

STAFFING CHANGES:

I would like to provide some additional background that led me to make this change in our Diocesan Clergy leadership structure.

Let me reiterate that these are staffing changes that I have made as Bishop. I made this decision after seeking input from a host of current leaders, starting with my Canon to the Ordinary, over several months. Once I had the design, I went to our Standing Committee, my council of advice. I sought input from the potential candidates. I engaged with Wardens from five congregations, followed by in-depth conversations and discernment with vestries. All five vestries voted to enter these partnerships for a three-year period. I also sought the input of Vice-Chairs of Diocesan Trustees and Diocesan Council, Chairs of Commission on Ministry and Diocesan Human Resource Committee, the Diocesan Chancellor, and a few of my Bishop colleagues. I had a lot of input before making the decision to launch this. We are going into this with the understanding that we have not done this in the recent past and we *will make the necessary adjustments as we go*.

This decision follows my sense of how to organize ourselves to optimize our help across the Diocese in addressing these vital focus areas through an empowerment and equipping model. They are based on observations, experience, discussions, and reviews over the past few years across the Diocese weighing on current staffing effectiveness. The last time we took an informal look at staffing was five years ago, when we made some tangible changes based on what we learned then. The single clarity in all our analysis currently is that the job description for the Canon to the Ordinary position is an impossible one for a Diocese that is as curious and forward looking as ours. This was a staffing assessment, not a governance decision, though I sought and got valuable input.

We have figured out our way through many pastoral situations both organically and in more directed ways. Over the past year we've worked closely with Wardens and coordinated with retired and active clergy, to provide consistent clergy leadership for longer term pastoral situations at Christ Church, Rochester, Good Shepherd, Webster, St. James, Watkins Glen and St. John's Catharine – supporting congregations over difficult weeks and months. In all of these situations, I was involved directly. In collaboration with the local leaders we figured out the best ways to address these situations. This is apart from the several instances when our clergy have supported one another by stepping in when an emergency came up. I am proud of the collegial bonds of shared Diocesan ministry that is constantly experienced. *To be sure, in case of any major pastoral emergency, please contact me directly or through Carolyn*. I have responded pastorally with discretion in major pastoral emergencies in the past and will continue to do so in future.

These Dean appointments are partnerships with them and their vestries. They are competent leaders and have my full confidence. Let us give them the time and space to live and move and figure out their being in their new roles. We cannot adjust their time-commitments without living into it. I will be in discernment with them and their vestries to clarify criteria by which we will monitor and review the progress of these partnerships.

We now have four Diocesan Deans, a designated Deacon Coordinator, along with five District Deans to help ensure that we are organizationally prepared to help in any eventuality. I ask for your trust as we strive to deliver more services, not less, and do this effectively in response to the emerging ministerial and missional needs.

I realize that it is a significant change and the Deans, and I promise to over communicate as we go forward and live into this reality. Small church, formation, liturgy, discernment and transition resources and best practices are forth coming. I hope you will show them some love and offer your prayers, insights and support.

Please contact me if you have questions about these staffing changes. As with any change, some people don't like it, some do, and most are curious to see how it works or doesn't. This is normal. I only ask for your trust and your prayer. In going down this path, we have chosen the road less travelled because we believe God provides when we trust!