

The Ven. Anne Germond

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Dear friends in Christ,

I am writing to thank you for the heartfelt messages of congratulations and assurances of prayer that I have been receiving from across Algoma and elsewhere since the electoral synod just ten days ago. My election as your next bishop was surprising, overwhelming and unexpected, and I am filled with the weight and responsibility of the office that I will hold. I count it a great honour and privilege to have been elected as bishop and I will do everything I can to be a faithful pastor to you as we continue *"To share in the gathering work of Christ so that His newness of life overflows into our hearts, homes, churches and community."* As I have been assured of your prayers, know that you are very much in mine.

The role of bishop is one that I will be growing into over the years and I am expecting there to be a steep learning curve. My friend Fawna Andrews said, "It's quite a ride Anne, so buckle up!" It is good to know that I have the support of the knowledgeable Archdeacon Harry Huskins, our Diocesan Administrator and Executive Archdeacon, the gifted Synod office staff Jane Mesich, Liz Hamel, Marjorie Ingram, and Jay Koyle, as well as the Archdeacons, Deanery officials, members of the Executive committee, and all of you. Archbishop Johnson assures me that there will be opportunities for training in the coming year. He has invited me to the November meeting of the Provincial House of Bishops, and to join the newly elected suffragan Bishops in Toronto for a pre-consecration retreat in January.

I am looking forward to getting to know you as I travel across the diocese in the coming years. This diocese in all its beauty and all its diversity is where I feel very much at home. Even though I've been a part of Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Executive Committee for several years and have heard about the good things that are happening in your congregations, there is still so much for me to learn and discover about Algoma. In addition to the official parish visits I hope to work alongside you in your outreach projects. What impressed me so much when I read through the Diocesan profile prepared for the electoral synod was how the deanery pages focused on the missional work that is happening in each of them. Did you notice that the photographs in the profile were all of people engaged in those ministries instead of church buildings? Interestingly, none of the archdeacons had spoken to each other in preparing their deanery profile.

I see my role and our life together over the next several years as continuing the good work that has been going on in Algoma for so many years now. We give thanks for our history. We look to the horizon with hope. There is much for us to do in this present time we but we know that Christ is our foundation and it is His love that holds us safely in our joys and in our fears. I am reminded of the beautiful Taize song, "*Ubi Caritas, Deus ibi est.*" "Where love is, there is God." Let love be our guide.

I echo Paul's words to the Philippians here, "*I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*" (Phil. 1:6)

Some of you have been wondering what will happen during this transition period. The diocese will continue to be run by the Diocesan Administrator, Archdeacon Harry Huskins with the assistance of the Diocesan leadership team. The Archbishop has set the Consecration for February 11th, 2017 in Sault Ste. Marie. Details of this will be forthcoming as details are known. Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Executive Committee will be meeting in November as planned, and so you can be confident that life in Algoma will run smoothly even in a time of transition.

During the coming months the Ascension and I will be preparing for my departure and I do ask you to keep us in your prayers. This is not easy for either of us as we have grown together in faith over the last sixteen years. There is capable leadership in place as well as very supportive honorary clergy to guide them through the next steps. Colin and I are also starting to think about how our lives will look as we downsize our home in Sudbury, and plan a move to the Sault. We do want to keep a smaller home in Sudbury as we have many ties to this community. I am attaching a photo of our family that was taken this Thanksgiving. Our adult children, Caitlin and Richard are both studying at Queen's University and we are proud of them both.

I leave you with a final thought on opening the door of our hearts to God. 'Becoming the Story We Tell' is not a moment in time, but a lifelong journey of faith and a daily commitment to Christ. Matthew says, "**Ask** and you will receive. **Search** and you will find. **Knock** and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7.7). In all of my asking and searching and knocking, I have come to the realization of a deep truth that whenever I was out there looking for God, that God was there all along just waiting for me to open the door of my heart to Him. Let us open our hearts to God and trust in his felt presence in our journey.

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

In Christ's love,

Anne

The Germond family at Thanksgiving 2016

Photo by Amanda Thirkill Photography

