



# Episcopal Diocese

— OF CENTRAL FLORIDA —

## **Canterbury: The Path Forward** **From the Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin S. Holcomb**

July 3, 2023

Dear Diocesan Family,

On June 27, the Canterbury Conference Center Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting, at which I was in attendance in my capacity as bishop and, therefore, ex officio board member. Due to Canterbury's dire and adverse financial situation, the members of the board unanimously agreed that it will be impossible to recover from the organization's fiscal crisis under the current business model and scope of debt.

While Canterbury is a separate organization with its own board of directors, God has entrusted our diocese with this tremendous resource — and an equally tremendous responsibility for its future. Diocesan support has been critical to Canterbury's survival.

As such, the Canterbury Board voted unanimously that all members resign immediately, leaving me as sole board member to exercise my authority as bishop under Canterbury's Articles of Incorporation (Article VII, Section 1) to nominate new board members to be elected by the Diocesan Board. Executive Director of Canterbury Chalmers Morse also submitted his resignation effective June 30, 2023, which I accepted with the advice and counsel of the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Board.

These actions by the Canterbury Board and Chalmers Morse were taken with the confidence that diocesan leadership will be able to chart a path forward for Canterbury. To do so, it is critical that we do everything in our power to reduce Canterbury's \$30,000-\$40,000 monthly budget deficit as much as possible. This will require Canterbury suspending operations while the Diocesan Board and I weigh options.

Any future decisions regarding Canterbury will be made with great care, prayer, and consultation with appropriate experts. I have already received guidance from the Very Rev. Dr. Canon Lang Lowrey III, who serves as canon for Christian enterprise in The Episcopal Church and Diocese of Atlanta. He also serves at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, as professor in the Practice of Church Leadership and as the director of the Episcopal and Anglican Studies Program. He is a creative and realistic businessperson with real estate and retreat center experience. Diocesan Board members are also engaged in consultation about how to properly manage the gift to the diocese that is Canterbury.

During this time of transition, the Rev. Canon Scott Holcombe will temporarily assume the role of managing director of Canterbury, in addition to his new role as canon pastor for retired clergy and spouses. As managing director, Canon Scott met with the Canterbury staff today at 10 a.m. to inform them in person of the contents of this letter. Next week he will make recommendations to the Diocesan Board and me regarding next steps.

Please pray for me, the Diocesan Board, and Canon Holcombe during this challenging season. I am grateful to the former Canterbury Board and Chalmers Morse for their years of dedication and service. Please keep them in your prayers as well.

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin S. Holcomb  
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida