



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

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THE RT. REV. JACK. LEO IKER, *Bishop*

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For immediate release

Court hears arguments on summary judgment filing

HOOD COUNTY, Texas – In a hearing today Judge Ralph Walton granted three motions favoring St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, as well as the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and the Corporation of the Diocese. At issue in the case is payment of a bequest made to St. Andrew's in 2002 by a longtime parishioner. As he had done in past hearings on earlier motions, Judge Walton dismissed attempts by representatives of the national leadership of The Episcopal Church (TEC) to bring issues from a case pending in Tarrant County into the trust case before the Hood County court.

Judge Walton began by approving a motion asking that the Diocese and Corporation be identified by their legal names in an order issued following a hearing on June 2. This substitution corrected inaccurate and informal descriptive terms suggested by representatives of the TEC interests. Next, the court found that Bishop C. Wallis Ohl, serving in The Episcopal Church, had no legal interest in the bequest to St. Andrew's. The filings submitted in Bishop Ohl's name sought to make the judgment dependent on resolution of an ecclesiastical dispute between the Diocese and TEC loyalists. The judge also denied a motion brought by the trustee of the bequest which would have delayed the hearing of the summary judgment filings to another date, contingent on proceedings in the Tarrant County case.

Proceeding then to arguments on the summary judgment*, the court heard pleadings on behalf of the trustee, the TEC cross-plaintiffs, and the Parish, Diocese, and Corporation. The judge concluded the hearing saying that he would inform the parties of his ruling in writing. His decision is expected in the coming days.

Today's rulings bring the case nearer to a conclusion. Bishop Iker expressed gratitude for the wise counsel provided by J. Shelby Sharpe and the entire legal team, as well as appreciation for the prayer support of today's proceedings from the clergy and lay people of the diocese.

The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth was organized in 1982. It is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion and the Province of the Southern Cone. The Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker has served as the third diocesan Bishop of Fort Worth since 1995. The diocese enjoys companion relationships with the Dioceses of Northern Malawi and Northern Mexico.

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