

## 1. Spiritual Autobiography:

**As a candidate discerning a call to serve as Bishop in Hawai‘i, reflect on your spiritual journey and formation. Describe how your faith and spiritual values have developed over time - highlighting formative experiences, significant turning points, and how these have influenced your ministry. Discuss how your spirituality shapes your vision for leadership and service, especially within the unique and diverse context of Hawai‘i.**

My spiritual life is shaped by a simple yet demanding conviction: to always choose love over fear. This commitment has guided my discernment for decades and anchors my call to the episcopate. This credo took shape in 2006 on the Old Pali Road. While driving with my wife, Kim, and our newborn son, Kim voiced the conviction that has become our family compass: *“If we live authentically, we will always be guided to where we need to be, what we need to do, and who we need to be.”*

I grew up in a primarily unchurched, Japanese/Okinawan-American family shaped by humility and the unspoken expectation, “Eh, no make shame.” I was the child who always stuck out – drawn to creativity and difference. Without a formal religious home, I collected small moments of spiritual resonance: the glow of a Christmas candlelight service at my paternal grandmother’s Waipahu UCC church, the solemnity of Buddhist funerals with my maternal grandmother, sunsets across the landscape during a summer job on Lana‘i. These early experiences taught me to recognize the sacred in quiet, unexpected places.

My spiritual longing intensified in New York through the National Student Exchange. Removed from the familiar, I asked the essential questions: *Who am I? Where do I belong?* This search led me to Copenhagen to study Søren Kierkegaard, whose work on authenticity and faith gave me language for my inner landscape. In my twenties, I lived in Japan, where I taught English, wrote extensively, and sought a deeper connection to the Ineffable. Yet beneath these explorations was a growing spiritual ache, a desire not just for ideas about the divine, but for a grounded spiritual home.

In 2009, we moved our family to an off-grid cabin on 10 undeveloped Big Island acres in Kurtistown. Homesteading was physically demanding and spiritually clarifying. In addition to our credo, we discerned a set of expanded principles: *live authentically, serve our community, and nurture collaboration*. 2012 brought deep grief: three miscarriages, and the deaths of several friends and my father-in-law. A Hindu hospice chaplain offered pivotal advice: stop “dabbling” and dig deep into one faith tradition so my spiritual life could flourish.

I found that rich soil at Church of the Holy Apostles in Hilo. Initially drawn to the beauty of the liturgy, I felt the weight of being unbaptized at the altar rail. In speaking with my priest, I realized the Baptismal Covenant articulated the very frame I had been seeking for decades: compassion, love, justice, and reconciliation. My baptism remains the most transformative moment of my life; it felt like finally coming home. Practices I had explored – Vipassana meditation, existential inquiry, intercultural experiences, all converged in Christ, the embodiment of God’s love made flesh.

My call to ordained ministry crystallized through prayer and spiritual direction. In my meditations, I found myself returning to Isaiah's words: "Here am I, send me." An invitation to the Holy Land sealed this call. One morning in the Tomb of Christ at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, I felt as though I were participating in a wedding ceremony, offering my whole life to Christ.

This clarity led me to what is now known as the Waiolaihui'ia Center for Ministry and, ultimately, to Virginia Theological Seminary, both of which deepened my formation in ways beyond measure. I learned to integrate theology, pastoral care, and leadership in community. Upon graduation from VTS, I received the Bishop Mark Dyer Prize for Theological Reflection, an affirmation of the reflective posture that continues to shape my ministry.

Today, my *Rule of Life* is centered on a steady rhythm of prayer. In my prayer practices, I often think about Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, where he gives the instruction to "pray without ceasing" (1Th 5:17), and St. Augustine's explanation that ceaseless prayer means a continual longing to be closer to God. This longing manifests in my daily practices: The Daily Offices, quiet prayer with or without words, immersion in nature, and time spent with art, music, and Scripture. I seek God's presence through receiving the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist weekly, acts of service, moments of awe, mindful gratitude, and regular check-ins with my spiritual director.

I recognize that leadership requires spaciousness to foster creativity and innovation. Practicing Aikido, a Japanese martial art rooted in peace and reconciliation, reminds me that my spiritual life is a continual act of polishing best approached with a beginner's mind. I walk often, swim in the ocean, spend quality time with my spouse, enjoy cooking nourishing meals, and do my best to cultivate sleep that restores. I'm learning to be kind to myself, to see wellness as a spiritual discipline, not a finished product, but a continual and sacred work in progress.

My spirituality is not abstract; it is lived. As Canon for Ministry Formation and Dean of the Waiolaihui'ia Center for Ministry, I am committed to leadership formation that grows from the soil, culture, and lived wisdom of place. My doctoral work focuses on decolonizing theological education and cultivating contextual leadership grounded in aloha and justice. These commitments flow from a spiritual conviction that God is found not in disembodied ideals, but in the particularities of our stories, lands, and relationships.

If called to serve as bishop, I will champion an incarnational and redemptive episcopate shaped by three main commitments:

- **Choosing Love over Fear:** Approaching every challenge with courage, compassion, and faith.
- **Deepening Pilina:** Strengthening the sacred relationality that binds clergy, lay leaders, and communities across the Hawaiian islands, Guam, and Saipan.
- **Affirming Lived Wisdom:** Uplifting culturally grounded leadership and creating collaborative "constellation" models of ministry rooted in embodied listening.

The road ahead is winding, and we are not always able to see what is ahead, but I trust the One who walks with us. My call is not about ascending to a position of authority, but about stepping more fully into a life of service, grounded in love, shaped by place, and sustained by God's grace. *Here am I. Send me.*

**2. What are your vision and strategies for moving the Diocese toward the church of the future, considering current financial, structural, and cultural realities facing our people, congregations, and diocese?**

The waters of our Baptismal Covenant shape my vision for the Diocese of Hawai‘i, Guam, and Saipan – waters always creating, renewing, liberating, and calling us into new life in Christ. As a single drop creates concentric circles, God’s dream ripples through our shared diocesan life, each a co-created expression of our promise to follow Jesus.

Our faith in the Triune God is the center of these waters. From that core, the first movement calls us to **continue in the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers**. Being grounded in the realities of diverse places and contexts, I envision lifelong and adaptable, place-based formation that meets people where they are, deepening structures for shared learning – expanding small groups, intergenerational worship, and partnerships between congregations and the innovative mission fields of our schools. Formation will not be shaped only from a central hub, but will flourish through the wisdom, relationships, and faith already alive within our communities.

The next circle calls us to **persevere in resisting evil and return to the Lord**. I will prioritize sacred listening, transparency, and relational integrity. Rooted in a culture of healthy feedback and moving at the speed of trust, the diocese will remain fiducially responsible while being mission-centered. My aim is for intentional listening sessions, regular engagement with clergy and lay leaders, and transparent communication around decisions, especially in times of financial and structural change, creating space to grieve losses while trusting that the “impossible” is the Spirit’s domain.

The waters move outward to **proclaim the Good News by word and example**. Evangelism is not only about drawing people in, but about going out. I will support congregations in discerning what God is already doing in their neighborhoods – whether through food ministries, cultural programs, youth mentorship, or partnerships with local organizations – aligning ministries with gifts. Growth will come not from replication, but from authenticity and deep presence.

The next circle calls us to **seek and serve Christ in all persons**, reweaving *pilina* – sacred relationality – across generations and cultures. We will raise up leaders from the margins and develop shared ministry models. Rather than asking a few to burn bright and burn out, we will form "leadership constellations" grounded in collaboration and mutual care.

Finally, we are called to **strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being**. In a diocese shaped by colonization, I am committed to truth-telling and restoration. By centering the lived experiences of our people, especially Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander voices, we offer wisdom not only for ourselves, but for the wider Church. At its best, Anglicanism is dialogical; we must widen that conversation within Oceania and Asia, and in the House of Bishops, so all can flourish.

As bishop, I will hold the vessel in which these baptismal waters move – steady, prayerful, and open. This is an attainable vision of hope and joy: a diocese where people are seen and known, alive in Christ, shaped by aloha, and continually renewed by the living waters of Baptism.

### 3. Embodying Aloha:

**‘Aloha’ is central to life in Hawai‘i and speaks deeply to our values as a church and community.**

**What does ‘aloha’ mean to you personally, and how would you embody and express the spirit of aloha as Bishop—in your leadership, relationships, and ministry?**

It is said that Hawai‘i drivers are incredibly generous, letting people into busy lanes, not honking for delays. “Ho, dat guy wen let me in. He get plenny aloha,” – trow da shaka.

Approaching life with abundant aloha is an embodied way of being. Kanaka ‘Ōiwi historian Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio describes this relational system as valuing "Careful conservation, sharing resources, cooperation and consensus... [defining] wealth [as] indicated by family relations, healthy lifestyles, and community connections." This deep sense of *pilina* tells us we are all in it together, communally; our ties to one another are covenantal rather than transactional. There is commitment to *kahiau* – giving without expectation of return.

I grew up in a time when having *plenny aloha* was the water we swam in. It was the air we breathed. Yet, I’ve heard folks lament recently, “Ho brah, whatsamattah wit da world deez days? No mo aloha.” There is weariness from the trauma and challenges that silo some people into individualistic ways of moving, being, and surviving.

In this liminal season, we need plenny aloha to stand for what is *pono* – for the healing and restoration of our diocese, our denomination, and our country. To embrace its full *kaona* (layered meaning), aloha requires us to take on the kuleana of *aloha ‘āina* (love for that which feeds), and the practice of *ho‘oponopono* (to heal and make right through speaking truth). Aloha calls us to nurture spaces where difficult truths can be spoken, and crucial conversations can take place with compassion; where we can acknowledge harm, listen deeply, and work together toward renewal. Aloha is not passive; it asks us to live into *kapu aloha* (disciplined love, compassion, and non-violence during times of conflict) to be brave in our relationships and direct yet grace-filled in our speech.

Having plenny aloha means being aware of ways aloha has been appropriated and commodified. Aloha cannot be replicated without cultural grounding, nor should it be applied carelessly or performatively. As congregations integrate *‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, mele, oli*, or cultural protocol into their communities, it is essential to work with cultural practitioners and *nā kumu* who hold expertise in these traditions. We must have plenny aloha to know how to offer *ike and nohona Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian knowledge and ways of being) with reverence, accuracy, and humility, not as aesthetic additions but as living expressions of the Gospel in this place.

With an open heart, I look forward to learning more about how aloha is expressed in the relational frameworks of our CHamoru siblings, as well as in the cultures introduced to Guam and Saipan, bringing their voices into conversation with Hawai‘i’s. Aloha grows as it listens and expands.

Ultimately, having plenny aloha is an offering that roots us in the relational story of our islands and aligns our hearts with God’s. As bishop, I pray that aloha will continue to guide my relationships, shape my leadership, and help our diocese walk together in grace, truth, and joy. *Ho, us guys, we get plenny aloha, eh.*