

Bishop's Address
170th Episcopal Diocese of Texas
Council meeting in The Woodlands
2019

For over ten 10 years
You and I have labored
Across 57 counties
46,000 square miles
That are the diocese of Texas
We are all kinds of people
City folk and country folk
Liberal, conservative
LGBTQ and Cisgendered
High church/low church
Black, white, brown and ever color in between
But we are all laboring as followers of Jesus Christ,
we are One Church
in the diocese of Texas
and that is no small feat!

Yes, the last few years have tested that again
In political storm

In church storm
In hurricane
But we have remained united
And will
united
within the Anglican Communion
and The Episcopal Church
we have made our witness of unity
and we have joined in
shoulder to shoulder and labored together

We seek all people to join us
Invite all people to follow the way of Jesus
And are willing to work together
To make Texas and the world
A better place tomorrow because
We
Episcopalians
are ready to work for Jesus
Here in this place
In our context
And to affect change for the good
Around the world

We have set out as our five-year goals

Our 2020 goals
To grow – to grow congregations,
to plant churches
To grow younger
To diversify
And, to care
To serve our people who are already in the church
And serve our people in our neighborhoods,
towns,
and cities.

We have together accomplished much
And, we are challenged by much

As soon as we figure out something...
we discover more questions
that lead us deeper into mission

A spirit of curiosity and tenacity
Determination and patience
And a love for failure
A love for adventure
A love for each other
Are most definitely key

After listening to you in 2008
Together
We decided that we had to reignite
College campus mission
We have reorganized
We did not have enough funds
And we were unwilling to change the formula of the
assessment
To the congregations to get those funds
So we looked to the great commission foundation

When we began in 2009 we had
6 campus missions
To your questions about the funding
And expanding college mission...
Today we are funding 21 college campus missions
With over 404 young adults participating
And we are growing

They meet weekly
With grants of over \$800,000
Aimed at supporting evangelism and growth,
And programing and service

And, I believe this needs to continue to grow

And strengthen
And teach us
Inside the church about younger generations
[as Saturday Night Live has taught us...
we cannot depend upon Alexa to help us know about the
world outside our church doors]

Christian Formation
As we stretch
And become a church
In this new mission age
[Where the baptized are supported in their ministry
By the clergy
Instead of a clergy led
Lay supported church]
We recognize the work we have to do together
To form Christians
To form Episcopalians
And to form apostles who go out
And lead in the world

Our team is meeting you in congregations
Serving with you
Gathering you together

We are worked to support 60 Christian formation leaders
We worked to prepare and coach 14 new children and
youth ministers

Our Happening ministry continues to thrive
[we even had 3 youth baptized at Happening this year]
We have over 500 people participate in youth gatherings
Not to mention the work of our youth ministers across the
diocese
Week to week
Month to month
Only you in your local congregations can form
Young people
So...we are investing heavily in supporting your ministry
to the youth who are members of our congregations

As we engaged in missional community growth and
planting
As we reached out into our neighborhoods
As we sought to be a welcoming church
We began to engage each other
To listen
And build our cross-cultural leadership skills
Over 400 church leaders participated in deeper dives into
diversity as a leadership group

We coached and helped spawn and then gather in an
additional 300 individuals
in local contexts

We began to immerse other ministries in these skills of
relationship building –
Like happening, Iona, our curate program
are just some of the places where leaders are stretching
themselves out towards a very diverse world

I want to thank Denise Trevino and Jamie Martin Currie
but if you were involved in Christian Education, you,
campus ministries, or the work on diversity would you
stand?

We as leaders are changing too...
We had over 300 lay leaders come together at the hispanic
lay leadership conference
Our goals to grow in our cross-cultural skills
And grow in diversity
In order to reflect our context as leaders
Is emerging as major strength of the diocese

We also discovered that we need to do some reconciliation
work

Especially around race

We did 6 screenings/dialogues last year of Traces of the trade – an amazing film, and awakening film to long legacy of slavery in our country

We are launching with the help of our congregational engagement team at EHF a program entitled

In Common this year

It is to work with 11 congregations interested in deepening their work...they will gather in Houston, Austin, Tyler

Still others are doing our Province VII training

We are curious about your work on this most important topic and we will be seeking your input on how best to help you lean into a difficult, powerful, transformative work on racial reconciliation

We must do this work

For the past

We must do this work

For our children's, our country's and our church's future

Trinity Marshall has been one of early adopters of this work a leading congregation in our diocese and a leading congregation in their city

Our service ministries are beginning to take shape

As we re-engage our communities to discover ways we can help

It is all too easy to step into a community and think we see what is needed

This is not community engagement

We want to work with our neighbors

And other community based organizations to

Get improve the wellness of our neighborhoods

With EHF's congregational engagement team

We are working together

Engaging 27 congregations interested in civic engagement and community organizing

15 congregations are doing Holy Currencies work – which is a ministry incubation program

75 congregations have worked on mental health and wellness – that is 828 people of which half were from our neighborhoods and half were our own members!

6 congregations have attended an engagement training...that helps us as congregations

And leaders

To move out beyond 1930's ideas of service and outreach

If you have a heart for serving your community and
don't know how to start
Or find that your outreach ministries are people's pet
projects
Or are fading away as the culture changes
I encourage you to make step one reaching out and visiting
with the folks at Episcopal Health Foundation
Congregational Engagement Team

I do think sometimes that we think that we will just get
money for things
The future of funding for mission is a collaborative model
That includes sustainability
Sustainability cannot be....someone else is going to pay for
my good idea forever

I think we do the same thing to "the diocese"
Whoever that is
That we do to rectors
We walk into a rectors office and say
Here is a great idea
You fund it
And you do it or find some to do it
The rector replies
Well I thought you were going to do it

Oh, I don't have time the person will say

There are such things as bad ideas

Bad ideas

Are the good ideas

That you have for someone else to pay for

Or do

Where you have no skin in the game

Or no stake in the outcome

Today we see people taking on amazing ministry though

In so many ways

Many of you in this room

Many of our church members

Have gotten the mission bug to do service

And to do evangelism

In 2012 we had a couple

Today we have

88 missional communities gathering out in the world

45 congregations are developing new ones

780 new people are touched by this mission

2 of these have become

at this council

Missions of the diocese

In 2018 we supported existing congregations

In planting missional communities
Through grants totaling \$390,000

Congregational growth
In 2018 we planted three more congregations
We now support 12 church plants / 10 since 2012
Serving 730 new Episcopalians

We are supporting this program with about \$5 million a year.

We also have 3 second site congregations that have expanded existing ministry in Georgetown, Austin, and Tyler

We are planting three new starts in 2019 as well,
And are beginning to think about who...

We are in conversations with 3 non episcopal churches
Who serve over 400 people
because of their interest in becoming Episcopal churches.

Let us think for a moment about how we are working together with existing congregations...

Not every congregation has the financial resources to support its mission, though it has substantial mission opportunity. These would be congregations like Lord of the Streets (a particular homeless community and ministry in Houston) Or a congregation serving in an economically depressed area. We support these efforts with \$1 million in grant funding. These congregations serve over 2,000 people on any given week.

We also support existing congregations in other ways. Certainly we are out on the road. Our mission amp team, together, puts over 70,000 miles on their cars. Getting out in the field. Supporting you all. Meeting, visiting, and coaching.

We also support our existing congregations through grant making for a total of \$1 million

\$200,000 for congregational aid and ministry support,
\$500,000 in emergency need (not including Hurricane relief)

\$50,000 in redevelopment grants,
\$80,000 in program, small conf, and support for
existing congregations
\$100,000 of moving expenses for clergy
\$70,000 for congregational support

In 2018 we had to help a number of congregations with
growth initiatives...many of these projects put off for over
20 or more years....

We helped existing congregations' improve their mission
protentional with gifts of 7.5 million

These dollars follow growth
Exponential growth
Evangelism
And they follow service
They do not come first

We also use our funding streams to help in times of crisis.
We do this every year with our aid
Recently with Harvey
We have had to support congregations
For a short while during the recovery

We helped with clergy pensions – which are paid by congregations

We also helped with shortfall in dollars

And, we helped to fund construction

In 2018, 31 congregations received a total funding of over 3.4 million

Some of these are massive rebuilds

We also are supporting our clergy

While we underwrite for the diocese the majority of the cost of health care – some \$5 million dollars

We spent and additional

\$400,000 for clergy support and salaries for new priests

\$150,000 is training bivocational clergy at Iona

\$150,000 in sabbatical grants to help clergy stay healthy, and another 150,000 for families and programing

We are supporting clergy and their families through Wellness and care

Providing and underwriting the clergy spouse retreat and
the clergy family retreat
Plus programming for clergy to help them
Along with their lay leadership
Become healthy and thrive in ministry

A few of you asked how much are we supporting our
outreach ministries at El Buen Samaritano and St.
Vincent's House, Camp Allen, Episcopal High School, and
St. Stephen's School Austin

We supported their ministry with over 5 million in grants.

Of which 1.3 went directly to ministries to the poor and
those in need...and some of that goes to parishes doing
homeless ministries and to the working poor like Echoes....

We gave another \$380,000 to community based ministries
outside the Episcopal Church but connected to our
churches.

We helped our community to strive towards wellness with
another \$23 million in funding to community based
organizations outside the episcopal church...you will hear

more about his from Elena Marks as she shares the work of the Episcopal Health Foundation

In our goals we have said that we wish to be a part of the communion and wider church

I serve as president of the Compass Rose Society

We have many members in the diocese of texas

We support global mission

We hosted General Convention

We make Grants to the episcopal church and Anglican communion for over 3.3 million...from Jerusalem to North Dakota, from Costa Rica to India (where we helped with a gift to train Dalit women to be nurses)...we are helping bring cancer treatment to the Gaza strip and forming leaders in the wider episcopal church...

Let me shift a bit here...just for a moment...

Some of you inquired about the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention for they have all been in the papers.

We should pray for the victims and their churches

We need to pray for healing

And clarity of vision

In the Diocese of Texas, we trained

Over 6,000 leaders in 2018

Clergy and the baptized
to safe guard our adults and children
spending \$350,000 in program support for this ministry
And countless hours on the road and in our congregations
and schools
Every report is dealt with
And, our work makes a difference
Your work
Your training
On this
That makes a huge difference
The church of God in Christ Jesus has to be a safe place for
children, and for all people

If we put this together
Which would have saved you a lot of time
In 2018 we gave away over \$26 million to health ministries
and to assist the poor and underserved.

We supported new church plants to the tune of \$5 million
dollars...

And, we supported a variety of programs and ministries
focused on building healthy congregations for the future of

mission and service with over \$20 million dollars in grants
– of which \$1.3 were for Hurricane relief

In addition to the Diocesan Council made up of over 700
members... an Executive Board with 15 members,
Standing Committee with 6 members, plus we have 54
volunteer board members that serve on our 5 foundations
boards

We have another 118 who serve on institutional boards
of the diocese.

And another 74 that serve on Commissions and
Committees of the diocese

It takes all of us doing our individual work

And working in sync

And together

For together

we have been able to keep the cost to the congregations
down

in fact investing almost double the amount in existing
congregations than what is given for the mutual ministry of
the EDOT budget...

A test of your budgets

Reveals a startling reality

Without this funding stream created by our
Financial strategic plan,
especially the insurance,
a stark reality appears
over 52 congregations would have closed over the last 7
years because they could not afford the assessment
trajectory we were on before
you and I started working together

this is unheard of in church today
any church today
it is, quite frankly, amazing
one of the largest underwriters of your congregational
ministries
are your diocesan foundations
upon which many of you serve
who do what you have invited us
as a diocese to do
based upon actions of this council
our 5 year 360 reviews
our agreed upon goals

and it is due to careful creation
and strategic financial alignment
that funds our mission of service and evangelism

in accordance with emerging best practices

This is all due to the creation of the Episcopal Health Foundation, The Great Commission Foundation, The Quin Foundation, and the Episcopal Foundation of Texas.

Now, I want to announce 2 new initiatives

The first new initiative

I have been out and about and looking

Seeing

And listening

And I think we need to go smaller

Just as we are going bigger

We are going to set aside funds to help congregations

With small maintenance needs

And small attractional evangelism grants

From branding, to advertising, to small construction and beautification grants.

we will circulate information through our communication and mission amp department after Easter about how to prepare and apply for these.

My sense is that not staying on top of these kinds of opportunities can lead to a congregation not being able to

catch up, or sustain itself on smaller incomes...this
initiative will help us to keep our doors open
And to have good facilities for worship
And for our communities to use

The second initiative is to place
A group of area missionaries
Full time clergy who are unattached
With the goal of having them support local mission
I have been thinking we have a number of growth areas
In the diocese where we already have footprints
But small congregations
In the midst of large numerical growth
We would like to get people
Full time clergy
On the ground in these areas
To nurture what is there
Help these small congregations
Not only survive
But thrive as they step into their future
We have learned a lot from the East Texas model where
Ryan Mails has been serving
And are ready to go to the next step
This too will take a bit to figure out

and

Plan to fund

Hiring and clarifying role and work between congregations,
regional bishops, and our mission amp team

Are also part of this preparatory work

We are already working as a team to figure out the amount
of the annual funding for your through these initiatives.

And I look forward to reporting back to you on our
initiatives in this area in 2020.

Last year I spoke to you about vocations

A group of 25 people from every part of the diocese have
been working

They are pondering what kinds of formation do we need to
undertake in this missionary age

How do we form leaders and apostles to go out

How do our structures work regarding discernment for holy
orders

What processes get in the way, how can we speed up when
we want and slow down when time is needed

And, we are looking at programs globally and across The
Episcopal Church

We are seeking to understand the new kinds of leadership needed – paid and unpaid models, what is working now and what could work better in the future

With an **intentional** and personalized approach
intentional, contextual, and innovative deployment
intentional discernment models.

Creating **intentional** formation and educational foundations for supporting lay vocation and development.

We are looking at funding approaches
Real cost of formation
Real cost of supporting those in training
Scholarships, insurance

We are studying our own matrix of transitions
And what kinds of clergy do we need

We hope to identify how best to provide effective care and support to clergy at each point of transition in the vocational processes adopted by the Diocese.

It is also clear that we need to raise a fund to help with vocations for the baptized and clergy. Moreover, given the

continue rising health care cost, coupled with our desire to create a community of healthy clergy and lay employees – we will have to do something more than what we do presently.

Both the cost of leadership development and healthcare for our leadership have outpaced our capacity.

I am presently working with a group of people on bringing solutions forward for both these issues.

And I hope to have an announcement in 2020.

All of this is unique in the church all denominational churches, it is Amazing

And what is the amazing part is not the money

What is amazing to me

is the work that you are all doing

You are changing the church

Changing the world

Sharing the gospel

You are faithful

Working hard

Striving

Pushing at the gospel plough

But the story is more complicated than all of that...
And there is much left to do
As we look at our next thirteen years together

What is ahead?

We need to prepare for our 175th anniversary
We need to do our next five year evaluation in 2020
Review and adjust our spending
Increase synchronicity between our organizations
And funding strategies

We need to imagine the work as it stretches out in front of
us

We are in the midst of hiring our new communications
director and rethinking our next evolution in this
particularly essential, critical, area

But as we are ending our 10 years together
And ending the last 5 and nearing 2020
Many things are already clear

We, the diocesan staff, your bishops
Are responsible for helping you manage the stresses and
strains of ministry

We do this by supporting you with grants
By underwriting your ministry
By being in the field with you
By coaching
And walking beside you

Your work as clergy and lay leaders
At the end of the day
As local congregations
are responsible
For the pastoral care of your people
For worship
The raising up of people for mission
And ministry inside and outside the church
You are responsible for the local mission
For the care of your communities

You are responsible for evangelism
You are responsible for serving your people
You are responsible for youth ministry
And the ministry to families
While we are attempting to financially
Make things easier
This is why we brought down the assessment
You as congregants are responsible for

The ministry on the ground
And raising the stewardship dollars
For your clergy person
And the upkeep of your buildings
And the financial support of your mission
You are responsible to share the gospel
And to plant new community seeds

We live in a society
I think
That wants someone else
To come and fix our problems
That is not Christianity

In Christianity
And in the polity of our Episcopal Church
We work together
Each part has its work
And, we work to support you
So that you as followers of Jesus
May become apostles
Every follower was sent
Every disciple became an apostle
Someone sent
And that is your work

We are here to help
You are not alone

yet we need to be mindful
That the world
The present context
Is throwing a lot at us all

Has it ever been different
Has it ever been different for Christians and their mission
From the prophets of old
To the disciples
And the first followers of Jesus

We have been a community
United in the cause of Christ Jesus
This age is no different
This moment
Our context
What is before us
No different

And, God is with us
we have Jesus Christ with us
We have God's holy spirit lighting our way

We are nothing less than participants in God's great story

And, we as a unique breed of Christians

As Texas Episcopalians

We will rise to the challenge

Just as those four laity, three clergy, and Bishop George

Washington Freeman did

170 years ago

When they traveled through the winter mud and muck

To hold the first council of the Diocese of Texas

I love being your bishop

I love working with you

I love our parishes

I love our congregations

The bishops, the staff

The leadership here in this place

Continues to make me want to be the best bishop I can be

for you, for the wider church, and for God

For next to my family JoAnne, and the girls, nothing makes

me happier. Than getting up each day and serving Jesus

Christ with you here in this place.