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~~Sister~~ *Katherine*
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Grace Episcopal Church
~~306 Northwest Third~~ *1009 Twin Oaks Drive*
Madison, SD 57042
October 3, 1994

Bishop Creighton L. Robertson
~~SD Episcopal Diocese~~ *Diocese of South Dakota*
500 S. Main Avenue
Sioux Falls,
SD 57042

Dear Bishop:

The members of Grace Episcopal Church in Madison would like to present the following reactions, dilemmas, and possible solutions stemming from your recent decision that the distribution of the sacraments by a deacon, except in "emergencies, is inappropriate.

The situation at Grace is this: ~~We~~ *and* we are a self-supporting mission church ~~that~~, while able to tithe to the Diocese and pay a stipend to visiting clergy, ~~we do~~ *we do* not have the funds to pay a full-time priest. We have been dependent for many years upon part-time ministry by priests. Up until this summer, we have been fortunate to have Fr. Allen Lewis at least twice a month. Even though arrangements had been made to continue coverage by a priest ~~twice~~ *twice* a month ~~during~~ during the summer, that coverage failed to materialize. On the other two Sundays of the month, Deacon Bridget Moore from Brookings ministers to us. If permission for distributing the sacraments is taken from her, ~~we shall not have~~ *our* the opportunity to receive the sacraments ~~twice each month.~~ *will greatly diminish.*

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In the Episcopal Church, the Eucharist is the center of the Sunday Service of Worship. We recognize that South Dakota does not have enough priests to serve the flock as it should be served. This means that the Diocese must do its best to make this hardship fall

as lightly as possible upon the sheep. We, respectfully, urge you to remember that for many churches in South Dakota, due to lack of funds, no clergy is available. To deny the Body of Christ to the faithful because they cannot afford a full-time priest sits ill, and bodes ill, for and upon the Episcopal Church in South Dakota. Frankly, we believe that Our Lord would prefer His flock to be fed than for His flock to starve while the "rules" were observed with pharisaical vigor.

Should you determine that this decision must stand, we then need to know the definition of an "emergency." How long must we go without the Eucharist before we are allowed to turn to the services of a deacon?

While we recognize that you, as the Bishop of this Diocese, have the right to make what theological determinations you deem appropriate, we also, respectfully, remind you that you are responsible for the spiritual health of ^{all your} your flock - ~~ALL of the members of the Episcopal Church in South Dakota~~, regardless of size or financial circumstances. We need your help. We need our Bishop to provide us with the sacraments, not deny them to us, nor put further hindrances in the way of our receiving them than our poverty already places.

Believe it or not, priests are not lining up to serve us, or other churches like us. We are fortunate to have some priestly coverage, and we recognize that. It has made us even more appreciative of those deacons who have been our steady bulwark in a time when other fully ordained shepherds seem to be unavailable. It is wearying, wearing, and a perplexity to our spirit to have to

fight our own church to receive the sacraments on a regular basis.
As it says in the prayer book, "Let not the needy, O Lord, be
forgotten; nor the hope of the poor be taken away."

Sincerely,

Grace Episcopal Church

~~Kitty~~ Kringen, Sr. Warden

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