# 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the

# Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana

# By Word and Example: Engaging God's Mission

Alexandria, Louisiana November 3-4, 2017

## Friday, November 3, 2017 - First Day of Convention

Registration began at 8:30 a.m.

Noon Lunch

- Call to Order The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The Very Rev. Rich Snow, Rector of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church and Dean of the Alexandria Convocation, opened the meeting with a prayer.
- 2 Verification of Quorum The Rev. Dawnell Stodghill, Ph.D., standing in for the Rev. Wayne Carter, Ph.D., Chair of Credentials and Privileges reported: There were 36 members present of 40 canonically registered and physically resident Clergy of the Diocese. (Thirty-three members are required for a quorum.) There were 89 Lay Delegates of 110 of those registered. (Seventy-one are required for a quorum.) There were a sufficient number of congregations represented to constitute a quorum.
- 3. Election of Convention Secretary Nancy Shaw was nominated as Secretary by Bishop Owensby. The convention approved.

Bishop Owensby appointed Holly Davis as Assistant Secretary.

- **4. Report from Committee on Dispatch of Business** The Rev. Frances "Boo" Kay moved to adopt the Agenda noting changes. The Convention approved the Agenda as amended.
- 5. Appointment of a Parliamentarian and Assistant Parliamentarian Bishop Owensby appointed Chancellor Kyle McInnis as Parliamentarian and Andrew Texada as Assistant Parliamentarian.
- **6. Adoption of Rules of Order -** It was moved by the Rev. Frances "Boo" Kay to adopt the Rules of Procedure as printed. The convention approved.
- 7. Introductions and Courtesies by the Bishop
  - a) Convention Guests (Institutions and Ministries)

Daniel Chapman, Director of Hardtner Camp and Conference Center The Rev. Dan Krutz, LIC Director (Bread or Stones Campaign)

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Dr. Paul Baker, Headmaster of the Episcopal School of Acadiana (ESA), Lay Chaplains: John Campbell and Andrew Armond. Andrea Petrosh, Sewanee Judy Bordelon, Daughters of the King (DOK) Jane Barnett, Shepherd Center

## **Current Candidates in the Process for Priesthood:**

Lee Jefferson (Priest) Layton Porter (Priest)

#### **Current Postulants in the Process:**

Andrew Armond (Priest) Brooks Boylan (Priest) Garrett Boyte (Priest) Laurent DePrins (Priest) Meg Lovejoy (Priest) Scott McCoy (Priest) Paul White (Priest)

#### **Canterbury Representatives**

Freddie Authement – ULM Alyssa Garner – ULM Mary Rhymes – ULM

#### b) Clergy resident, licenses, and in new cures since the last convention

## Clergy resident and in new cures since the last convention:

The Rev. Frank Fuller (St. Paul's, Winnfield)
The Rev. Deacon Christie Fleming (Christ Church, Bastrop)

Dr. Lemmy Akoma (St. Luke's, Grambling)

Dr. Frank Hughes (St. John's, Minden)

The Rev. Margaret Ayers (St. James, Shreveport)

#### **Newly ordained since the last convention:**

The Rev. Deacon Andre Bordelon (Trinity, Cheneyville; Holy Comforter, Lecompte) The Rev. Deacon Madge McLain (St. Paul's, Abbeville)

#### Clergy newly retired since the last convention:

The Rev. George Gennuso (St. Michael's, Pineville)

#### Clergy in Transition and additions since last convention:

The Rev. George Gennuso, Urban Missioner (Bishop's Staff)

The Rev. R Christopher Heying (St. Paul's, Abbeville) to St. Matthias, Shreveport (Vicar)

The Rev. Deacon Christie Fleming (Christ Church, Bastrop)

The Rev. Deacon Sean Duncan, Assisting (St. Paul's, Shreveport)

Andrew Christiansen, Youth Missioner (St. Mark's Cathedral, Shreveport)

The Rev. Lauren Larkin, Chaplain (Ascension Day School)

John Campbell, Lay Chaplain (Episcopal School of Acadiana)

The Rev. Deacon Wayne Fletcher (St. Michael's, Pineville - arriving in December)

## Members of the Standing Committee and the Diocesan Council were introduced:

## **Standing Committee retiring members:**

The Rev. Richard Norman (Monroe Convocation) Rosemary Lafargue (Shreveport Convocation)

# **Diocesan Council members rotating off:**

Tom Jones (Acadiana Convocation)

Dwain West (Alexandria Convocation)

The Rev. "Boo" Kay (Lake Charles Convocation)

The Rev. Dawnell Stodghill (Monroe Convocation)

The Rev. Dr. Frank Hughes (Shreveport Convocation)

#### Diocesan Council newly selected members are:

Tommy McGinnis (Acadiana Convocation)

David Zolzer (Alexandria Convocation)

The Rev. Seth Donald (Lake Charles Convocation)

The Rev. Richard Norman (Monroe Convocation)

The Rev. Margaret Ayers (Shreveport Convocation)

## Appointed by the Bishop for one year are:

Michael Parham

Judy Bordelon

The Rev. Whit Stodghill

## **General Convention 2018 Deputation:**

## **Clergy:**

The Rev. Thomas T. Nsubuga

The Rev. Annie Brown Etheredge

The Rev. Seth Donald

The Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry

The Rev. John Bedingfield (Alternate)

#### Lav:

Laurent DePrins

Andrea Rabalais Petrosh

John Robert

Nancy Shaw

Reece Middleton (Alternate)

**8. Minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention** – The Rev. Whit Stodghill moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and that they be accepted as presented. Lee Jefferson seconded. Approved by Convention.

The Rev. Whit Stodghill moved to forgo the reading of Canons passed by GC 2015. Lee Jefferson seconded. Approved by Convention.

9. Report from the Committee on Credentials and Privileges – The Rev. Dawnell Stodghill

requested a vote for Seat and Voice for Official Youth Presence. As this was presented by Committee, no second was needed. The vote passed.

**10. Report from the Nominating Committee** – Nominating Chairperson, the Rev. Seth Donald moved to nominate the following candidates as listed in the *Alive!* 

Moved by committee

### Lay Trustee nominees, University of the South:

Phillip Earhart

## **Disciplinary Board Lay nominees:**

Fred King Jennifer Milligan

**11. Report from the Committee on Resolutions** – The Rev. Mary Richard indicated that there was no report.

#### 12. Table Introductions:

Members of each table were asked to introduce themselves and talk among themselves about their congregations.

13. Appointments by Bishop Owensby

**Convention Committees:** As listed **Treasurer:** Cannon T. Gray Easterling

Other Appointments: As listed

- **14. Mission Status** Lee Jefferson moved that the status of the following be changed from Parish to Mission. The Rev. Rich Snow seconded.
  - St. Michael's, Pineville Approved by Convention.
  - St. Matthias, Shreveport Approved by Convention.
- **15. Mission:** Iglesia Episcopal La Esperanza de Familia Unidas The Rev. Frank Fuller moved that the new congregation be received and accepted as a Mission. Martha Hopkins seconded. Approved by Convention.
- **16.** Campus ministries which used to be within churches can now be independent, self-standing spiritual communities. Two ministries have requested to be received into the diocese as such.

**New Chapel and Chaplain:** University of Louisiana in Lafayette (ULL) with Katy Campbell as the Lay Chaplain. Moved by the Rev. Dawnell Stodghill; Rita Jefferson seconded. Approved by Convention.

**New Chapel and Chaplain:** University of Louisiana in Monroe (ULM) with Archdeacon Bette Jo Kaufman as Chaplain. The Rev. Mary Richard moved; David Zolzer seconded. Approved by Convention.

**17. Ballot for Standing Committee and Disciplinary Board:** Nominating Chairperson, the Very Rev. Matt Woollett moved to nominate the following candidates as listed in the *Alive!* Ballots

were distributed and voting held.

#### **Standing Committee:**

Clergy candidates from the Shreveport Convocation: The Rev. Mary B. Richard The Rev. Paul D. Martin

Lay candidate from Monroe Convocation: Jefferey Thompson

# **Disciplinary Board Lay Nominees:**

Fred King Jennifer Milligan

## Lay Trustee nominee, University of the South:

Philip Earhart

- 18. By Word and Example: Open Table recording and presentation Joy Owensby
- 19. Results of Election:

Standing Committee Clergy - The Rev. Mary Richard was elected. Other Candidates for Standing Committee, Disciplinary Board and Lay Trustee were accepted unanimously.

- **20. Report from Hardtner Camp and Conference Center** Canon Bill Bryant presented the new director, Daniel Chapman and his wife Katy.
- 21. Recess for the day at 3:32 p.m.

5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist was held at St. James.

6:15 p.m. Hospitality

**7:00 p.m. Dinner** was served. Entertainment was provided by the group *Sal and Dazz* with Matthew Snow and Joseph Starns.

# Saturday, November 4, 20127 - Second Day of Convention

7:00 a.m. Breakfast at Hotel

**8:45 a.m. Morning Prayer** was led by the Rev. Michael Bordelon. Lector – Lee Jefferson.

**Convention Reconvened** – Bishop Owensby called the Convention to order at 9:00 a.m.

**22. Report from Committee on Dispatch of Business** – The Rev. Frances "Boo" Kay moved to adopt the Agenda as printed. The convention approved.

The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby asked Parliamentarian Kyle McInnis to take the Chair while he gave his address

#### 23. Convention Address:

## *By Word and Example*

Researchers tell us that people today are just as hungry and just as spiritually engaged as ever. Comparing each generation from the Greatest Generation to the Millennials, some studies have found that this youngest generation is actually more likely to report a spiritual longing and more likely to report profound spiritual experiences than the previous ones.

So, the strength and the prevalence of our spiritual yearnings has remained relatively constant. Reports of encounters with the holy have remained steady or have even risen. Nevertheless, the pews in our churches continue to grow emptier year after year.

All mainline denominations are undergoing this decline in attendance and membership. It's not just the Episcopal Church.

Let's summarize the situation this way. We understand ourselves as being in the God business, and we conduct our business inside the walls of our church buildings. However, people are finding God somewhere else. Or, more to the point, God is finding people somewhere else. Outside the walls of our church buildings.

Something is going on here. For us to be the Church, we need to identify what's happening and respond effectively.

Our decline in size is making many of us anxious. When we're anxious, many of us seek something or someone to blame. I bet you've heard stuff like this. Those liberals have watered down the faith. Those judgmental conservatives have crushed souls and run people off. Those parents don't make their kids come to church like they should. Those atheists are threatening the faith.

We've been playing the blame game since the 1970's. Honestly, how's that been working for us? Instead of looking for a dragon to slay, let's try another strategy. Let's take seriously what people are saying to us about their spirituality. And let's look especially at the Millennials. There's good reason to look at this generation. There are almost as many Millennials as there are Boomers. In other words, they comprise a huge segment of the American population. And unless life expectancies shrink precipitously, they will continue to do so for decades to come. So where is God connecting with the Millennials? A goodly number still show up at worship services. But religion plays a significant role in considerably less than half of them.

They are not giving up on the holy. And God has by no means abandoned them. Many of these non-religious Millennials report a profound experience of the divine beyond the walls of our churches. In nature. In community. In works of mercy. In art and music.

You could say that Millennials are abandoning church in order to find God. And that should be a wake-up call for the followers of Jesus. Because God is meeting them out there in the world. So, at the risk of being a six-year-long broken record, I say that we have to stop single-mindedly focusing on bringing people inside the walls of the church. We have to be the church outside the walls. Be the Church. Bring the Church to the people. Connect with the real people who live around you.

I'm in the sixth year of my episcopate. For at least five of those years I've been saying this. I'm heartened by the fact that this missional notion of church has gotten traction in many places. And I'm going to talk about that in a moment.

But before I tell those missional stories, I want to share with you some reports I get each year: Some of you have shown me the list of places to which you write checks or tell me about the boxes you send to distant lands. This is very generous. Don't stop. But take the next step: real engagement with real people in your surrounding community.

Consider this comparison. You may send checks or gifts to family members. But if you never meet face-to-face, never offer a listening ear, and never share projects or meals or celebrations together, you won't have much of a relationship.

Bringing the Church to people means bringing yourself to people. And importantly, it means bringing your ears to people. All kinds of people. Not just people like you.

If the people in your pews do not resemble the people who live around you, you should take some time for reflection. Are you engaging the people that God has put on your path, or are you looking for people with whom you are comfortable?

Spreading the Good News involves listening to all sorts of people. Hear from others how they understand the real day-to-day bad news that they confront. Then, and only then, can you together become the Good News in the world you share.

As promised, I'll turn now to some of the missional initiatives breaking out across the Diocese. We have established two new Canterbury Centers on college campuses. At ULL, we have rented a space and called a Lay Chaplain. At ULM, St. Thomas is donating space and we have appointed a Chaplain. In accordance with the canon we passed at the last Convention, these are independent ministry centers under the direction of the Bishop. They offer students, faculty, and staff a spiritual community. They are devoted to worship and action. And I have charged my chaplains with seeking out nominees for the diaconate.

For the first time since I have been in this Diocese, we have welcomed a new congregation into the Convention of Western Louisiana. Iglesia Episcopal La Esperanza de Familia Unidas is now a mission of our Diocese, sharing space with St. Alban's in Monroe. In addition to this, a new commission has been appointed to explore ways to nurture similar missions in other locations.

St. Michael, Pineville, and St. Matthias, Shreveport, are boldly and intentionally pursuing revitalization. Transitioning from parish status to mission status made them eligible for financial support from the Diocese. The Trustees and the Diocesan Council released funds from the endowment to invest in revitalization efforts in these congregations. Each has called a new vicar and has committed to redefining themselves along missional lines.

To confront the growing addiction crisis in our state, we have instituted the Central Louisiana Mission for Addiction and Recovery. It occupies no building. This ministry is church beyond the walls. Focusing on addiction and recovery among those with inadequate insurance coverage, this ministry is coordinated by Fr. George Gennuso. He has connected with our public rehab center and is building partnerships among local churches to provide after-care resources. Through Open Table, the Diocese joins churches of many denominations in a partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services. This partnership focuses on providing a transition to self-reliant adulthood for children who are aging out of the foster care system. Several of our congregations are now partnering with the organization called Interfaith. In north and Central Louisiana, Interfaith brings together community members, faith leaders, and elected officials to discuss local challenges and to arrive at solutions together.

The Beloved Community Commission—formerly called the Dismantling Racism Commission—has redefined its charge and refocused its work on reconciliation. Beginning in 2018 they will host a series of gatherings designed to help all of us scale what one writer has called the empathy wall dividing our culture. These gatherings will take place in different convocations in order to facilitate attendance. Clergy and elected leaders in our congregations have been directed by General Convention and by Canon to receive the training offered at these gatherings.

In the past I have challenged you to get outside the walls of your buildings and into the surrounding community. These are examples of how you have taken up that challenge. And you have exceeded my wildest imaginings.

Now I have a few more challenges to go along with my continued challenge to get outside your walls.

Studies have shown that missional church collapses without the support of formation. Going into the community is not enough. Who we are when we go is crucial.

Christian Formation is more than what we have frequently referred to as Christian Education. Many associate Christian Education with Sunday School. We organize people—especially children—into grade levels in order to facilitate an information transfer. It focuses on what content students should learn.

By contrast, Christian Formation is devoted to shaping who we are becoming. In the past, people used the word "discipling" to refer to this process. While formation involves engagement with information, its primary focus is shaping enduring habits of mind, body, and soul.

Education fills us with information. Formation cooperates with the Holy Spirit to mold us into disciples.

Formation is life-wide and lifelong. From childhood to advanced age we remain works in progress. Every corner of our lives belongs to Christ and can be molded by the Spirit. Formation shapes Christian character. It doesn't just pass along doctrines and Bible facts.

The Christian life centers on imitating Christ. Formation is how the Christian community helps each of us all along this infinite, eternal journey.

As many of you know, St. Francis provides one of my primary exemplars for the Christian life. He, his brother friars, and the sisters of St. Clare went into the world to meet Christ in the needy as the needy.

They were wounded healers. The poor in solidarity with the poor. They embodied Christ's own humble hunger for justice. They were servants, not benefactors.

So I challenge each of our congregations—regardless of your size—to form not only children and youth to go into the world as the image of Christ. Along the way, each Christian community should shape in each of its members the following habits:

- Corporate Worship
- Personal Devotions
- Generosity
- Stewardship of the earth
- Evangelism
- Works of mercy
- Pursuit of justice

I recognize that this is all shorthand. The Christian Formation Commission and the Congregational Vitality Commission have now joined in partnership to guide you in understanding and facing this challenge. Mark their events on your calendars and attend as a group, not just one or two individuals.

As our Presiding Bishop often says, if we will focus on being the Church, average Sunday attendance and membership will take care of themselves.

Let me close by drawing on a baseball metaphor. After all, we're just finishing up the World Series.

When the count is three and two, you know the pitcher is going to throw a strike. If you just stand there, he's going to strike you out. You might as well take a cut at the ball. It's better to go down swinging than to just stand there and strike out by doing nothing.

In a way, many of our congregations are at three and two. What you've been doing up to this point has not stemmed the tide of declining attendance and membership. If you keep doing what you're doing—what you've always done—it's like just standing there as the pitch flies by. You'll strike out.

Trying something new is like taking a cut. There is no guarantee that you'll knock it out of the park. No guarantee that you'll even make it to first base. But it's better to go down swinging than to just stand there and give up.

Now here's where that analogy doesn't quite work. Right now, even if you swing and miss, you're learning how to take a better cut next time. You're not really striking out. You're becoming a better batter.

But you only become a better batter by swinging. So I'm challenging you. Step up to the plate. You'll never get on base if you don't take a cut at the ball.

# 24. Table Talk: The Bishop's Challenge

Groups discussed the following questions at their tables then shared with the convention: What are the most important, pressing, urgent challenges facing your congregation? How do you personally have to change to meet these challenges? How does your congregation have to change to meet these challenges?

- 25. By Word and Example: Disaster Relief The Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry reported on some of the many endeavors performed by our diocese to help those in need as a result of the disasters. Following hurricane Harvey, many necessities were noted. Primary is a central Contact person or team who can reach out to the local communities and communicate needs to those who can assist. They may be able to provide availability of shelters, immediate food distribution, walking the neighborhood, physical help, repair processes, financial giving, etc. Deacon Lois is available to help organize relief processes to prepare for the next disaster.
- **26. 2018 Proposed Budget Report** as reported in the October 2017 issue of *Alive* was presented by Canon Gray Easterling.

#### ACTION

**Moved:** by Committee that the 2018 Budget be approved by Diocesan Convention. (No second necessary)

**Approved Unanimously** by voice vote

#### 27. Report from Committee on Courtesy Resolutions –

Presented by the Rev. Jamie Flowers and the Rev. Brandt Montgomery.

#### **Courtesy Resolutions**

#### Resolution # 1

**Whereas** The Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry is the first African American Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church; and

Whereas this week begins the third year of his episcopate; and

**Whereas** Presiding Bishop Curry has embarked on a series of revivals that promise to "stir and renew hearts for Jesus, equip Episcopalians as evangelists, and welcome people who are not part of a church to join the Jesus Movement;" now therefore be it

**Resolved** that this  $38^{th}$  Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana sends warm greetings and affection to Presiding Bishop Curry and his lovely wife Sharon.

I so move.

#### Resolution # 2

**Whereas** The Rt. Rev. Jacob Wayne Owensby is the fourth bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana; and

Whereas he is now in the fifth year of his episcopacy; and

**Whereas** his lovely wife Joy (check with Joy first Owensby) is his able and enthusiastic partner in this great ministry; and

**Whereas** his new book, <u>Your Untold Story</u> is sure to become a diocesan bestseller... at least; now therefore be it

**Resolved** that the 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana demonstrate our heartfelt love and affection to Bishop Jake and Joy with a rousing round of applause.

I so move.

#### Resolution # 3

**Whereas** The Rt. Rev. David Bruce McPherson was the third bishop of The Diocese of Western Louisiana; and

**Whereas** Bishop Bruce and his lovely wife Susan have retired to the wilds of Oklahoma; and

**Whereas** together they were often oout and aboout throughout this great diocese; now therefore be it

**Resolved t**hat this 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana greet Bishop Bruce and Susan with warm memories and heartfelt affection.

I so move.

#### Resolution # 4

**Whereas** The Rt. Rev. Robert J. Hargrove was the second bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana; and

Whereas Bishop Robert has passed on to glory; and

**Whereas** his lovely wife Linda traveled with him throughout this diocese making a joyful noise wherever she went; now therefore be it

**Resolved** that this 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Western Louisiana sends to Linda Hargrove greetings, affection, and warm memories.

I so move.

#### Resolution #5

**Whereas** Fr. Rich Snow and the Alexandria Convocation have hosted a marvelous convention; and

**Whereas** the old timers were impressed with the completely refurbished Holiday Inn, where the quality of the food has improved considerably; though the elevator is still a bit quirky; and

**Whereas** Mother Deborah Heathcock and the people of St. James hosted a tremendous Convention Eucharist; and

Whereas the music was terrific as always, therefore be it

**Resolved** that the 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the

Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana signify our profound gratitude to all of the Alexandria Convocation with hearty round of applause.

I so move.

#### Resolution # 6

Whereas Camp Hardtner is the heart of this diocese; and

Whereas directors seem to come and go so quickly there; and

**Whereas** new director Daniel Chapman and his lovely wife Katie are lifelong lovers of Camp Hardtner and have ever longed to return, therefore be it

**Resolved** that this 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana welcome them home with a hearty round of applause.

I so move.

#### Resolution # 7

**Whereas** this diocese has had a long and fruitful partnership with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic; and

**Whereas** many of the members of this diocese have journeyed there as missionaries, finding fruitful work and friendship; and

**Whereas** Bishop Moises Quezada Mota has ably lead that diocese in the first year of his episcopate, therefore be it

**Resolved** that this 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana send greetings and our kindest regards to Bishop Moises and all of his flock.

I so move.

#### **Resolution #8**

**Whereas** Bishop Mark Lattime and the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska has lately hosted the Fall gathering of the House of Bishops; and

**Whereas** the bishops and their spouses were awed by the beauty and grandeur of God's creation there; and

**Whereas** they were welcomed by the members of that diocese including many of the indigenous peoples there, therefore be it

**Resolved** that this 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana send greetings and fervent prayers to all the peoples of Alaska.

I so move.

#### Resolution # 9

**Whereas** The Episcopal Church in Navajoland is an Area Mission of the Episcopal Church U.S.A.; and

Whereas The Rt. Rev. David Earle Bailey serves as its bishop; and

**Whereas** we are mindful of the struggles of all the indigenous peoples of this nation, therefore be it

**Resolved** that this 38<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana sends greetings and fervent prayers to Bishop Bailey and to all the peoples of Navajoland. **I so move.** 

- **28.** Commissioning of Diocesan Leadership Bishop Owensby invited all of the newly elected and appointed Diocesan leaders to rise for commissioning and prayer.
- 29. Other Business of Convention: None
- **30.** Closing Prayers, Blessing, and Adjournment: Bishop Owensby offered prayer and blessed those present. The dismissal was given by the Rev. Richard Norman.

The Convention was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

The Standing Committee met briefly after Convention.

**Noon Lunch and Depart** 

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Barnes Shaw Secretary of Convention