

current debt payments, even with a much reduced attendance, are being met. Now, tragically, it appears to be all for naught.

Your decision to close this honourable, valuable edifice to Christian witness must be questioned. With the local Presbyterian Church in serious decline, no Roman Catholic Church in Town, the United Church struggling, and the Pentecostal Church gaining a toehold, the removal of the Anglican congregation option from this small community is terribly tragic. In my opinion, as a former resident of the village, and as a journalist who has written extensively about justice issues, I see your decision as a breach of faith with your own faithful communicants.

What determining factors have led you to make this decision? Is it purely attendance figures? If so, is there a set number of adherents to the faith that must be maintained in order for a congregation to remain viable in the eyes of God? Is it a money issue? If the building is being maintained, bills are being paid, children are being educated, and adult worshippers are continuing to be nurtured at Trinity Anglican's alter, what is the magic amount of money needed to keep the doors open? Is it purely church politics that drives your decision? If that is the case, then all of the smaller congregations in your diocese - some of which have had their doors open since the early 19th century, if not earlier - are doomed to be shuttered and abandoned, their parishioners scattered to the four corners. In Colborne's case, your decision will force them to St Paul's in Brighton, or St. George's in Grafton, a nearly 50 km round trip if you're an Anglican living in Castleton. I should not have to remind you of the aging nature of most Anglican congregations; nor should I have to point out that, by closing the doors to Trinity Anglican in Colborne, you will no doubt eliminate the presence, and impact of Anglicanism in an entire township.

I urge you to rethink your decision immediately. Perhaps a reprieve of five years, subject to review at that time, would be in order. But to move forward with your current plans to de-consecrate Trinity Anglican Church in Colborne is simply wrong.

Thank you for your time and reflection.

Sincerely,

Tom Philp
Peterborough, Ontario

The Bishop replied three days later, after the de-consecration.