

May 9, 2013

**Proposed Realignment of Diocesan boundaries
to include the Southern Region of the Diocese of Keewatin
in the Diocese of Rupert's Land**

Background

The Anglican Diocese of Keewatin – our immediate neighbour to the north and east – has been charting a course that would see its 3 regional areas re-organize themselves into new configurations involving new episcopal leadership. The first of these realignments is already well underway with the selection and consecration of the Rt. Rev. Lydia Mamakwa as the Bishop for the Northern Ontario region. With the blessing of the rest of Keewatin diocese, this region is proposing to become a new and separate diocese after receiving final approval from the General Synod (meeting in a Joint Assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in Ottawa) this summer. The northern Manitoba region is still in discernment – considering options that might involve the new northern Ontario diocese or the Diocese of Brandon. In 2012, the **Southern Region** of the Diocese of Keewatin indicated its interest to explore becoming part of the Diocese of Rupert's Land. (which it was part of, in fact, until the beginning of the 20th century.) At our Rupert's Land Diocesan Synod in October, 2012, we passed the following resolution:

The Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, in response to a letter from the Archbishop of Keewatin, communicate to the Diocese of Keewatin its interest and encouragement in exploring together ways in which we might cooperate with the proposed realignments of the various regions of the Diocese of Keewatin, should such a request be made by the Archbishop and Synod of the Diocese of Keewatin.

Subsequently, the Southern Regional Synod of Keewatin committed itself to further researching the option of realignment with Rupert's Land with respect to "boundaries, financials, governance, structure, and pastoral oversight" in preparation of making a final decision at their upcoming Southern Regional Synod on May 26, 2013. As a result, both bishops appointed members to a six-person working group to begin to prepare for this development and enable each diocese to make a final decision this month. (Archbishop David Ashdown, Dean Jim Dugan, the Rev. Wayne McIntosh, the Rev. Canon Dr. Cathy Campbell, the Rev. Dr. Lee Titterington, and Bishop Donald Phillips) As long as the Southern Regional Synod votes in favour of seeking realignment with Rupert's Land, our Diocesan Council, meeting on May 28th will be asked to pass a complementary resolution stating our approval of the realignment. Should both dioceses indicate their approval, the proposal then goes to the General Synod (Joint Assembly) this summer to obtain consent by that body. The following resolution will be put to the (Keewatin) Southern Regional Synod on May 26, 2013:

That the Southern Region of the Diocese Keewatin:

- 1. Confirm its decision to seek realignment with the Diocese of Rupert's Land*
- 2. Advise the Bishop of Keewatin of this decision*
- 3. Request the Bishop of Keewatin convey this decision to the Bishop of Rupert's Land, seeking the agreement of the appropriate authorities of that Diocese*
- 4. Request that the Bishop of Keewatin take the necessary steps to facilitate this realignment in accordance with the Implementation Plan approved by Diocesan Council January 31, 2013.*

So what does it mean for us?

I think the easiest way to communicate this is in the form of a Q and A. as follows.

1. **What comprises the “Southern Region” of Keewatin?**

The Southern Region is comprised of parishes within both Manitoba and Ontario that lie (roughly) south of a line drawn straight east from Hecla, MB, on Lake Winnipeg and south to the American border. It is comprised of 15 parishes. However, it is expected that the Parish of Christ Church, Fort Alexander, (Sakgeeng First Nation) will decide to align with the Northern Manitoba region.

2. **How many clergy are involved?**

The Diocese of Keewatin has been working hard at developing models of parish ministry which are locally sustainable. There are currently 17 priests and deacons in the region who would become part of Rupert’s Land, of which only 6 receive full or part-time stipends.

3. **What is the estimated financial impact of this realignment?**

The significant increase in expenses will be for travel: both the bishop’s travel (Winnipeg to Atikokan, ON is 557 km) and individuals travelling to required meetings of Diocesan Council, Executive and Committees. (It is recognized that there will need to be judicious use of electronic means for some of these meetings, such as Skype, Conference Calls, etc.) At their current level of income and contribution to the Diocese of Keewatin, this region should be able to contribute approximately \$80,000/yr. according to our current (12%) Common Ministry and Mission formula. The parishes of the region currently contribute in excess of this amount, but some of these additional resources may need to remain in the region. An allocation of these resources to support our mission and ministry will be worked out jointly over the next year.

4. **How will the present structure of the Southern Region be affected by this realignment?** It is anticipated that the present regional structure will be welcomed and supported by creating a fourth archdeaconry in Rupert’s Land (proposed name: Kenora – St. Albans following our convention). The present Cathedral of St. Alban, Kenora, would continue to be honoured in some way. The new Archdeacon would live within this Archdeaconry.

5. **What are the steps that our Diocese is taking as its part of the Implementation Plan?**

The six-member Planning Group identified a number of areas where preparatory work needs to take place:

- *Getting to know each other better.* We have already begun to advertise each other’s program events. The Phyllis Tickle event on Apr. 26 - 27 was moved from Fort Frances, ON to our Cathedral in Winnipeg and enjoyed a great response. We are beginning to extend invitations to specific events. Our Bishop, Dean and an Archdeacon are attending the Southern Regional Synod on May 24, 25 in Fort Frances, ON.
- *Creation of a new archdeaconry, role of the Cathedral in Kenora, and appropriate representation from this region on the Councils, Boards and Committees of Rupert’s Land.* These needs have been identified and will be addressed through our own Diocesan Council, Executive Committee and other appropriate groups in consultation with the people of the Southern Region of the Diocese of Keewatin.

- *Recognition and support of non-stipendiary and alternate forms of ministry.* Our Diocesan Local Collaborative Ministry Group has already begun to respond to this and is planning ways to reach out to and engage these ministries in the new region.
- *Compensation, insurance, payroll, benefits.* These issues have been raised for the appropriate Financial staff person in both dioceses and are being worked on.
- *Constitution and Canons.* The Chancellor of Keewatin lives in Winnipeg and so has already begun to confer with our Chancellor about any differences in these documents. The new region would come under the Rupert's Land Constitution and Canons.
- *Archives.* Because the Diocese of Keewatin will need to continue to preserve its Archives, they are presently in negotiations with the Archives of the General Synod for this provision.
- *Continuing legal liability.* Because the Diocese of Keewatin will still be liable for any suits brought against it from past actions, it will continue as a legal entity only. Therefore, no liability will be transferred to the Diocese of Rupert's Land if the realignment proceeds.

6. **What is the proposed Timeline for this realignment?**

Because the realignment of the Southern Region with Rupert's Land is only one "piece of the puzzle" in the dissolution of the Diocese of Keewatin, our part in this process needs to be synchronized with the other pieces. At present it looks like this:

- May, 2013 – approval by Southern Region of Keewatin and Diocese of Rupert's Land.
- July, 2013 – approval by General Synod of realignment.
- Fall 2013 – final confirmation (if any) by the Executive Council of the Province of Rupert's Land.
- 2014 – continue to share all relevant communications, invitations to events, work in the areas of the bullet-points above.
- Dec. 31, 2014 – Diocese of Keewatin ceases operations except as a legal entity.
- Jan. 1, 2015 – Southern region of Diocese of Keewatin begins to function as part of the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Insurance, payroll, benefits, etc., transfer to the Diocese of Rupert's Land.
- June 30 (approx.) – David Ashdown retires both as Archbishop of Keewatin and as Metropolitan (of the Province) of Rupert's Land.

This is merely a report about the formal pieces involved in the proposed realignment of the Keewatin Southern Region and Rupert's Land. The more important work will be our willingness to open ourselves to welcome our new brothers and sisters to Rupert's Land and to receive their gifts of faithful ministry, mission and discipleship.

Donald Phillips, Bishop of Rupert's Land