My dear Friends:

On Oct 18 of this year, I will celebrate the tenth anniversary of my ordination as your Bishop. I have loved being your Bishop – it has been for me both the most humbling experience and the greatest privilege to serve with many fine clergy and lay leaders over this past ten years. I have loved each of my parish visits in times of great joy, and even in times of sadness and struggle, as we always worked together to find a way forward.

When God called me to be among you as your Bishop, I envisioned a much different ministry, but I found my role was to give leadership to a process of moving the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior from under the umbrella of the Province of BC & Yukon to becoming once again an Anglican Identity with the rights and responsibilities of a diocese. During my episcopal ministry, in my visits with each parish and to the many gatherings we held, I learnt some important truths about the people who God had gifted me to share in ministry with.

The **first** truth is the deep commitment to be the family of God despite the horrors of our history, and along with your deep commitment to walk together to healing and reconciliation has been paramount in your sharing with me – you were prepared to give up all to stay in the family of God here in this place.

The Second truth was your desire for the right to elect your own Bishop under your terms.

The Third truth, you knew you needed to embrace new ways of being church and doing the mission of God in this place. I witnessed how faithful you were in prayer, allowing the Holy Spirit to take you on a journey that brought us here to today. As you moved to becoming the Territory of the People, you held firmly to your commitments, made right here in Quesnel in 2000 as you let go of the Diocese of Cariboo. You held firmly to the affirmations you adopted as you became the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior, and I believe you have been able to maintain the best of who you have **been and are** as you walk together into a hope filled future.

I have a deep sense that God is calling me to retirement as Bishop, now that we have completed this part of the journey together. Coordinating Council this morning has made way for me to retire and to begin the process of electing a new bishop over the summer and it is my prayer that on September 28th, you will gather to elect your new Bishop. With this in mind, early today, I sent a letter to the Metropolitan, stating my intention to retire at the end of the 2019.

Retirement for me has many exciting possibilities and I will take time to discover them. However, what I will miss most in retirement is the privilege of sharing in ministry with an outstanding team of clergy and laity who have been courageous in finding new ways to be God’s people as the Territory of the People. I pray you will live into your theme for this Assembly, as you go forward to build, renew and strengthen by walking together in unity.

And now a final blessing before we carry on with the work of our Assembly,

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,

And the blessing of God, our creator, Redeemer and sustainer of life,

Be with you this day and forever more. Amen.