



**FROM THE ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF CAPE TOWN**  
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Dear People of God in the Diocese of Grahamstown,

I write to you following meetings of the Chapter and the Diocesan Council in recent days, at which the substantial arrears owed by the Diocese to the Provincial Pensions Fund were discussed. This fund is the source of pensions for clergy when they retire, so its financial stability is absolutely critical to the well-being of our clergy throughout Southern Africa when they retire after their ministry within a Diocese.

I attended Chapter as your Diocesan Bishop in terms of Canon 22, and in that capacity, but also as Metropolitan, chaired a subsequent joint meeting in East London of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Trusts Board. At that meeting we resolved that the Elective Assembly scheduled for November to elect a new Bishop should be postponed to a date to be arranged. I will appoint an Episcopal presence to help lead the Diocese on an interim basis while a Planning Committee is convened.

The Planning Committee will comprise Rob Rogerson, the Provincial Treasurer, Siviwe Dongwana CA(SA), an experienced accountant, Professor Paul Walters and leaders of work streams which will be established to develop a sustainable plan to restore the Diocese to full health. I will undertake pastoral visits to you in November and February, and once the way ahead is clear, I will issue a new mandate for an Elective Assembly.

These decisions were not taken lightly. The Diocese currently owes the Pensions Fund about R2 million, as well as a substantial sum to the Diocesan Trusts Board. About 16 stipendiary clergy and about 100 self-supporting clergy minister in the Diocese. Parish assessments are not realising the expected income but expenses are still running at a high level. Although many agree that the financial and structural issues facing the Diocese arise mainly from spiritual and teaching challenges, the Diocese needs to draw up a detailed and implementable plan to address these issues and prepare the way for the election of a new Bishop.

Please join me in praying for wisdom and discernment for all in the Diocese and beyond who will be charged with the weighty responsibility of addressing these challenges. With your prayers and support, I am confident they will succeed.

Yours in Christ

*+ Thabo Cape Town*