

May 8, 2008

Dear _____,

This is written to you, echoing St. Paul's greeting: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ".

On Tuesday Fr. George Gray informed me that he had submitted a resignation as Rector of St. Christopher's and intends to function as priest within the territory of Upper South Carolina—but *not* under my authority; and he declined to indicate under whose authority he would serve. I also learned that a majority of the members of the Vestry had resigned—although I had some inaccurate information as to exactly which members.

I cannot adequately express how much I regret their decisions and the situation in which we are left. I am, as I indicated when I visited St. Christopher's in February, heartbroken—and I'm confident you share that emotion. On the other hand, as Anglicans we respect the convictions of faith and belief which motivate people, and I recognize that people must follow their own conscience. To those who feel that they cannot be faithful to Jesus Christ in The Episcopal Church, as well as to those who choose to "grow where planted", I give assurance of good will and prayers for God's richest blessings.

Although heartbroken and distressed, we are reassured by our Lord's promise to the disciples on the eve of his crucifixion—and to us today—that God does not leave us comfortless. *We have God's Holy Spirit—and each other—to strengthen us and lead us forward.*

Please have this assurance, too: St. Christopher's Episcopal Church will survive, thrive and grow in service to God and God's world. I have received the commitment of many of you to "continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" at St. Christopher's, as we vow in the Baptismal Covenant. I have appointed a Mission Committee from among our continuing communicants and appointed Canon Michael Bullock, a member of my staff, as Priest-in-Charge. Mitch Slade has accepted appointment as Senior Warden, Bobby Faucette as Junior Warden, and Bill Canny, Elizabeth Cobb, Peggy Graham are already serving as members of the Mission Committee; Ruth Anne Hickerson is participating as a member of the leadership team with specific duties as treasurer. Others are also stepping forward for leadership. I give thanks *for* them all and *to* them all.

This Sunday is the Feast of Pentecost, and I shall join you to celebrate Holy Eucharist at 8 and 11 A.M., and to meet with members of the congregation following each celebration. Pentecost Sunday is known informally as the "birthday of the Church", when we celebrate the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts which each one of us has been given for Christian living and witness. Let us gather to pray for a joyful renewal of life within us all—a rebirth of the family which is St. Christopher's—and, to be sure, with fond remembrance of and thankfulness for all who have contributed

to the life and witness at St. Christopher's—for all who worship and labor there now—
and for the many who will follow us in worship, labor and witness.

With warmest personal regards and prayers for God's richest blessings, I remain

Faithfully yours in our Lord,

Dorsey F. Henderson, Jr.
The Right Rev'd, the Bishop