

February 17, 2010

TO: Christ Church Vestry

It is abundantly clear to me, and I believe to every member of Christ Church, that our church family is deeply divided, not over questions of theology, but over whether or not to stay in The Episcopal Church.

This was plainly stated in the Vestry's January 12, 2010 letter to our members: "There are those of us who believe that there is no future in TEC and others who would like to work for change from within. Some of us are willing to give up our existing buildings if necessary and others would not leave under any circumstance."

Anxieties over this have risen to a crescendo with the vestry elections, the February 7 parish meeting, and in emails and personal conversations I have had with many parishioners. It seems even clearer after last night's Vestry meeting how polarized we are and how difficult it is to really listen to one another. Well meaning and sincerely devoted Christians are on both sides of this discussion. Both sides love the Bible and our Anglican heritage, and both sides abhor the revisionist agenda of The Episcopal Church. Both sides perceive our current Christ Church community to be a strong witness for Christ and desire to keep it unified.

Nevertheless, as The Episcopal Church pushes forward with its agenda, the issue before us will not just go away.

Last night I asked the Executive Committee of the Vestry to recommend to the Vestry a "process" whereby we, as Christian brothers and sisters, can discern our future together. Once the Executive Committee has made their recommendation, I ask the vestry to forthrightly address the following as soon as possible: **Given the deep divisions at Christ Church over the question of our continuing relationship with The Episcopal Church, what is the way forward for this parish family that honors our core values, our love for the Lord, and our love and respect for every member.**

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15).

Chuck Collins
Rector