

Your Grace, Delegates and Guests

Let us pray: Loving and Faithful God, through the ages you have nourished your people who have come to you for guidance; Lead and direct us in our present journey, that we may discern the way ahead as the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior; By your Spirit, help us to preserve the best of what we were, enable us to let go all that hinders love of you, and strengthen us as a community of living saints to minister with eager hearts and wills. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Who is our Way, our Truth and our Life. Amen.

This prayer was a gift giving to us by Bishop Jim Cruickshank as we let go of the Diocese of Cariboo and began to wonder how we might gather as a God's faithful people in the Central Interior. Those were days in which we all had to be courageous and call on the Spirit of God to lead us into new ways with eager hearts and wills. We had faith in prayer and the Holy Spirit has been leading us in our discernment time – we have been lead through a process to discern a new name for our new entity.

- The **Territory of the People Anglican Church** will become our legal name. A name that reflects the best of who we are – a people who walk together as Indigenous and non- indigenous people who welcome all people into our community of faith.
- The **Bishop's Task Force for the Election of a Bishop** has guided us through a process of receiving approval from the Provincial Synod of BC & Yukon to move into this new entity.
- Provincial Synod petitioned **General Synod** and we receive their approval to move forward as the Territory of the People.
- The Bishop Task Force began the process of registration under the **BC Societies Act** and took on the task of writing a new constitution that reflects our unique governance model. I am delighted that Bud Smith and Suzanne Jackson, our legal advisors have guided this team of writers. Other members of our team are Dwight Oatway, Ken Munro, Ken Gray and many others who gave us feedback and helped us shape what will come before you tonight.
- Today you will have this new constitution presented to you and tomorrow we will vote on it with the necessary changes that you will now input.
- Once we have affirmed the new constitution in some form, it will go to the **Province Executive Council** for ratification (I am hoping on June 3) and then it will be filed under the BC Societies Act.
- The next step for us once we are a new society is to renew our CRA charity status under our new status.
- Along with the work on our Charity Status we will begin the work of writing a new policy for the Election of a Bishop. It would be my hope that we can have all this work complete by April 2018. At that point you will be in a position to elect a Bishop under your new governance model and have the policies you will set to accomplish this. I am proud to say that I will be the last Bishop of the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior.

All this work will bring us into the Promised Land under our own unique way of living together and working out God's mission in the Central Interior. You know that I have often related our journey to the moment that Joshua was called by God to take over the leadership from Moses and to lead the Israelites into a new territory – a land that God had promised them. Well my friends – we are in the

Promised Land – the territory that God has blessed us with and now we have developed a way to live together in harmony and putting all our efforts into God’s mission **in** God’s new creation that we have been lead to by the Spirit of God. Over time you will have to adapt and change what we have done but what will not change is your faithfulness to being the family of God, walking together as a fine example of the best of God’s people commit to a ministry of healing and reconciliation for all God’s people.

It is my hope that we will continue to work at healing and reconciliation within the next few years. Our Primate, Fred Hiltz and General Secretary, Michael Thompson have invited us to join them by focusing within our parish churches for the next twenty-two days , from May 31 – June 21, on the work of healing. Early in this period is the Day of Pentecost, when the people gathered in Jerusalem heard the good news in their own languages. With prayer, song, and story, we are invited to mark the early days of Pentecost as an opportunity to renew our commitment to the work of healing. Let us take up this invitation and highlight within all our parishes the important work of healing. Along with this initiative we are invited to also financially support the **Anglican Healing Fund**, which has blessed us abundantly over the years. While the Diocese of Cariboo we received over \$75,000 to fund 7 projects and the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior received over \$161,000 to fund 15 project. One example of a project funded is the \$25,000 grant to the Community Healing Committee in Lytton to host the first healing gathering in 1992 which continue today as an important healing gathering each July. Numerous projects promoting the recovery of indigenous languages have been funded by the Anglican Healing Fund and it is important for us to continue to support this work throughout the territory. I am asking our Dean Ken Gray to give leadership on this initiative and to post on our website resources to help us participate in healing the wounds that we helped to impose in the past and to encourage us learn to walk together as God’s people is a new way.

Along with our efforts in each parish church to learn and promote healing I am inviting you to help us raise funds for the Anglican Healing Fund by hosting one fundraising event this coming year and together we can support this important initiative of recovery of language for our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

A second initiative that I wish to hold before you at this Assembly is our need as a faith community to be aware of the effect of **suicide** on our families and communities. The stats show that the rate of suicide in our Indigenous community is higher than the general population. This is not only a first nations issue but one that many in our communities deal with daily. I am deeply aware that many within all of our communities are dealing with this difficult issues and I am inviting all of us to find ways to provide pastoral care training and support for those who struggle most with the loss of family and friends due to suicide and for those who provide care. We are privileged to have two people from the Indigenous community within our midst who attended an awareness and training event this spring offered by the Indigenous Ministries of the National Church. It is my hope that we will have a report at this Assembly by Rholfe and Jordan so that we might all learn how we can move forward with this issues.

Over the past years we have engaged in many conversations on how we will do ministry into the future. With the challenges we are facing with declining resources – human and financial – we are called to reimagine ministry leadership within our communities. The **Ministry Committee** has been meeting to discern a way forward for us. In this Assembly we will be presented with a new vision for ministry and

some guiding principles that are meant to help us with the tasks of support leadership within our communities. It calls upon all baptized people to explore their gifts and talents and to ponder how they might offer them in new leadership roles with our faith communities. The need for Christian formation, education and training for ministry and to discern new vocations is pressing us to give new attention to how give leadership in ministry. We are blessed that St Alban's Ashcroft has worked hard for some years now to discern a new model of ministry for themselves, and this past year we all celebrated the ordination of Angus and Martina and the induction of a new leadership team for St Alban's. We have a test case in our midst and can all learn much from them as we journey into new model of being God's faithful people in the territory.

Our Companion Diocese Partnership with the Diocese of Montreal has blessed us deeply over the past ten years. We welcome our partners with us at our Assembly and look forward to hearing from Bishop Mary Irwin Gibson on Saturday and again on Sunday as our preacher. You cannot know how thrilled I am to have Bishop Mary with us – we have had a long-time friendship spanning about 35 years and to now share in Episcopal leadership with her is a true blessing to me. Our Companion Diocese covenant calls us to pray faithfully for one another and to share the stories of our communities and ministries. And we will hear of some of these initiatives in the report of the Companion Diocese Committee.

As we journey forward into a new creation, we have had to change our way of communication with one another. In a very difficult decision our beloved Anglican Link was cut from our budget. With this change we need to find ways to continue to tell our stories to one another and to share the wonderful events that are happening weekly throughout the territory. The new website is one opportunity for us to share. However, I am aware of the number of people within our community that do not have access to the internet. One way we can improve our communication is through the electronical newsletter that is sent out from the Territory office about every two weeks. It will include more information we will need to rely on members within each parish to find ways to circulate it to those who feel cut off from the wider church.

I am deeply aware of our need to find new ways of recognizing the outstanding ministries of many lay people in our communities. I am told that long ago, Bishop Snowdon recognised individual by presenting them with the **Bishop's Cross**. I would hope that we can develop in the coming year a new award to recognize and celebration those laity within our communities who do outstanding ministry amongst us.

I commend to you the **reports of all** of our organizations both within the Central Interior and beyond through our commitment to The Provincial Archives, Sorrento Centre and Vancouver School Theology. In the pages of our reports we see much to celebrate and to give thanks for all who have given leadership and by working on the various committees which give us a strong foundation to build on as we become a new creation.

We have been blessed with many people who help us on the journey, often quietly in the background supporting all of us.

- The APCI staff – Bonnie, Sylvie and our new bookkeeper for serving all of us well with their care of the payroll and accounts. Barb Farrell has been a valuable member of our APCI team keeping

us all informed and organized with her amazing ability of tracking our meetings and communicating the important work and events of APCI.

- Our archival staff, Dale Drodza, did an amazing job last summer going through the Cariboo files and we are blessed to have her again to begin the task of preparing the APCI files to go to the Archives and to help with the research that we need to gather as background to our story, as we develop our plan for the documentary of Cariboo Remembered.

- The Resource Centre staff – Gordon and Mary Dove who have developed a wide variety of resources to use in parishes, a network of parish coordinators, and have expanded their ministry to include the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer and PWRDF ministries within the Central Interior.

- The many people who have given leadership on the Administration Committee and Coordinating Council and the many task forces, committees, and sub groups who keep the Central Interior journeying forward into a new creation.

- The Lay leadership who do countless tasks to ensure that worship, pastoral care, administration and property is cared for in parishes week after week by leading worship, visiting the sick and shut-in, doing the accounts and keeping the statistics, and the work of maintaining the parishes both spiritually and physically.

- The Ordained team of deacons and priests are a joy to share in ministry with around the Central Interior. Despite the fact that many spend hours driving from one parish to another, their loyalty and devoted servant leadership is remarkable and serves our community and the wider church very well.

- My daughter Patricia certainly is one of those who has a quiet presence in the background; she lovingly supports me in many ways - loads the car for one more trip, ensures I have all I need on each trip, takes phone messages for me, and keeps our home life running smoothly which gives me great peace of mind while I travel. I know you will join me in wishing her God's blessing as she prepare to marry Cameron in 2018.

- Archbishop John Privett's leadership amongst us is remarkable. Since we last met as an Assembly, Archbishop John has support us in our journey to define a future for ourselves and has been faithful to ensuring that the whole of the Province is served well by moving along the work of Safe Church policies and the developments of the Ministry Committee.

- The Financial Officer of the Central Interior, Dwight Oatway, has for the past seven years been the steady hand on all aspects of the life of Central Interior. Along with serving on the Administration Committee and Coordinating Council, he has travelled to events to represent the Central Interior at the Council of the North and the Provincial Consultation. His work with the staff, auditors, investment advisors, insurance company, Council of the North, and the many other daily tasks he does on your behalf, deserves a special thank you from all of us.

- It is my privilege as your Bishop to recognize those in our community who have served us faithfully and with great distinction by their ministry over many years. I am pleased to announce that in the near future it will be my delight to install as Canon: **Molly Platz** of the parish of St Alban's Ashcroft for her many years of faithful service to that community and the wider APCI community.

Together as we move into a new creation we will call on all the gifts and talents of each of us to embrace the future, trusting with faith and courage in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is working within us, amongst us and is drawing us forward to do God's mission and ministry in the Central Interior as a new creation – God's grand plan for us as God's faithful family in the Territory of the People.