



In the gospel passage chosen for this Sunday we will listen to a beautiful exchange between Jesus and two thieves as they hang from their respective crosses. One thief mocks Jesus but the other asks Jesus to 'remember him' when Jesus comes into his kingdom. Jesus promises him so much more. *"Today you will be with me in paradise"*.

This isn't a promise of being with Jesus at some future moment. It's a promise about who Christ is for that thief in the moment of his death. Newness of life is offered to a thief who will never be able to repay those he has injured or offended. "Today you will be with me" is also a promise for who Jesus can be for us right here and right now in our lives if we have the courage to place our trust in him.

Let us in Moosonee remember who is in charge and keep looking unto Jesus who is our future and our hope.

Over the last few months we have been saying our formal farewells to Bishop Tom Corston as his ministry as the Assistant Bishop of Moosonee draws to a close. Bishop Tom has served the Diocese faithfully and with great devotion for a number of years, and his leadership and ministry will be missed. I echo the sentiments of many and wish him and Ruth a happy retirement in which they enjoy the fruits of their labours.

Naturally this has brought about some uncertainty, and questions are being raised about who the next Assistant Bishop of Moosonee will be. You are not alone in this - it has been on my prayer list for some time. My personal discernment has led me beyond this one aspect of ministry in Moosonee into a broader conversation with the leadership of the diocese and others in the church who have a history with and a heart for our diocese. I am thankful for their collective wisdom which has given me much to think and pray about.

In conversation with the Executive leadership in the Diocese - our Assistant Bishop Tom Corston, our treasurer Canon Patricia Dorland, our Administrator Archdeacon Larry Armstrong, and our Chancellor Canon Bryan Finlay, I have learned that once again we are facing some very challenging fiscal realities which need to be addressed sooner rather than later. The present model of ministry in Moosonee, with the Metropolitan of the Province serving as the Diocesan Bishop, with the assistance of an Assistant Bishop and Executive Archdeacon has also been in our discussions. This model came about at a particular time in Moosonee's history and the time has come for us to revisit this and ask whether it is the most feasible model at this time. I am also wondering about how Moosonee will fit in with the self-determining Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada as that begins to emerge.

All of this has led me to the conclusion that the next steps for Moosonee are not 'business as usual' and that appointing an Assistant Bishop to continue in the same vein as before is not the answer. Instead, I would like to invite us to use next year as a time of 'Holy Discernment' in

which we actively and prayerfully engage with God's word and one another in deep conversation about where God is calling us as a diocese.

The Psalm chosen for Reign of Christ Sunday is Psalm 46 which contains one of the most frequently quoted verses in scripture: "*Be still and know that I am God.*" (vs. 10). While some people think this refers to stillness and quiet meditation, I am convinced that we are actually being called to a kind of deep attentiveness that causes us to drop everything we are doing in order to listen carefully to God.

This work of discernment next year will be undertaken with the help of facilitators who will be appointed to guide the discussions in parish and regional gatherings. We recently submitted an application for a grant from "Faith Works" which, if received, would enable us to host a Regional Gathering in June 2020. The purpose of this gathering would be to gather the leadership of the diocese together to build relationships, share our history, learn from our youth, worship in joy, and in so doing discover where God is leading us. It will also begin some foundational work from which our proposed 2020 November Diocesan wide Synod can build upon.

The Executive Council has set aside funds for a diocesan wide Synod next November and it is my hope that Moosonee will make some important decisions about our future as a diocese.

One of the bishops of our church who I have considered to help us in our work of discernment over the course of next year is Archbishop Fred Hiltz, the much loved former Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. He has a heart for Moosonee, having visited it several times during his Primacy. You will recall how blessed we were to have him with us at the Great Chapter Meeting in Val D'Or this February. Archbishop Fred led us through the "Heartbeat of the Church" exercise with such sensitivity and care and his leadership enabled many of you to share your stories of gladness, heartbreak and hope for the church with one another without fear.

A few weeks ago I approached Archbishop Fred about the possibility of him exercising some episcopal ministry in Moosonee. To my delight he has agreed to be our *Assisting Bishop* (not Assistant) for 2020, and an instrument for conversation in hosting gatherings for the discernment process to unfold. In this capacity Archbishop Fred will be working closely with me and the members of the Synod leadership team to help prepare us for next year's Synod.

In order to cover the costs of the regional gatherings which will bring people from across Moosonee together for holy listening, it might be that some of the episcopal travel for confirmations and parish visits might need to be adjusted. We will put the School of Ministry on hold for the time being as well so that our time, prayer, and energy is focussed on the new future that God is calling us into.

As we enter this time of intentional corporate discernment, I ask you to pray for your fellow brothers and sisters in Moosonee, and for all your church leaders. Let us walk together trusting in God's goodness and love for all God's people.

With gratitude for the ministry we share as we continue to be called by God to live and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Anne: Moosonee". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

The Most Rev. Anne Germond  
Archbishop of Moosonee