

Bishop's Address: 171st Diocesan Council-February 8, 2020

I am grateful for all those who participated in those videos, their vulnerability, and power bears witness to God's common mission and its impact.

We are a storied diocese! An amazing diocese filled with people who are miracles because they allow God to do work through them. You are doing incredible work...In Texas and around the world. Every week. The bishops visit your diocesans staff visits. We see the amazing work you are doing our annual report Reveals what you are doing!

The pastoral care, the ministry in the community, serving, reaching out, giving a hand up. We are a diocese who is doing transforming work! We are transforming very real lives and we couldn't even share half of the stories we got!

This is a collage of some of your stories shared this year on-line and with each other. You can read more in our annual report, The Texas Episcopalian plus our giving follows our vision for creating healthy communities. Health not healthcare. This is a view of our transformational work through EHF over the past six years, giving out across the 57 counties of the diocese we are easily reaching more than 2% of the Texas Population through our local outreach ministries congregation by congregation. Our institutional ministries like El Buen Samaritano, St. Vincents, LOTS, the Cathedral's Beacon. Our funding to partner organizations, our work through Episcopal schools, and with local partnerships between churches, and public schools, we can definitely say that The Episcopal Diocese of Texas is having a positive impact on the communities around us!

And, we are Planting churches! You are planting Christian Communities of every kind on the ground, in the field, with the people, real evangelism such that we have not seen in decades, the Diocese of Texas has supported and built two new congregations from Bishop Wimberly's tenure: St. Mary Magdalene, Manor; St. Julian of Norwich, Round Rock – has outgrown their space and we are hoping to buy land and build for St. Julian's this year...that is a goal. Another five have been planted and grown to mission status: Church of the Cross, Lake Travis, dedicated land this year; SoCo Episcopal, Austin; and St. Isidore, Spring – found permanent space this fall.

We have three new plants at fellowship status: San Romero, Houston, Spanish speaking; St. Philip the Evangelist, Houston, Sudanese; Good Shepherd, Stafford, an Indian Church

We planted 3 new fellowships: Holy Family, Humble; St. Joan of Arc, Pflugerville; and Holy Family, East Downtown Houston. We have Five more planters working in the field learning and listening to their neighbors and gathering worshipping communities.

The Rev. Carissa Baldwin-McGinnis and Northside Episcopal are thriving in their own space in Northeast Houston, the Rev. Brin Bon and Incarnation in south Austin will be moving into a public worship space soon, Joseph Yoo is building a community called Mosaic in West Pearland—growing in the soil tilled by St. Andrew’s, Pearland.

The Rev. Oscar Huerta-Garcia has been charged with planting a Hispanic church in Waco, hosted by St. Alban’s, Waco. And Lay planter Maria Bautista began last month to explore additional areas of northeast Houston outside Beltway 8. Two more planters will be deployed in 2020, bringing our total new starts to 18.

Four of our five full-time campus missionaries were new in the fall semester of 2019. We have one additional part-time campus missionary in the northeast convocation, based in Tyler. Combined with all the lay missionaries and clergy, we are on the ground on 26 different campuses...up from 6 when we started... There are 80 higher education campuses across the Diocese, and we intend to partner with congregations to reach students at all of them. If you are near a campus and interested in partnering with us, we need lay missionaries to begin college campus missions and hope you will talk to Jason Evans about the opportunities

The Diocese has over 90 missional communities, small Christian churches some of the most innovative exciting generative and creative ministry. We have ever seen 44 congregations are helping us reaching 1400 individuals that would not otherwise be connected to the Episcopal Church

You can download a study guide at epicenter.org under missional communities. You can attend our August 28-30 of 2020, Cultivate Conference--13 hours of instruction from experienced leadership mostly practitioners within EDOT.

The weekend will additionally serve as an “orientation” weekend for those that are accepted into the one-year Mission Developer track at Iona to begin the following month. So, we will be training vi-vocational priests and deacons, lay people. But specifically, Mission Developer’s at Iona.

Here is the 50,000-foot money trail. We have given this amount to existing congregational support to new plants, campus missions and aging mission congregations. We have spent two years working on a review of our vocations process

We studied our transitions over the years. We average 100 a year the Vocations task force studied salaries, revealing we are making strides to improve sharing data with congregations and institutions to enable them to understand the importance of being good stewards.

We also have sought to improve processes, so women and men have parity given size/context/tenure/and work expectations. We have work to do and work to do in diversifying our clergy and rectors in larger parishes. That being said our leadership already outpaces the episcopal church average by 3x the percentage while our number of women clergy after rising from 8% in my Episcopate and nearing 45% has dropped due to retirements and moves...so we have work to do here

Our goal though is for leadership to reflect the community in which we serve so we still have a long way yet to go. We have redeveloped our process towards ordination we are adapting the Discovery Retreat wondering/curious about a generational retreat for people in their twenties.

We do think we have work to do around formation between baptism and adult vocational discernment. So, this is occupying our imagination at this time as we think about the next step of this vocations work.

How do we inspire vocations? Of mission – service and evangelism? For those interested baptized ministry. But also, those interested in ordination...A full report will be in Volume II of the Journal. As for the numbers: We have in training: 7 Bi-vocational priests at IONA; 10 deacons at IONA; 4 lay track at IONA; 15 Seminary Track

In 2019, 64 people participated in a Discovery Weekend, making that a total of 241 in discernment about lay and ordained leadership

We have 6 people discerning for orders and 25 people helping in active discernment groups
We have 11 applicants for seminary track to enter 2020, 4 Anglican Study applicants for 2020
And six deacons applying for 2020 And seven Bi-vocational priest applicants for 2020 growth.

This is about right. These are the numbers we need to see every year. Our goal is to raise up

Lay and ordained ministers of every type to serve in congregations, schools, hospitals in the world. Full time, part-time, Bi-vocational. From birth to death. We are called. God is praying for missionaries to labor in God's field I hope we will join God in that prayer.

Some of you out there are considering this even now. We take that seriously, speak to a priest A senior warden. Let us partner in your discernment, regardless of where you might be going Lay preacher, lay pastor lay planter, lay administrator, mission cultivation or ordination.

Let us dream dreams of God's call to us and let us hear God's voice and answer here I am. I will am looking forward to our 360 Review a deep dive with 200 leaders and a conversation with over 2000 of you on the road in the 2nd and 3rd weeks of June.

To visit convocations and share a more detailed and reflective view of our common work, our Goals, accomplishments, and hopes for the next five years. We will also at this time look at our foreign mission commitments and our upcoming Lambeth.

Now let me pivot here to three initiatives, the first is about minding the gap during changing times over the last 16 years of working in your diocesan office I have tried to alleviate the increasing pressure financially on you to steer dollars towards existing congregations best practices and vitality and towards new congregational starts and emerging missional work

But in the midst of all of this we have trials we have storms and hurricanes and fires. We have marshalled the resources to meet these challenges we are fortunate enough to care for each other at such times. And, in 2019 we have implemented small maintenance grants as part of a way to support you when unexpected needs arise. But one of the places we are most vulnerable... Where a congregation is most vulnerable is when there is a financial change.

In smaller congregations this can be precipitated by a family or two leaving our most vulnerable congregations are those between 100 and 300. A local business closing grad student hired away from a college town, deployment of military families or even conflict in a parish. Whatever the cause (And there are a variety) such loss of income can be a problem.

That problem is amplified by the assessment the Council sets the assessment and neither the Executive Board nor the Bishop is able to change it. I am going to ask the Executive Board to look at two ways of helping our Congregations. The first is to look at decreasing the lower end of the assessment altogether from 6% to 5%.

I believe that given our good stewardship of our dollars (As you will hear from Linda in the finance report). We can do this without raising the upper end. Now I want to talk about the chutes and ladders of parish finance. The second proposal is to look at “special cases” of congregational financial decline. Right now, there is a 1% and 5% cap and that is only after the new year begins.

What we want to do is create a system by which the Executive Board Finance committee might look at congregations that loose. Let’s say 15% or more of their income in a year. This is completely doable and West Texas has a model we can use to build our own¹. These two financial initiatives will continue to alleviate pressure on small congregations and those with unique financial difficulties

And, will be a nice, add-in so as to support already low assessments compared to the rest of the Episcopal Church combined with other underwriting will give opportunities for correction and new mission strategies.

The next thing I want to speak with you about is “Unity In Mission Amidst Divisive Partisanship” I believe that we are living in an environment where there is very little dialogue We are divided across partisan lines. I have been listening to you (Clergy and lay people alike) on every side of the partisan divide. I hear from you that you can’t talk to our family members and friends I know you have literally walked away from decades old relationships spouses are having trouble talking to each other about politics we shut our clergy down for repeating the words of Jesus and see them as suspect. Most of the time I think your good hard working preachers get it from both sides not liberal enough, too liberal, etc...its rough preaching out there!

However, partisan politics does not govern the unity of our church. Jesus Christ governs our unity the narrative of scripture where God is the prime actor governs our unity the sacraments of baptism and eucharist govern our unity. Our common acceptance of God’s mission Our unity in serving others, our unity in sharing the gospel. These are the things that unite us. We are citizens of a different kingdom with a different Lord with different virtues and different values. I am curious who told us we were too weak...Too unsure...That our footing wasn’t solid enough to remain together in the midst of partisan life?

To this end we believe we need to practice skills to help us live together during these divided times and, we are preparing a list of resources and thanks to the Quin foundation have the financial foundation so congregations can take advantage of excellent work out there on how to have healthy conversations and table in the midst of a bitterly divided world

To that end we are providing leadership training with Brené Brown for clergy offering a Dare to Lead conference and training we are hoping to add other events, and in-person opportunities including but not limited to: Fierce Conversations and Better Angels. There are Resources we can access: Beyond Gated Politics; Citizen: Faithful Discipleship in a Partisan World; Episcopal Civil Discourse Curriculum: A program for reflection, consideration, discussion; Baylor's Public deliberation initiative <https://sites.baylor.edu/baylorpdi/>

We are also looking at "other resources" like the ELCA's Golden Rule <https://goldenrule2020.org> And, The Lambeth's Difference course. I am mindful in this conversation and others that the church is invited into the prophet Isaiah's clarity about God's imagination for us. From Isaiah 58:9-12: If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. We are invited Into God's narrative where God is the primary character and where we may become a different community, God's community, not of this world, a different kingdom with a different lord And different understanding of kinship and family

The final initiative I want to visit with you about today is One on Racial Justice. I believe that we live in a time where our public discourse and conversation (or lack thereof) on Race is disappointing to many people as I talk and visit and listen, I find that most people Would like to continue to make strides forward most people want a positive outcome, but we feel powerless mired in other people's conversations struggling to make sense of the past and while we want a different future one that resembles better the kingdom of God we are not sure how to get there or where even to start. I want us to make the renewed start we are dreaming about and in so doing mending the past and walking into the future together in new ways supporting what is already happening and engaging in new creative ways.

Today churches from Austin to Marshall, Waco to Tyler, Houston to Matagorda. Big churches like Good Shepherd, Austin. Middle size churches like St. James', Conroe. And small churches like St Philips, Hearne and everything in between are engaging in pilgrimages to the lynching memorial in Alabama conversations brought about by tabling in their context with diverse leaders engaging their community, engaging conversation.

What we need is to capture our momentum our positive hopeful belief. We can be a more diverse more unified, more transformative Church by leaning in towards one another than away. This will mean a continued effort to shift our understandings of racism and white supremacy, that a solid ground of mutual ministry and mission may be engaged. These are not partisan philosophies, but Godly theologies. A Solid Doctrine of Creation – that God has made us, and God intends us to be in community together. A Robust Soteriology – a theology of anthropology and sin that explains that our life together is marked eternally by sibling rivalry and scapegoating. We are a Covenant People that we are to undertake what we do in the framework of God's covenant that is characterized by faithful compassion This mixture makes for an "internalized sense of identity, kinship, loyalty, obligation, responsibility, and reciprocity"

The First and Second Commandment - That what we do draws us closer to God and others that we understand that like the parable of the Samaritan we see that when people in our community are hurting that we help them because of our sense of faithful compassion – and we give of ourselves and our own resources to assist in mending and repairing the wounds (whether they are our own or caused by others)

In our community we see this clearly in the body of the immigrant and migrant worker, but we also see this in the black body (individual and corporate) that is still wounded from slavery what we do today to help those in need will spread beyond racism to ethnic justice as well as I looked for guiding principles to help me understand the kinds of characteristics needed in such an initiative I turned to the work of Richard Cellini founder of the Georgetown Memory Project.ⁱⁱ The first principle is voluntary – I hope you will discover that I and others involved in the beginning of this project have undertaken this work willingly, as an act of collective responsibility for our past and future.

The second value is: Proportionate – That while we are just beginning that the project has scope & duration to the original wrongs and hopeful future Remedial – That our goal is to support the people of our communities who were actually injured by our past actions. Equivalent – Money

and finances are involved as in part such was withheld or taken from those communities injured by our history. Inclusive – Developed in collaboration with injured parties – this is in part why I met with 38 representatives of the Historic Black Churches to begin to think about how to roll out this work. They will work with me and together we will create processes and a board to oversee and help promote our initiative. Coordinated – Designed to reinforce & amplify remedies adopted by others. I have sought to undergird this work with the best theological and practical ideas in this present moment and from across the church.

Finally, I draw on Pauli Murray for the last three principles: equality, mutuality, and reciprocity. These affirm the richness of individual diversity as well as the community tie that bind us. Before we continue, let me affirm historic memory: It is true that the Diocese of Texas and her bishops were lauded for early efforts to multiply black churches in the south. It is also true that our first bishop was enabled in his ministry because he had household slaves. And, that our first church was erected by slaves.

It is true that we set about planting our historic black churches and even appointed a missionary Dean to do so. But it is also true that our overall history shows fewer dollars given to the project of mission, maintenance, and ministry of black churches and an afro-centric mission over the years. It is true that clergy and laity alike spoke out against slavery, racism, and even courageously stopped lynching in our communities. But it is also true that other leaders defended slavery, white supremacy, and were silent and we believe some lay leaders in the nineteenth century and early twentieth participated in lynching. It is true that we were early to desegregate our “separate but equal” camping facilities and schools and had Bishop Hines and Richardson who prophetically called us to transformation on the issue of racism in our church and cities. It is also true that we have at times used the notion of “self-determination” and “freedom” to shirk our mutual responsibility for one another’s life.

This is not a full telling of our history in the times we fell short nor of the times when our communities stood tall against the powers and principalities. Naming does help us understand how complex our story is. And, I hope by telling you, you will see how each of the following announcements fit into the overall work we can do and hope to do together to repair, heal and imagine a different future.

The first two racial justice gifts have been made to support current and ongoing work

★ A Pledge of \$1 million over the next 10 years

The Episcopal Health Foundation has been engaging our Diocese of Texas Church communities on the topic of Racism for three years. This intentional and measurable initiative has already seen over \$300,000 in funds used to engage the work of understanding our history and the realities of white supremacy. The Episcopal Health Foundation has agreed to continue that funding for the next ten years for a minimum commitment of \$1 million dollars.

- \$1 million-dollar grant to the Rev. Pauli Murray Scholarship fund to help students of color with living expenses while attending Seminary of the Southwest.
 - ★ \$500,000 is given from Bishop Quin Foundation
 - ★ \$500,000 is given from Church Corporation

These efforts will dovetail with other initiatives in order to continue our capacity building on racial justice

- ★ One gift of \$1 million from principal EFT
- ★ One gift of \$1 million from EHF.

John and Joseph Talbot were slaves owned by Matthew Talbot in Matagorda.

In 2003 Evelyn (Talbot) Tolbert met The Rev. Hoss Gwin vicar of Christ Church Matagorda she was looking for her ancestors these two baptized slaves mentioned in our baptismal book. The profits of their slave labor paid for Christ Church, and we know the slaves assembled the first church as it was a pre-sawn kit church. Evelyn came to give thanks for her Christianity and its roots she and Hoss Connected with the Matthew Talbot Descendants for a meal and worship service. John and Joseph Talbott are examples of our complex history and story. The fund named after them will be held in Church Corporation. While helping to educate internally the goal of the work is to eventually work with Equal Justice Initiative, the Lynching Memorial in Alabama on lynching memorials and justice work in local communities. As the model in Atlanta of “The Beloved Community” emphasizes we wish to make pilgrimages to the Lynching memorial but in order that we reclaim hope through remembering and enact memorial pilgrimages to sites in our diocese – to bring churches, seminary students, and community members together to hear and know our story.

A board will be created made up of Episcopalians of color from across the diocese with special consideration given to the leadership from Historic Black Churches.

- \$1 million given by the Bishop Quin Foundation

Henrietta Wells was an Episcopal lay woman who attended St. John's, Tyler Texas during her time at Wiley College where she was also a member of the great debate team. She was baptized at St. Clement's Episcopal Church, now St. Luke's, and ended her life of ministry at St. James, Houston. This too will be held in Church Corporation and annual gifts drawn from this endowment will be used to provide scholarships for students attending Historic Black Colleges in the Diocese of Texas: Houston Tillotson, Prairie View Texas A&M, Texas College, Texas Southern University, and Wiley, College.

The scholarships may be given to students who sing in a local choir, assist in ministry, or for teaching internships at local Episcopal schools while attending a Historic Black College in Texas. In perpetuity .2% will be set aside annually from the Great Commission Foundation for the mission, program, or maintenance of Historic Black Churches of the Diocese of Texas.

In 2020 the first grant is estimated to be made in the amount of \$250,000. In 2021 that will increase to \$275,000. The Rev. Thomas Cain was born into slavery in Petersburg Virginia, served St. Augustine's in Galveston, and planted churches in East and Central Texas. He was the first priest of color in the Diocese of Texas and represented the Diocese of Texas at General Convention in 1886. He was made deacon and priest by Bishop Whittle, fifth Bishop of Virginia, and was in charge of St. Philip's Church for colored people in Richmond, Virginia,

He transferred to the Diocese of Texas in 1888 and was placed in charge of St. Augustine's Mission. A graduate of the very first class of the Bishop Payne Divinity School (founded in Petersburg, Virginia in 1878 to train people of color for ministry in the Episcopal Church),

Cain died in the great flood of 1900. Held in the Church Corporation, and overseen by the new board, the program aims to grow capacity within existing black congregations. It may be spent every year or allowed to grow as the board sees fit. The program will not prevent Historic Black Congregations from participating in other programs. Under my episcopate this is a commitment to over 3.5 million dollars...and that number will only increase as the Great Commission Fund increases and time passes.

- \$1.5 million by the Bishop Quin Foundation

The Rev. David Franklin Taylor endowed Scholarship,” at Seminary of the Southwest, for students of color working towards an MDiv. Taylor was the first priest of color raised up by the historic black churches in the diocese of Texas. In 1904, Bishop Kinsolving licensed David Franklin Taylor as a lay reader at St. John the Baptist’s Chapel in Tyler. He was ordained to the Diaconate on January 24, 1906, Taylor served as Deacon-in-Charge from 1906 to 1910, when he was ordained priest and moved to St. Augustine’s in Galveston.

- \$3 million grant from the Bishop Quin Foundation

Dr. Bertha Sadler Means is a founding member of St. James’, Austin. Community leader, political activist, businesswoman, and inspirational trailblazer Bertha Sadler Means, is a 1945 graduate of Tillotson College, she earned a master’s degree in education from the University of Texas at Austin. Enjoyed a long career in education before retiring from the Austin Independent School District (AISD). She was and is an inspiration to young women and men alike. A recipient of the W. Charles Akins African American Heritage Award in 2002, she is known for her exemplary character, leadership, and community service. This endowment is to be housed at the Seminary of the Southwest this seeks to fund in perpetuity a ministry to support visiting black scholars, research in Texas slavery and racism, teaching racial justice, formation for empowerment of black leaders, and encouragement for Episcopal black ministries in the diocese of Texas and the church

The Episcopal Foundation of Texas is committed to a follow up gift to the Seminary of the Southwest, outside of its initial racial justice gift, ongoing annual support, and capital campaign support to make a gift to Seminary of the Southwest to help further endow this ministry. The request will be received by the foundation in 2022.

This is what the Episcopal Diocese of Texas racial justice initiative looks like over the next decade I am grateful to our foundations for seeing a moment of transformational action they imagined with me the potential we have to make a positive impact a hopeful impact, a healing impact and a forward progressing impact on the issues of Race within the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, The Episcopal Church and the wider community of Texas and beyond

I am grateful for my friends across the diocese, especially in the historic black churches

Who have taught me so much and have been patient friends I am proud to walk this walk with you and am grateful for your honesty, vulnerability and courage in entrusting me with our common work. I am grateful to my friend bishops who have been conversation partners. And, I am grateful for the Presiding Bishop's kinds words and support of the Diocese of Texas. We are passing out his special message to you at this time. Let me draw this time to a close with an image. One of the most amazing grotesque, morbid and even macabre crucifixion paintings from the middle ages is called the Isenheim Altarpiece or The Grünewald triptych. It was painted by Matthias Grünewald for the monks of St. Anthony who served at the Isenheim hospital. They devoted themselves to the poorest of the poor and the most desperate cases of Middle Ages Epidemic cruelty the art is not meant for the healthy it was meant for the diseased the pock marked those with sores and the dying. The art has the purpose of mirroring for the viewer in Christ's suffering their own suffering.

Christ literally in the art takes on the suffering of the patients at the hospital it is a means to say to a patient "Christ's body is with you and it is for you" It's a dynamic, powerful, and a moving work of art. One art historian wrote "the emphatic physical suffering was intended to be thaumaturgic. Thaumaturgic. In other words, miracle performing, the church is a kind of Thaumaturgic...miracle performance art. A Sacramental vessel it is a vision to the world of Christ's body.

The church is not the sum of people who call themselves Christian. But the Very body of Christ Reflecting the Woundedness Pain Suffering of the world. The church is the sum of people who like Christ do the things Christ does, especially as it sacrifices itself in service to its community. The Church is the corporate life that appears indivisible from the body of Christ and from God and so rather than presenting ourselves as church the church presents itself as Christ's body in the world.

When people look upon the church (As the patients long ago looked upon their suffering Christ in the hospital in Isenheim) When people look upon the church they must see themselves in the body. The church you see is a kind of work of art, it is at once the body of Christ, an icon of God for people it is also everywhere and always at its best when it lives with the people and reflects their own suffering pains and sores.

This is the work we are given to do in our time and in our context in the name of the Father Son, and holy spirit. Amen.

ⁱ A “Special Case” will occur when the Normal Operating Income amount (i.e. Line “A” on the Parochial Report) drops by 15% or more from one year to the next. In the year following qualification as a “Special Case”, the apportionment will be: The percentage produced using line “A” on the Parochial Report times. The actual income for the year in which the payments are being made. Once determined, this apportionment percentage is not subject to change in the first year. Apportionment amounts, being based on actual income, should be figured and sent in to the Diocese on a monthly basis. Any unpaid apportionment due and not paid for the last year of regular status will still be due to the Diocese. Payment of this past due apportionment will be handled by the Credentials Committee in their usual format.

ⁱⁱ A project that has documented the lives of more than 200 of the enslaved persons the Georgetown College sold during antebellum and has traced more than 8,200 direct descendants.