



20 February 2026

**The Rt Revd Charles Edgar,**  
*Bishop*

Mrs Madison Kuzia,  
*Bishop's Assistant*

The Revd Canon Jim Lewis,  
*Canon to the Ordinary*

The Venerable Hunter Jordan,  
*Archdeacon*

The Revd Deacon Joyce Harder,  
*Ordinations and Events Coordinator*

The Very Revd Canon Ken Weldon,  
*Canon for Camp and Clergy Care*

The Revd Canon Laura Bowman,  
*Canon for Safe Churches*

The Revd Canon Todd Simonis,  
*Canon for Church Planting*

The Revd Canon David Dubay,  
*Canon for Hispanic Ministry*

The Revd Canon Bob Lawrence,  
*Canon for Global Missions*

The Revd Canon Newman Lawrence,  
*Canon for Men's Ministry*

The Revd Canon Hunter Myers,  
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### **Matthew 5:15-16**

*Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

To the Members of the Executive Committee of the Anglican Church in North America,

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On September 15, 2025, we wrote to you regarding the troubling developments surrounding the ecclesiastical trial of Bishop Stewart Ruch and the confusion and disruption that followed. That letter included our August 8, 2025 correspondence to the clergy of our Diocese. Our sincere hope was that the conclusion of the trial and the findings of the court would address these concerns. Unfortunately, that has not happened. We write now with even greater urgency, convinced that the "independent, third party investigation into the Provincial Office's actions during the course of the trial, to begin no later than 60 days after the conclusion of the trial process" that we called for is essential to the long-term health of both our Diocese and the Province.

Let us be clear: we understand that the charges against Bishop Ruch will not be retried. We are not seeking an appeal. This case is concluded. Where it has left us, though, must be acknowledged. At present, our shared life is marked both by diminished trust as well as by heightened suspicion of moral failure at the highest levels of leadership.

We in the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina are no closer to reconciling the apparent contradictions between the former Provincial Prosecutors' resignation letters and the court's orders than we were when those resignations occurred. This remains

true despite the court's August 12 public statement that in addition to the order, "The Court will also address...all questions related to the fairness and integrity of its proceedings." Instead, the extraordinary events surrounding the trial have gone largely unaddressed.

The former prosecutors allege that the Archbishop's office granted permission for a member of the trial court to access the prosecution's files without their knowledge; that the subject of those files had already been ruled to be excluded from the record by prior court order; and that those files became the basis for improper questioning during the trial. Until the air is cleared regarding these allegations, suspicion remains. When facts are inaccessible, repentance, forgiveness, and grace are hindered, and our communion in the Body of Christ suffers as a result.

The court chose to hold the proceedings in private. It appears the court chose not to employ a court reporter. The court has thus far chosen not to release the record. We assume these decisions were made in good faith although the confidentiality of the proceedings appears inconsistent with court rules and norms, as discussed below. Yet taken together they build a wall around the truth, leaving those outside with only the final ruling of December 16, 2025 to understand what occurred. Unfortunately that ruling has intensified our concerns instead of ameliorating them, and reinforced the urgency of our original request. The order neither fully exonerates Bishop Ruch nor adequately addresses the serious questions it raises. Its treatment of the Province raises further concerns about character, competency, and procedure among some of our highest-ranking and longest-serving bishops. At a moment when our Province most needs reasons for trust, we instead find ourselves with more reason to doubt.

Both can be addressed by the public release of facts. If there is a moral failure within the ACNA, it must be known so it can be addressed. If there is not, then suspicion must be dispelled through transparency and open process. Whether or not you agree that trust has been lost, demonstrated trustworthiness remains the only way for trust to increase. With no appeal pending, the court has little to gain and no evident reason to maintain strict confidentiality over these proceedings. The ruling itself rests on the evidence and cannot be threatened by that evidence. It is standard for court records to become public once proceedings conclude.

Likewise, any third-party investigation will only deepen concern unless its engagement letter, scope, and full findings are made publicly available. Anything less will only reinforce the very confusion and scandal the court identified as damaging to the ACNA. We cannot afford as a Province to let obscurity flourish where clarity is needed. The forthcoming trials of Bishop Jones and Archbishop Wood will come before this same court and follow these same procedures. It is therefore vital that we at every level of the ACNA learn as much as possible, and quickly, from what has already occurred so future proceedings may be received as just and credible. Let us commit now to avoiding even the appearance of impropriety, in what has happened and in what is yet to come.

Our goal is simple: to restore trust and eliminate suspicion. We trust this is your goal as well. To that end, we commit ourselves to making no predetermined judgments, and to ensuring that those entrusted with responsibility and jurisdiction act openly and faithfully. We likewise ask that no assumptions be made about us or anyone else seeking clarity. Let the record speak for itself.

The clergy of our Diocese are aware that we called for a third-party investigation to begin within 60 days of the trial's conclusion, by February 16, 2026. They are eager to see tangible steps toward restored trust and health within the Province. They also desire to know how we are contributing to that work, and therefore we will be sharing the full contents of this letter with them in 30 days (March 23, 2026), with permission to disseminate further at their discretion. We welcome your response to be included in that communication, so they may be assured of all efforts being made towards our shared goal of increased trust and diminished suspicion.

In addition to acknowledging receipt of this letter, we respectfully request your response to the following requests, and if any of them cannot be met, we ask for a written explanation as to why:

1. We request that the important standard of avoiding the appearance of impropriety be held up and maintained among the provincial staff in all pending and future proceedings. As discussed above, serious questions remain about why the Provincial Chancellor and the office of the Archbishop allowed a court member in the Ruch trial to have access to electronic files of the prosecution team without the prosecutor's knowledge or agreement. Lingering questions about this highly unusual action have engendered mistrust throughout the Province. The recusal of those involved in this concerning incident from future disciplinary proceedings, particularly those involving Archbishop Wood, will help restore trust in the Province.
2. In a way that only protects identities of abuse victims or victims advocates, we request the release of a complete transcript of the trial and all pretrial proceedings - the trial video, or the unedited, captured audio from the trial video, or an unedited transcript from the captured audio of the trial video.
3. We request all motions and court rulings, including pretrial rulings, be released along with the release of all three pretrial investigations.
4. We request the identity of the person/firm that will be conducting the investigation along with the engagement letter defining the investigation's scope.
5. We request that the results of the investigation be made public with appropriate confidentiality for the protection of victims. There should be no reason to attach the attorney client or work product privileges to the report. The trial has been completed and this investigation should be conducted not in anticipation of future litigation, but to help the Province learn from past experiences and to restore trust among all within the Province.
6. We offer our 2026 Diocesan pledge to the Province to be used to fund this investigation so that no financial obstacle will prevent it moving forward.

In our call for a third party investigation, we further ask that investigators review facts and publicly respond to the following questions of any reasonable reader that remain based on the limited information that is available. If valid questions like these exist, no one in our Province is served well by leaving them unasked, unexamined, or answered only in secret. Those in a position to deny a public response to valid questions by insisting that the Province is best served by withholding the answers to these questions, do so at the risk of destabilizing the foundation on which their authority is established. These questions must be answered for unequivocal trust in the court and its future proceedings to be established, and the answers must be released publicly.

1. Why were the proceedings completely conducted under a cloak of confidentiality rather than in open court (with protection for identity of victims) as provided by court rules and trial norms?<sup>1</sup>
2. What pretrial order or nondisclosure agreement was entered or required of the parties regarding confidentiality? What rationale was articulated for requiring all proceedings to be kept confidential rather than following court rules and trial norms?
3. Was a full verbatim transcript of all pretrial and trial proceedings made?<sup>2</sup> How was a transcript made and who was responsible for it? Will the investigative team have full access to the transcript?
4. Why did the President of the Court not serve as the Presiding Officer of the Court?<sup>3</sup> How was the role of the Presiding Officer defined? What role did the Presiding Officer play in the proceedings and in the drafting of the Order?
5. Did the Court make any inquiry of the members as to the existence of conflicts of interest of the members and, if so, how were any conflicts resolved?
6. What were the specific circumstances involving the provincial office providing a court member access to confidential files of the prosecution, and the questioning that took place thereafter by the court member?<sup>4</sup> In the opinion of the investigative team were these actions of court members and the provincial office appropriate or not appropriate?

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 9 (a) of the “Rules of Procedure of the Provincial Ecclesiastical Trial Courts and the Court for the Trial of a Bishop” (adopted by the ACNA Court for the Trial of a Bishop April 13, 2021) states that: “In all court proceedings, the testimony of witnesses shall be taken orally *in open Court* by the Recorder of Proceedings, unless otherwise provided by the Court.” “Open court” is a legal term of art generally understood to mean in public or non-confidential proceedings. American jurisprudence for court and administrative hearings generally favor open proceedings with confidentiality and closed proceedings being applied only where necessary to protect identities of victims. The ACNA Title IV proposed revisions provide that all hearings for a disciplinary tribunal for a bishop must be open to the public unless the tribunal specifically determines that a public hearing, in whole or part, would be inappropriate for reasons such as protecting a minor or vulnerable adult.

<sup>2</sup> Rule 11 (b) of the Rules of Procedure provides that the Court “shall appoint a Court Reporter to record the proceedings of each Trial . . . .”

<sup>3</sup> Rule 11 (a) of the Rules of Procedure provides that “[t]he President of each Provincial Trial Court will serve as the presiding officer of each Trial, unless the members of each Trial Court shall appoint another member of the Court to serve as Presiding Officer.”

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Runyan’s resignation and the subsequent letter from Ms. Rachel Thebeau raised serious and concerning questions about the actions of the provincial office in providing to a member of the court access to the files of

7. What specific confidentiality orders or requirements were applicable to the prosecution team before the resignations of July 2025?<sup>5</sup>
8. Is there any evidence that the former prosecution team actually violated any confidentiality orders or requirements?<sup>6</sup>
9. What confidential information did the former prosecution team improperly share?<sup>7</sup>

In addition to these important procedural questions, the Final Order – on its face – raises many serious questions and concerns that cannot be answered without a full and complete trial transcript. Without the benefit of a transcript, we are left with the following questions which we believe, in the interest of restoring trust throughout the Province, should be answered by the investigation.

Trial courts normally follow a logical evaluative process that consistently applies reasoned principles and considers counter arguments. Such a process builds trust, dispels doubt, and bolsters the Court's credibility. We expected the Court's final order to: identify the elements necessary for proving each of the charges, analyze all inculpatory and exculpatory evidence in accordance with such elements, determine if the evidence meets the standard of proof required for each element, and determine a rational ruling based on such analysis of the evidence. The Final Order, however, fails to provide such a usual and logical approach. Instead it provides a conclusory exposition of what appears to be only exculpatory evidence.

We are left with the following questions about the evidence that we request be addressed by the investigation:

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the prosecution team without their knowledge. The court's Final Order does nothing to answer these questions but simply shrouds the questions in a cloak of secrecy and harshly criticizes breaches of confidentiality that are not apparent from publicly available information.

<sup>5</sup> The Court posted on its information website an undated document entitled Confidentiality Statement of the Court. The metadata of this document, still publicly available at the writing of this document, shows that the document was created on July 29, 2025 (by Jeff Weber), which was several days after the resignation of Provincial Prosecutor Alan Runyan (<https://anglicanchurch.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CONFIDENTIALITY-STATEMENT-OF-THE-COURT.pdf>).

<sup>6</sup> Serious and important questions remain about what specific confidentiality orders Mr. Runyan violated, when and how he became subject to them, and why the Court made such harsh and conclusory allegations against Mr. Runyan without a full treatment of the facts. Further, the question still stands whether or not any confidentiality orders should be used to cloak alleged impropriety of the Court, which was his stated intent for writing (<https://anglicanchurch.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/7-19-25-Provincial-Prosecutor-Resignation-Letter-to-Archbishop-Woods.pdf>). Mr. Runyan quotes in his letter: "once a Presentment is before the Court for the Trial of a Bishop, the proceedings are to focus on the charges and allegations of that Presentment(s) and on the admissible evidence that either supports or refutes those charges." This statement, assumed to be from a court order, is in direct conflict with the Court's Final Order.

<sup>7</sup> The Court's Final Order harshly criticizes Mr. Runyan for violating confidentiality orders and causing (p.63) "confidential, personal, and sensitive information to be provided to a media outlet", yet the order fails to specify what information was improperly shared by Mr. Runyan. His resignation letter speaks to the actions of the court and its proceedings, but does not name anyone on the court and does not reveal any evidence.

1. Did the Court consider all of the evidence in an unbiased manner? If so, why is no inculpatory evidence discussed? Are we to believe none was presented?<sup>8</sup>
2. Did the Court accurately interpret certain canonical provisions cited in the order?<sup>9</sup>
3. Why did the Court speculate about possible evidence that was not presented, as opposed to conducting an analysis of the evidence that was presented?<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Examples of the Court's apparent failure to consider all of the evidence:

- i) (p.49) "Findings regarding the priests testifying for respondent." There is no corresponding section giving similar consideration to the testimony of the prosecution's witnesses.
- ii) (p.57) "The evidence revealed that Greenhouse operated as a structurally unique and semi-autonomous mission agency". The court interprets the evidence only to conclude that Bp. Ruch did not have full responsibility for Greenhouse, yet it is equally reasonable to conclude that Bp. Ruch had some responsibility. "Semi-autonomous" and "semi-not-autonomous" are the same, meaning Bp. Ruch is not completely absolved of responsibility as the court's narrative suggests.
- iii) (p. 69) "... [T]he nature and course of this prosecution were marked by ... reliance on ... online narratives ...". Ironically, a compelling narrative not grounded in facts is the justification that the court gives for Bp. Ruch's innocence. Here, they create a competing narrative in Bp. Ruch's favor instead of dealing judiciously with the evidence before them.

<sup>9</sup> Examples of the Court's apparent incorrect interpretations of canon law:

- i) (P.11) Regarding a rumors investigation, "The purpose of this process is to ensure that *unfounded* (emphasis ours) allegations may be investigated and resolved". The stated purpose of the canon found within the canon itself and quoted directly in the ruling is to "determine, whether upon matters of law and fact...there are reasonable grounds to put the accused to trial." A plain sense reading of the canon clearly implies a neutral approach to all rumors.
- ii) (P.25) Regarding firsthand knowledge requirement of presenters, "the three presenting bishops had no firsthand knowledge, no factual basis, and no substantive grounds to sign the Presentment—sworn or unsworn." Repeatedly the court's position rests on a fundamentally illogical canonical interpretation of what knowledge presentment signers must have. This interpretation has been previously contested and defeated, and nowhere in the order do they justify their use of it or explain why it is the court's prevailing interpretation. Regardless, it is illogical to assume that 3 bishops or 10 various others as defined by the canon must have firsthand knowledge of, for example, sexual abuse. Requiring first hand, eye witness and direct knowledge by so many presenters would be an impossible burden to meet in most investigative situations. This clearly was not the intended interpretation of the canon. Most significantly, the September 5, 2023 Decision & Order of the Provincial Tribunal of the Anglican Church in North America explicitly ruled that the superseding amendment to the signature page by the three presenting bishops provided a sworn presentment that met the canonical requirements for presentment.
- iii) (P.33) "Canon IV.2.9 concerns a bishop who "disobeys or willfully contravenes the Constitution or Canons of this Church, or any lawful authority acting thereunder." The court then says "the Province was required to establish...that the disobedience was not accidental, not based on misunderstanding, and not attributable to procedural ambiguity. The canon requires proof of a willful act." In this example, the court's interpretation of the canon ignores what the canon explicitly states: "disobedience to, or willfull contravention of the Canons..." The canon names disobedience or willful contravention as grounds for a charge, yet the court says only "the canon requires proof of a willful act." Disobedience attaches to the act, regardless of the will or intent, but the court does not address this fact. If the court interprets disobedience as to imply a willful act, it still needs to acknowledge that disobedience can occur when obedience is willed.

<sup>10</sup> Examples of the Court's speculation as to evidence not presented:

- i) (P.42) "During direct examination by the Provincial Prosecutor, neither of the two witnesses who signed the Second Presentment was asked what specific actions by Bishop Ruch they believed constituted canonical violations...If the witnesses had possessed relevant factual knowledge, the Prosecutor would reasonably have sought to establish it through their testimony." The court's interpretation of the questions

4. Did the Court employ both analysis and counter-analysis of all of the evidence?
5. Did the Court apply consistent standards?<sup>11</sup>

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not asked does not logically follow. Its speculations are inferences, not established facts, and not to acknowledge them as such is misleading and could reasonably be interpreted as disingenuous. The questions could have not been asked for many valid reasons not knowable by the court, like the reasonable assumption that the Prosecutor did not expect the presentment signers to have first hand knowledge. The court can't possibly know and therefore should not speculate on what reasons the Prosecutor may have had for the questions asked or not asked.

- ii) (P.44) "The Province called additional witnesses in support of the Presentments. The Court finds that these witnesses exhibited similar evidentiary deficiencies: they had no firsthand knowledge; no direct communication with the bishop about concerns; no documentation demonstrating warnings or red flags; and no evidence of episcopal misconduct...Across all Provincial witnesses, not one testified to warning Bishop Ruch about Rivera before 2019." The court summarily dismisses the testimony of all of the Province's witnesses. With the exception of expert witness Sidebothom, in which it only references specific comments from her testimony that support the court's conclusion while ignoring any testimony that could counter their conclusion, and with the exception of Bishop Guernesey, the Court never engages with the direct testimony of the Prosecution's witnesses, nor gives specific reference to their testimony to either support or deny the Court's conclusion.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of the Court's apparent application of inconsistent standards:

- i) (P.63) "[Mr. Runyan] filed no motion to withdraw, offered no explanation to the Court, and provided no transition of responsibilities. He simply ceased to act in the role he had been appointed to fulfill." As a rule, throughout the Order the Court considers the context of the actions of the Province and its leadership in regards to Bp. Ruch and the charges against him. In regards to Mr. Runyan, the same considerations are not made. Mr. Runyan claims that his email was cut off and that he asked Archbishop Wood to forward his email to the court since he no longer could. The court gives this context no consideration, laying the silence directly at Mr. Runyan's feet. It also fails to recognize that the Provincial Prosecutor is appointed by the Province, and only responsible to the Province, and therefore could "ceas[e] to act in the role he had been appointed to fulfill" for any number of legitimate reasons, such as an illness. If context is to be considered in the case of Bp. Ruch, it logically follows that contextual consideration should also be granted to Mr. Runyan.
- ii) At times the order treats all three investigative reports as equal. Equally faulty, and equal in conclusions. At other times, it says the GRS and Husch Blackwell do not meet the requirement to be considered as evidence, and "weights" the Telios report substantially more. (P.32) "All three major investigations—GRS, Husch Blackwell, and Telios Law—found no leadership culpability in violation of Title IV by the bishop, that the Presentments were unsupported by clear and convincing evidence, that procedural irregularities contributed to misperceptions and escalation, and that the Respondent did not commit any canonical offense."
- iii) The court points out errors made by other bodies within the ACNA and reasons that these errors are the only reason charges are brought against Bp. Ruch in the first place. It never considers whether the charges could still be correct regardless. Yet the court is sure that its ruling is correct, despite admitting within the ruling to errors made by the court. (P.22) "Specifically, the Court stated on the record that it would not require the parties to litigate the propriety, mechanics, or wisdom of the pre-trial investigative process itself. This restraint was not an abdication of the Court's responsibility, but a deliberate judicial choice grounded in a foundational assumption: that a canonically compliant, fully operational Board of Inquiry ("BOI") existed...As trial testimony unfolded, however, the evidentiary foundation supporting that assumption steadily eroded. Although the Court has taken judicial notice of declarations asserting that a Board of Inquiry existed in name, the trial record does not establish that such a body functioned in any meaningful sense." (P.24) "In sum, the trial evidence demonstrates a stark divergence between the process the Court assumed existed at the pre-trial stage and the process the testimony revealed at trial."

6. Did the Court apply a thorough evaluation process as to all of the evidence?<sup>12</sup>
7. Did the Court confine its reasoning and analysis within an appropriate scope of inquiry?<sup>13</sup>

Lack of trust and mutual suspicion erode our communion and weaken our witness to a watching world. But our communion and witness are strengthened by a commitment to transparency and truth that is above reproach. We therefore urge you to join us in seeking clarity and truth in these matters, and to work diligently alongside us so that, together, we may pursue reconciliation, restore confidence, and ensure that God is glorified in all we say and do as a Province.

In Christ,

The Bishop and Standing Committee of the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina



The Rt Revd Charles Francis Edgar III, *Bishop*  
Anglican Diocese of South Carolina



The Revd Mary Ellen Doran  
President, ADOSC Standing Committee

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<sup>12</sup> Examples of the Court's application of an inconsistent evaluation process:

- i) (P.21) "Testimony at trial indicated that exonerating information from the Telios report was not shared with the signing bishops at the time they signed the presentment." The court references exonerating information without revealing that information or indicating why it was exonerating.
- ii) The court states that no testimony provided evidence that rose to the clear and convincing standard, without giving direct reference to any testimony to show how it failed. Its findings are conclusory and not evaluative of the evidence.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of the Court's apparent departure from its proper scope of inquiry:

- i) (P.27) "Considered collectively, the evidence offered fell well short of the minimal threshold required for referral for trial". The role of the trial court is to evaluate the evidence presented by the parties, not to judge whether the allegations should have been presented for trial. The court focused on trying the process rather than the person accused.
- ii) (p.5-6) "The Court finds that the nature of Bishop Ruch's response to that episode is not an aberration, but a representative example of how Bishop Ruch consistently responded to harsh criticism: not with defensiveness or deflection, but with humility, a posture of learning, and a demonstrated willingness to listen, repent where harm was caused, and adjust his conduct accordingly. Over a lengthy trial, the evidence demonstrated a pattern of leadership marked by a shepherd's heart—one that seeks restoration, bears responsibility for unintended harm, and prioritizes care for those in pain over the protection of reputation or position." The Court goes to great lengths to describe the positive aspects of Bp. Ruch's character while ignoring the questions raised about his character and the evidence presented to the contrary. This diminishes the court's credibility by not addressing a central aspect of the case.
- iii) (P.64) "In doing so, [Mr. Runyan] exploited the Court's integrity for his own purposes. He accused members of this Court of misconduct while depriving them of any canonical means of reply. He slandered the bench. He inflicted reputational harm on the Court and the ecclesiastical judicial system it represents. And he did so in defiance of the very orders he had sworn to respect." The Court gives almost 3 pages of its ruling to the conduct of the former Prosecutor, who was not on trial. Whatever the Court may have felt about his withdrawal from the case, it is hard to see how such a lengthy rebuke contributes to the Court's primary task. The Court's conclusory self-justification on this issue detracts from its analysis of the evidence regarding Bp. Ruch.