



## The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana

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10 September 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Calumet Episcopal Ministry Partnership,

Grace and peace be with you in Jesus, the Light for all people!

This letter comes with news regarding next steps for all of us who are part of the Calumet Episcopal Ministry Partnership (CEMP), the Episcopal Church in five locations: St. Barnabas in the Dunes in Gary; St. Christopher's in Crown Point; St. Paul's in Munster; St. Stephen's in Hobart and St. Timothy's in Griffith.

I want to begin by thanking the Rev. Mike Dwyer for his service as Priest in Charge of CEMP since January of 2012. The vision of CEMP and its implementation has been led by Fr. Mike. What began as a partnership among three faith communities has grown into a partnership of five faith communities. Because this is a unique initiative in our diocese and throughout the Episcopal Church, I want to make sure that significant attention and resources are focused on this important transition. Moreover, this partnership model is one that I have been exploring and encouraging in other regions of our diocese.

Several weeks ago, I asked Fr. Mike to prepare a detailed list of his responsibilities as Priest in Charge. I met with Mother Michelle and Pastor Kris, seeking their input and reflections. Canon Terri Bays and I met with the Senior Warden or Vestry member of all five communities on Thursday, 31 August to listen as well as offer some possible next steps for their consideration. I also discussed some transition ideas with Bishop Little and Bishop Gray. And on Tuesday, 5 September, I had a Conference Call with members of our Standing Committee to discuss some transition ideas, seeking their council and advice.

After prayerful listening and consideration, I want to share the Transition Plan for the Calumet Episcopal Ministry Partnership. As of 1 November, I will assume the role of Priest in Charge of CEMP. This will include being part of the Sunday rotation of priests among the five faith communities. Because of visitations already scheduled throughout October, November and early December, I will not be able to begin being part of the rotation until early December. Mother Michelle and Pastor Kris and I will meet regularly to prepare the schedule and we will also be inviting Canon Terri Bays to serve in the rotation in her role as our Missioner for Transitions. It is my intention to be part of the Sunday rotation as often as I can until the Day of Pentecost which is 20 May 2018. It is essential that Canon Terri and I understand what kind of responsibilities we are inviting potential candidates to assume as the next Priest in Charge of CEMP. There will be Sundays that I will not be present because of other commitments. Nonetheless, this will allow me to focus on this important and unique ministry initiative in our diocese.

One of the expectations that I have focused on during clergy transitions is the resourcing and support of the lay leaders in our faith communities. Wardens and Vestry members have authority in our polity and to the best of my ability, I want to encourage and support them in their leadership roles. To that end, here are the next steps that will be implemented during this transition.

1. Bishop Doug or Mother Michelle will be present at Vestry Meetings in November and December for each of the five Faith Communities.
2. Bishop Doug or Mother Michelle will be present at the **Annual Meeting** of each Faith Community scheduled by the Leadership Council.
3. Beginning in January, Bishop Doug or Mother Michelle will be present every other month at Vestry meeting.
4. **CEMP Leadership Council** will begin meeting every other month.
5. Canon Terri will facilitate a Conversation in each of our Faith Communities.
6. Engage in a CEMP Mutual Ministry Review.
7. Constitute a Search Committee (Warden and 1 person from each Faith Community)
8. **Prepare Profile, solicit names, interview then nominate**

We all are one in mission...God's mission! I ask for your prayers and patience during this time of transition. I believe that this initiative in ministry known as CEMP is led by God's Holy Spirit. I am thankful for the sacrifices and gifts that all of you have given to live more fully into this vision of "the Episcopal Church in many locations." I also believe this is an important time to reflect on what is going well and what needs our attention as we move into the next season of the Calumet Episcopal Ministry Partnership.

I want to invite you to gather on 29 October, which is a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, for the CEMP Eucharist at St. Paul's in Munster at 10 a.m. which will include a reception for Fr. Mike and Jane in thanksgiving for their ministry.

Be assured of my prayer and commitment!

Every blessing,



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Douglas Sparks  
Serving as Bishop of Northern Indiana