

The Bishop's Report

The Feast of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle

August 24, 2024

I am writing this report nearly seven weeks before the 56th Annual Meeting of Convention. Because of deadlines to prepare the Convention reports for publication and sharing, it must be written ahead of the meeting. As we are too keenly aware, much can happen in the weeks between writing and the Annual Meeting.

As I write to you on this feast day from the Ahupua'a of Honolulu, I take this moment as your Bishop to honor and give thanks for the founding patrons of our Diocese, King Kamehameha IV (Alekanetero 'Iolani Kalanikualiholiho Maka o 'Iouli Kūnuiākea o Kūkā'ilimoku) and Queen Emma (Emma Kalanikaumaka'amano Kaleleonālani Na'ea Rooke). I write from the land on which our Cathedral stands that was entrusted to the Church by the Holy Sovereigns. I acknowledge the trust they committed to our Church in 1862 to care for their people – Kānaka 'Ōiwi – and all of the children of these Islands, and for our responsibility to care for all of creation. As the Bishop of the Church invited to these islands, I deeply regret that we have not always fulfilled our responsibility through these many decades. We have often failed and turned a blind eye to those around us. For those things which we as the Church and as individual Episcopalians have done and the many things we have left undone that contributed to the harm inflicted on nā Kānaka 'Ōiwi and these islands, I offer our collective lamentation. I ask God's forgiveness. I ask the prayers of our blessed ancestors and you, God's people, that we, God's Episcopal Church in Hawai'i, will have the will and courage to better fulfill our responsibility – kā mākou kuleana – to the people of these Islands and to God's creation.

Looking back over the past year since the 2023 Annual Meeting of Convention, I realize how much the Church and the world has changed. As we lived through the impact of the pandemic, we had to then deal with the aftermath of the Maui fire. We have faced a time of inflation and rising insurance rates. Nationally, the rhetoric of division and hate continues. Internationally, as I write, the war in Ukraine continues and the Israeli military action in Gaza continues with Palestinians displaced and living in a land of calamity and ruin with a larger military conflict looming in the area.

I know the stress this year has had on clergy and on the congregations – especially on Maui.

This year, I have taken St. Paul's words to heart:

"No ia mea, e nā hoahānau, e kūpa'a 'oukou, me ka nāueue 'ole, me ka ho'omau i kā 'oukou hana nui 'ana i ka hana a ka Haku, no ka mea, ua 'ike nō 'oukou, 'a'ole i make hewa kā 'oukou hana 'ana ma ka Haku." Korineto I 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."
I Corinthians 15:58

The Racial Reconciliation Task Force has prepared the *Hō 'Imi Pono* curriculum. This curriculum invites us to tell our individual stories within our context of a living host culture and the many cultures of people who now call the islands of our Diocese home. It is based on the “Difference Course” created by the Reconciliation Leaders Network under the auspices of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and adapted and expanded by members of our Diocese working together. *Hō 'Imi Pono* seeks to engage every Episcopalian in our Diocese in a healthy conversation about reconciliation that honors our host culture, our heritage, our diversity and God’s creation. In the months ahead, I hope every Episcopalian in this Diocese –especially all the clergy – will take part in *Hō 'Imi Pono* as soon as practical. I am delighted that it is ready for our engagement throughout the Diocese. Ideally, congregations will engage this program together. It is an opportunity for growth and fellowship as we learn together about our diversity.

The Environmental Justice and Creation Care Ministry Task Force has called us to reconciliation with creation by sharing resources for action, advocacy and education. The team administers grants for Carbon Reduction Assistance in our congregations. This ministry is a priority for me!

There have been changes in the Diocesan Support Center. Sam Okita is retiring from his position as Diocesan Controller. Jasmi Regmi is our new Controller. With the resignation of Haaheo Guanson as Dean of the Waiolaihui‘ia Center for Ministry, Andrew Arakawa joined the staff as Canon for Ministry Formation. This ministry includes the role of Dean of the Waiolaihui‘ia Center for Ministry, liaison with Commission on Ministry in support of those in the ordination and licensed lay ministry processes, and assisting with clergy continuing education. Finally, Kalani Holokai joined us as the Community Relations Administrative Assistant on Maui in support of our Diocesan response to the fires.

Your Diocesan Support Center staff have worked diligently during some unusual times with unique problems. I deeply appreciate all that Nani, Rae, Sandy, Sam, Sonny, Sybil, Spencer, Lynette, and Stuart do for us all. Haaheo has been a blessing in her time as the Dean of the Waiolaihui‘ia. The Archdeacon and the Chaplains to retired clergy are volunteers who serve the Diocese and their Bishop faithfully. Steve, Bruce, Carol, Heather, Frank and Norma, thank you.

I am also grateful to the elected leaders of this Diocese on Standing Committee and Diocesan Council, and to those who serve on the various commissions, committees and task groups. I am particularly grateful to our Treasurer, Ryan, and to our Chancellor, Wayne.

The 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church took place this past Summer in Louisville, Kentucky. In addition to the election of the Right Reverend Sean Rowe as our next Presiding Bishop, we said goodbye to our beloved Michael Curry for his years as our Presiding Bishop. As a Diocese, we had resolutions adopted by General Convention including [Protection of Water “Ola i Ka Wai - Water is Life”](#). The Commemoration of Queen Lili‘uokalani of Hawai‘i was authorized for trial use in “Lessor Feasts and Fasts” on January 29th for the triennium 2024-2027. This is the last step before full inclusion in the Episcopal Church’s liturgical calendar. General Convention also approved [the expansion of the boundaries of the Diocese of Hawai‘i to include Guam and Saipan](#). We will welcome the delegation of the Church of St. John the Divine, Tuman, Guam, into the Annual Meeting of our Diocesan Convention.

This year has brought the loss of two Honorary Canons of the Cathedral. Dora Kraul and David Kennedy. Their years of faithful service to the Diocese and friendship for me reminded me of how grateful I am for you – God’s people – in this Diocese. I have always felt supported by your love and prayers. The loss of these two extraordinary kupuna and of others remind me how important you are to me. I am thankful to God for their lives and witness, and for everyone in this Diocese.

So, looking back over this year, I want to acknowledge that it has not always been easy. Mostly, however, I am left with a sense of gratitude for the faith and resilience of you – God’s people. During the month of September, the Epistle lessons will be from the Letter of James. The opening verses of the Letter brought a smile today: “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, consider it all joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and whole, lacking in nothing. If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.” We have faced some trails together and we have together grown in wisdom.

Submitted with my warm aloha and blessing,

+ Robert L. Fitzpatrick

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick, Bishop Diocesan
The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai‘i