

My Sisters and Brothers of St Paul's,
I hope this note finds you well and in good spirits, for Christ is among us!

On February 14th, your Wardens and Sioux Icenhower from the vestry went to visit Bishop Robert O'Neill and Cannon Ruth Woodliff-Stanley. It was a wonderful discussion, full of energy. The purpose of our visit was to discuss the lack of candidates for our open clergy position and our approach for finding our place for St Paul's.

We started our discussion with concern of the not having received more candidates for priest in charge at St Paul's. More on this later.

We then discussed our approach to find a place for St Paul's. We discussed our discernment we have done over the years starting back before we left Elizabeth St. We reviewed latest methodology with our new Place committee: leveraging our past searches for a new place, our learnings, putting these into a decision matrix. We shared how we will have focus groups and all parish discussions coming up. We discussed the options we have been considering: renovating a building, staying at Trinity and building a chapel, or even combining with St Luke's. We also talked at length on the joy in ecumenism we have found sharing space with St Luke's and Mary of Magdala.

We all commented later how well the Bishop listened, intently and with interest though with no reaction. Then when he began to share, he said, "Can you catch the scent in the wind? Pay attention to it". He then explained that he sensed our energy when talking about working with the other faiths at Trinity. The Bishop and Cannon both said how impressed they were with our discernment on Place: the process, effort and willingness to go very deep. The Bishop also clarified the need for St Paul's in Fort Collins making it clear the growth and changing demographics in Ft Collins needs a larger presence of Episcopal churches, not a smaller one.

And yet, Bishop O'Neill pushed further. He asked us, "If the ecumenism is a value you have discerned, why build a St Paul's chapel at Trinity and promote an 'us' and 'them' mentality? Why not go further and talk with your partners about doing something truly transformative in Ft. Collins, creating a place where multiple faiths are celebrated for their differences and working together on common missions?"

Now back to finding us a priest: the Bishop then indicated that for this journey, he needed to shift his lens. We need a priest in charge that could walk this path with us as we find our way. He and the Cannon exchanged knowing glances and mentioned they had someone in mind.

The energy in the room was surly the Holy Spirit in us all. It was exciting to imagine. The Bishop was not giving us directions or orders; he was encouraging us to continue on our path and to seek out God's plan for us – though to do so boldly and with great faith.

We are on the right path my Brothers and Sisters; can you smell the scent in the air? Let's pay attention to where the scent is leading us.

Yours on this wondrous journey with Christ,
Rhoda and John