

BASIC BACKGROUND

■ WHAT IS THIS TRIAL ABOUT?

In the last year, when Anglican churches voted to seek temporary Episcopal oversight under ANiC (The Anglican Network in Canada) various dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada responded by seeking to seize properties and replace elected trustees. The purpose of joining ANiC was to remain in communion with the worldwide Anglican Church and receive leadership from an orthodox bishop. St. John's and three other local ANiC churches have asked the Supreme Court of B.C. to clarify who are the proper trustees of our congregations (the ones we elected or the ones appointed by the diocese) and for what purposes the buildings are held in trust. We are asking the court to recognize we are committed to remaining Anglican and for continuing to worship in our churches. We are the first churches asking the court to rule on these issues. Previous cases have only involved rulings on interim use of buildings.

■ ISN'T IT ABOUT BLESSING SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS?

The blessing of same-sex unions is the presenting issue. The core issue is a deeply profound theological difference in the understanding and interpretation of scripture and what it means to be "Anglican". It is clear that the Diocesan leadership no longer believes, adheres to and or seeks to preserve the core doctrines of the Anglican Christian faith, such as the uniqueness of Jesus, the physical resurrection, and the authority of Scripture, or the accepted teachings of the Anglican Communion.

■ A COURT HEARING ABOUT CHURCH SEEMS EXTREME .

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Over the last ten years, the leadership of St. John's has been working through local, national and international processes to resolve this issue. There has been no resolution that would keep St. John's in communion with the world wide Anglican Church for this generation and the next. We have sought mediated solutions but none has proved successful. In August 2008, after the Diocese of New Westminster sought to seize the property and replace the clergy and trustees at St. Matthew's Abbotsford and St. Matthias & St. Luke, the trustees of these churches, along with St. John's Shaughnessy and Church of the Good Shepherd, were forced to go to the courts for clarification. This decision, as with all the decisions related to this matter in the last 10 years, was done after much prayer and the reviewing of alternatives. It was not done in haste.

■ HOW CAN I HELP OR PARTICIPATE?

There are a number of ways in which you can participate and help as individuals, families, and within your small groups.

PRAY: Please include in your individual, family, and Bible study prayer times, prayers for the trial process, God's protection, His will to be done and growth in His kingdom in Vancouver.

GIVE: You can give to the legal fund through the church offering or by dropping off your gift to the church office. Please make cheques out to ANiC – St. John's Project and designate it to the legal fund.

ENGAGE: Be prepared to speak about your faith when the opportunity arises and seek to explain the Gospel.

HELPFUL REMINDERS

■ WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The New Testament definition of the church is the people of God. The buildings are important as they provide a place for ministry. In essence, the church is the family and the church buildings are the family home. The home helps the family relate to one another and in welcoming visitors and friends, and we care about it as we would our home. The family is going to stay together but may move homes.

■ HOW DO I RESPOND TO MY FRIENDS ABOUT THIS?

Honestly and openly. We do not want to be in court. This is a dispute on the church's teaching on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and how he offers us relationship with God. It may appear that this whole debate is about same sex unions, but it is much deeper than that. We recognize this trial is not wanted and is tough for both sides. We desire to continue to tell people about the good news of Jesus.

■ WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

It does not mean we have grounds to be entitled or self-righteous. It means we know we need a saviour outside of ourselves. A Christian is someone who recognizes that while there is truth and goodness, it is impossible for us to know these without God's help. Truth and goodness come out of a relationship with God. To have this, we must accept what he has done for us through the death and physical resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ. A Christian believes that it is only in recognizing Jesus' perfect sacrifice as a payment for our sin, that we are able to live in right relationship with God and others. Our response is to serve Christ, love one another and glorify God.

■ WHAT CAN I EXPECT AS WE MOVE THROUGH THIS TRIAL?

It is a public trial and there will likely be press coverage. There will be lots of conflicting information and misinformation, some of it may be personal and directed at the leadership of St. John's. It is important to know this process may be confusing and frustrating at times and we need to be faithful and continue to walk through it, resting in the knowledge that God is ultimately in control and we trust in Him. You will likely have periods of anxiety, frustration, anger, and sadness. That is okay. God wants us to bring these things to him in prayer and so we should.

■ IS GOING TO COURT CONTRARY TO 1 CORINTHIANS 6?

The Apostle Paul's rebuke of the church at Corinth in going to court was because it was being motivated and done out of litigiousness, greed, or possibly revenge. The situation we find ourselves in is different. St. John's Trustees are trustees of the gospel and the buildings serve the gospel. There is a requirement to attempt to conserve the property if it appears that the ministry of the gospel will be futhered by retaining it and will suffer a setback by losing it. Going to court has not been done in haste.

DURING THE TRIAL

■ CAN I GO TO THE COURT, IF I WANT?

YES! It would be very helpful for the whole trial to have people attend. If you can, please do. Court house details are: 800 Smythe Street, May25-June12, Monday-Friday, 10am-12:30pm, 2pm-4pm. A key aspect of our judicial system is that it is open to the public as much as possible. So any member of the public is welcome to attend the trial. If you attend, please be quiet and respectful.

■ WHAT IF THE PRESS APPROACHES ME?

You are never under any obligation to speak to any member of the media on any topic. Just be polite and excuse yourself if you do not wish to engage in conversation. It is very difficult to misquote you on something that you did not say! Should you choose to speak, remember that only a very tiny fraction of what you say will be used and you will have no control over how it is used.

■ **WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION ON WHAT IS HAPPENING?**

We will update our website as often as possible. Court proceedings are drawn out and technical, so don't expect to be able to glean a lot of information during the trial. Be aware that amateur analysis either by yourself or someone else is often inaccurate.

■ **IF I WANTED TO PRAY WITH SOMEONE, WHERE CAN I GO?**

There are a number of different regular prayer services you can attend, such as Keeping Company with God, Even-song, and Parish Prayer. Monday to Friday, from May 19 -June12, there will be Morning Prayer at 7am, Noon Day Prayer at 12pm, and Evening Prayer at 5:30pm. Other prayer times may be scheduled, so please check the website and parish life notes. There is a prayer that has been written for us to pray during this time. You can find a copy on the website and at the office.

■ **WHEN WILL WE KNOW THE RESULT?**

The trial begins on May 25th and is scheduled for three weeks. The most likely scenario would be to have a ruling between late summer and Christmas.

AFTER THE TRIAL

■ **WHAT HAPPENS IF WE LOSE THE BUILDING IN THE JUDGEMENT? WHEN WILL WE HAVE TO LEAVE BY?**

We don't know, but the court would likely give us time for an orderly hand over of the property.

■ **WOULD WE APPEAL THE JUDGEMENT?**

That depends on a few factors. What is the basis of the judgement, what are our resources, and what is the likelihood of success? We would make the decision after much prayer and consultation.

■ **WHERE AND HOW WILL WE MEET IF WE LOSE THE PROPERTY? WILL WE SPLIT UP?**

We would all move together. We would remain St. John's and worship elsewhere.

■ **HOW WILL WE HOLD SERVICES AND WHERE WILL OUR MINISTRIES MEET?**

We would hold services as we do today, just in different buildings. Our ministries and office would also move. Ideally, this would all happen in the same building, but for a period of time we possibly would use different buildings for different needs throughout the week.

■ **IS THERE SOMEBODY THINKING AND WORKING ON THIS?**

Yes. A committee is thinking through what we would need and what would be available, the priority being to keep core ministries undisrupted. This could mean that we would have one solution for a temporary (anything from 2 months to 2 years) time period while we looked to God for further guidance.

■ **WHAT HAPPENS TO THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE?**

The Garden of Remembrance will remain a memorial garden and be open and available for prayer and remembrance.

MORE QUESTIONS?

IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS, HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES YOU MAY WANT TO EXPLORE:

OUR WEBSITE - www.stjohnsvancouver.org - We plan to keep this as up-to-date as we can.

THE OFFICE - We recognize that not everyone has a computer and we will make updates available at our reception desk.

EMAIL - If you would like to get email updates please email krista@stjohnsshaughnessy.org and give her your name, address, and phone number.

TRUSTEES & STAFF - If you have more specific questions or concerns, you can call the office and we will connect you **604 731-4966** or talk to one of the following individuals:

LESLEY BENTLEY 604 261-9495

DAVID AVREN 604 261-9541

CHRISTINE KLUKAS

KRISTA FRIEBEL

ANDREW KONNERT

REV. JIM SALLADIN

JOANNE LAWRIE

www.stjohnsvancouver.org

FAQ'S ABOUT THE LEGAL TRIAL



*"The Lord is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him."*
Exodus 15:2