



# THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

September 27, 2022

Dear Friends in the Diocese of South Carolina,

Yesterday, Bishop Chip Edgar of the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina and I announced that our two dioceses have reached a final settlement agreement resolving numerous outstanding legal issues between our two dioceses ([read the announcement at this link](#)). This settlement was made possible after extensive, good-faith discussions between the leadership of each diocese, each of which was engaged in an open dialogue of mutual respect and good will toward one another.

While the settlement does not end the ongoing negotiations on a parish level, including betterments litigation, it does bring resolution to all issues involving diocesan property. While each diocese has had to leave things on the table to get to this moment, and while we experience pain over losses of some of the historic churches our members hold dear, we have seen the Spirit at work in drawing us toward God's redemptive way of love at every juncture. I remain hopeful that we can bring remaining parish issues to full resolution and move into a new season of ministry as two distinct dioceses working alongside each other in the same communities for the sake of the gospel.

Reflecting on the process, Bishop Edgar noted in yesterday's announcement, "This settlement agreement allows us to invest our diocesan energy, time, focus, and resources in gospel ministry rather than litigation ... I am grateful that the work we have done has brought an end to litigation between our dioceses." Following Jesus entails a willingness—an eagerness, even—to engage those who have been our opponents with the goal of repairing the breach between us. From the very beginning of this process, I have been grateful for the gracious spirit of Bishop Edgar in doing just this work with us. I am grateful for his leadership and his generosity.

I am deeply grateful to the leadership of our diocese for their determined efforts that helped us arrive at this resolution. Our Diocesan Chancellor Bert "Skip" Utsey has worked skillfully and tirelessly to help achieve this agreement. His efforts both prior to and throughout these negotiations have been instrumental in allowing us to accomplish this settlement. Our Standing Committee and Trustees have been involved throughout this process, and both have given their unanimous support to this final agreement. The resolution of these matters would not have been possible without the outstanding legal work and continuous guidance of our retired Chancellor, Tom Tisdale and the Presiding Bishop's Chancellor, Mary Kostel over many years. We owe them, and our whole legal team, a debt of gratitude. It is difficult to express adequately my tremendous gratitude for their great work, and I know this would not be possible without each of them.

It is often difficult to find common ground with those with whom we disagree. Yet, it was uplifting to see both sides in this resolution willing to make concessions that allowed us all to move forward. While the full details of the settlement remain confidential, we release today certain elements, including the following:

- The Anglican Diocese of SC (ADOSC) will transfer full control of all real estate owned by the Trustees, including the Bishop's residence at 50 Smith Street and St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center, to the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina (EDOSC).
- Full control of all assets, equipment, and bank accounts relating to St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center, will transfer from the ADOSC to the EDOSC on October 1, 2022. Camp and conference center operations will continue uninterrupted when EDOSC assumes control.
- ADOSC will transfer rental property at 129 Coming Street, Charleston, and a vacant lot in the town of Santee, both properties in possession of the ADOSC, to the EDOSC.
- EDOSC waives and relinquishes any claim in the ADOSC lease hold interest in the Diocesan Headquarters building.
- The historical papers in the possession of ADOSC will be made available for imaging or copying by both dioceses and then jointly donated to the South Carolina Historical Society or another jointly agreed upon nonprofit organization in Charleston.
- The historical silver, now in possession of the ADOSC, where no parish has a claim, will be jointly donated to the Charleston Museum or other jointly agreed upon nonprofit organization in Charleston.
- Both the ADOSC and the EDOSC will provide quitclaim deeds to several active mission congregations associated with the ADOSC.
- Additional financial assets have been returned to the EDOSC. Each diocese made additional financial concessions and agreed to forego claims against the other to reach this agreement.
- The parties will not pursue further or future litigation between each other and all parishes and missions of the ADOSC except for those currently awaiting rulings from the South Carolina Supreme Court or those which have pending claims in the betterments lawsuit.
- The pending litigation in Federal Court will be dismissed, leaving in place the current Federal District Court orders regarding use of certain names and seals.
- All bishops' portraits, now in possession of the ADOSC, will be given to the EDOSC after copies are made by the ADOSC.

It has been nearly a decade since the schism in our diocese brought about heartbreak and loss, as many in our diocese no longer felt welcome to worship in their church homes. Over the past five months, we have

reopened at St. John's, Johns Island; St. David's, Cheraw; and Christ Church, Mt. Pleasant. In the coming weeks, we hope Episcopalians can fully return for worship again at St. Bartholomew's, Hartsville, and St. James, Charleston. We are working to determine how to best use all of our returning assets to support our mission and ministry across the diocese in the days ahead. Please know I am fully committed to supporting your future as The Episcopal Church where you have so faithfully kept our presence alive and growing, whether your property is being returned to you or not.

I have great hope for the future of our diocese and our next season of ministry together. As we continue to go forth, may we remain focused on that which brings true reconciliation, believing in the power of the gospel to right the wrongs of injustice, heal the broken, and build a beloved community of God.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'R' with a cross symbol integrated into its upper loop, followed by the name 'Ruth' in a cursive script.

The Rt. Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley  
Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina