

## State Supreme Court rules in favor of Diocese

Today we rejoice that the Supreme Court of Texas has issued a unanimous decision in our favor concerning the suit first brought against the Diocese and Corporation more than 11 years ago. After considering our Petition for Review of the 2018 opinion issued by the Second Court of Appeals, the high Court has granted all the relief requested.

Page two of the opinion says in part,

Applying neutral principles to the undisputed facts, we hold that 1) resolution of this property dispute does not require consideration of an ecclesiastical question, 2) under the governing documents, the withdrawing faction is the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, and 3) the trial court properly granted summary judgment in the withdrawing faction's favor. We therefore reverse the court of appeals' contrary judgment.

In its opinion, the Court found that the Diocese had not violated any Episcopal Church charter in withdrawing from association to TEC in 2008, and that the actions of the Diocese and Corporation were consistent with our own charters and with the state's trust and unincorporated association statutes, and it upheld the dismissal of the Dennis Canon as determinative in Texas church property disputes.

Plaintiffs may exercise their rights of appeal, after which a mandate will go to the trial court for implementation.

We are grateful for the Court's hard work on this decision and for the clarity with which it was rendered. We give thanks to the members of our legal team – Shelby Sharpe, Scott Brister, and David Weaver – for their sound counsel, expertise, and perseverance throughout these proceedings.

We give thanks for our visionary founding Bishop, the Rt. Rev. A. Donald Davies, and for those who assisted him in setting the legal and temporal foundations of the Diocese and Corporation. We stand on their shoulders.

We praise God for the steadfast faith and leadership of our third Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker, a true shepherd of the flock, who made many sacrifices throughout his episcopate for the sake of Christ's holy Church.

Above all, we thank God for his eternal provision and protection for his Church and the people he has called to serve him.