

THE FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONVENTION
OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF HAWAI'I
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I

Friday, October 23, and Saturday, October 24, 2015

The Bishop's Report
The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick, Bishop

As I look back over the past year, I must begin with notes of appreciation and thanks to God.

I am grateful for my staff. Peter Pereira has faithfully served the Episcopal Church in Hawai'i for many years as Treasurer and chief financial officer. My ministry continues to be enhanced and organized by the extremely competent and hard-working Irina Martikainen, my Executive Assistant. She has taken on additional duties helping to oversee transition ministry. Charmaine Bernard is the diocesan Office (and Property) Manager. She handles internal personnel issues, office operations and logistics for meetings (like the annual meeting of Diocesan Convention) for the Bishop's Office. Katrina Luksovsky continues part-time as our most helpful Administrative Assistant. Athena Chan as our Bookkeeper. Fane Lino is our Missioner for Pacific Islander Ministry. Austin Murray continues as the part-time Dean of Waiolaihui'ia. From Kaua'i, Sybil Nishioka continues her contract work overseeing the diocesan website, the e-News, the e-Chronicle and being our general artistic consultant.

One departure in the office was that of Sarah Klitzke who moved to Texas. I'll comment more later in this report.

The Office of the Bishop is strengthened by the service of volunteers. Sharon Billingsley and Norma Chun provide many hours of service in my office to our Diocese.

Unlike many dioceses, our chancellors provide much legal assistance to the Episcopal Church in Hawai'i without charge. Our Chancellor, Martha Im; the Vice Chancellor, Kevin Herring; and the Deputy Vice Chancellors, Eric James, Douglas Smith, and Wayne Yoshigai, are a gift to us.

With my thanks to the Chancellors comes an announcement: Martha's tenure as Chancellor will conclude with the 47th Annual Meeting. She has served us well for the past eight years. It is not always easy keeping a bishop who sometimes binds Robert's Rules into Bob's Rules to the breaking point in tow. She has been a patient and wise advisor. I will be honored to present her with the Bishop's Cross this year and name her Chancellor Emerita. She has agreed to help the next Chancellor and Diocese as needed in the future. Please extend your thanks to Martha. Mr. Wayne Yoshigai has accepted my appointment as Chancellor pending confirmation by the Convention.

I am particularly grateful to Stuart Ching, the Historiographer of our Diocese. Stuart works in an inadequate space and must reply to questions from folk who forget that he is a volunteer. He is patient and a dedicated servant of the Church. I will present him with the Bishop's Cross for his faithful service to the Diocese.

We also have dedicated and faithful clergy; and our lay leaders do us an invaluable service. This year, Karen Sender and Greg Johnson are rotating off of Standing Committee. They have each provided leadership to the Diocese in many roles – elected and appointed. The terms of Bill Rees, David Gierlach and Paul Lillie on Diocesan Council conclude with this Annual Meeting. Pat Hillegond's term is up and is standing for re-election. Walter Brownridge will be going off the Commission on Ministry. Please express your appreciation to these folk for their ministry to the Diocese. I am certainly grateful.

I am particularly grateful to everyone in our Diocese, and especially to those attending and involved in the Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Convention. Your generosity and leadership are a blessing. Mahalo.

As you know, I have set three major goals for my ministry.

First, I have asked us to explore new models of "Shared Ministry." This means looking for ways for congregations to share ordained leadership, to consolidate other staffing, to serve together in outreach and advocacy ministries (like A Cup of Cold Water), to share in educational programs (like confirmation classes) and liturgical events (like Thanksgiving). I deeply appreciate the bold extension of St. James' to include St. Columba's Church.

The work in West O'ahu continues. The congregations (St. Timothy, St. Nicholas, St. Stephen and St. John the Baptist) of West O'ahu are working together to share clergy, programs and to create a common financial system. Keane Akao has worked tirelessly to organize and coordinate the finances and property management. Kaleo Patterson and Steve Costa are two clergy still in the region. The departure of Paul Klitzke offered a special challenge. Finances are still a struggle and another major reorganization will have to take place before the end of the year. I think an Episcopal presence in Kapolei is very important, but it will require partnership to develop the property. While logistically practical, the temporary move of St. Nicholas to St. Timothy's campus in Aiea has been detrimental to mission and church growth.

In addition to being the Rector of Epiphany Church, Irene Tanabe has been appointed the Vicar of Good Samaritan Church, with Jar Passalo serving as the clergy assistant (curate) to both congregations. These two churches are about a mile apart along 10th Avenue through the Pālolo valley of Honolulu. The two congregations have different rich histories. By working together, it is hoped that the people of both congregations can receive pastoral care and effectively reach out to their shared community.

This work must continue in the Diocese. The Episcopal Church in Hawai'i has valuable resources that can be shared and used in new ways. I am particularly concerned that we explore ways to better use our largest asset: our buildings and property. We need to look beyond local parochialism and short-sighted congregationalism to find new ways to allow our property to be a resource for ministry and an asset to fund mission. This is not a question of closing congregations. It might mean development of partnerships allowing congregations to maintain a presence within new developments. A couple of congregations are exploring ways of developing their property with housing projects.

Second, I have focused on raising and forming leaders for ministry in Hawai‘i. In some ways, this is intricately connected to Shared Ministry and my third goal (incorporating new communities of faith into our Diocese). The first four candidates for ordination to the priesthood via the local Waiolaihui‘ia program are scheduled to be ordained to the transitional diaconate at the Convention Eucharist. We also have at least nine people who are completing their first year of study in Waiolaihui‘ia. This program is designed for those called to ordained ministry later in life and can serve underserved communities with limited stipends. We also have two people looking towards ordination as vocational Deacons in 2016.

We also have one senior seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary: Annalise Castro. This Fall, Jasmine Bostock began a combined Master of Divinity (Yale Divinity School)/Master of Social Work (University of Connecticut) program. Chris Bridges is in his first year at the School of Theology, University of the South (Sewanee, Tennessee).

JaR Pasalo graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in May and was ordained a transitional Deacon in June. He spent a three-month internship with the Philippine Independent Church (largely in the Province of Ilocos Norte) and, as already noted, he will be the Curate serving both Epiphany Church and Good Samaritan Church in Honolulu. This is possible because of the funds in the Diocesan budget that helps newly ordained seminary graduates begin their ministry back home in Hawai‘i.

We also continue to build our relationship with Virginia Theological Seminary. From the VTS faculty, Lisa Kimball, Director of the Center for Ministry of Teaching and Professor of Christian Formation and Congregational Leadership, joined us during the first week December for a workshop and focused training, and then in then Spring, James Farwell, Professor of Theology and Liturgy, was here to be a workshop leader. This will continue in the new year. VTS has agreed to provide a special scholarship for clergy entering their Doctor of the Ministry programs. Dan Leatherman is the first one to take advantage of this opportunity. We have also been asked to encourage congregations to offer summer internships for VTS seminarians to provide meaningful cross-cultural experiences. I think an engaged and supported relationship between the Diocese and VTS will be beneficial to everyone involved. I hope our congregations will support VTS as part of their annual giving for Theological Education.

My third focus has been a continued intention that new communities of faith – new congregations – will grow and that our existing ones will grow. After the economic downturn of the past few years, the Diocese has had an increase in average Sunday attendance and (plate and pledge) giving. This is not true in every congregation, but it has been significantly so in a few. Through ministry with Pacific Islanders, we are experiencing growth by inter-related groups. As many know, I confirmed 59 people on Easter Sunday at St. John the Baptist, Maili. I was also honored to ordain Viliami Langi to the Diaconate so we could better serve the Tongan part of the congregation at St. Elizabeth’s Church. I recently met with clergy and a priest ordained in the Church of England for the Church of Pakistan. We discussed the possibility of an Indo/Pakistani fellowship worshipping in Urdu and English. Some congregations are reaching outside the walls of the church to start worship services on the beach or trying new things inside the sanctuary. I think this must continue. The Church of Jesus Christ does not exist as a chapel of ease for a few parishioners on Sunday morning. We are called to reach out to bring others to the love of God through invitation, hospitality and inclusion.

As you can see, the three goals are interconnected.

Two other concerns are pressing upon these islands:

The reality of homelessness and the high cost of housing are impacting nearly every corner of every island. This annual meeting includes a resolution that addresses the crisis with a few specific actions. Every Episcopalian must become informed and engaged about the houseless. As always happens, it is the poor that are impacted the most. As a Diocese, we have and can make a difference. This struggle must continue in 2016.

The reality of global warming and the destruction of the earth's environment is moving at a breakneck pace. I have to ask the Diocese to be part of the solution in 2016. We have cut back on the number of in-person meetings as a Diocese. We have moved to install solar panels on many of our buildings. We must do more. The poor are still the most sorely harmed by the changes in the environment. Our sisters and brothers throughout the Pacific are losing their homes to rising waters. As the stewards of creation, we have been woefully lacking in our care of the world.

I hope to make these issues important for my ministry in the months ahead.

As a Bishop of the Episcopal Church, I continue on the Episcopal Church–Iglesia Filipina Independiente Concordat Committee and the Joint Committee on Provincial Companionship between the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church in the Philippines. I have been asked to be on the writing committee for the House of Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism. By appointment of the Presiding Bishop, I also continue as the Bishop-in-Charge of the Episcopal Church in Micronesia.

Finally, a word about this summer's General Convention. The election of Michael Curry as Presiding Bishop was a remarkable experience and he brings new vigor and joy to the Church. I am also thankful that Katharine Jefferts Schori has been an infallible leader of keen intellect in a very complicated time. The Episcopal Church is truly blessed.

I leave you, as I often do, with Paul's words (1 Corinthians 15:58):

“As a result of all this, my loved brothers and sisters, you must stand firm, unshakable, excelling in the work of the Lord as always, because you know that your labor isn't going to be for nothing in the Lord.”

“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.”

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick, Bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai‘i
HE LANAKILA MA KE KE‘A: Victory through the Cross

