



Thursday, March 21st, 2024

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 11)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Rector of Holy Communion Anglican Church and a Presbyter of the Church Universal, it is my sacred duty, by God’s grace, to make known the riches of His glory by preaching and teaching the Word, administering the Sacraments, and governing the congregation well. Desiring to govern well, it is thus my obligation to act upon a conscience informed by sacred Scripture and shaped by constant prayer, even when (especially when) the LORD prompts His servant to do or say that which is most difficult at the time.

Therefore, it is with mixed emotions and clarity of conviction that I share the following news: After discussion with the Elders and Deacon, I have proposed the closure of Holy Communion Anglican Church and the dissolution of the Corporation to the Board of Directors.

On March 15th, the Board of Directors unanimously approved an intention to dissolve Holy Communion, resolving to bring this intention to a Special Meeting of the Congregation for discussion and affirmation on Sunday, April 7th, immediately following the 5PM service. The Board wishes to bring the intention to a Special Meeting prior to final confirmation so the Congregation can have a voice in this momentous decision.

The potential plan of dissolution, including timing and details of the final church services, will be confirmed after the Special Meeting. Holy Week services will continue as originally planned.

My proposal to close the church was not a decision I took lightly. I made the recommendation to the Board of Directors after many months of prayer to discern God’s will for the future of Holy Communion Anglican Church. Those prayers were recently answered in a moment of clarity and conviction of conscience that dissolution was the most prudent decision for the long-term spiritual wellbeing of the congregation. The rationale for this decision comes down to a matter of stewardship in multiple dimensions.

One aspect of our stewardship has to do with church size. We are a very small congregation, averaging an in-person attendance of eight to ten people a week, and our Board of Directors makes up nearly half of our regular membership. The reality is, even as we embrace our identity as a small church, our critically small size creates a couple of complications and risks to consider.

The first consideration is that our size risks unfairly binding the conscience of our members in matters of church life. The existence of the local congregation is predicated upon the voluntary association of believers seeking to worship the Triune God in Word and Sacrament and participating in ministries to advance the Gospel. However, if a church barely maintains the minimum membership needed to remain viable, it risks adding a complicating factor to congregational worship and the work of ministry. This is because, during otherwise routine decision making, each



congregant may be tempted to consider whether his or her actions will have an outsized impact on the ability of the congregation to remain open. This moral hazard threatens to impede the ability of our members to act freely upon an informed conscience and is thus detrimental to our long-term spiritual health.

The second consideration is the actual risk posed to the congregation by a major life event happening to any one of our members. Particularly when it comes to church leadership, the loss of any single Board member would leave us unable to function under our bylaws. Here, we face the reality that we lack the “critical mass” of membership that would otherwise dampen the effects of typical life events upon the congregation. Understanding this risk, I consider it an exercise in good stewardship for us to seek dissolution now. Rather than wait for the decision to be forced upon us under duress, we can proactively handle church closure in a way that most glorifies God and advances the Gospel. As a result, we are in a rare position to conclude this chapter of our ministry with Holy Communion Anglican Church patiently, peaceably, and amicably.

Another factor which played a significant role in my decision was the stewardship of my own time. As you may know, I work bi-vocationally as both an ordained minister and a project manager. My secular full-time job regularly requires me to work 50-plus hour weeks, after which I joyfully devote my time to my work as Rector of Holy Communion. In the past year, changes to our congregation required me to preach and preside every Sunday, while I also sought to maintain our fruitful digital ministries - our social media pages, our website and blog, our YouTube channel, and the Lively Faith podcast. And all this, while trying (and failing, and trying again!) to keep a disciplined prayer life and love my wife as Christ loves the Church.

I share these details not to garner sympathy - it is my honor to be a servant of the Gospel of Christ - but to provide context. While praying for discernment over the future of Holy Communion, I realized that I cannot keep up my current workload indefinitely without burning out. However good my desires may be for our church, I must have the humility to admit that I cannot do it all - and to insist on working to the point of burnout on the chance that our fortunes might change is not only harmful for me spiritually, but for the entire congregation as well. It is far better for us, then, to willingly confront the difficult realities facing our congregation now, than to ignore them until the risks are multiplied in the future.

I will conclude by offering a few additional thoughts. First, we as a congregation have much to be proud of, and we should not consider a closure as defeat or failure. For God has ordained everything to a season, and it is healthy and normal for seasons and chapters to end. Similarly, the challenges we face as a congregation are in no way unique to us but are in fact common to churches across the country (and especially New England). The proposal to dissolve the Corporation is not a result of any one event, but a decision necessitated by normal demographic realities to be faced by every local congregation until Christ returns.

Second, our online resources will remain available, and our digital ministries will continue beyond the lifespan of Holy Communion Anglican Church. As described in my annual report, these ministry efforts are a fruitful and important part of Gospel ministry in our present generation, and I have every intention of continuing in that work, God willing.



Finally, as we have just observed the Feast of Saint Joseph, the guardian of our Savior and devoted spouse to his Blessed Virgin Mother, let us pray that God gives us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and obedience to His commands, in this chapter of our ministry and in the next. And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

I am Sincerely Yours in Christ,
Elder Nathan

The Rev. Nathan Stomberg

The Reverend Nathan Stomberg
Rector, Holy Communion Anglican Church