

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bishop Robert O'Neill, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado, said today that "it is with great sadness that I have received the news that the vestry of Grace and Saint Stephen's Church decided this morning to affiliate with an Anglican bishop in Nigeria."

This action, taken by the vestry in consultation with Father Armstrong (still a priest of the Episcopal Church under inhibition by the Bishop), has been taken unilaterally and has no canonical or constitutional grounding or effect. "The fact is that people may leave the Episcopal Church but parishes cannot," Bishop O'Neill stated. "Grace and Saint Stephen's Church remains a parish of The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado and will continue to be so for any and all who desire to be members of The Episcopal Church."

To that end, Bishop O'Neill has removed the members of the vestry and all officers from office under the provision of the church's canons. Taking this step affords the Bishop the opportunity to provide appropriate pastoral care to those remaining within the Episcopal Church, while, at the same time, protecting the assets of the parish in light of the serious allegations pending against Father Armstrong concerning potential long-term and significant financial defalcations.

"My primary pastoral concern is for all those who remain loyal to Grace and Saint Stephen's and The Episcopal Church," said Bishop O'Neill. In a letter sent out to parishioners today, Bishop O'Neill stated that they will hear from him soon regarding provisions for this Sunday's worship and new pastoral leadership for the parish until such time as the parish is restored to its property.

At present, Father Armstrong remains under inhibition by the Bishop as he faces allegations regarding the misappropriation of church funds. Under the terms of the inhibition, Father Armstrong cannot exercise any functions or pastoral responsibilities as a priest.

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