

# **The Bishop's Report to the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i**

## **Introduction**

As I begin my report to the Convention, I must thank you again for calling me to be your Bishop. This is my twelfth report as your Bishop for an Annual Meeting of the Convention. Fifty years ago, the first meeting organized the new Diocese to be inaugurated at the turn of the new year in 1969. That is why we will celebrate 2019 as the golden anniversary of the Diocese of Hawai'i. It is a rare honor to be Bishop as we celebrated two major milestones, both the sesquicentennial of the founding of the Church in Hawai'i (2012) and now look to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of becoming a Diocese of the Episcopal Church (2019).

In 2017, we completed a major three-part review of our common life as a Diocese: 1. Mutual Ministry Review. 2. Bishop's Professional Performance Review. 3. Strategic Initiatives. Our consultant through this has been Dr. Kim Payton, an organizational psychologist. The following are my reflections on that work and on how it impacted this past year.

### **I.**

**The Mutual Ministry Review** brought to consciousness some important insights. In the past ten years (my tenure as Bishop 2007-2017), the Diocese has had three strategic plans. The consultant noted that while we dutifully fulfilled our goals, we weren't always as clear on how our goals would fulfill our vision of a vital Diocese. We reduced the Diocesan assessment of each congregation's operating income through the years from 26% to 18%. This happened following the economic crisis of 2008. In reality, however, the actual income from the assessment income saw no loss in any year. Giving and other income continued to increase to offset the rate reductions. The size of the Diocesan Council (corporate board) was reduced from 21 to 12 members. We also reduced the number of committees and commissions. Until 2017, we maintained a Diocesan ASA of about 3,000 for the past decade. We dipped just below that last year with the losses being largely attributed to deaths and moves. An important learning was that some of the historically strong congregations are declining, but that other key congregations are growing. We can learn from those congregations. In the past ten years, we significantly increased outreach ministries throughout the Diocese. We were exactly not clear how all the actions noted above necessarily fulfilled our goal to encourage a vital Diocese.

There were some learnings of note: (1) There seemed to be no conscious connection to "outreach" and "faith". (2) Lay members desire greater community and interconnection as Episcopalians across congregations and within their own congregations. (3) There is the desire for deeper faith and meaningful personal spirituality. (4) There is significant pride that the Diocese has ordained more Native Hawaiians and "local" clergy in the past ten years than at any point in its history. (4) There is some fear: of aging congregation members, the loss of younger members to the "mainland" (usually attributed to the high cost of living), and that events on the "mainland" will negatively impact life in the Islands. (5) On the whole, folk are comfortable, appreciate their clergy (and their Bishop), and want the Episcopal Church to be known as the

“progressive” and “inclusive” church in the islands (albeit while being somewhat conflict avoidant).

From our conversations, I concluded that the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai‘i is grounded in three adjectives:

1. Hawaiian: Our very founding is defined by the invitation from King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma. It is extremely rare that a Church showed up by invitation anywhere – not as colonizers, but as welcomed guests. Though historically, we have been too often connected to the *Ali ‘i* in history, we are of the Islands and it is our *kuleana*, entrusted to the Church by the Monarchs, to care for the spiritual well-being of the people and the land. If you haven’t seen it, please watch “Grace and Beauty: 150 Years of the Episcopal Church in Hawai‘i” (<https://vimeo.com/50794332>). We take pride in our history.
2. Progressive: The Episcopal Church has been at the forefront of social issues for decades in the Islands. This has included supporting plantation workers on Kaua‘i during labor disputes, the fight for marriage equality, the drive to eliminate homelessness, working for prison reform, and advocating for Hawaiian land rights. There are many ministries in the Diocese today seeking to have a positive impact on communities – there’s “A Cup of Cold Water” on Maui, laundry ministries, feeding ministries, food banks, sheltering folk, shower ministry, etc. We take pride in being inclusive and engaged.
3. Catholic: We were founded under the influence of the Oxford Movement with Queen Emma’s Church of England connections being very High Church. In fact, the first name of the Church here was “The Reformed Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Hawaii.” Now, we are decidedly sacramental. We want the Holy Eucharist to be celebrated in our churches every week. We have longed for more local candidates for ordination and that has come to fruition in the past decade. There is a certain pride in being the “‘local,’ inclusive catholic Church in Hawai‘i”.

On the whole, we are stable, but there is concern about the future.

## II.

The **Bishop’s Professional Performance Review** was very important to me. The Consultant’s final report came to over twelve pages (single-spaced) and was delivered after last year’s Annual Meeting of Convention; it has been shared with the Standing Committee. I wanted to share some important personal learnings.

The report noted that the “... traditional role description [for the Bishop] assumes that the Bishop’s ministry is in a particular relationship with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the People entrusted to his care. The Church is in transition, which means it is in a state of dangerous opportunity. The Church is in need of significant change. A Bishop is not exactly a CEO of a business, but a Minister of the Gospel within the particular structures of the Episcopal Church. Beyond the historic functions, however, the Bishop must be able to navigate in a society and Church that is changing significantly and will require great adaptability, and in that way the Bishop must act like a CEO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century serving as a change agent being nimble to respond to evolving needs.”

The surveys and interviews found that I am “seen as an ethical, hardworking, committed leader who understands the organization and the business, is good at judging talent and engaging in constructive dialogue and setting priorities.”

The report noted that perceptions of me as the Bishop fall into two categories: “1. He is seen as a caring and supportive pastor by those who have interacted directly with him in relation to situations where pastoral care was required. 2. He is seen by others who have seen him ignore situations where pastoral care was needed.” In a follow-up interview for the report, I admitted that there are times when I just do not recognize a need, and that I need for others to let me know that a need exists and to help me find a way to respond. It was noted that this has been significantly alleviated with Canon Graham in place as the Canon for Congregational Life and Leadership.

I was asked to improve in areas of: “confronting, coaching and developing team members and conveying concern for their well-being, making decisions in a timely way, managing vision and purpose, creating team spirit, providing clear assignment of tasks and decisions, and providing performance feedback.”

What was most appreciated and most desired that I continue was: “[sharing] his commitment, clarity of communication and thought, understanding and ability to teach theology and the academic and Canonical aspects of the Church.”

In his conclusion, Dr. Payton suggested the Bishop (that’s me) should: “Apply his strengths as a theologian and teacher to Goal 1 of the strategic plan [see below], focusing on developing the clergy and helping them find ways to be of service to their congregations and community. Adopt a multimedia approach including on-line classes, in-person workshops and especially one-on-one coaching. Focus on the clergy that want the help, and develop a reputation as one who can help clergy find ways to make the Church relevant to their community.”

In the end, the Professional Performance Review affirmed my call as a bishop and more specifically as the Bishop of Hawai‘i at this time. I look forward to years of ministry with you.

### III.

**Strategic Initiatives** were introduced at last year’s Annual Meeting of Convention. You’ll remember that this was not a traditional strategic plan. It is not a static plan. We said that this was our vision for the Diocese:

#### **OUR VISION**

We will be a Diocese that is both *spiritually nourished* and *spiritually engaged*, which will best situate us to be mission-focused, relevant, and viable amid an ever-changing and complex world.

This vision will allow the Diocese to seek out these objectives:

- Nurture our congregations to claim a spiritual identity that is vibrant and engaged. We have to clear that we are first and foremost followers of Jesus Christ. And that as Episcopalians, our hearts, our minds and our hands are open.
- Encourage the development of relationships among the members of our congregations - both those new to the church and those who have been around a while - so that we will eagerly share a fresh and energetic faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, we have to learn to better communicate our faith - as individuals, as congregations and as a diocese.
- Foster a greater sense of 'ohana within the Diocese, especially among lay and clergy leaders. We are "One Team" working together.
- Encourage a Diocese-wide spiritual awakening that will draw people to the joyful faith presence of Jesus Christ in our churches.
- Invest time, talent and treasure in the spiritual vitality of our Diocese, which in turn will enhance our human and financial resources for mission.
- Empower our churches to be the Body of Christ in their local communities. Service is a witness to faith.
- Create safe, pastoral environments where individuals can talk openly and share the stories of their spiritual journeys and how they have been transformed by their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Achieve greater clarity in our churches of the importance of compliance with the policies of the Diocese and The ("national") Episcopal Church. [This may sound odd, but it is about how we work together.]

We decided to engage three goals as a Diocese:

### **OUR GOALS**

- The Diocese is committed to developing and sustaining spiritual growth, vitality, curiosity, and well-being within our churches.
- The Diocese seeks to strengthen our identity as one 'ohana and the relationships within our 'ohana among clergy, lay leaders and congregations.
- The Diocese is focused on improving the capacity for communication within our congregations, across the Diocese, and into our communities as we engage in evangelism

## **IV.**

**Design Teams** were organized to address the goals of the Strategic Initiatives Plan. Design teams are an alternative way to implement a strategic plan. The traditional way to implement strategic plans is through the functional units of the organization. That approach is limited for organizations that have a minimal functional structure, and where it has become difficult to recruit people into the traditional committee structure. Both of these limitations apply to the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The three Design Teams have been working to focus on areas to find ways our congregations and the Diocese as a whole can address the following three goals.

**Goal 1 Team: Spiritual Growth:** How do we help our leaders and congregations find their connection with God? This Design Team will identify and design opportunistic activities and programs that will enable significant spiritual growth in the lives of our clergy, lay leaders, and members of the congregations.

**Goal 2: ‘Ohana: Building a Community of Faith:** How do we increase cooperative efforts among clergy and lay leaders? What leads us to care about each other and work together? This Design Team work will address any operational issues such as clarifying and refining the roles and processes and practices we use to work together, to find ways to make the work both more efficient, and more importantly, more a form of worship in action. How do we invite people to take up key roles and give them the tools they need to be successful? How do we help people overcome their tendency to be separated by geographic, personal, ethnic, and sociological differences?

**Goal 3: Communication – the language of Communion:** What is our shared identity? What is our unifying Story? This goal grew out of a realization that all the media tools in the world cannot compensate for a lack of common understanding of the meaning of the Story that defines us as Christians and Episcopalians in Hawai‘i. What informs our understanding of God and discipleship? This Design Team will address the language of the Church that explains our relationship with God that establishes the basis of our relationship with each other and the world, and how our Story as Episcopalians can be best shared with the broader community.

The work of these Teams is the beginning of a process that must include experimentation, evaluation, and adaptation in the local congregations throughout the Diocese. The work of the Teams and our experiments are just now being shared with the Diocese.

## V.

**As I consider the year in review,** I must make mention of the impact on the staff. As you likely are aware, our Diocesan Treasurer, Peter Pereira, was out of the office for several months in 2018 related to a kidney transplant. The miracle of the year was, of course, that the donor came from within the office (Sandy Graham). Irina Martikainen was on sabbatical earlier in the year. I share this to offer a note of appreciation to all who came together in this year. I particularly learned that the Episcopal Church in Hawai‘i is supported by a fine group of people. In the ebb and flow of the year, we supported one another and proved that our system is interconnected and carried forward by mutuality.

With this lesson, I am less and less comfortable referring to the staff as the “Office of the Bishop” (the term used as long as I have been in the Diocese). The ministry is far richer than supporting one person in one ministry. Likewise, calling the group the “Diocesan Office” or the “Diocesan Staff” is wrong-headed. Such terms imply that the “office” or the “staff” is the Diocese, or even the center of the Diocese. The Diocese is the gathering of all Episcopalians

serving God. We are still discussing this as a team, but here is my pass at a name and a purpose statement:

As a staff, we are the Diocesan Support Team. And the purpose of the **Diocesan Support Team** is to encourage and empower the Diocese of Hawai‘i [this includes the Convention; Bishop; Diocesan Council; Standing Committee; Commissions, Committees and Task Groups; congregations; clergy; lay leaders; and related institutions (schools and Camp)] to engage God’s mission in the world.

In Danny Casey, Rae Costa, Sandy Graham, Irina Martikainen, and Peter Pereira, we truly have “One Team” serving the whole Diocese. The Team is augmented by Kate Cullinane (focused on helping the Design Teams), Sonny Liu (irrepressible part-time office assistant), Sharon Billingsley (overseeing air travel), and Sybil Nishioka (our contract communications coordinator). I am blessed to be working with them. As a Team, we have recognized that skills and education have moved us beyond traditional job titles. The office is being organized on a trial basis using a model called Holacracy. This is a way of structuring and running an organization that replaces the conventional management hierarchy. Instead of operating top-down, power is distributed throughout the organization, giving individuals and teams more freedom to self-manage, while staying aligned to the organization’s purpose. My hope is that this organization can allow the individuals on the Team to fully use their gifts and to better serve the Diocese – as the Diocesan Support Team.

## VI.

As we have come to our fiftieth anniversary as a Diocese; the next year will continue the work of the three Design Teams and expand our ministry in new directions.

Coming out of General Convention this past summer in Austin Texas, I will appoint three Task Groups before the end of 2018:

- **Worship:** Bishops were specifically urged [in Resolution A068 (see <https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/A068?house=hd&lang=en>)] to engage “...worshiping communities in experimentation and the creation of alternative texts to offer to the wider church, and that each diocese be urged to create a liturgical commission to collect, reflect, teach and share these resources with the TFLPBR” (Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision). The same resolution, also, “memorialize[d] the 1979 Book of Common Prayer as a Prayer Book of the church preserving the psalter, liturgies, The Lambeth Quadrilateral, Historic Documents, and Trinitarian Formularies ensuring its continued use” and affirmed that the Church would continue “to engage the deep Baptismal and Eucharistic theology and practice of the 1979 Prayer Book”. As you will see, the resolution is nuanced and calls the Church to well-ordered and communal liturgical renewal. It also instructs that any liturgical revision to “utilize the riches of Holy Scripture and our Church’s liturgical, cultural, racial, generational, linguistic, gender, physical ability, class and ethnic diversity in order to share common worship.” All of this is to note that, as Bishop, I will not authorize individual experimentation on a

congregational basis until this Worship Task Group establishes guidelines for review with limits of use for experimental liturgies and a means for their evaluation. Liturgical revision happens within a broader community rather than only in an isolated congregation. Such liturgical revision ought never be the work of individuals in an isolated congregation. I expect this Task Group to have three to five members, and to do most of their work electronically.

- **Reconciliation:** There were several resolutions and presentations of reconciliation in the broadest terms at General Convention. There were three key areas for discussion and reflection: (a) Racial Reconciliation, (b) Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and (c) The Church's historic response and/or non-response to such issues. The intertwining of the three areas are about awareness, power, control, repentance, and amendment of life – as individuals, as a Church, and as a society. Recognizing that these concerns are broad and deep, I expect this Task Force to develop a plan to help us as a Diocese to address the issues of reconciliation over the course of the next three to five years. I also understand that the work may require sub-groups. In any event, I suspect this group will require five to seven members to get started, and will do most of their work electronically.
- **Creation Care:** There is a resolution (see [http://www.episcopalhawaii.org/uploads/2/5/4/8/25486559/annual\\_mtg\\_website\\_reso\\_4.pdf](http://www.episcopalhawaii.org/uploads/2/5/4/8/25486559/annual_mtg_website_reso_4.pdf)) coming before the Annual Meeting of Convention regarding creating such a group “to address the scientific, cultural, theological and ethical realities of climate change, and its impact on our Islands and the world.” I welcome the resolution and intended to create such a Task Group before it was filed. No single issue impacts us more immediately as human beings entrusted by God with the care of creation who have a responsibility to future generations. To address the reality, however, will require changes in behavior at both societal and individual levels. This work will need to be ongoing. The Presiding Bishop has appointed me to the Episcopal Church's “Task Force on Care of Creation & Environmental Racism”. I expect, therefore, to be directly involved with the Diocesan Task Group on Creation Care. I expect this Task Group to begin with three to five members, and to do most of their work electronically.

An ongoing question for the Diocese has been how to best support **ministry for youth** (junior and senior high school age). While we have from time to time had a staff person focused on the age group, there has been ongoing disagreement as to the role and function of the position in our common life. The only consensus opinion was the desire for regular (annual) retreats for the target groups to strengthen faith, build community, and encourage new leaders. In 2019, Camp Mokolē‘ia will host a weekend senior high “rally” and a diocesan planning retreat for youth ministry leaders. Further, grants will be available to congregations in 2019 from the MacCray Fund for ministry with **Young Adults** (ages 18-30) both on and off college campuses.

In 2019, I will ask the Standing Committee and Chancellor to begin a complete review of our Diocesan **Constitution and Canons**. Why? Our current Constitution and Canons have not been thoroughly reviewed in 50 years. I suggest there are areas that need revision and clarity. For example, why do Organized Missions have Bishop's Committees appointed by the Bishop (being nominated by election at the congregation's annual meeting), rather than just being directly elected? What are the clear guidelines about when a Parish becomes an Organized Mission, and vice versa? Should both Wardens be elected with the "junior" and "senior" designation being based on tenure in office? Should there be a provision for a "provisional bishop" if there should be an unexpected departure of the sitting diocesan bishop or the desire for an interim after the diocesan bishop retires? These are some of the things that can be addressed in this current time of calm.

In 2019, I will ask the Commission on Ministry to give special attention to the ministry of all God's people with a focus on **Lay Ministry**. I will ask the COM to specifically address the following from the Canons:

### **Canon III.1**

**Sec.1.** Each Diocese shall make provision for the affirmation and development of the ministry of **all** baptized persons, including:

- (a) Assistance in understanding that **all** baptized persons are called to minister in Christ's name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church and to serve Christ's mission at all times and in all places.
- (b) Assistance in understanding that **all** baptized persons are called to sustain their ministries through commitment to life-long Christian formation.

### **Canon III.2**

**Sec. 2.** The Commission [on Ministry] shall advise and assist the Bishop:

- (a) In the implementation of Title III of these Canons.
- (b) In the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of **all** baptized persons.
- (c) In the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness therefor.

With the Waiolaihui'ia program established as our local formation program leading to ordination and having had more candidates for ordination in residential seminaries, I think a serious focus on lay ministry and leadership formation is timely.

**My focus as Bishop** will be to address issues of relationships as well as some of the issues previously noted. We will be returning to a model of Confirmation in congregations during regular Sunday visits, rather than during regional confirmations. I had hoped to make such Sunday visitations to each congregation more frequently than once every 24 months, but the schedule seems to suggest that every 24 months will likely still need to be the reality. I will not, however, have scheduled non-Sunday visitations. As such, it will be important for clergy-in-charge of congregations to get on my calendar early for special events, teaching missions, and important liturgical celebrations. I am keen to offer teaching in congregations and at regional gatherings on weeknights or on the weekends of my visitations. I especially hope to begin to

gather with small groups of clergy (beginning in 2019 with the active parochial clergy and chaplains) at Camp Mokulē‘ia for a day of retreat, prayer, and talk-story. I am also exploring how to best begin virtual teaching again as I have in the past. Your insights or suggestions are welcome.

I also look forward to the **Presiding Bishop’s official visitation** on March 22, 23, and 24 next year. Please mark your calendars now.

### Conclusion

It is hard for me to believe that I have been Bishop of Hawai‘i for over eleven years. It has been my gift and honor to serve you. I regularly pray through the ordination rite of a Bishop in the Book of Common Prayer (see pages 512-523). As I read the words, I pause as I remember the then-current Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, saying,

*My brother, the people have chosen you and have affirmed their trust in you by acclaiming your election. A bishop in God’s holy Church is called to be one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ’s resurrection and interpreting the Gospel, and to testify to Christ’s sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of kings. You are called to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church; to celebrate and to provide for the administration of the sacraments of the New Covenant; to ordain priests and deacons and to join in ordaining bishops; and to be in all things a faithful pastor and wholesome example for the entire flock of Christ. With your fellow bishops you will share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world. Your heritage is the faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and those of every generation who have looked to God in hope. Your joy will be to follow him who came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

As one called to serve you, please forgive me when I have failed you. Celebrate with me the times we together have served God and God’s people rightly with love and joy.

This past year, I was named the “Bishop Protector” of the Society of St. Francis. This is a Franciscan religious order of men in the Episcopal Church who maintain the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I was moved when asked to serve in this role because I have been shaped by Franciscan spirituality as I try to live a life in Christ Jesus shaped by humility, love, and joy.

Written at the end of his life, St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) concluded a letter to the entire Order with these words:

*Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, give us miserable ones the grace to do for You alone what we know you want us to do and always to desire what pleases You. Inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and, by Your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, and are glorified God almighty, forever and ever. Amen.*

It is by his words “Inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ” that I look forward to serving you in the days and years ahead.

“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.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Respectfully submitted,

*+ Robert L. Fitzpatrick*

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