

24 April 2014

To the Clergy & Church Wardens of the Diocese of Georgia:

Greetings in the Name of our Resurrected Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Now that Governor Deal has signed into law what is officially called the “Safe Carry Protection Act of 2014,” I want us all to have clarity about this new law’s effect on our life together in the Diocese of Georgia. As I understand it, this new law allows for guns in churches and other houses of worship only if the ecclesiastical authority of the church permits this. In other words, the status quo remains the same in that guns are banned, unless the ecclesiastical authority takes action to change the status quo and permit them to be present.

As the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese of Georgia I want to be perfectly clear: the status quo will remain in this Diocese. In my judgment, firearms of any kind have no place in any of our church buildings. If I am requested by a congregation to grant them permission, as the laws provides but does not require, I will not grant such permission. In my judgment, the only people who are appropriately allowed to carry firearms in any of our church buildings are law enforcement officers who are on duty at the time.

If any clergy person or churchwarden has any question about this policy, then I welcome your inquiries.

In the Name of our Merciful, Risen Lord, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

The Right Reverend Scott Anson Benhase  
Bishop of Georgia