



78 Washington Street  
Norwich  
Connecticut  
06360

Phone: (860) 887 4249  
Fax: (860) 887 3506

[cecnorwich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cecnorwich@sbcglobal.net)

**Lillpopp Pastoral Letter #1  
September 1, 2018**

Dear Parishioners of Christ Episcopal Church,

A lot has happened in the past few months. As Senior Warden (with Hugh's enthusiastic support), I plan to write a monthly letter so that everyone hears what is happening from me directly, rather than getting information which may often be wrong from parking lot gossip and other informal channels. This is my first such letter.

In June Hugh received a letter from Louis Fuertes (the canon in the Diocese who is responsible for church's financial affairs) stating that CEC had withdrawn more than 25% of its endowment funds for operations in 2016 and 2017 combined. This breaches the limit set in a Diocesan rule and allows the Diocese to take over management of our endowment funds and only allow us to draw 5% per year. The Diocese intends to implement that rule for CEC, subject to the approval of the Diocesan Mission Council which meets on September 8.

Then on July 17 Hugh met with Ian Douglas (our Bishop) who told him that as a result CEC could no longer afford a full time rector and that he should plan to leave. Hugh was shocked and dismayed (as was the vestry) but is now actively looking for a new position. We do not yet know when that will take place.

I want to describe first how we got here, and then what we are planning. We have been drawing from our endowment at an unsustainable rate (much more than the income it produces) for years. In 2015 we made a conscious decision to continue doing so for two years while we tried to grow the church. In 2016 we started discussions with St Mark Lutheran about blending the two congregations. Neither were successful and we face a difficult future.

Our plans right now are nebulous as we are waiting to hear back from the Diocese. I have written them in response to Canon Fuertes letter giving some backup to our 2016 and 2017 parochial reports and raising some questions. I also asked when we would be able to sit down with Diocesan representatives and discuss our plans. Louis acknowledged my letter but has not otherwise responded yet.

Regardless we have to plan to live within our means. The Finance Committee has worked hard to lay out a way we can do so and still be a thriving Church. We believe that it will take a combination of:

- Further expense savings;
- Finding sources of additional revenue (such as moving the office and food pantry to below the chapel and renting out the current office wing), and asking those who can, to consider pledging more;
- Diocesan grace to reduce our assessment to be commensurate with our reduced circumstances, and to permit us to draw up to 7% of our endowment funds (rather than 5%)
- Jesse taking over the School of the Arts.

If we can achieve all of these we should be able to afford a half time rector and a modest stipend to have Jesse play the organ on Sundays.

This is our plan but we have had no real discussion with the Diocese. I had hoped to have done this before I sent this letter, but we felt it very important that I write to you now, and every month to keep the communication open. I did not accept this responsibility when I agreed to be your Senior Warden. At that time we expected the blending to go ahead which would have given us a different (but more pleasurable) set of problems to address. However having now had the leadership of Christ Episcopal thrust upon me I promise you that I will exercise that responsibility to the best of my abilities to see us through this difficult time. Most of you know my father was rector here for many years, and the viability of CEC is very important to me.

If you have any questions or comments please call or email me, Hugh or Dave Anderson.

Yours in Christ

Mike