Bishop Logan to stay on is not an option.

Following the Bishop's retirement on May 1, Dean Ansley Tucker will assume the role of Administrator, in accordance with the canons. She will be ably supported by Executive Archdeacon Barry Foster, the rest of the Synod staff, and all the diocesan clergy. Let me assure you that in addressing these challenges, Archbishop Melissa expressed unreserved confidence in, and support for, the senior administration in this diocese.

Diocesan Council met (electronically) on Thursday, March 26. After careful consideration, the hard decision was made to defer the electoral synod that had been tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 27. It would have been imprudent to plan to convene such a gathering in person. An electronic virtual meeting, with over 200 electors casting secret ballots in two separate orders, presented logistical challenges that would have been difficult to meet in that short time frame. Further, there was a feeling that a virtual meeting would limit the opportunity for full and careful consultation among delegates, and might deprive some candidates of the opportunity to make themselves known fully to the electors.

If the present limitations on gatherings persist, the decision not to meet electronically can always be re-visited. Council has asked Synod staff to begin to look into the mechanics of holding such a meeting. For a variety of reasons, the day may come when virtual meetings become more acceptable, and even commonplace.

For now, Archbishop Melissa has agreed to be guided by future decisions of Diocesan Council as to the timing of the election. Such a deferral is consistent with the canons. Council will, of course, continue to monitor the situation with a view to calling for nominations and convening the election when it is reasonably possible to do so.

In the meantime, let us all pray for Bishop Logan, Dean Ansley and each other in these difficult and challenging times.

Yours in Christ,

Robert Gill, Chancellor