

TITLE: P2- 2024: Dissolution of St. Andrew's in the Highlands in Antelope

We, the undersigned, being the Senior Warden and Treasurer of the Mission Committee, make the following petition based on the unanimous consent of the Mission Committee, which consists of 4 members:

PETITION FOR DISSOLUTION

This Petition of St. Andrew's-in-the-Highlands, Antelope, California, is addressed to the Convention of The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Northern California, and represents the following:

1. St. Andrew's-in-the-Highlands, Antelope was established as a mission congregation of this Diocese on February 4, 1962, by Bishop Haden, and by affirmation of the Convention of the Episcopal Church in May 1962.
2. Attendance peaked at 392 in 1965. Our membership of roughly 10 people has disbursed since our closing service on December 3, 2023, and now worships at other churches in the area.
3. History of the Mission

St. Andrew's-in-the-Highlands (hereafter St. Andrew's) was established during a time when the area, including nearby McClellan Air Base, was booming. The earliest diocesan records show a meeting to discuss founding an Episcopal mission in the area was held in fall of 1961, and a

service of Evening Prayer was held October 24, 1961 at the "Highlands Swim Club" at the Clouds Café on Watt Avenue.

The Rev. Melvin Ray Brown began serving as Vicar, St. Andrew's-in-the-Highlands on July 1, 1962. The meeting place for the church is listed as Planehaven Community Center, Airway Drive, North Highlands.

In 1963, land was purchased at the corner of Watt Avenue and Navajo Street in North Highlands. Ground was broken for church construction on July 28, 1963, and Bishop Clarence Haden consecrated the new church building on November 3, 1963.

Records show that clergy generally cycled through in 4-5 years, with some notable departures which affected membership: The Rev. David Cates was removed and disciplined in 1973 after charges of child sexual abuse were examined, and in 2003, Rev. Frederick Symons resigned and was divorced on the same day.

In 1995, it was announced that McClellan Air Base would be closed. This closure was complete by 2001, creating a profound impact on the area around it, including St. Andrew's. By 2003, the Sunday average attendance (ASA) was reported as 26. Although attendance ebbed and flowed after this time, generally hovered in the mid 30s.

A fire that started after hours in the church's restroom on November 17, 2021 seriously damaged much of the interior of the church, which was already suffering from significant deferred maintenance. The congregation rented the sanctuary at Bethel Lutheran Church in N. Sacramento from December 2021 to December 2023. In 2023, it was determined that the insurance payout for repairing fire damage was insufficient to rebuild the church, due to many other structural issues. By this time, Sunday worship was in the teens (including some members of the closed Lutheran church where they gathered).

Long-time beloved vicar, The Rev. Peter Rodgers, retired in the summer of 2023 with a joyful service of evensong followed by a festive meal. The Rt. Rev. Megan Traquair was present and read a proclamation of appreciation for Rev. Rodger’s long-time service. The remaining congregation wanted to try continuing with Morning Prayer and occasional supply clergy, but Leadership was a struggle, and in late 2023, after several conversations, four members of the Mission Committee met with the Canon to the Ordinary and declared that it was too much to carry on as a congregation, and requested a closing service, which was held at Bethel Lutheran Church on the first Sunday in Advent (December 3, 2023).

Since 2023, the Diocese has managed finances and hired a security company to protect the vacant church campus, which suffered from repeated vandalism.

4. Clergy Leadership History

2008 – 2023: The Rev. Peter Rodgers

2007: The Rev John Mangels

2003 – 2006: The Rev. David Cavanaugh

1994: The Rev. Zealand Hillsdon Hutton (brief interim)

1994 – 2003: The Rev. Frederic Symons (resigned)

1986 – 1994: The Rev. David Powell

1973 – 1986: The Rev. David Muth

1969 – 1973: The Rev. David Cates (removed and disciplined for sexual abuse of minors)

1967 – 1969: The Rev. John Duncan

1966 – 1967: The Rev. Ralph Bower

1962 – 1966: The Rev. Melvin Brown

5. We had our final worship service on 1Advent (December 3) 2023 and have concluded it is not possible to continue as an organized mission of the Diocese.

THEREFORE, we pray that the Diocesan Convention act by acclamation to order dissolution of the organized mission pursuant to Canon 30.12.

Date: 10/9/2024

Joan Hall
Joan Hall, Bishop's Warden

Date: 10/9/2024

Dominic d'Etcheverry
Treasurer