

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release ~ Friday, April 4th, 2008

**Victoria – The Anglican Diocese of British Columbia** (Vancouver Island & the Gulf Islands) has asserted its ownership of buildings at 4125 Metchosin Road, in the District of Metchosin, by securing the property with a change of locks and the installation of a monitored alarm system. The property is known as St. Mary of the Incarnation Anglican Church.

The Parish of St. Mary, Metchosin is an historic parish of the Diocese of British Columbia, serving the District since 1862. In 1873 the present “heritage” church in the village was consecrated, and in 1991 services began at the newly built site known as St. Mary of the Incarnation. Members of the parish, who did not join ‘The Network’, have continued to worship in the old St. Mary’s Church in Metchosin Village. Now that the Diocese has asserted ownership of the 4125 Metchosin Road property, these parishioners of the Diocese will return to using it.

The Bishop of British Columbia, James Cowan, in announcing this action, stated, “While I am conscious of the need to protect and preserve the people and the property of the institution in my care, I am sorry that events have brought us to the necessity of this measure.”

The Bishop’s need to “protect and preserve” people and property is a result of the Episcopal and the synodical make-up of Anglicanism in Canada. Dioceses (designated geographic territories) under the leadership of a bishop are established and parishes are formed by the diocese. Parishioners, members of the diocese but attending a specific parish, exercise the Church’s ministry through that parish and in other ways in the life of the diocese. The Synod, appointed and elected members of every congregation and parish in the diocese, holds title to all diocesan property “in trust” for the use of members of the Anglican Church of Canada in the Diocese.

Former members of St. Mary of the Incarnation, Metchosin, left the Diocese of British Columbia and the Anglican Church of Canada in February of this year after passing a motion (February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008) to join with ‘The Network’, a group of conservative Canadian Christians endorsing the leadership of former Anglican Bishop Donald Harvey of St. John, Newfoundland, and Archbishop Gregory Venables, Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone of South America. Archbishop Venables lives in Olivos, Argentina, where he is bishop of the Diocese of Argentina. They had continued to worship at the St. Mary of the Incarnation site even though they were fully aware that the property belonged to the Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia, and that this action would be taken at some point. Bishop Cowan decided to allow them use of the site until after the Easter weekend.

Members of ‘The Network’ have left the Anglican Church of Canada over issues of authority, human sexuality, and the interpretation of Scripture, as well as a variety of other concerns which have been before the Church over the past several decades.

*If you have any questions, please contact the Communications Officer ~ Mary Ruth Snyder @ 250.418.0336.*