



*The Episcopal Church in the
Diocese of Western North Carolina*

THE RT. REV. G. PORTER TAYLOR

February 5, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Just a few weeks ago I wrote to let you know that Howard White, the rector at Grace Church in the Mountains (Waynesville) from 1984 to 2006, had been identified by former students of St. George's School in Rhode Island as having engaged in sexual misconduct in the early 1970s while he served on the staff at that school. I am writing again to share more difficult news with you. Earlier this week I received an email message from a person informing me that she had been sexually abused by the Rev. White many years ago during his tenure as rector at Grace in the Mountains and while she was a minor. I received that with many emotions and with a renewed commitment for our Diocese to do all it can to aid in the investigation, to console any who are abused or hurt, to respect our ecclesiastical disciplinary process while pushing for a speedy resolution, and to pray to the Lord that justice be done and that the Holy Spirit console all those who are harmed as well as give us all hope for a renewed world.

The Rev. White is, of course, entitled to a presumption of innocence in the eyes of the law. However, as your Bishop and pastor I know we need to face this challenge and do the right thing. To this end, I shared with the person that reached out to me our sorrow and sympathy for any wrongdoing she has suffered. In addition, I offered her assistance in coping with this difficult situation, including aid for counseling services. We also notified the district attorney's office and police. In deference to their responsibilities and any possible criminal prosecutions, we will share all that we can and will assist their investigators. Finally, Canon Jim Pritchett provided this information to the Intake Officer (who receives and acts upon disciplinary complaints about priests) of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. The Rev. White is resident in that diocese. At this time he has been suspended from exercising any priestly duties.

It is important that we have a full understanding of any misconduct that may have occurred to others so that we can do our best to support them. Therefore, I ask anyone who experienced, or is aware of, any sexual misconduct by the Rev. White while he was a resident in our diocese to please let us know. You may contact Canon Pritchett at (828) 450-7500 or jimpritchett1@icloud.com.

I ask that you join with me in confronting this difficult issue. I ask that you pray. Pray for the person who reached out to me. Pray for the former students of St. George's school. Pray for the

Rev. White. Pray that we know the truth and respond appropriately. Pray that God's will be done.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Porter Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

+G. Porter Taylor

Bishop, Diocese of Western North Carolina