

1 February 2008

Reverend and dear colleagues:

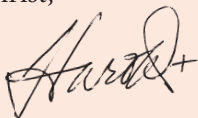
I write to let you know that my heart was gladdened when I read in the *Post-Gazette* yesterday that you had informed Bishop Duncan of your decision to remain in the Episcopal Church. I recognize that it has been costly, and even painful, for you to take this stand. In so doing, you have, in my opinion, struck a blow for Anglican comprehensiveness. Many of us have long believed that the difficulties facing The Episcopal Church today, however serious, in no way necessitate a parting of the ways of the sort that the bishop has espoused. In this regard, we have stood with most of TEC, believing that Anglicanism has a broad tent, embracing “all sorts and conditions” of people with a variety of theological opinions, which enrich and do not diminish our fellowship. You have clearly expressed your commitment to being a voice for reform from within that fellowship, rather than re-aligning out of it. Thank you for affirming that Anglicanism is about unity and not uniformity.

My heart is gladdened, however, for another reason, and that is that all of us who are committed to building up the Episcopal Church in this place will have the opportunity to work together toward that end. While there are undoubtedly challenges before us, I pray that those challenges will elicit the best in each of us. I look forward to many collaborative efforts involving those from both the “Epistle” and “Gospel” sides in the months and years ahead.

The upcoming Lenten series in the East End, in which three of the signatories are preachers and two are hosts, provides us with what I trust will be an outward and visible sign of our renewed commitment to each other and to our beloved church.

This comes with my warmest personal regards and prayers that the Lord whom we serve will give us grace to keep a holy Lent.

Affectionately, your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard", with a small plus sign at the end.