Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

There is no doubt in my mind that the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments provide our personal conscience and Christian faith to take a critical ‘Jesus centered look’ at our world and our times. Today it may feel like our political and religious institutions are unravelling and our belief in God’s emerging kingdom is becoming more questionable. Nevertheless, we are reminded in the first chapter of St. Mark’s Gospel that immediately after Jesus’ baptism and John the Baptist’s arrest, Jesus intentionally went to Galilee proclaiming the Good News of God’s reign saying: “The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand” [vs.14]. Jesus had no doubt that the man-made kingdoms of the world were not in sync with the Kingdom of God. What are your feelings about today’s world and what do you think?

Historically we know that when Jesus lived it was a time of great political and social unrest. It was a time of violence, economic inequality, persecution, ethnic segregation, blatant racism and political injustice. This was the world of Jesus’ time. So, what’s new under the sun? Into this mundane, chaotic reality, Jesus, the religious inferior and the great unjust economic divide between the rich and the poor. So, what’s new under the sun?

I presume some people today, as in Jesus’ day, would label and dismiss the teachings of Jesus, and those who struggle to live out his teachings, as too controversial and religious and, sanction us, too secular. But I ask you, do these people really know Jesus and understand that his Gospel is about these very historic and contemporary social and political issues?

There is nothing new under the sun, except the Gospel and the Sermon on the Mount, and much of the New Testament’s teachings, deeply reveal that he was not only conscious of the “sacred movements” causing people’s suffering but cared deeply about social, religious and political issues of his day that corrupted the truths of the Kingdom of his Father. Jesus addressed every social, religious and political issue and untruth that both undermined and disregarded God’s ‘assurance’ – the powerlessness, disregarded power. He reacted publicly with bold compassion when he saw the rejected lepers, the socially disregarded, abused children, people’s aggressive violence against each other, poverty stricken street people, crucified Jews, pagans and alienated Gentiles, battered women, the ethnically and religiously inferior and the great unjust economic divide between the rich and the poor. So, what’s new under the sun?

I presume some people today, as in Jesus’ day, would label and dismiss the teachings of Jesus, and those who struggle to live out his teachings, as too controversial and religious and, sanction us, too secular. But I ask you, do these people really know Jesus and understand that his Gospel is about these very historic and contemporary social and political issues?

People are still suffering and great unjust divides still exist.

Matsen wrote: “Participating in social justice is a Christian task us to be effective witnesses and advocates of God’s reigning reality in the world.” So, do you think these people really know Jesus and understand that his Gospel is about these very historic and contemporary social and political issues?

There is nothing new under the sun, except the Gospel and the risen presence of Christ!

People are still suffering and great unjust divides still exist.

For me some of the ethical and moral signs of God’s emerging kingdom are evidenced in the twelve gifts of the Holy Spirit: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Meekness, Self-control and Chastity (Purity in conduct and intention).

Social, cultural and political upheaval shook people’s beliefs and their religious public witness then just as they do today. In my reading of the New Testament Jesus sought to empower and change people’s priorities, world view and way of life to be more godly, compassionate, communal and embracive. St. Paul made this clear to the Galatians when he said, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all in one Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). These verses make it clear that everything in the Kingdom of God, which includes all the social and political movements and challenges today, every race, every ethnicity, international cultures, global poverty, injustice, violence, hatred, racism, xenophobia, sexism, excessive wealth, the excluded, the included – and can go on and on and on – must be brought under the power of the Kingdom that the God of Israel is at hand as and his followers tasks us to be effective witnesses and advocates of God’s reigning kingdom.

Bishop Michael

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteous sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah: 6:8)

This, I believe, is the teaching and work Jesus gave us in his sermon on the mount and what we read in St. Matthew's Gospel. Perhaps it is time to read the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospels and the New Testament writings again. It’s time to ask Maciach’s prophetic question: “And what does the Lord require of you?”

Today our world is certainly experiencing unprecedented, accelerating change, some change for the common good and some change not for the common good. Yes, I know. No one likes change, yet life is all about change. Many changes today are evident in every facet of our lives. As you have heard me say many times, if you don’t believe we’re changing, spend more time looking into a mirror.

I believe Jesus’ world was no different than our world today. Jesus did not avoid the discomfort of godly confrontation with those powers, authorities and social movements that did not reflect God’s Truth, God’s Love, God’s Justice and God’s Kingdom. For me some of the ethical and moral signs of God’s emerging kingdom are evidenced in the twelve gifts of the Holy Spirit: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Meekness, Self-control and Chastity (Purity in conduct and intention).

Bishop Michael

Many Blessings Everyone,

Bishop Michael
The Search for the Next Bishop

CANDIDATES RESUMES

The Rev. Canon Michael Buerkel Hunn
Canon to the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church

Ordnations:
• 2004: M.Div.—Diocese of the Rio Grande, 2011- present:  Canon to the Ordinary, Episcopal Diocese of Idaho; “The Mobile Program of the Diocese.” Areas of ministry include: Congregational Development,
• Transition Ministry, Spiritual Retreats, Vestry Development, Leadership Retreats, Conflict Resolution, Liturgical Training, Preaching Pastoral Retreats, Clergy Development and coaching, Clergy Education, Clergy Retreats, Mutual Ministry Review. Lead Staff for Diocesan Events, including Convocation, Council and Preside at different parishes every Sunday. Liaison to Diocesan Council and interface with the Commission on Ministry.
• 2005-2011: Rector, St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, Sacramento, California: A bilingual/multicultural setting in a low-income urban area. Bilingual ministry and liturgies, with an emphasis on social ministries. Partnerships with local nonprofits, Title I school, Child Abuse Prevention Council, Community College, as well as numerous churches and businesses. Goals included raising up and empowering leadership within the parish and with partners.
• 2005-2006: Adjunct Faculty, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, California: Ministry in Latin Context. Curriculum included instruction in liturgical language, historical perspectives, and theological trends in Latin America.
• 2004-2005: Assistant Rector, The Episcopal Church of St. Martin, Davis, California: A program-size parish in an affluent, university town. Ministry areas included: education and formation, healing ministry, youth ministry, liturgical planning and training, pastoral care. Formed and coached program teams.

Experience Highlights:
• Supporting Bishop’s ministry in all areas within the Episcopal Church’s 109 Dioceses in 16 nations.
• Supervising departments of Formation Ministries, Transition Ministry, and Communication, including Episcopal News Service and the Office of Public Affairs.
• Presiding Bishop’s liaison to the House of Bishops, the Office of Pastoral Care, the Office of the Bishop of the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries, and the Convocation in Europe.
• Chair of General Convention 2018 Liturgy Committee, Member of Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements for General Convention.
• Leading the cultural transformation of the church-wide staff which involves healing, justice, re-design, re-organization, conflict transformation to build a positive, creative, responsive and collaborative culture.
• Restructured and reoriented the Communications Department to emphasize multimedia, social media and digital evangelism.
• Designed and lead process in which bishops and indigenous leaders from across the church imagine sustainable, church-wide Indigenous Ministry leadership and support.

Canon to the Ordinary for Program and Pastoral Ministry, The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 2006-2015
• Supported all aspects of the Bishop’s ministry in a diocese of 120 congregations and 7 campus ministries.
• Designed training program for pastoral responders and discipline board.
• Redesigned congregational transition process, personally facilitated 80 congregational transitions.

CANDIDATES 5 ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important attributes that a bishop brings to his/her calling and what special gifts underscore your call to the Diocese of the Rio Grande?

The Rev. Canon Michael Buerkel Hunn

I could not agree more with the four attributes of a bishop’s character named in your prayer: personal holiness, wisdom, compassion, and grace. We need bishops who lead by example and embody those characteristics. Here’s how I understand them…

Wisdom is based in experience - a bishop needs to have “been there,” to have seen the church top to bottom and collected an extensive toolkit as a result. A bishop’s wisdom must constantly be revised and transformed through listening, connecting to the deep, even unspoken needs and concerns of people.

Compassion is an attitude of the heart. A bishop’s heart is open to people from all walks of life. A bishop listens with the heart, connecting to the deep, even unspoken needs and concerns of people.

Grace is a gift from God. Grace is given to us freely, to forgive, to open our hearts to love and to connect with one another.

Hope can be a gift underscore your call to a diocese that has been through such a difficult time. The Diocese of the Rio Grande. The Church of the Rio Grande. The Church of the Americas. All that is needed is a bishop who is grounded in prayer, in the power of God’s grace, to work with the people and help them to strive for the vision of the Church. A bishop who will not give up and will continue to work for the good of all people, even in the face of challenges.

I believe that you need a bishop who is experienced and mature, someone who is grounded in parish ministry as well as being knowledgeable about diocesan life and governance. The clergy and leaders of the diocese desire a bishop who will love and pray with and for them.

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I believe that you need a bishop who is experienced and mature, someone who is grounded in parish ministry as well as being knowledgeable about diocesan life and governance. The clergy and leaders of the diocese desire a bishop who will love and pray with and for them.
2. Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” How would you answer that question? How would you describe the significance of this “death and resurrection”?

When Peter and Jesus had that wonderful encounter in the gospels of Matthew, it was a moment of getting at the core of personal belief—and it was a deeply intense moment. I cannot answer with anything less than that same spiritual intensity. “You are God”—savior, teacher, console, pacifier, exchequer. Because you have gifted yourself to me and others in these very human forms, I can better understand and relate to the enormous nature of You that would otherwise be unfathomable.

Jesus’ death was for all time and all place, as is his resurrection. His teaching that we die to self is profound in its psychological, social, spiritual, and ministerial implications. It is the calling of all the baptized to die to self, to be less ego-driven, and focus on the call of self so that one might discern, to those in need, to a world in trouble. Dying to self is what makes resurrection—for rising with Christ.

The scriptural resurrection is said to have taken place in early dawn, when darkness was most prominent. There was a faint glow. We as Christians, look for that faint glow, that glimmer of hope. Our calling is to point that to, in every moment of every day, to a world in need of hope.

I see resurrection daily: in a simple act of kindness, a changed mind or heart, and at times, in a total change of life; those simple, personal “resurrections” are the glow which brings about the greater glory.

3. A bishop is called to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church.” (BCP p517) How do you understand this charge as it relates to the current challenges within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, and the examples of how you have exercised leadership in the Church?

The richness of Anglicanism lies in that place of tension, where understanding of scripture, tradition and reason are informed by history and context. As such, they are relational, influenced by historical patterns of colonization.

Right now, our relationships are strained as we all grapple with what Anglicanism means in our post-colonial world. I believe it is important to continue to strive for the ideal of Anglicanism—where we are not afraid to listen and speak respectfully about theological and scriptural issues that are interpreted differently within our different traditions.

Our experience in 2017, I encountered the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion in the US East Coast, Cuba, Palestine, and Ireland. While in Cuba representing TEC, I found that the ecumenical leaders were so easy to walk alongside theologically and ecumenically, so that a leader would be noted and impactful. It was important to meet with everyone from the place of our Baptismal Covenant, and to enter each situation with humility, sensitivity and respect.

In Spanish, the verb to guard, “guardar,” also means to keep: Keeping the unity, the faith and the discipline means holding them close, cherishing them. In my encounters with the church in other parts of the Communion, I am mindful that maintaining relationship is what undergirds the charge: relationship with each other, with God, and with the teachings of Jesus and our ancestors. As leaders we have personal and communal responsibility for our part in keeping these relationships and guarding against that which does harm.

4. The Diocese of the Rio Grande is a geographically massive and culturally diverse diocese, with a combination of urban and rural/frontier congregations. How might you apply your experience to the realities of your situation?

Because I have served in Northern California, and more recently Idaho, I am accustomed to thinking “one size does not fit all” when it comes to how program is crafted, how a meeting is led, how worship happens, how community relationships are developed, how interfaith connections are forged.

Cultural diversity, some of which is obvious, some of which is not, shaped my experience growing up and my life in professional ministry. I am both comfortable and uncomfortable among Anglo, Latin, and Native American peoples as we minister together and grow the mission of the Rio Grande: comfortable, because I believe that the authentic person meets the authentic person; uncomfortable, because I come from a place of privilege and can only begin to understand the paths that have been worn under the feet of many of my brothers and sisters.

Based in big cities in Latin America and a small town in Northern New Mexico, I find that I adapt easily to many environments. As a priest, I came from a cathedral, and I served in a small parish, and I lived both. As Canon to the Ordinary, traveling throughout the diocese, I am constantly in a different place; so I have my assumptions and expectations in my car and walk alongside the people simple joy-filled to be a part of the Body of Christ in that place.

5. Based on your reading of our diocesan profile and any other knowledge that you have, what do you see as your greatest challenge as the bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, and what excites you about becoming our bishop?

I believe that the greatest challenge you face is also my greatest excitement about becoming your bishop: diversity. As Bishop, I am called to be a symbol of unity, and I delight in the challenge of working through what it means in a diocese that holds theological, historical, cultural, political and socio-economic breadth. This cuts to the core of our tradition.

How does one work to unite such a diverse Body? How does one persuade people who are so very different from each other to find common vision and plan for the church of the future? I am eager to pursue these answers.

I have asked myself two questions of late: how can the Church continue to be relevant in this very needy, highly secular world, and what is my role in that? As Bishop of the Rio Grande, I have the opportunity to explore these questions, to find greater ways to connect through Matthew 25, and to grow and nurture our faith—and that of those who are seeking the Body of Christ. This is an important time, and you are an important place for ministry.

Many believe that our greatest challenges lie with declining numbers, aging congregants, and diminishing resources—and those are important. Yet, I believe that God has a larger dream for us: we are called to be innovative members of the Body of Christ, with an opportunity to take the rich diversity that is ours, and use that same diversity as a means to spread the gospel ever more widely.

RESUME: The Rev. Canon Lucinda Ashley

Continued from page 3

- Relevant Diocesan experience: 2004-2011: President of Standing Committee, Hispanic Commission, Chair of Liturgy Committee, Fresh Start Facilitator, Gratitude Consultant (Stewardship), Search Process Consultant, Mutual Ministry Review Consultant, Vestry Retreat Leader, and Bishop Consultation Chair.
- Larger Church experience: Deputy to General Convention, 2018
- Ongoing Ministerial Training and Teaching
  - Conference, 2016: Leading Women Conference, 2016: “Speaking the Truth in Love (Based on Fierce Conversations),” 2015: “Caring about Pastoral Care” 2014: CREDO,

- Secular Work Experience
  - 1997-2001: Educational Consultant, Ramsey Rancheria, Native American Reservation, Capay Valley, California: Built private school for K-6 Wintu students, literally from the ground up. Taught several Equivalent Schooling classes (ESL) for adults. Formed and developed School Board and hired and coached teachers.

- Hobbies and Recreation:
  - Reading—Murder mystery, historical fiction, biographies, Latin American and Spanish literature. Gardening—raised bed vegetables, sculptures, drought tolerant plantings and hard landscaping; Hiking, Walking (almost daily with husband and two dogs); Knitting, Camping, Traveling, and Watching movies and attending theater. Member of Boise Committee on Foreign Relations.

RESUME: The Rev. Simon Charles Justice

Continued from page 3

- Chair, planning committee, Province II Stewardship Conference. 1997-2001.
- Member, Board of Directors, Bethany Hospitality Center, Troy, 1995 – 2001.

- Ongoing Ministerial Training and Teaching
  - Parish-based Stewardship Training: frequent presenter/spokesperson.
  - CREDO participant: Spring of 2010 and summer of 2014.

- Ministerial Skills and Abilities

Spirituality
  - My relationship with God in Christ is the foundation of my life and ministry. I try to model a life of prayer, to encourage and counsel others in their spiritual life, praying with and for them.
  - I have a personal commitment to use prayer: a weekly prayer meeting with a mentor and I take an annual silent retreat.
  - I have a discipline of public services of morning, noonday and evening prayer in church.
  - I am a trained spiritual director.
  - I am skilled in leading weekend and day retreats on a variety of subjects and have led numerous groups on pilgrimage.

Liturgy
  - My most important ministry is to help plan, lead and facilitate meaningful and spirit-filled worship.
  - I am experienced in leading formal liturgies, including Choral Eucharist, Evensong and Sung Compline as well as contemporary worship and weekly children’s services, and worship outside the church buildings, for example in retirement homes.
  - I guided Good Sam through a major diocesan change and in the pattern of Sunday worship, including the creation of a family oriented service.
  - I have supported the ministry of music in all the congregations where I have served. In 2010 I helped to create a choral scholarship program for college students.
  - I work closely with our Worship Committee to plan the liturgies at Good Sam and involve others in the planning and leading of worship.

Leadership
  - Through discernment, training and ongoing support a vital element of my vocation is to rise up and equip inspired and motivated lay and ordained leaders for Bishop’s 2007 – 2013.
  - I call our two-governed congregations to the creation of five year parish mission plans.
  - I meet weekly with our staff and wardens. I initiated a bi-monthly meeting of all leaders and committees to share ideas, plans and
The recent controversy about marriage, like the question of the ordination of women before it, has seen the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion trying to faithfully live out our ancient faith in a modern world. By the grace of God, both the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church itself have proven remarkably resilient. As a Canon to the Ordinary, I led congregations through times of intense conflict. And I say this because I love and respect Episcopalians on all points of the “liberal-conservative” continuum.

When we stay close to our Anglican roots — we can weather the storm. Anglicanism has always sought common prayer — prayer which is in the common language of culture and of the people. In Anglicanism we know we find our unity in our worship, particularly in the Eucharist.

I lay people deserve our utmost respect and gratitude — we dignity exist to support and encourage their ministry and congregational leadership so they can change the world.

5. Based on your reading of our diocesan profile and any other knowledge that you have, what do you see as your greatest challenge as the bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, and what excites you about becoming our bishop?

The diocese is geographically, ethnically, culturally, economically, and theologically diverse. In the comments in the profile people often passionately ask for exactly opposite things — how does one bishop not just hold all of that together but lead the diocese to work in harmony for the glory of God? — That’s the greatest challenge I see.

So many things excite me about what you have written. I would love to come home and serve the only Diocese that includes both states which shaped my early Christian faith. As I read the profile, each different place speaks to part of my heart and I feel the excitement of wanting to learn more about the people of the Diocese — to learn anew, this time as an adult, the towns and villages, roads and trails our people inhabit.

But my excitement is not nostalgia — I am a priest who seeks out challenging ministry. To think that my work might be to help a diocese simultaneously minister to high-church and evangelical, Native American, Latino and Anglo, Republican and Democrat, Texan, New Mexican, the rich and poor, in a variety of languages is exciting indeed.

I want you to know I’m excited by your faithfulness, inspired by the possibilities ahead. I draw this time of writing to a close with hope in my heart and prayers of gratitude for the Diocese of the Rio Grande.

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2. Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” How do you answer that question? How would you describe the significance of “Jesus’ death and resurrection?”

I first came to know Jesus in the pews of a church in Los Alamitos — well, under the pews. There, as a young child, while quietly playing at my parents’ feet, I felt the holiness that surrounded me. In elementary school I loved being an acolyte and to this day I am in touch with the silent presence of God whenever I am near a altar, whether celebrating the Eucharist or just sitting in quiet prayer.

The year I turned 13 we moved to Texas and my parents literally forced me to go to youth group — but once there I found a group of people focused on the Bible Study and the practice of God’s love — a love which welcomed me as an awkward, overweight, pimped teenager whose voice was changing. The study of Scripture, and my personal relationship with Jesus became real to me then. I quietly began trying to live my beliefs in my complicated multicultural school situation.

I’ve been seeking holiness and trying to walk the talk ever since. What is the talk I’m walking? God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, whose life, death and resurrection forever changed the reality of the universe. His death destroyed death, revealing the futility of violence and the power of God’s love to heal, reconcile and forgive.

So, I’m trying to walk forgiveness and healing and the love of God. For me, the teachings of Jesus are not metaphorical but practical — those who lose their life can find it — it is better to give than to receive — turning the other cheek is an act of power that can bring lasting peace — as we learn to forgive, we also find forgiveness.

3. A bishop is called to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church.” (BCP, p. 517) How do you understand this charge as it relates to the current challenges within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion? Give examples of how you have exercised leadership in the Church?

In English we often use the word “guardian” to describe the care for living things, and the word “caretaker” to describe caring for, say, a piece of property. This implies that bishops by “guarding” are for living things, and the word “caretaker” to describe caring for, say, a piece of property. This implies that bishops by “guarding” are those who lose their life can find it — it is better to give than to receive — turning the other cheek is an act of power that can bring lasting peace — as we learn to forgive, we also find forgiveness.

I’ve learned that I believe might apply.

Every place is unique — I don’t assume I know what they need. When I go someplace new, I listen and I ask questions. Often the conversation creates one of those “two or three gathered together” situations when God shows up and suddenly see new possibilities in the place of problems. I trust that.

Our faith in Christ Jesus makes us one — for real. I say this because of conflict over these contemporary and contentious issues. I understand the legal, financial, pastoral, and structural issues involved in the healing work which is now needed.

My leadership reflects God’s love for all people by guarding the unity, faith, and discipline of the Church.

4. The Diocese of the Rio Grande is a geographically massive and culturally diverse diocese, with a combination of urban and rural/frontier congregations. How might you apply your experience to the realities of our situation?

I’ve been blessed to serve the church in many different contexts. I grew up in New Mexico and Texas where my soul was shaped by orange dirt canyons and a vast changing sky amidst a Latino/ Indigenous/Anglo blend of cultures. I’ve served urban and rural churches in many contexts: New Mexico, Texas, Vermont, England, Connecticut, Chicago, North Carolina, New York and now wherever the Presiding Bishop sends me.

Four things I’ve learned that I believe might apply.

• Every place is unique — I don’t assume I know what they need.
• Pastoral Care — for all students, faculty and staff.
• Campus Ministry — for all students, faculty, and staff.
• 3 mandatory chapel services each week.
• A co-educational prep school of 550 students founded by the Order of the Holy Cross (An Episcopal Monastery)
• 4 mandatory chapel services each week.

In Anglicanism we know we find our unity in our worship, particularly in the Eucharist. In Anglicanism we know we find our unity in our worship, particularly in the Eucharist.
The Rev. Simon Charles Justice
Rector, Church of the Good Samaritan, Corvallis, Oregon

concerns to coordinate the ministries of the congregation, and to build community.
• I host an annual parish leadership retreat and have fostered ongoing patterns of leadership training both within the parish and at specialized conference events.
• I facilitate an ongoing process of developing job descriptions and vision statements for staff and committees.
• I assist and encourage parish leaders in recruiting new leaders and staff.
• I create a weekly email update for Good Samaritan that goes to church members to keep them informed about upcoming events.
• I am experienced in helping congregations redesign their sacred space, most notably at St. Paul’s, Troy (a Tiffany designed interior).

Pastoral Care
We care for others by being the hands and voice of Jesus. We love Christ by loving our neighbor.
• I make regular home visitations to members of the congregation.
• I am a volunteer chaplain at the Diocese of Eastern Oregon’s Regional Medical Center.
• St Paul’s experienced an increase in average Sunday attendance by 50% during my tenure.

Administration
Efficient administration supports healthy parish leadership and enables the church to focus its vital energies on its primary mission – proclaiming the life and ministry of each local congregation. This can be fostered in several ways:
• Identifying key areas of parish life – such as liturgy and music, education/sacred formation, family and children’s ministries, stewardship etc. and training consultants in each deanery that would be proactive in helping support and encourage congregations.
• Encouraging children and families to make maximum use of the Diocesan Camp.

The Diocese exists as a legacy of our past but also because there are things we need to find our way into the future and together and other things we can do more effectively if we collaborate with each other. Because the Diocese is so large it cannot rely on one person. In some senses this is an opportunity. It forces the bishop and the Diocesan staff to reach out and to work collaboratively with other leaders in the Diocese. It also means that the work and ministry of the Diocese needs to be widely distributed which naturally encourages grass roots innovation, if it is cultivated.

5. Based on your reading of our diocesan profile and any other knowledge that you have, what do you see as your greatest challenge as the bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, and what excites you about becoming our bishop?

Many things excite me about the Diocese of the Rio Grande!
You have some outstanding resources. A dedicated and competent diocesan team, the Bishop’s Ridge, dedicated lay and clergy leaders throughout the Diocese, the Bosque Conference and Retreat Center for example. I am impressed with the relationship that has been established with the Diocese of Navajoland. The greatest asset that you have, of course, are the fifty eight congregations that make up the Diocese of the Rio Grande.
One of the most pressing challenges is that over half the congregations of the Diocese are small, with an average attendance of under forty. This is linked to the decline in church membership that has taken place over the last twenty five to thirty years, as well as the age of your congregation.
That said, I believe that there are exciting opportunities here:
• Increased mission and ministry with members of the Hispanic majority population.
• Smaller congregations that are willing to be helped to undertake transformational discernment – there are some really good tools out there for this type of process. The Diocese could provide trained and sensitive consultants to work alongside congregations through such a process.
• Some Episcopal Dioceses have created programs that enable newly ordained clergy to minister in congregations that are not able to afford a full-time clergy person. The Diocese of Lexington has a long established program.

My sense is that a great deal of healing has taken place during Bishop Von’s episcopacy. The Diocese has worked hard at re-envisioning its collective life and ministry. A great deal seems to have flowed from the Matthew 25 Conference held in 2008. Now is the time to build on these foundations, and to face the challenges of the present time honestly and with courage and faith.
Perhaps the most important work for the people of the Diocese will be to form a clear and compelling identity. Who are we as the Diocese of the Rio Grande? Why do we exist? What is God’s call to us now? It would be a privilege and an exciting challenge to work alongside you and help you in this.
Lent heartens a Valentine beginning

Lent began in 2018 with Ash Wednesday on Valentine’s Day. It was an auspicious launch with Ashes to Go provided by a number of churches in the Diocese. More than 90 of the clergy of the Diocese gathered the first Friday of Lent at the Bosque Center for the Bishop’s annual Lenten Retreat.

The Bishop’s Retreat this year was led by the Rev. Canon Robin Dodge, who is rector of the Church of the Holy Faith in Santa Fe. Canon Dodge led participants through a series of meditations on principles derived from the Rule of the Order of St. Benedict. The topics he covered included Balance, Prayer, Study, Work and Rest. Some questions asked: Time as Gift versus Commodity (how we use/spend/waste/kill time); Where are things out of balance in life? Where would you like more balance?

Following each presentation, the clergy were allowed an hour of time for meditation and reflection in silence. Unlike the Benedictine practice, conversation was encouraged over the delicious luncheon prepared by Bosque Chef Jerry Gallegos.
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

Taos Youth and Jill Cline stand with Bishop Vono and Presiding Bishop Curry.

By Jill Cline

St. James started working on Youth/Teen Fellowship in the fall of 2015. That’s when we went bowling with a group of eight teens and five adults in Española, right next to the casino. We tried to pretend it was “gambling for God” but that pun was just the beginning of our fun. We planned a star-gazing night in February, 2016. As it turned out, it was extremely cold, and some equipment had been stolen from UNM, so we made it a low-key pizza party at a house with five kids on a sleep over. That set a mood, though. The overnight fellowship and games seemed like something to re-create. So, in 2016, we did ... four times!

We hosted four lock-ins that year. Our themes were Starry Night, Family Game Night, Movie Night, and our first New Year’s Eve youth event. Each event saw an increase in teens participating. The first lock-in we had 12 teens and three chaperones for the wonderful star-gazing experience at UNM. We came back to the church for roasting marshmallows by the fire. We stayed overnight in our parish hall and shared breakfast together. We followed that spring night with the two fall events and then a great New Year’s Eve Night. While up to 35 other kids and family members joined us for parts of each of those activities, about 17-18 teens stayed overnight with us at each one. We realized that half the kids attending had no previous involvement with St. James as “church goers” ... They were coming because a friend had come another time and invited them to join. No strings attached here ... just fellowship and fun. And they kept coming back.

After our New Year’s Eve lock-in, we kicked off 2017 by making breakfast for the parish. We peated at about 32 unique teens and youth participating across the different activities.

We continued 2017 with fellowship and fun with five lock-ins, one after a day trip to Mellow Wolf in Santa Fe, then Fourth of July, Game Night, Thanksgiving and another New Year’s Eve Bash. Our attendance increased steadily ... 38 came to and out during the evening at this year’s game night, and 25 stayed overnight at Bishop’s Ridge for the best. We had a DJ from Taos Pueblo donate her services. 68 folks came in and out during the evening, 46 of them teens), and THIRTY-FIVE teens stayed overnight! This particular night, we had 11 teens join who have not been to any of our fellowship activities before, and with a little research, we determined we had kids from seven different area schools. One of our St. James parishioners asked recently, “Where do they all come from?” You see, in terms of families with teens who are members of the church, we have about 12. At this point, though, we’re engaged with about 41 families in the community. At one point during the fall, I got a call from a lady I had never met. She introduced herself and said, “I just got a call from my son. A friend of his invited him to some youth thing at church tonight, I wanted to make sure this was a real thing.” Another adult, a friend of mine, practices no particular faith but volunteers at the Food Bank. He wanted to know the “devil’s advocate” to the project I do from home, like sewing for my favorite charities.

I have been in Clovis for a few months now, taking care of my grandparents. Having holidays away from home and not knowing when we can go home has been a little uncomfortable. Our responsibilities here are quite different from our normal routine. I have not been able to do the usual projects I do from home, like sewing for my favorite charities. I really like doing those projects, but I know everything has a time and place. You can’t do the extra in life until you take care of the things that are necessary. Right now, being here in Taos is what Mom and I need to do. It is every bit as much a calling as all the other charitable works we do. We might have not chosen it, but it is chosen.

During this event in our life it seems like we’ve noticed a lot of church signs with really good advice for us. One just around the corner from my grandparents’ house said, “God give your footsteps if you are willing to move your feet.” It reminded me of one of my favorite hymns, “Here I am Lord.” The words, “I will go Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart” came to mind. Life doesn’t always go according to our plan. We have to be open to what direction God wants to take us in.

I do miss my friends and I’m sad about having to miss a steel drum concert I would have been playing in this Valnetines, along with other things that bring me happiness. But that is what personal sacrifice is. If we aren’t willing to personally sacrifice for others, are we really serving God? Up until now, I did things for the Lord’s service that made me feel good. And there is nothing wrong with feeling good and deriving joy in serving the Lord. The more we love doing it, the more it we are willing to do, and will do. But for me, the financial commitment was the only real sacrifice I was making. I was spending less money on myself, because I was choosing to spend it on others. But God doesn’t ask us to make sacrifices without blessing us in some other way.

The blessing Mom and I have received while being here is the warm and genuine welcome we have had at St. James, by Fr. Alan, Mother Susanne, Ms. Lendria Haldy and Mrs. Pam Lockmiller in particular. Last Sunday, the sermon at St. James was on being thankful for our gifts and using those gifts to serve others. Fr. Alan said that our time and efforts are the most valuable gifts we can give because they are not replaceable. That is a good way for me to describe the time we are spending here in Clovis. Fr. Alan also said that we pray because prayer is what puts us for the work that has been done. It’s true for me because I don’t think I could have done all this without prayer. Prayer has calmed, strengthened and comforted me while I’ve been here. Knowing I can talk to God anytime, anywhere, quietly or out loud, helps me support my mom when she needs it and comfort my family. There have been multiple lessons for me to learn here. You think you know patience and then God teaches you how to be more patient, and usually not in the most comfortable way. Kindness is another lesson we take for granted. We think we know how to be kind and God has shown me new ways to show kindness. I saw a church sign in Russell that said, “If given the choice to be kind or right, choose to be kind.” I have also learned a lot about pastoral care from Fr. Alan and the Sunday school teachers at St. James. I believe every experience I’ve had here has been something they will prepare me for adult life in whatever direction God leads me. Meanwhile, Mom and I will be here for some time – how long, we do not know yet. But we will keep looking out for those seemingly appropriate church sign messages. They seem to be everywhere, just like God! So see you on “Le tour de Church Sign!”

J. L. R., Ms. Lendria Haldy, Madeleine Fazenbaker, Mrs. Pam Lockmiller at St. James Episcopal Church, Clovis, where Sunday school is fun - even on Superbowl Sunday. Taos Youth and Jill Cline stand with Bishop Vono and Presiding Bishop Curry.
Together

WOmEN’S MinISTries

Boldly Forward gathers Women at the Bosque Center

By Cindy Davis
Coordinator of Women’s Ministries

Women have taken a leading role in the church through teaching, supporting the work of the church by service and with donations, and by empowering each other since the beginnings of the Episcopal Church presence in the Diocese of the Rio Grande. The current Women’s Ministry recognizes that we have a variety of gifts, and we support one another to live out this reality in retreat, fellowship, study and ministry.

Make plans to join the conversation at the Bosque Weekend in August, and participate in creating a strong future for our sisters in Christ of all ages.

The 2018 Bosque Weekend theme will be Boldly Forward. We will gather August 17-18 for fellowship and to look at our journey as Women of the Diocese. We’ll envision how we want our ministry in the diocese to grow. We will look at the lives of some biblical women for inspiration as we develop our own vision for going “boldly forward in our lives in Christ” in the Diocese of the Rio Grande. What new and continuing opportunities for outreach, retreats, inclusion of all ages, worship, and inspiration can we offer? After Easter, you may want our ministry in the diocese to grow. We will look at the Rule of Life encompassing prayer and service.

If this sounds like a sisterhood of women you would be interested in learning more about, speak to your priest, contact Cindy Davis, diocesan president at cynthiaadavisvisioth@gmail.com, or the Daughters of the King chapter in your parish. You can get more information on the National website: doknational.org, or at dfgdaughters.blogspot.com.

DOK: Sisters in Prayer-Service-Evangelism

By Cindy Davis

Do you want a deeper prayer relationship with God in fellowship with other women? One that includes living a life of service? A relationship with God that invites others to want the same thing? There is a group in the Diocese of the Rio Grande that offers just those things. It is The Order of the Daughters of the King.

Daughters of the King is more than women who get together to pray and study. It is committed Christian women who take a life-long vow to “lift high the cross” by living out a Rule of Life that embodies Prayer, Service, and Evangelism. Daughters can be any women or ordained. Daughters of the King include all ages and are at all stages of their Christian journey. The Vision statement of The Order of the Daughters of the King® states, “Empowered by the Holy Spirit, our vision as Daughters of the King is to know Jesus Christ, to make Him known to others, and to become reflections of God’s love throughout the world.”

The Order of the Daughters of the King® is an international Order, which includes members in Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA) and Roman Catholic churches. There are 22 chapters in our Diocese. Each Daughter, wherever she is in the world, is sister to every other Daughter. Each woman and her family follows a Rule of Life encompassing prayer and service.

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Daughters from around the world will gather at the 2018 Triennial Assembly in Austin to worship and reflect together, as well as transact business of the Order. The theme is Walk His Way. Chapters and dioceses are encouraged to create prayer bricks that will form a walkway at Triennial.

All Daughters of the King, are encouraged to mark their calendars for the Diocesan Daughters Assembly Deepening Prayer on August 3-4 at the Bosque Center. New officers will be elected, and other business of the Order will be done. Deborah Smith Douglas will be the keynote speaker on Saturday. Her talks will be open to all and are sure to be inspiring. You are invited to contact Dona Ace at St. Chad’s at aceond0@gmail.com to get a copy of Douglas’ book The Praying Life.

The Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil – the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil (IEAB) – has elected its first female bishop, some 34 years after the province first paved the way for women to serve in all three orders of ministry. The Rev. Canon Marinez Santos Bassoott was elected on Saturday, January 20, as the next Bishop of the Diocese of Amazon during a meeting at Belém, in the northern Brazilian state of Pará. She will succeed Bishop Paulo Mauricio de Barros, who retired last November.

The province was one of the first in the Anglican Communion to officially open the episcopate to women in 1983. Its first female deacon and priest was ordained in 1985. Bishop-elect Marinez Santos Bassoott is currently the priest in the Southern Diocese’s Meridional parish of São Paulo in the city of Caicó in northern Pará, in Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil. She has previously served as Dean of the National Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Porto Alegre. Originally from Rio Grande do Sul, Rev. Marinez, 46, is married to Paulo Bassoott, and the couple have two daughters.

She already holds a number of national roles in the province: she is a member of National Commission of Liturgy with responsibility for the Book of Common Prayer and the National Commission of Diakonia, the province’s social responsibility wing. She is also the coordinator of Confedfebre 2018, the national leadership conference which will take place just before the 2018 meeting of the provincial synod, which takes place from May 30 to June 3 in Brasilia.

The Mustard Seed Babies’ Home, Hoima, Uganda

Rescued, Remembered, Not Forgotten

By The Rev. Jan Hosea
St. Chad’s Episcopal Church

On January 15 a crew of six New Mexicans and two Pennsylvanians boarded aircraft to Uganda. For some of us it was a repeat adventure, for others it was a new experience. We spent a couple of days in Entebbe to get our materials (from 15 extra bags) organized and ready for use. We loaded a bus and headed for Hoima, some 5 to 6 hours away. The Mustard Seed Babies’ Home was established in 1994 through the Anglican Church in Uganda, East Africa, and the Episcopal Church in the USA in response to the AIDS crisis, and it is still going strong today. Currently there are 63 orphans in the home and well over 40 who have matriculated into higher education, graduation and families.

The arrival of the Mission of Hope 2018 was a time for mentoring, hugging, just loving all the children. Besides the direct work with the children and staff, we also accomplished several major projects. Last year we used donated money to improve the old cemetery which had deteriorated into a pile of ant hills on one of the farms. This year we added a sign over the gate of this sacred ground. The back apron - foundation - on one of the buildings had deteriorated and a new one was built. A large water collection tank was built with new guttering added. Furniture that had been made in past years was repaired, repainted, or replaced, including armories, dressers, and bookcases.

On one of the farms, two more acres were cleared and planted with corn and beans, all in an attempt to become more self-sufficient. School supplies and clothes were purchased for older children moving on to high school. All of this was done with your donated dollars! Thank you!

In total we spent about $5000+ on projects. Try to stretch $5000 in the US to do all of that! Many thanks to parishes and dioceses across the Rio Grande and in Pittsburgh who purchased for older children moving on to high school. All of this was done with your donated dollars! Thank you!

Mission of Hope Team

- The Rev. Kathy LaLonde, St. Andrew’s, Las Cruces (retired from Holy Spirit, El Paso)
- The Rev. Wally LaLonde, Associate Rector, St. Andrew’s, Las Cruces
- The Rev. Jan Hosea, Associate Rector, St. Chad’s, Albuquerque
- Tim Gillard, Cathedral of St. Johns, Albuquerque
- Joyce Anglin, St. Andrew’s, Las Cruces
- Sharon Rystedt, St. Andrew’s, Las Cruces
- Patricia and Carolyn Hurd, St. Paul’s, Pittsburgh, PA
- Dennis Mukwatani, Uganda
**Bishop at St. Paul’s Peace**

By The Rev. Madelynn Johnston

Vicar, St. Paul’s Peace

January 7th was a special day for St. Paul’s Peace Church, Las Vegas. Bishop Vono came to receive and confirm members of the congregation. Bishop Vono’s visit was such a joy for us all, as he confirmed five of our young people and received one adult into the Episcopal Church. He preached, celebrated, and visited with us such generosity that all were uplifted and encouraged. Members of the congregation provided a tasty array of food for the reception, which quickly disappeared, our joy having given us all an appetite! Thank you, Bishop Michael.

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**St. Paul’s Peace, Las Vegas, Rev. Madelynn Johnston**

Bishop Vono confirmed five young people at St. Paul’s Peace Church and received a new member into the Episcopal Church. There was a reception for the bishop and the candidates following the service, which was much enjoyed by all.

We will be sharing our Holy Week Services with our brothers and sisters in Christ from the Presbyterian tradition and the Methodist tradition. This will be the second year that we have done so, and hope to make this a part of our Holy Week tradition for years to come.

**Trinity on the Hill, Los Alamos, Claire Singleton**

Trinity on the Hill’s Adult Education class, led by Steve Younger has been pursuing spiritual development on the topic of “Find Rest for Your Soul: Christian Approaches to Life’s Challenges” finishing just before Lent.

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was held on February 13, in Kelly Hall. Ash Wednesday services were held at 7 am, noon, and 7 pm, with imposition of ashes at all services. During Lent, Morning Prayer will be said on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7 am in the Chapel.

Looking ahead, a fundraiser celebration dinner will be held on Saturday, April 7, to raise funds for the Youth Choir scholarship fund and for the Choral Pilgrimage to England in July, 2018.

We elected a new Vestry at the Annual Parish Meeting on January 28. The new Vestry and the Discernment Committee will meet on February 23-24 to continue the Strategic Visioning process begun in late 2017.

Following the retirement of Joe Cox as Director of Music in November, 2017, we are still searching for a new Director of Music. Valerie Fassbender continues as Organist and acting Director of Music.

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**Bishop Vono’s Visitation at St. Christopher’s**

Bishop Michael Vono visited St. Christopher’s, El Paso, on December 10, the Second Sunday of Advent. With 136 parishioners in attendance, the Bishop celebrated a bilingual Holy Eucharist with Baptism and Confirmation, assisted by Rev. Canon José Bernal, Rector, and Rev. Miguel Ramirez Centeno, Associate Priest.

In addition to baptisms and confirmation, one couple was received into the Episcopal Church and Rev. “Padre” Miguel was inducted into the First Order of the Franciscans and received a blessing by the Bishop. We are blessed at St. Christopher’s with three parishioners who are gifted translators. As Bishop Vono gave his sermon, Alex Reyes simultaneously translated his words into Spanish so that all present could enjoy his message.

While First Communion is not a usual practice in the Episcopal Church, many of St. Christopher’s parishioners are former Roman Catholics and it is a tradition near and dear to their hearts. Three of our children chose to make their First Communion with Bishop Vono.

The service ended with a performance by the Danza Apache Guadalupana matzahine group, who greeted Bishop Vono, asked his blessing, and then offered a prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The glorious service was followed by a sumptuous reception and lively fellowship. A truly wonderful day for all!

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**Yard Sale at St. Paul’s TorC**

By Mary Berndt, Bishop’s Warden

November brought about the annual yard sale at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Truth or Consequences, NM. This is a major fund raiser for our Monthly Community Dinners and our Fanny projects.

Once the newspaper article came out, items for the sale began coming in. Not only the church parishioners but the community donated gently used items of clothing, furniture, electronics, etc.

The project took about a week from collection to set up to sale. It netted over $2,100.00 and could not have been possible without the many helping hands of St. Paul’s. Thank you to everyone, especially the customers for making this the best sale yet.

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**Bishop at St. Luke’s, La Union**

On January 28, St. Luke’s was honored to host Bishop Michael during his farewell tour of the Diocese. During the Bishop’s visit, two members of the congregation were confirmed, one member was received and one young man was baptized in our newly acquired four-person baptismal spa. The Body rejoiced and celebrated with a well-attended and well-cooked feast. Thanks be to God!

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**Northeast Deanery – The Very Rev. Christopher Adams**

**Holy Faith, Santa Fe, Donna Lukacs**

“Holding the Memory; Beginning Anew: A Retreat for Those Who Grieve” will be held April 13-14 at The Church of the Holy Faith. Discover your resilience after losing a loved one through expressive arts and exercises in a private retreat setting. The healing journey challenges us as we cherish the gifts and memories of our lives, feel the dark emotions that can wash over us, and relearn our lives to begin anew. Even after death, our relationships continue and can bring us comfort. Grief can also be a time for personal growth and transformation, as all the great spiritual traditions have taught. This retreat will be led by a team of facilitators who are experts in loss and will guide participants in developing resources for living a new full life. The retreat is on Friday evening from 5-8:30 and Saturday from 9-4. The charge is $30. For more information or to register, contact Molly Lott at 505-983-6424 or matl44@me.com.

**Holy Family, Santa Fe, Camille Donoghue**

Holy Family hosted the visit of Bishop Vono on February 25. Our new vicar, Constance Hodges, was officially assisted by Rev. Canon José Bernal, Rector, and Rev. Miguel Ramirez Centeno, Associate Priest.

Holy Family will host a performance by Santa Fe Music Works of Haydn’s Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo and Te Deum under the direction of Dr. Mary Badaratz on Saturday, March 10 at 3 pm. Please join us!

**St. Stephen’s, Española, Karen Morris**

St. Stephen’s continues to emerge in our newly transformed space with the renovations to the Sanctuary and Nave, and with the addition to our calendar of a Sunday evening service of meditation and contemplation “Candle Evening Prayer & Meditation.” These are only the beginning. We continue to discern new outreach possibilities and offer our services and presence in the Española Valley.

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**Megan McKenna illuminates St. Matthew’s**

By the Very Rev. Robert Mundy

Vicar, St. Matthew’s, Los Lunas

Dr. Megan McKenna told stories to the people of St. Matthew’s at their Annual Meeting on January 28. Dr. McKenna has authored 34 books during her ministry as a story teller and champion for justice. One of her most recent books, Holy Families: Shadows of the Trinity, will be a major resource for Pope Francis’ visit later this year to the Roman Catholic church in Ireland, focusing on the importance of families.

Her most recent book, soon to go to print is called, Saved by the Poet. It is a culmination of several true stories of people who have made a lasting impact on her understanding of the importance of the Good News of Jesus Christ and His presence to us, the people of the Church.

Dr. McKenna has become a real blessing to many of us in Diocese of the Rio Grande, and especially those at St. Matthew’s for the depth and richness of her wisdom and love of God’s Word. Thank you Megan!

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**Bishop at St. Paul’s Peace**

By The Rev. Madelynn Johnston

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Together in the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande

Congregations

May All the Faithful Rest in Peace

Canon Edward Balle, Jr.
March 19, 1920 - December 27, 2017
Canon Edward Lewis Balle, Jr. died Thursday, December 21 in Winnnsboro, Texas at the age of 97. His Memorial Service was January 9 at the Ridgegate Place Chapel in Houston, followed by the interment at the National Cemetery in Houston. He and his wife, Sybil, were active at St. James’ Church in Tuxis, in addition to serving at Central Texas Church and New Orleans Diocesan. He served in the Air Force during World War II as a D-511 radio operator for a deputy for several years and as a diocesan canon. He and Sybil also established the M’Lisa Balle Scholarship Fund, which has supported hundreds of students for more than 35 years.

Frances T. Butler
October 1, 1922 - January 27, 2018
Frances T. Burke, 95, enslaved in the Marine Corps, in World War II and afterward graduated from the University of Wisconsin with studies in music and history.

Anthony “Tony” Guck
April 21, 1923 - December 29, 2017
Anthony Harold Guck, 64, passed away at home in Silver City from complications of Parkinson’s Disease and Type 1 diabetes on Friday, December 29, 2017, surrounded by his family. In his honor, the family requests donations be made to the M’Lisa Balle Scholarship Fund c/o Janet Steel, 1109 Sagedu Trail SE, Albuquerque, NM 87123.

John Tober stands between Deacon Laurie Bonavides and Canon Lowe.

DRG’s John Tober Ordained to Priesthood in Louisiana

By the Rev. Canon Thomas Lowe
Rector, St. John’s, Alamagordo

Tober served for the remaining 18 months of his curacy at Trinity Church in Baton Rouge. It might be assumed that Fr. Tober would have served out his curacy in his sponsoring diocese, but the Diocese of Louisiana has no funded curacy program and, unlike other dioceses, it is assumed here that deacons will not be compensated. Those factors meant that two of the three graduates from residential seminaries for 2017 who were canonically resident in the DRG chose to do curacies without an ordained priest. The decision is a result of the current climate in the Diocese of the Rio Grande and the Diocese of the Diocese since 2013 and served a curacy as Associate Priest until his death in 1998. He was ordained to the deaconate in the Diocese of the Rio Grande in 2003 and served as Associate Priest until his death in 1998. He was ordained to the deaconate in the Diocese of the Rio Grande in 2003 and served as Associate Priest until his death in 1998.

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The Rev. J. Phillip Corbett
March 26, 1935- January 2, 2018
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ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH MINISTRIES

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry gathered in Santa Fe to outline issues
By the Rev. Canon Robin O. Dodge
Rector, Church of the Holy Faith

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – New Mexico (LAM-NM) held its annual Issues Briefing on January 28, 2018 in Santa Fe in anticipation of this year’s session of the New Mexico Legislature. LAM-NM is called to advocate for justice in public policy, with a particular emphasis on alleviating poverty and hunger, by speaking with and for those with little or no political power, and supporting Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) members, congregations and ecumenical partners in the ministry of advocacy. LAM-NM works in an advocacy partnership with the New Mexico Conference of Churches and the Presbytery of Santa Fe, and Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Methodist, Quaker, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal laity or clergy attended. In addition to Bishop Michael Vono, Canon to the Ordinary for the Diocese of the Rio Grande, and Bishop Timothy Baldonado of Los Lunas were honored for their efforts across the aisle in support of a bipartisan bill relating to employment of ex-offenders that would have prohibited private employers from inquiring about an applicant’s conviction on an initial employment application. The bill passed both houses of the Legislature by wide margins last year, but was vetoed by the governor. In addition, St. Timothy’s Lutheran Church in Albuquerque was recognized for its outreach efforts.

Reflections for Legislative Representatives and Faith Leaders Bishop’s New Mexico Legislative Luncheon

Address by the Rt. Rev. Jim Gonia
ELCA Bishop, Rocky Mountain Synod

Dear friends from the faith communities of New Mexico, respected legislators, staff members and all who serve the people of this wonderful state: it’s my pleasure to be with you again this year on behalf of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry here in New Mexico. Thank you for taking the time to be with us, and thank you for your work on behalf of all the people of New Mexico. Your service is deeply appreciated.

This last year was a big one for those of us in the Lutheran part of the Christian community. It was the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, a movement of upheaval and renewal launched by the actions of a Roman Catholic monk and professor named Martin Luther that led to the creation of the particular part of the Church in which I serve. I’m grateful that we didn’t recognize this milestone alone as members of my church body. At the end of October there was an ecumenical service hosted by the New Mexico Conference of Churches and prior to that we celebrated two Lutheran-Roman Catholic prayer services marking our mutual commitment to unity despite the differences that divided us in Luther’s day. In that way, it was truly a remarkable year.

I bring up this Reformation milestone because the roots of our commitment to advocacy as Lutherans are as old as this Reformation movement itself. For those of you less familiar with our branch of the Christian tree, what I’d like to do today is connect the dots between historical justification by grace through faith. But Luther had plenty to say about the neighbor, rather on the despised and foolish things, help the poor, instead of doing good to please God or to earn God’s favor. We do good as a response to God’s love and grace and in service to our neighbor.

Witness some of what Luther had to say:

• God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does. (Luther on Vocation 10)
• It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbor. (Concerning Christian Liberty) (On the Freedom of the Christian, paragraph 28)
• A Christian does not live in himself, but in Christ, and Christ in him, nor does he need Christ in heaven, but Christ in heaven needs him. For he has not yet tasted of Christ’s benevolence and work for you. (Luther’s Sermons, Third Sunday in Advent, The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther, Volume 1)

There are some of us who think to ourselves, “If I had only been there! How quiet I would have been to help the Baby. I would have washed His linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!” Why don’t we do it now? We have Christ in our neighborhood. (Martin Luther’s Christmas Book)

If we Christians would join the Wise Men, we must close our eyes to all that glitters before the world and look rather on the despised and foolish things, help the poor, comfort the despised, and aid the neighbor in his need. (Martin Luther’s Christmas Book)

• What is it to serve God and to do His will? Nothing else than to show mercy to our neighbor. For it is our own neighbor who needs our service; God in heaven needs it not. (from a later sermon in Martin Luther: The Man and His Work, By Arthur Cushman McGiffer, p 178)

Some of Luther’s key teachings about the neighbor are to be found in his most basic educational work, The Catechism, a writing intended to help form faith in the faith. But Luther had plenty to say about the neighbor who needs our service; God in heaven needs it not, either in his explanation of the Ten Commandments. This is where I first remember Luther’s language about the neighbor being so significant.
The 2018 Pastors’ Panel, featuring pastors from Santa Fe’s three downtown churches, tackled the theme subject of “Christian Civility in Polarized Times” at the annual forum on January 25 at The Church of the Holy Faith. Fr. Robin Dodge, rector of Holy Faith, Fr. Adam Lee Ortega y Ortiz of the Roman Catholic Cathedral Basilica, and the Rev. Harry Ehets of First Presbyterian, agreed that the key to promoting civility was looking within.

On the feast day of the Conversion of St. Paul, Fr. Adam began by pointing to Paul’s pre-conversion zealoussness against the church and said, “Those types of feelings are where we often are today in the midst of our society. I asked my congregations at our Masses today to look at ourselves and see when this panel is taking place — the Week of Christian Unity.

“Consider how much of today’s incivility is done by Christians. I can honestly say that the majority of what goes on is done by Christians themselves. We can go down our different covenants, we can go down our different faiths, we can go down our different tenets, and disagree. But are we carrying out truly the message of unity that Christ so desires, that Christ had this to say about the Commandments and neighbor in general. Our own self-imposed good works lead us to and into ourselves ... But God’s commandments drive us to our neighbor’s need, that by means of these commandments we may be of benefit only to others and to their salvation (AE 44:71)

Today in the ongoing spirit of the Reformation and in light of this gathering focused on our call to advocacy as people of faith, I’d like to connect some dots between Luther’s teaching about the neighbor in the Commandments and the work of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry here in New Mexico. I’m going to highlight what Luther had to say about four commandments in particular. Let’s start with commandment number five: the Fifth Commandment: You shall not murder.

What does this mean? What we are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life’s needs. There are a variety of ways of helping and supporting one’s neighbors. There is the response to a neighbor’s immediate needs – hands-on service – which is important. And there is the next level of service: addressing why one’s neighbor is in need to begin with. Here we get to the larger systemic issues of our society and the need for advocacy. To help and support our neighbor in all of life’s needs includes speaking to and with those who have the power to make decisions impacting the underlying needs of our neighbor, be it access to health care or issues related to hunger. If you ever wondered why Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in New Mexico is focused on matters like outreach and the enrollment of those eligible for Medicaid or the NM Health Insurance Exchange or in the creation of the mid-level profession of dental therapists to increase access to health care; or whether it was just by chance that our work this year continues to aim at promoting enrollment; or on efforts to close New Mexico’s food gap and funding for food banks – wonder no longer! It’s all rooted in our response to the fifth commandment – not just to avoid endangering or harming our neighbor but to help and support them in all of life’s needs!

Those needs take on some specific shape in the seventh and ninth commandments. Listen to Luther’s teaching:

The Seventh Commandment: You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we neither take our neighbors’ money or property nor acquire them by using shoddy merchandise or crooked deals, but instead help them to improve and protect their property and income.

The Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we do not try to trick our neighbors out of their inheritance or property or try to get it for ourselves by claiming to have a legal right to it and the like, but instead be of help and service to them in keeping what is theirs.

What does it look like for me to help my neighbor improve and protect their property and income if they are struggling to gain either to begin with? For us in New Mexico it looks like advocacy around Affordable Housing and Homelessness or Family-Sustaining income. It looks like support for the state Housing Trust Fund. or asking for funding for programs that assist children and adults experiencing homelessness. It looks like advocacy for policies and programs that assist people living in poverty to work toward family-sustaining income: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, quality early childhood programs and childcare assistance, increasing the state minimum wage with adjustments for inflation.

And what does it look like for me to be of help and service to my neighbor in keeping what is theirs? It looks like fighting for tax policy that is fair and provides stable, sustainable and adequate revenue to meet the needs of our state, particularly the most vulnerable, and effective oversight and review of state tax credits, exemptions and incentives.

It is not accidental that these issues on which we focus in our work of advocacy as a Lutheran church body are not about us but always about the needs of my neighbor. The neighbor is where the Commandments point us; the neighbor is where the grace of God at work in my life finds expression in the world. All thanks to a reformer who wasn’t shy about reminding us that Christ alive in us means that no one may forsake their neighbors when they are in trouble. Everybody is under obligation to help and support their neighbors as they would themselves like to be helped.

There is one more commandment I’d like to highlight. This one is still about the neighbor, but it has less to do with the WHAT of our advocacy or lawmaking and more to do with the HOW. Luther’s explanation of the eighth commandment feels particularly relevant for the divisive times in which we find ourselves.

The Eighth Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.

In this work we do together, as lawmakers, advocates, people of faith, we can have honest differences about how we see our neighbor’s needs and how what steps we believe are necessary to address those needs. What do you suppose might happen if in our political discourse and engagement if we took seriously the commandment: not to tell lies about one another, betray or slander each other, or destroy each other’s reputations. What would happen if instead I spoke well of my neighbor across the aisle, interpreted everything you did in the best possible light. I wonder how this would transform our political landscape and our capacity to actually get something done for the sake of our neighbor in need?

At the end of the day, here’s what you need to know: this ministry called advocacy is the difference for our neighbor in need in our local community. Rather it is part and parcel of our life and witness, integral to our calling and identity. Blame Martin Luther. Blame his focus on the neighbor. Which means – for those of you serving here in this state – we’re not going away. We’ll be here to partner with you, or to challenge you – hopefully with Eighth Commandment care, as the case may be.

And for those of you who are fellow faith partners in this sacred work, you can be assured of our commitment as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America here in the Rocky Mountain Synod to our shared engagement in advocacy. As long as our neighbor has need, we will focus our energy and efforts on this work God is calling us to do with our hands, our voices, our very lives.

Thank you!
St. Chad’s Explores Clergy Letter Project

By Fr. Jeremiah C. Griffin, M.Div, MIA, Rector, Saint Chad’s

Growing up in the Bible belt, like many of my peers, I was taught Young Earth Creationism and a literal interpretive approach to the creation stories in Genesis. Needless to say, when I arrived at college thinking the earth was 6,000 years old and began as a geology major, I was confronted with some tough challenges. Challenges that, to say the least, I had not been prepared to face. My sheltered upbringing had never exposed me to Christians who viewed the scientific community without antagonism.

Predictably, this sparked within me a spiritual crisis and the false dilemma of needing to choose between the faith of my upbringing and the accepted wisdoms of our age - Biology, Physics, Geology etc. As such, science won out and I embarked upon a journey of several years, wandering religiously unmoored like so many of my generation.

Thankfully, I did eventually stumble upon a group of Christians who accepted the findings of science and made my way back into the Christian faith. But now I lament the fact that I ever felt the need to choose because I’ve come to regard science and religion as two equally valid and vital, yet different, ways of knowing. I’m now an enthusiastic student of both.

On a recent Sunday at Saint Chad’s we participated in an initiative launched by The Clergy Letter Project, which aims to spread awareness that science and religion needn’t be viewed as two equally valid and vital, yet different, ways of knowing. The Clergy Letter Project stresses that, while differences of opinion abound in religious circles on a host of matters, most do not see science and faith as being at odds, and hopes to influence school boards in making decisions about curricula and textbooks. The Clergy Letter Project stresses that, while differences of opinion abound in religious circles on a host of matters, most do not see science and faith as being at odds with their worldview – a fact that sometimes gets lost in mainstream coverage on the issue. As such, this initiative urges teachers and education leaders to continue teaching credible science, while not caving to the demands of more fundamentalist perspectives.

Further still, in reflecting on this past Sunday’s epistle text, I’ve come to see the Church’s response on this as a matter of Evangelism. When Paul speaks his iconic words about “being all things to all people,” we catch a glimpse into his working theology of contextual ministry. He knows that for the Church to minister effectively we must speak to the concerns (context) of our day. And when we look at the declining numbers of participation, particularly with younger generations, I can’t help but wonder how many, like me, feel the need to choose between their faith and the accepted findings of science.

It’s time for the Church to stop leaving a vacuum for the likes of people like Ken Hamm or Richard Dawkins to fill. We need to deepen the quality of dialogue here. Such either/or, binary-driven thinking is what got us into this mess in the first place!

If we take the Great Commission seriously, then our faith communities need to become well versed in helping people navigate the perceived tensions between these two ways of knowing, rather than assuming people can already do so on their own or that they know how our faith tradition approaches this.

My hope in sharing this is to encourage your congregation to address this in some way and consider participating in The Clergy Letter Project. Find more information here: www.theclergyletterproject.org

NM Interfaith Power and Light

It was inspiring to join with many faith leaders and people of faith at the NM Legislature for Witness for the People Day in February. After an inspirational training invited people of faith to speak to legislators about environment and community legislation, the Rotunda filled at noon for music and prayers around excerpts of a speech by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the four pillars of the Poor People’s Campaign: A Call for a Moral Revival.

People of faith and faith communities are invited to take part in the NM Poor People’s Campaign: A Call for Moral Revival education and action days from Mother’s Day to June 22. To find out how to get involved with the campaign focusing on poverty/economic disparity, racism, military industrial complex, and environmental degradation, go to https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/ or on facebook at https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoPPC/

There is a saying that every day is Earth Day. We might also say that every day is a day to care for and celebrate God’s creation, whether that is during Lent, Easter or April Earth Day time.

Ranch Program Reaches Out in Farmington

The Ranch Program at Navajo Ministries in Farmington has been an important part of our Outreach program at St. John’s Church for several years. Grants from the Diocesan Poverty and Outreach Board have helped in this effort for two years, and we have currently applied for a third year.

Located at the Four Corners Home for Children, the Ranch Program is a vital part of what the ministry does to help children experience healing. The Four Corners Home cares for more than twenty children who come from homes of abuse and neglect. Taking care of the animals in a ranch setting teaches the children responsibility and how to care for others, as well as providing therapy for them.

We at St. John’s are pleased to partner with this valuable ministry to bring help and healing to the children God has placed there.
The planning started in 2017
A group of Youth Leaders were contacted
My big question was asked
“What do we do for Snow Slam?”

The Group shared and I learned
We had a WebEx meeting
Half the Group made it
These wonderful folks fell into comfortable roles
I rejoiced LOUDLY inside!

Plans were executed
Small hiccups happened
A spoonful of sugar fixed that
Reports from folks from the Ruidoso side of the state showed up regularly
In my Messenger feed
“There Is Snow!”
“No Snow!”
“There Is Snow!”

Travel Day!
We made it!
26 youth, 7 young adults,
5 young at hearts
and 2 House Elves!

There was slush, there was rain,
There was Snow!

We slept on the floor
We sang fun songs
We worshiped
We Snow Tubed!

Parables were acted out
More songs were sung
We asked Jesus to drop kick us through the goal posts of life!
We danced!

We slept
We ate Awesome pancakes
Attended church, Thanked our hosts
Prayed for safe travels
Scattered to the south and to the north
With thoughts of our next encounter.
2018 Summer Camp Schedule

**Family Camp**
(Ages 8-18)
JUNE 14-17
Bring The Whole Family! Family of 4 is $275. Additional members $25 each.
Great way to introduce your kids to camp. This extended weekend is an easy and fun way to meet the staff, try the food, and experience the accommodations.

**Adventure Camp is for the Teens**
(Ages 13-18)
JUNE 17-23
Here is a camp that introduces the teen camper to God’s Creation first hand. A fun camp where water, dirt, air and camp fires are a part of exploring the camper to God’s Creation first hand.

**Summer Fun Camp**
(Ages 8-12)
June 24-30
That’s what summer is all about! You are invited to share in the fun of arts & crafts, archery, hiking, and swimming. Campers enjoy s’mores, songs, and worship! $275 per camper.

**Harry Potter finds out he’s a wizard!**
(Ages 8-12)
JULY 8-14
This themed camp explores the Biblical themes in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Series while campers experience the fun of being unplugged. Archery, hiking, arts & crafts, and the forbidden forest! $275 per camper.

**The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe waiting for Kings and Queens of Narnia!**
(Ages 8-12)
July 22-28
The Daughters of Eve and the Sons of Adam are invited to explore the Christian themes of C.S. Lewis’ Chronicles of Narnia. This is Camp Stoney’s longest running theme camp, incorporating all the fun camp activities with bible study and worship. $275 per camper.

**NARNIA**
THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE
JULY 22-28, 2018
Open to all 8 – 12 Year Olds
The greatest tradition of Camp Stoney returns for 2018! Come on a Narnian Adventure this summer at Camp Stoney! We will be exploring our faith through the wonderful work of C.S. Lewis “The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe”. Every day campers will act out a new scene of the story, leading us through the novel as we learn more about the One True King. Enjoy camping fun including archery, arts & crafts, games, swimming, songs, worship, the Narnival, and so much more! This is a great way to make new friends and create life long memories, so you won’t want to miss out!

**Family Camp 2018**
June 14 – 17
Family Camp especially for you
This weekend is designed for anyone who would like to come to Stoney for the weekend. Young children, young adults, young at heart and alumni. We will have two program tracks this year, youth and adult studies, along with traditional camp activities including swimming, archery, hiking, service projects, arts and crafts and games.
For more information email pmote@dioceserg.org
To register, visit www.bishopsridge.org

**Superheroes are coming to camp!**
(Ages 13-18)
July 15-21
Campers are invited to come explore their inner superheroes! Is Wonder Woman, Iron Man, or maybe Groot hiding inside? This camp will explore the similarities and differences of superheroes to Jesus and other biblical people. Campers will enjoy archery, hiking, swimming, and many summer camp activities. $275 per camper.

Visit www.bishopsridge.org for more information and to register.

Contact Paula Mote at pmote@dioceserg.org or 505-881-0636 (Albuquerque)

**Early Bird Discount Through April 13, 2018!**
Register Your Camper Online at www.bishopsridge.org