

August 21, 2026

To:

The Executive Committee, Anglican Church in North America;
The Rt. Rev. Julian Dobbs, Dean of the Province and Acting Archbishop;
The Rt. Rev. Charles F. Edgar, III, Bishop, Anglican Diocese of South Carolina;
The Rt. Rev. Chris Warner, Bishop, Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic; and
The Rt. Rev. David Bryan, President, Court for the Trial of a Bishop

The undersigned Diocesan Chancellors and Chair of the Provincial Constitution and Canons Committee were asked by our Diocesan Bishops to participate in a mediated inquiry into the Provincial proceedings styled *In the Matter of the Rt. Rev. Stewart Ruch, III (Bishop, Diocese of the Upper Midwest)* (Ruch Matter). We understand this inquiry was to be conducted by making a full review of the transcript from the Ruch matter. The creation of this panel to conduct this inquiry was the result of an agreement that was reached among certain bishops during Provincial Council in June 2026, and because of this agreement two resolutions pending before Provincial Council were withdrawn without prejudice. The first resolution called upon the Court for the Trial of a Bishop to release a full transcript of all of its actions in the Ruch matter. The second resolution called upon the Executive Committee to release the full written report of the investigation of the Ruch matter which will be prepared by the Lathrop GPM law firm.

We as a group are prepared to undertake the requested inquiry. The inquiry will be based solely on the trial record, including all transcripts, ruling, orders, and recordings, in the Ruch Matter (Record of the Trial Court). We are prepared to make a written report of our work, with the goal of the inquiry to bring greater clarity and understanding to what occurred during the pretrial and trial proceedings, to assist future courts and tribunals in the exercise of their judicial authority under both current Title IV disciplinary canons and those coming into effect as of January 1, 2027, and to rebuild trust throughout the Province. To that end, we jointly prepared a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting forth our appointment as a Chancellor Panel, as well as understandings regarding the scope of the inquiry, access to the Record of the Trial Court, confidentiality requirements, and expectations for completion and release of our report.

At the end of July 2026, we were provided information indicating that the Court for the Trial of a Bishop will not execute the proposed MOU or provide us access to the Record of the Trial Court in the Ruch matter. As of this writing, that remains our understanding. Accordingly, we are unable at this time to complete the task requested of us.

However, we believe that we can and should make a brief comment based on the limited public information available from the Trial Court.

At the outset it is important that we say that we have not seen the record from the Ruch matter and, therefore, do not know the reasons why that matter was an *in camera* proceeding. Nor are we privy to the factors that have recently led the Court in the Wood's matter to close that proceeding. As a general matter, however, we have deep concern for any trial of a Bishop that is conducted in an entirely confidential proceeding, especially when such a trial is conducted without the reasons for such confidentiality being publicly explained by the Trial Court.

The current Rules of the Trial Court state that testimony is normally taken in "open court."¹ As licensed attorneys who have practiced in civil courts of various jurisdictions in America and Canada, we understand the term "open court" to mean open to the public and thus the opposite of an *in camera* proceeding. Furthermore, we strongly support the recently revised Title IV of the Provincial Canons which contain a Canon for *Norms for Disciplinary Bodies of the Province* that expressly states that provincial disciplinary or judicial proceedings must be open to the public unless the tribunal determines that conducting the whole or part of the hearing in public would be inappropriate.² These 2026 canonical revisions – including the specific canon entitled *Public Nature of Judicial Proceedings* – were passed by 100% of the delegates to Provincial Council and Provincial Assembly.

A fundamental norm of our civil society is that courts are open to the public because public access is a core structural safeguard of fairness, legitimacy, and accountability. Open proceedings help ensure that trials are fair and that legal standards are applied properly. Transparency strengthens trust in judicial decision-making and the integrity of the courts, thereby engendering public confidence.³

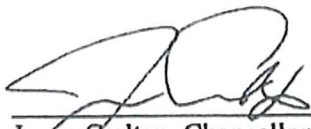
In conclusion, let us again affirm that we are ready to complete the task requested of us, but we are unable to do so without access to the Record of the Trial Court in the Ruch matter. We express deep concern about the practice of closing trials to the public without clearly articulated reasons. We believe that the fairness and integrity of the judicial processes of the body of believers that comprise the Anglican Church in North America is best protected by open trials, rather than by confidential proceedings.

¹ Rule 9: *Taking of Testimony* of the *Rules of Procedure for the Court for the Trial of a Bishop* provides that "in all court proceedings, the testimony of witnesses shall be taken orally in open Court by the Recorder of Proceedings, unless otherwise provided by the court."

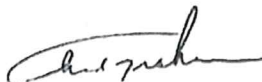
² Title IV, Canon 11, Section 5.

³ See *Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia*, 448 U.S. 555 (1980), where the United States Supreme Court traces the history of open trials in England and colonial America recognizing "the importance of openness to the proper functioning of a trial; it gave assurance that the proceedings were conducted fairly to all concerned, and it discouraged perjury, the misconduct of participants, and decisions based on secret bias or partiality." 448 U.S.569.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Carlton, Chancellor, Diocese of the Living Word



The Rev. Chad Graham, Vice Chancellor, The Anglican Diocese of Canada



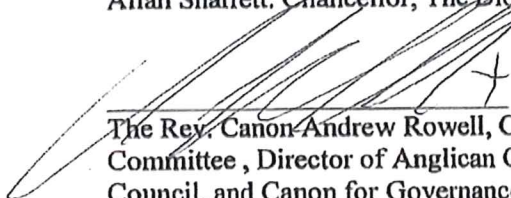
Ben Hagood, Chancellor, The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina



Gary Hunter, Chancellor, The Gulf Atlantic Diocese



Allan Sharrett, Chancellor, The Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic



The Rev. Canon Andrew Rowell, Chair of the Provincial Constitution and Canons Committee, Director of Anglican Governance Ministries for the American Anglican Council, and Canon for Governance of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese.