



2024 Journal

The Rt. Rev. Frank S. Logue
Bishop of Georgia



2024 Bishop's Journal

A note about this journal. What follows captures much of my work done in service to God as the Chief Pastor of the Diocese of Georgia. To preserve confidentiality, I don't even mention many concerns my staff and I addressed this year as in a small diocese it is difficult to even characterize a concern without revealing more than is appropriate. I use names when the information was otherwise made public. I offer what follows as I have enjoyed time exploring the history of this Diocese and wish I had a similar record from my predecessors.

+Frank
The Rt. Rev. Frank S. Logue, Bishop of Georgia





The Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee discuss six aspirants for Holy Orders during a January 5-6 Postulancy Retreat at Honey Creek.

January 1

A day off at home included reading my 2023 Journal which I posted online today. It is daunting to encounter a year in one sitting, but also helpful to see all the places where the Holy Spirit showed up as I look to the year ahead.

January 2

Tuesday morning began in a Zoom meeting with 13 other bishops in Province IV, which is the Southeast U.S. This is the first of intended monthly gatherings in months we are not otherwise together. The discussion today was a helpful one to me, not just because it is helpful to gather for colleagues, but also so that I can see the work we have done in considering Communion by Extension would not be a novel innovation. Other dioceses are seeing the same need for congregations to have communion

from reserve sacrament on some Sundays and that needs to be able to be offered by lay persons as well as deacons. The rest of the day was spent on the variety of issues raised across Christmas and New Year's Day that need ongoing follow through.

January 3

I started the day looking over *From the Field*, our weekly email newsletter as I do each Wednesday. Our Communications Manager, Liz Williams, puts it together, but Bishop Harry Shipp instructed me that the diocese's communication matters. He said that a bishop is the publisher, though not the editor, and should be involved in decisions about what we lift up, the stories we tell and the events we share. I had a check-in meeting with an Interim Rector, followed by a staff Eucharist and staff meeting.

January 4

I worked with Lutheran Bishop Kevin Strickland on an issue before the Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center. We are both board members and the Israel-Hamas War is making it more difficult for Jews and Muslims to support some of the same legislation they could have worked on in the past. I also drove to Atlanta to be present for Dr. Catherine Meeks retirement as Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing. I also spoke at the event of the transformation I saw her lead in the Episcopal Church at the churchwide level. She has been a great colleague, and I was glad to be able to be present for this farewell held at St. Luke's on Peachtree Street.

January 5-6

Back in the office on Friday morning after waking up in Macon, I met with a seminarian on Zoom before going to Honey Creek. The Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee held a postulancy retreat for those feeling called to serve as deacons and priests. The work of discernment takes time and care. I am in awe of the commitment of the members of the two groups doing that prayerful work. We approved three persons to begin formation to serve as deacons and an additional three for the priesthood.

January 7

It was so fun to worship at Christ the King in Valdosta this morning with great music and good people. They are doing well with the Rev. Jim Pace serving on Sundays. I am often with Archdeacon Yvette Owens on the road. I enjoyed serving with her in her home congregation, with her grandchildren as acolytes. Afterwards, I drove to meet with a clergy couple who needed a visit from their



chief pastor before turning back to Savannah for a long, full day.

January 8

On this Monday off from work, I took part in a Zoom meeting with Franciscans during which I professed vows as a novice in the Third Order, Society of St. Francis (TSSF). This Anglican/Episcopal religious order is for people—single and married, lay and ordained—who live by Franciscan principles without being in a monastery or convent. This is the order founded by Francis himself for those who were drawn to his way but felt called to live it out right where they were. I have been a postulant for six months. I will be a novice for at least two years before professing life vows. Victoria professed life vows as a Franciscan tertiary on September 23, 2007, at King of Peace in Kingsland.

January 9

It was a stormy day with high winds and rain in Savannah while Albany and Valdosta had homes damaged by more severe weather. In the morning, I met with a priest wanting to step back from his current call this summer. I then met with the canons on staff on a number of issues as we plan the year and had a call with a lay leader from All Saints on Tybee Island. I will

visit there this Sunday and as they are without a priest, a little help was needed in preparing bulletins for a renewal of baptismal vows and receiving people into the Episcopal Church. In the afternoon, I had a check in meeting with Ethan White, who is about to return to Virginia Theological Seminary after Christmas Break in his first year of studies.

January 10

I met with a lay leader in the morning. At noon, I gave a talk at the Senior Learning Center in Savannah where I was asked to speak on our first bishop, the Rt. Rev. Stephen Elliott, Jr. In the 50-minute lecture, I showed the influences on his thought, his views on slavery as part of God's providence to evangelize Africa, the failed attempt of his school at Montpelier Springs, his founding Sewanee, his changed views after emancipation, and his legacy. More than 60 people listened attentively and then asked great questions. My Mom was present with a few other residents of Harmony at Savannah. In the afternoon, I caught up on texts, emails, and phone calls.

January 11

Because of my schedule for yesterday, we shifted the staff Eucharist and staff meeting to Thursday. After lunch, I had a Zoom meeting as I continue to serve as a coach for the Rt. Rev. David Read, as Bishop of West Texas. That was followed by a 2-hour meeting of the Court of Review on Zoom as we consider an appeal to a diocese's Title IV verdict. I finished the day in a Zoom meeting with the co-chairs of RacialJusticeGA.

January 12

A priest who is licensed to officiate in the

Diocese met me in my office for a check-in meeting. In the middle of the day, I took my Mom to her doctor. In the afternoon, I met with seminarians at Sewanee on Zoom.

January 13

A Saturday off in Statesboro with Victoria's mom and brother.

January 14

What a kick to worship with the laid-back saints of All Saints Episcopal Church on Tybee Island, with their beach vibe. I received four into the Episcopal Church here today. During the lunch in the parish hall, I spoke with everyone in a wide-ranging conversation on the life of faith and the needs and hopes of the church. They are currently searching for a part-time priest since the Rev. June Johnson retired in the fall.

January 15

Victoria and I were in Brunswick today, joining with parishioners from all five Episcopal congregations to walk in the parade for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. They work well together as Glynn Episcopal Ministries and it was a joy to be with the group for the event.

January 16

My Tuesday included checking in with Canons Katie Easterlin and Joshua Varner, meeting by phone with the Rev. Becky Rowell as she assists me in thinking through how we will work toward a strategic plan for the Diocese, and a meeting with an aspirant for the priesthood.

January 17

I was at the former St. Michael and All Angels for the Episcopal Youth and Children Services first board meeting of the year. I celebrated the



Victoria Logue chairs the Episcopal Youth and Children Services Board Meeting in the Parish Hall of the former St. Michael and All Angels.

Eucharist and inducted the officers, adding my Executive Assistant, Maggie Lyons, to the board. She was an EYCS scholarship recipient while at Georgia Southern and now attends St. Thomas Isle of Hope. This meeting begins Victoria's second year of a two-year term as President of the board. In the afternoon, I met on Zoom with the board of the Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center.

January 18

My day included a meeting with Canon Katie Easterlin and a real estate agent. Then I had a helpful check in with Jim Toedtman, who represents me on the Dominican Development Group Board, together with Christy Wallace, who is a Diocese of Georgia parishioner and the Executive Director of the DDG. We are looking to increase the number of partnerships among

our congregations and those in the DR and to bring more of their clergy we work with there, here to Georgia. In the afternoon, I met representatives of the Savannah Farmer's Market to talk about how we might better partner with each other in caring for our neighbors.

January 19

A very full Friday began in meeting with a new postulant for Holy Orders and checking in with a priest just back from a conference that opened up so new ideas to discuss. After lunch, Canon Loren Lasch and I met with members of a church where the annual meeting failed to elect wardens and they currently have no treasurer. We worked on way forward with them. Canon Lasch will meet with the full vestry next week to assist them further. At the end of the day, our diocesan Chancellor, the Rev. Jim Elliott,

assisted me on Zoom as we support a Senior Warden facing a potentially explosive annual meeting at a parish that is in conflict in a time without a priest.

January 20

Saturday morning was filled with responding to a rather large group of emails that built up this week and finishing my sermon for Sunday. In the afternoon, Victoria and I drove to Vidalia to be closer for tomorrow morning's visitation.

January 21

Victoria and I worshipped at St. Luke's in Hawkinsville where I confirmed Robert during the liturgy. Then we went into the parish hall for lunch and a parish-wide discussion that was instead of a vestry meeting. They currently do not have a priest and so the conversation naturally turned to the many churches in the diocese who are in the same situation. They do have the Rev. Jim Strickland, a vocational deacon whose call to the priesthood the Diocese affirmed. He is away this weekend, studying at Sewanee in their program for bi-vocational priests.

January 22

A Monday off at home. Victoria took part in a Zoom Bible Study that Caroline Welby, the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury offered. She was with 20 other spouses of bishops around the world. I don't usually mention this in my journal, but Victoria is also a member of the House of Bishops Spouse Planning Group which she meets with monthly.

January 23

I first met with an Interim Rector who wanted to think aloud with me about the message for the first annual meeting for the congregation in

this transition between rectors. Then I met with the canons on diocesan staff going through all the congregations we are working with and upcoming events. After lunch, I went out to Tybee Island to meet with the All Saints vestry as I look to assign Deacon Susan Hill there even as they search for their next priest. At 6 pm, I was at the Camden County Courthouse in Woodbine for a County Commission Meeting. The commissioners voted 3-2 to move forward on an option to buy an acre of Honey Creek for the purpose of putting a public boat dock near the entrance to the camp. The meeting was a contentious one for reasons that had nothing to do with our matter, but there were neighbors present who don't want a public dock near their homes. The Department of Natural Resources now has 24 months to get permissions in place to build the dock, so it is far from a sure thing at present. Canon Loren Lasch met this evening with the vestry at a church that failed to elect wardens at its annual meeting. We checked in with each other on the late drives home from a full day.

January 24

I presided and preached in chapel for a staff Eucharist followed by a staff meeting. In the afternoon, Canon Lasch and I met with the Revs. Melanie Lemburg and David Rose to reflect on our recent Postulancy Retreat for those discerning a call to Holy Orders. She is the Chair of the Commission on Ministry and he is the President of the Standing Committee. Later in the afternoon, the Chancellor, the Rev. Jim Elliott, and I met with a vestry on Zoom ahead of an annual meeting that is likely to be contentious as the congregation is already in conflict. A number of parishioners also attended the meeting, which I hope assisted with more people hearing from us directly.

January 25

Among the tasks in a busy day, I enjoyed meeting the Rev. Wendall and Linda Phillips. He is a retired priest. They moved to Savannah to be close to grandchildren and I am licensing him to officiate. It is a busy week for our Chancellor as the Rev. Jim Elliott met with me and a rector and senior warden whose vestry is considering starting a preschool in a county with great need for that care. Canon Loren Lasch met with the Church Disciplinary Board as they had an organizational meeting and elected a President and Vice President. These are important roles for the Diocese and I am grateful for Sam Colville from King of Peace and Neil Dickert from the Church of the Good Shepherd in Augusta for taking this on. Today Canon Katie Easterlin is in Brunswick to sit with the leaders of St. Athanasius Church who are dealing with their finances to assist them in thinking through strategies to consider. On Sunday, she will be doing the same with the vestry of Epiphany in Savannah. Meanwhile, Canon Joshua Varner is preparing for an upcoming New Beginnings even as he looks into streamlining background checks for our congregations as they follow our Safe Church policy.

January 26

I met in the morning with a priest who will be stepping back from her current call to take a break. Then Canon Katie Easterlin, our Assistant Administrator, Daniel Garrick, and I met with a priest as we look together to self-sustainability for a ministry that has benefitted from grants. I also spent time lining up Canon Julian Clarke, a retired priest from the Virgin Islands who serves here in Georgia, to manage an annual meeting on my behalf for a congregation without a rector who needs that

support this year. I am so relieved he can assist me this week with diocesan staff already have a lot going on this week and this weekend.

January 27

Writing my sermon and catching up on some emails after a week with a lot of meetings, Victoria and I drove to Augusta after lunch. I met with the vestry of Our Savior in Martinez as a part of my visitation.

January 28

There is such a positive vibe at Our Savior Episcopal Church in Martinez as they are moving forward together in worship and service to the neighbors! The Very Rev. Al and Val Crumpton have lots of gifted and engaged leaders who are essential to the good happening here. I confirmed/received/and reaffirmed six people. We had a great discussion in the parish hall over good food.

January 29

A Monday off at home.

January 30

I met with Canons in the morning at the office. The Rev. Daudi Ndahana arrived at the airport in the early afternoon. We met in Kibondo, Tanzania, in 1998 when I was an intern there while in seminary and he was entering the process toward ordination. He visited King of Peace Episcopal Church during the first year he was earning a master's degree at Nashota Seminary and he returned with his wife, Olivia, and a son during Christmas the second year. Since then, we have each worked on a bishop's staff, as he held a position in the Diocese of Western Tanganyika equal to my being a Canon to the Ordinary here.



The Rev. Daudi Ndahana from the Anglican Church in Tanzania with me at St. John's Savannah and at King of Peace where he preached one Sunday during his visit to the United States.

January 31

Victoria and I enjoyed a delightful evening in Moultrie at St. Margaret of Scotland with the Holy Eucharist and great homemade food in a wonderful variety. Great conversations over dinner rounded out the evening.

February 1

On Thursday morning, we had a memorable drive home as we started out at 5:30 am from Moultrie and the pre-dawn light led to sunrise as we traveled on Georgia 122 and the steam was rising from ponds along the road in that light was magical. I held my first meeting with the new Executive Council of Diocesan Council. They gave feedback to assist me in finishing a Request for Proposals for a person or entity to assist us in preparing a five-year strategic plan for the Diocese. I also met with an aspirant for the priesthood moving to Savannah from North Carolina, with an introduction from his bishop there.



February 2

A full day of emails and phone calls and dealing with some conflict in parishes. I also recorded a podcast being created by a team at Our Savior in Martinez and had a check in meeting with a retired priest.

February 3

I finished my sermon for tomorrow and scheduled the request for proposal for our strategic plan to send automatically on Monday morning. We are contacting seven people and companies recommended to us and are listing it with Episcopal News Service to give us a chance to hear from others we might not yet know of.

February 4

There is such a joyful spirit at St. Peter's in Savannah where I made my visit today. The Revs. Kelly Steele and David Wantland and the whole staff are well loved and they love their people. This is also my Mom's church since she started attending on moving to Savannah last

March. A fellow resident at Harmony, Claudette Warlick, invited her to go to church with her, not knowing my Mom knew anything about the Episcopal Church.

February 5-10

A staycation in Savannah as our daughter, Griffin, and son-in-law, Chaz, visited for her 33rd birthday on the 8th. But that truth fails to share the several matters I still needed to work on, like signing off a \$725,000 cash offer on the former St. Michael and All Angels Rectory. With rising interest rates, the residential market had cooled here, but we were still offered well over our \$635,000 asking price. A couple of other matters needed more time than I care to admit. But I handled these things and turned back to being with Griffin and Chaz including canoeing in Congaree National Park, visiting local historic sites, a trolley tour of Savannah, and time with family.

February 11

My visitation to Christ Church in Savannah, the Mother Church of Georgia, was a beautiful celebration as we move toward Lent. The Rev. Samantha McKean worked hard to prepare the 20 confirmands. The music was gorgeous as they kicked off a campaign to restore their organ. The Rev. Michael and Helen White and so many lay leaders have been so creative in leading the oldest congregation in our state. My Mom was able to come with me and Victoria to the church for the visit.

February 12

I wrote a reflection for Ash Wednesday and recorded a video of it in the historic chapel at St. Thomas Isle of Hope.



February 13

I had a full day starting with a routine doctor's appointment, checking in with the canons after vacation, a Finance Committee meeting to consider the 2023 year-end financial reports, and a 2-hour Zoom meeting of the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution, and Canons.

February 14

Ash Wednesday was quiet in the office. We did have a staff meeting, and I met with Daudi Ndahaha, our guest from Tanzania, checking in with him after his visit back to King of Peace in Kingsland on Sunday and looking ahead in his trip. I also checked in with the RacialJusticeGA co-chairs and with a seminarian in her senior year at Sewanee.

February 15

Catching up on emails and phone calls, I also had my coaching meeting via Zoom with Bishop David Read of the Diocese of West Texas.

February 16

A check in Zoom meeting with a priest in the morning. In the afternoon, I met on Zoom with the reference panel of the church disciplinary board.

February 17

A Saturday morning at home with an afternoon drive to Augusta.

February 18

I made my visitation to Saint Paul's in Augusta where the Revs. Eric Bidy and Kimberly Dunn are working well with their lay leaders and staff toward a vision for the future as the church opens their doors even wider to the downtown. I presided and preached at the early service, met with the confirmands, and then held an hour-long town hall style meeting in the Berlin Room on the Diocese, Saint Paul's, and the larger trends of declining participation in churches. As I was vesting, I had fun interruption as a group of kids in paper mitres came to greet me.

February 19

This was to be a Monday off at home, but by 10 am, I had three issues arise that couldn't wait. This was another occasion in which I was reminded of the prayer for the ordination of a bishop that says in part:

“...fill, we pray, the heart of this your servant whom you have chosen to be a bishop in your Church, with such love of you and of all the people, that *he* may feed and tend the flock of Christ, and exercise without reproach the high priesthood to which you have called *him*, serving before you day and night in the ministry of reconciliation, declaring pardon in your Name, offering the holy gifts, and wisely overseeing the life and work of the Church.”

The words, “serving before you day and night” is unlike the language in ordination rites for deacons or priests. This does not mean I don't need to have boundaries that I keep or that I can't have time off or vacations. Yet there are times when it is possible to keep a brush fire from becoming a wildfire and some of these issues have to have the bishop, rather than staff. And I also know I tend to take these things on, rather than letting an issue wait until when I am at work, so I am trying to be better in discerning what to let wait.

I did not let work take the whole day as I took my Mom to a doctor's appointment and was able to do a couple of things I enjoy on a day off in cooking a vegetarian cassoulet for lunch with Daudi Ndahana in our home and then spending a couple of hours reading a book that Victoria really enjoyed, Robert Jackson Bennett's *The Tainted Cup*, which is a fantasy novel with a classic twisty mystery set in a very different world.



February 20

Tuesday involved a variety of tasks including finishing the day with a meeting of the Reference Panel of the Church Disciplinary Board. I spoke with an Interim Rector by phone on how that call is progressing.

February 21

Wednesday began before 7 am in line for service at Savannah Toyota for regular service and four new tires, the third set on the car that now has 101,150 miles. A variety of concerns filled the day, including assisting the Bishop of Tennessee on a church discipline matter he is facing. Victoria and I enjoyed a lovely evening in Jesup for a Holy Eucharist with healing prayers and a blessing and first Eucharist on an altar in the columbarium chapel at St. Paul's. Home just after 8 pm.

February 22

I began Thursday with a meeting with an Interim Rector in another church (from Tuesday's call) on managing some necessary changes in a congregation. In the middle, I worked in time for taking my Mom to a doctor's appointment. I finished the day meeting with a retired priest and spouse in my office.

February 23

I worked in the office in the morning and then headed Friday to Honey Creek for a meeting with the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee as those bodies met with six persons in the Holy Orders process. There is a lot of reading to get ready and then the interviews and the discussions that make for some real emotional labor for those who serve on these groups.

February 24

On Saturday, the meeting continued at Honey Creek with the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee recommending Dr. Bertice Berry and Becky Dorrell for ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons and Shelley Martin and Ken Shrader to be ordained deacons for a transitional period before ordination to the priesthood no sooner than six months later. I will be ordaining them in March and April. I drove to Augusta to get ready for tomorrow. Our cat, Olive, got put on antibiotics yesterday and so Victoria is at home dosing her every eight hours, as I make a visitation alone.

February 25

Today was a wonderful morning at St. Augustine of Canterbury in Augusta as we celebrated formally the Rev. Terri Degenhardt becoming Rector and five parishioners confirmed or reaffirmed their faith. Terri started as an associate here and then moved to Priest in Charge during a search after the previous Rector moved. The congregation is thriving with Terri and the Revs. Thomas Barron and Kurt Miller as part time associates and Deacon John Warner on the clergy team.

February 26

On a Monday before heading out of town, I got out a flurry of communications in response to the Holy Orders meeting on Friday and Saturday. I also signed the documents ahead of a closing on the former rectory of St. Michael and All Angels at 721 Washington in Savannah. In the afternoon, I met with the Court of Review of the Episcopal Church.

February 27-March 5

I was in Texas for the Spring House of Bishops Meeting at Camp Allen. This is my second in-



A group photo with my "class" in the House of Bishops, all of us elected in 2019, and I direct my colleagues into place as I take a group photo of the Bishops of the Episcopal Church during our meeting in Texas.

person meeting with my colleagues as I was in California last year officiating my daughter, Griffin's, wedding. While this much time apart from the Diocese and apart from Victoria is difficult, being with others who understand this unique vocation is helpful. The meeting was a joyful time of worship and meaningful conversations with a group I value and respect.

March 6

A full Wednesday of catching up after being away had to also include getting my Mom to a medical appointment, so we moved the staff meeting.

March 7

The day included meeting with a priest in town for a conference at St. John's and staff meeting moved back a day. There was a lot to go through together after my time away.

March 8

I did not go into the office, but took my Mom to a medical appointment and otherwise completed sermons for the weekend and

answered email from home. After lunch, I made the 4.5-hour drive to Clemson, South Carolina.

March 9

I led a Diocesan Council meeting on Zoom from my hotel room, before heading to at Holy Trinity in Clemson, South Carolina, where I preached during the Mass of the Resurrection for Louise Huntington Shipp. This was her church for the nine years since her husband, Bishop Harry Shipp, died. The Rt. Rev. Daniel Richards, Bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina officiated.

March 10

Two visitations in Darien this Sunday. Victoria and I began with a lovely visit to St. Cyprian's, which included welcoming three new members as Canon Julian Clarke and Deacon Rita Spaulding assisted me with my visitation. Then we had a delightful visit to St. Andrew's, where I confirmed/received five new parishioners for the congregation and another three from King of Peace in Kingsland.

March 11

A Monday off at home included an afternoon meeting of the Episcopal Church's Court of Review.

March 12

Canon Katie Easterlin and I met together on a variety of matters in the morning and then we were both with the Standing Committee on Zoom in the afternoon. We updated them on the construction work they authorized by electronic vote for the former St. Michael and All Angels. They also approved a listing price and the bottom figure we can accept as we sell the Vicarage for the former St. Richard of Chichester on Jekyll Island.

March 13

A staff Eucharist with Canon Loren Lasch presiding and preaching was followed by our staff meeting. Canon Lasch and I met with the vestry of Christ Church in Savannah in the evening as word went out to the congregation this week that the Revs. Michael and Helen White are stepping back from parish ministry for a break. Michael took the call 16 years ago as the congregation was forming again following a split as the rector and vestry voted to leave the Episcopal Church while suing to keep the property. The congregation was meeting on Sunday evenings at St. Michael and All Angels at the time of his call as Rector. The church has thrived with his leadership to be strong in every measure of health for a congregation. Helen joined the staff of Christ Church in May of 2015 with duties including coordinating Sunday School for All Ages, Children's Chapel, and other formation programs involving children, families, and adults. While their leaving this summer is a real loss for the parish, the Whites have the congregation in an excellent

place for the transition through an interim period to the next rector. The vestry is well suited to lead in this transition. The Rev. Samantha McKean will also be staying on which is a great support for the congregation. Deacon Patti Davis will also continue to serve and I will ordain Dr. Bertice Berry as a deacon there in April.

March 14

My workday in the office included a check in call with a priest, a coaching meeting on Zoom with Bishop Read of West Texas, and an in-person meeting with the Revs. Melanie Lemburg and David Rose as Chair of the Commission on Ministry and President of the Standing Committee. In the evening, I met with the vestry of St. Andrew's in Darien in person at the church office.

March 15

Writing two sermons for the weekend and catching up on letters and emails rounded out the week before I took my Mom to see a cardiologist in the afternoon. Today is the deadline for those submitting proposals to lead our Strategic Planning process. We received 11 proposals.

March 16

Victoria and I drove to Vidalia where I had the joyful honor of ordaining Ken Shradar to the diaconate at the Church of the Annunciation. He will serve for a transitional time as he continues his formation toward the priesthood. Ken will serve bi-vocationally. His full-time work is as the Administrator of Twelve Oaks Senior Living in Dublin. Baptized and confirmed at Christ Church in Dublin at 13 years of age, Ken has long been a member of vestry and Senior Warden of the congregation.



The Rev. Ken Shradar's ordination to the diaconate at the Church of the Annunciation in Vidalia.

The service could not be there today as all around Christ Church, the city of Dublin is celebrating St. Patrick's Day and we would not have had either a place to park or quiet within the church. This gave an opportunity for Annunciation to host an ordination, where Ken served as an intern during his formation. Ken is currently serving with the Rev. Steve Larson at Good Shepherd in Swainsboro.

March 17

Victoria and I were at St. Mary the Virgin in Augusta for a sweet Sunday morning with two new young acolytes, who are such a gift for this largely older congregation. The Rev. Andy Menger has long served here and is well connected to the parishioners. In the parish hall after the service, the conversation turned to what they can do for the people in the neighborhood around them. After talking with the group, I had a longer conversation with a parishioner who has served on the Augusta Commission, who has ideas about what we could do. I will follow up on an opportunity for

the congregation to offer tutoring at the church.

March 18

A Monday off at home with some diocesan concerns breaking into the time off.

March 19

I met with the Canons as is typical on Tuesdays, then I checked in with a postulant for the priesthood who is entering an online Anglican Studies program. I ended the day with a two-hour Zoom meeting with the Episcopal Church's Court of Review.

March 20

I began the day making some additions to our *From the Field* weekly email newsletter, then went into the office for the staff Eucharist and staff meeting. In the afternoon, I took part in a Zoom meeting of an Advisory Council for the Alternate Clergy Training at Sewanee (ACTS) Program, which we use to assist in local formation for priests. I was also working to set up a meeting to assist in a conflicted situation.



The Rev. Shelley Martin's ordination to the diaconate at St. Augustine of Canterbury in Augusta.

March 21

I wrote my sermon for next week's renewal of ordination vows and then went into the office. I had a check in call with the Rev. Ashton Williston who chairs the Southeast Convocation Discernment Committee. In the afternoon, Canon Lasch and I met with the Rev. Guillermo Arboleda who is transitioning out of serving as Rector of St. Matthew's in Savannah since June, 2016. His new call has him serving as the Program Manager of New Starts for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

March 22

The Chancellor, the Rev. Jim Elliott, was in Savannah (from Valdosta) to assist me in a meeting in my office seeking to mediate a conflict in a parish.

March 23

I ordained the Rev. Shelley Martin to the Sacred Order of Deacons at St. Augustine of Canterbury in Augusta as she continues her formation for the priesthood. She is a senior at

Sewanee and we are still working to secure her first call in the Diocese. She served as the diocesan missionary to Augusta University prior to seminary. The Rev. Amy Bradley, who had been an Associate Rector at St. Augustine's during that time of discernment, returned from Tennessee to preach for the occasion. A good size group of fellow seminarians were on hand for the ordination.

March 24

What an amazing morning in Swainsboro with four baptisms and more confirmations and receptions with 57 people in attendance. The Rev. Steve Larson baptized a father with his two daughters and the daughter of another couple who I also received into the church. A lovely lunch followed in the parish hall where we worked together and successfully remembered how to tie palm crosses once again.

March 25

Victoria went with me to Statesboro for the first of two Renewal of Ordination Vows liturgies. Her mother, Laura, is on the altar guild and the



two of them picked up the food order for lunch. Thirty of us gathered to bless Chrism Oil for use in baptisms and to renew vows (*shown above*).

March 26

I spent 7 hours on the road today to be in Tifton for the Renewal of Ordination Vows (*shown below*). That allowed me to sleep in my own bed last night. I used the windshield time to both have four hours of phone conversations and hours more of quiet. This liturgy, with sixteen people today, is always a lesser attended



one on the I-75 side of the Diocese as we have fewer clergy in the area and more of them are bi-vocational. Yet, it is so meaningful to gather around the altar together in Holy Week.

March 27

Canon Loren Lasch presided and preached for the staff Eucharist followed by a staff meeting. We set more details about the convention in November, including that as we will be deep into a strategic planning process, we don't need a separate speaker. I met on Zoom with possible Rector candidates for a parish in a search. When we get down to a few possible people, I meet with any who are not now in the Diocese of Georgia.

March 28

I had a long morning meeting to listen and share with a person caught in a conflict in their congregation. I finished writing my Easter Message for the Diocese. I also was at City Hall to pray for the Mayor and Council as they started their meeting today. This Holy Week has also been full of more than the usual number of phone calls and emails as anxiety shows up in the midst of a busy week. Also, news of priests



The top two photos at left are from Palm Sunday at Good Shepherd in Swainsboro. The four below are from Easter at St. Anne's in Tifton.

in need of healing prayers from last Sunday until now shows the toll of all the work behind the scenes.

March 29

I created my Easter Message video that will go out tomorrow evening. I also worked on my two sermons for Sunday as each of the Easter liturgies have different readings.

March 30

I finished working on the sermons. Then we drove to Tifton and I rehearsed with acolytes and others ahead of two Easter services.

March 31

A glorious Easter morning at St. Anne's in Tifton with a sunrise Easter Vigil with baptisms and confirmations at a 7 am Easter Vigil that started in the dark. Then, Victoria and I enjoyed breakfast and watching an Easter Egg Hunt before the 10 am Easter Sunday Holy Eucharist. The many acolytes did a fantastic job and the music was beautiful. It was great to work with the Rev. Leeann Culbreath, who is Priest in Charge as the congregation searches for its next Rector.

April 1

A day off at home.

April 2

I began the day with 17 other bishops who serve in Province IV of the Episcopal Church. When we were in Texas for the House of Bishops' meeting, they asked me to brief them on the proposed changes to the church disciplinary canons coming up for this summer's General

Convention. I walked them through the 18 resolutions proposed by two groups I serve on—the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution, and Canons and the Court of Review. Then we checked in with one another. In the afternoon, I met with an aspirant for the priesthood.

April 3

A staff meeting took up much of the morning.

April 4

A group gathered as we look into what happened in the 1930s and 40s to funds held in trust by the Diocese from the sale of property at St. Athanasius' Church in Brunswick. Included in the meeting were the Rev. DeWayne Cope and Gladys Lyde from the church with members of RacialJusticeGA, and diocesan staff. We have some leads due to research at the Georgia Historical Society and we strategized a way forward to bringing light to these past actions where a trust seems not to have been handled rightly. At present, we don't have enough information to determine what happened, but volunteers with some training and coordination will be able to assist our uncovering the truth. I have asked the volunteers to look for documentation from the same time period around selling off St. Stephen's and St. Augustine's in Savannah to create St. Matthew's as there is also a persistent story of not all of the funds from the land sale going to the new church as promised.

April 5

Friday included writing a sermon for my Sunday visits and answering mail and email to close out the week.

April 6

A Saturday morning at home. We ended the day

at Jonnard Cottage at Honey Creek, our home base in the southeast part of the Diocese.

April 7

Sunday was a very full day this week. Victoria and I began the day before sunrise with the wake up for Happening #109 (*shown at right*). Maddie Yarborough from Christ Church in Valdosta is the rector and she is doing a great job leading the team. Next, we went to St. Marys for their service at 9:30 am. On the way, we stopped by the house in St. Marys where we lived for 10 years while starting King of Peace in Kingsland. It is the house we lived in the longest in our lives and where we mostly raised our daughter, who was 9-19 when we lived here. After the liturgy and a little hang out time over breakfast in the parish hall, we drove to Woodbine to be at St. Mark's for their 12 noon service. Over lunch in the parish hall, we sang happy birthday to Ruth Proctor who was celebrating her 94th birthday (*shown below*). Both of today's visitations included many people we have known as long as 24 years, who supported us in church planting in Kingsland in a variety of ways. We drove northwest from Woodbine to get to Birmingham, Alabama on backroads.



April 8

We were in Little Rock, Arkansas, to be in the path of totality for a solar eclipse. It was an incredible experience as the light darkened just after mid-day.

April 9

We made it back to Statesboro where Victoria visited with her mother and brother while I visited the Episcopal Campus Ministry at Georgia Southern. The Eucharist, dinner, and discussion went very well for the ministry at my alma mater. The Rev. Charles Todd has led this ministry for years and knows well the ebbs and flows as some well-connected students graduate and we need to continually connect with new students.

April 10

I started the day finishing an article in our email newsletter, *From the Field*, that updates the Diocese on our strategic planning process, as we consider 11 proposals from individuals and consulting firms. The Rectors and Senior



The Rev. Dr. Bertice Berry's ordination to the diaconate at Christ Church in Savannah.

Wardens of Christ Church Frederica on St. Simons Island, Christ Church in Savannah, and Saint Paul's in Augusta have a video and article in the newsletter launching The Georgia 200 Fund, intended to raise the money to support the strategic planning process. They have already raised \$35,000 of the anticipated \$50,000 cost.

April 11

I met on Zoom with the Chancellor, Canon Loren Lasch, and the interim rector and wardens of a church experiencing difficulty in setting boundaries with a parishioner whose mental health issues are negatively impacting the community. At noon, the Executive Council of Diocesan Council met on Zoom and reduced the proposals we are considering for the Strategic Planning process from eleven to four. We will check all of their references and meet again next week hoping to name two proposals where we will meet with the consultants on Zoom. I had my monthly call as I coach the Bishop of West Texas during his first three years

as bishop. I spoke with a priest to encourage them to take part in a rector search at another congregation in the Diocese. In the evening, word reached me of a vestry member at a congregation who we now know was arrested for child pornography in 2020. Canon Lasch and I arranged calls for tomorrow to assist the leaders there in next steps even while we look at what went wrong in the process of required background checks for a member of vestry.

April 12

We followed through on the issue from last evening with phone calls. I also dropped off vestments and other items at Christ Church ahead of tomorrow's ordination. I wrote my Sunday sermon and almost caught up on mail and email.

April 13

Such a joyous day at Christ Church in Savannah as I ordained Dr. Bertice Berry to the Sacred Order of Deacons. Attendance included many people who connect with each other

through the storytelling ministry Bertice started online in pandemic. The song for the procession out into the world was Oh Happy Day! This song I share with the new deacon, and the preacher, the Rev. Michael White, as we all spent years in Pentecostal churches.

April 14

A morning of two services with confirmations and receptions at Trinity in Statesboro proves you can go home again. This is the congregation where Victoria was baptized and confirmed and I was ordained a priest after they sponsored me for seminary. They are thriving with the Rev. Charles Todd as Rector and the Rev. Noelle Raiford as Deacon.

April 15

A day off at home included taking my Mom to her cardiologist.

April 16

A day in the office with few appointments is a help. Canon Katie Easterlin and I met in the morning to sync up on a variety of concerns and I met with a person in the afternoon who I have known for a while, but not well. He wanted to talk about questions of faith. I always enjoy this sort of conversation, which is a rare treat as a bishop.

April 17

Our Wednesday staff meeting was just four of us as the other three are on the road for meetings. I had two Zoom meetings—the Finance Committee at noon and the Board of the Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center at 2.

April 18

Thursday began with a 7 am check in phone call with the Rev. David Rose in his role as President

of the Standing Committee; an 8 am call with a priest in a Rector search who wanted to talk some things through; a meeting with the Rev. Melanie Lemburg who I am appointing the next Dean of the Savannah Convocation; a noon Zoom with the Executive Council as we looked at references for Strategic Planning Consultants and decided to interview all four next week; then a meeting with the Rev. Ian Lasch, Chair of the Worship Commission about revising the Liturgical Customary for the Diocese; and ending the day meeting with a Disciples of Christ pastor looking at becoming an Episcopal priest.

April 19

Friday was a very full day despite only having one phone appointment on my calendar when the day started. There were a variety of concerns arriving that needed attention from me, and staff. I also finished up detailed plans for the upcoming clergy conference with Canons Varner and Lasch. Then I drove to Honey Creek to meet with a priest working through conflict arising in their congregation and check in with Executive Director Dade Brantley. I spent the night at Jonnard Cottage. Victoria is in Clayton, Georgia, tonight. She is giving three 45-minute talks at a Franciscan retreat there this weekend.

April 20

After watching a beautiful sunrise over Honey Creek, I worked by phone on an issue that arose yesterday and then began working on the sermon for tomorrow. I drove to Valdosta, finished the sermon and went out for dinner with a small group ahead of tomorrow's visitation.

April 21

I made my visitation to Christ Church in



Valdosta with an 8 am Eucharist, a meeting with parents of young children, and the 10 am liturgy with 20 confirmations and receptions. There is real joy in worship (*this visit is shown above*). The Rev. Hal and Michelle Weidman have been serving here for a year. He is the Rector and she oversees children's ministries. As the service was ending a group of children processed out to help their priest ring the church bell.

April 22

A Monday off at home.

April 23-24

I flew to Charlotte, North Carolina, along with bishops across our church in order to meet with the five candidates for Presiding Bishop. I know all of them, of course. I arrive not knowing who I will vote for this summer. I listened and am prayerfully discerning who the Spirit is calling to lead our denomination. This meeting did bring some additional clarity to my discernment.

April 25

I flew back early and was in the office before 10. I got to meet with Dr. Robert Johnson and his wife. Robert is the grandson of the Rev. Robert Nathaniel Perry who served at Good Shepherd in Thomasville for 32 years. I enjoyed learning more about this giant of our Diocese. In the afternoon, an interview committee of the Executive Council held our first of four Zoom meetings with prospective consultants for the strategic plan.

April 26

On Friday, the interview committee, made up of me and Canon Katie Easterlin, Dwala Nobles, and the Rev. Kelly Steele, met with three more representatives of consulting groups we are considering for our strategic planning process. The interviews were quite helpful in bringing clarity to what we need from consultants in the process. In the afternoon, I met with my spiritual director.

April 27

I ordained the Rev. Becky Dorrell to the Sacred Order of Deacons at Christ Church Frederica on St. Simons Island (*photos on the following page*). The Very Rev. Tom Purdy used his shared history of working for a delivery service (her at FedEx for many years and him for a few years at UPS) as he preached on the work of a deacon. He gave Becky a UPS truck with flames painted on it to represent her being Christ in the world with the flames of the Spirit in her heart. This completes a joyful series of four ordinations in two months. In the afternoon, I stopped by Cursillo to visit with those on retreat. Victoria and I spent the night at Jonnard Cottage at Honey Creek.

April 28

We had a glorious Feast of St. Mark the



The Rev. Becky Dorrell's ordination to the diaconate at Christ Church Frederica on St. Simons Island.

Evangelist at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Brunswick, Georgia, which included 37 people confirmed/received/reaffirming their faith. The Rev. Alan Akridge is joined in ministry by a great team of lay and ordained leaders at the congregation he has served as Rector since 2009. In the afternoon, I presided and preached at the closing Eucharist for Cursillo #128 with Phyllis Anderson Fox as Rector. I confirmed her husband, Jim, during the liturgy. They are members of St. Mark's and I would have confirmed Jim this morning if they had not been at Honey Creek.

April 29-May 1

Monday through Wednesday, we held a Spring Clergy Retreat at Honey Creek. As is always true of these gatherings, worship has been the heart of the event. Sermons from the Revs. Becky Rowell, David Rose, Nathan Wilson, and Shayna Cranford grounded the time in the Word. I preached at the Eucharist with the Rev. Kimberly Dunn as officiant. The retreat also allowed time for three significant periods of discussion as a group, both hearing from me

about the Diocese and broader Episcopal Church, and in offering feedback on some proposed changes, and in speaking to one another about the challenges and joys of ministry. A Tuesday afternoon kickball game and an evening session of 3-minute PowerPoints allowed different ways of being together including a time of sharing things we are



passionate about in order to get to know one another better (*shown on the previous page is the Rev. Samantha McKean offering her hilarious presentation on tofu*).

May 2

The Board of the Corporation of the Diocese met in the conference room at Diocesan House to keep up with the investments we manage for both the Diocese and our congregations who chose to use the board for their long-term assets. We currently have \$13 million, mostly in funds managed for congregations.

May 3

I wrote sermons for Saturday and Sunday and then joined the Commission on Ministry that was meeting today at St. Thomas Isle of Hope. The Commission members took on a variety of tasks in small groups that broke up parts of the discernment and formation processes for review. They met today from 9 am to 1 pm, including eating lunch, with the Rev. Melanie Lemburg as Chair and Canon Loren Lasch offering what she could from the staff. I came in from 1-3 pm and we worked through the proposed changes they wanted to check in with me on before we set a course of action.

May 4

Victoria and I drove to Thomasville on Saturday for a lovely visitation at Good Shepherd. In my sermon for the Eucharist, I shared what I had learned about their Vicar of 32 years, the Rev. Robert Nathaniel Perry in my recent email exchange with his granddaughter, Beatrice, and his grandson, Robert. I wove this in with the scripture to challenge us all to work not just toward preserving the past, but continuing the ministry that lifts up people in the neighborhood around the church. They very much want this and are working toward it. As I



told them in the sermon and after, I wanted them to also hear this from their bishop.

May 5

On Sunday morning, I made my visitation to All Saints in Thomasville, where the Rev. Will Brown is Rector. Deacon Dennis McGill from Good Shepherd served in the Eucharist. It was a beautiful day with a lovely reception on the lawn after our worship. All Saints does a lot for the community and their Wednesday Body and Soul series offers a meal and discussion that often attracts participation from the other two Episcopal Churches. (*Victoria and I are pictured above in an ussie with the Rev. Will and Kate Brown and their son, George*).

May 6

Victoria and I drove to Charleston for a fellowship meeting with other Franciscans in the low country at Grace Cathedral. Afterward, I drove on to Kanuga and Victoria got a ride home. I stayed at the cottage in Saluda, North Carolina, owned by the Diocese of Georgia. I met on Zoom that evening with the General Convention Committee on Church Planting and Future Church. This was my first meeting of the group as chair of the bishop's committee



after Bishop Gretchen Rehberg stepped down from that role as she can't attend the convention while she awaits a lung transplant.

May 7-9

I was at Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina from Tuesday morning through lunch on Thursday. On Tuesday and Wednesday, bishops from the Southeast US met for a very helpful discussion on the challenges we face and how we are responding to the decline in attendance of recent decades that was hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Province IV Synod met in advance of General Convention from Wednesday evening through lunch on Friday. I left early, driving west after lunch on Thursday to get to Sewanee for a 6 pm dinner for those receiving honorary doctorates. We enjoyed supper at the home of Jim and Jennie Turrell. He is the Dean of the School of Theology.

May 11

Sewanee honored me today with a Doctor in Divinity (honoris causa) and the invitation to preach the commencement for their School of Theology. I received my honorary doctorate

alongside Bishops Peter Eaton (Southeast Florida) and Daniel Richards (Upper South Carolina) and two from the Diocese of Georgia, the Rev. Shelley Martin who earned a Master of Divinity and the Rev. Larry Williams who earned a Master of Sacred Theology. I drove home after the service. *(at left, an ussie with seminarians Shelley Martin and Roger Speer).*

May 12

I finished my sermon and we drove to Augusta.

May 13

My visitation was to a full church at Holy Comforter in Martinez with a big group of confirmations and receptions. What a delight to be with this church planted Christmas Eve 1999. They continue to thrive with the Rev. Glenn Palmer and a great group of lay leaders.

May 14-16

I really enjoyed visiting with Bishop David Read and his staff in the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas in their Bishop Jones Center in San Antonio. He is a great colleague. I am grateful to be his coach on behalf of the College for Bishops. Victoria and I also took time off in San Antonio as recent weeks have been full. This included visiting the graves of her grandfather and an aunt.

May 17-18

In the office for a few hours in the morning after time away. The Clergy Spouses' Retreat started in the evening at Honey Creek. We had a great time together from Friday dinner through lunch on Saturday. We worshiped together and also had times of discussion engaging with questions that encouraged sharing with each other to whatever degree of openness one chose. With eight of us total, the

gathering was smaller than in recent years, but this also allowed more depth as we all enjoyed the time together. The feedback is that this time of year is difficult for those who wanted to take part, so we will survey and set the retreat at a time better for more spouses, likely in Lent.

May 19

The Holy Spirit was present in two morning liturgies at Christ Church Frederica on St. Simons Island in the Pentecost readings, music, sermon, and the sweet, sweet Spirit in this historic church that is thriving and so very engaged in ministry in and with their community through Glynn Episcopal Ministries and more. The Very Rev. Tom Purdy has served as the Rector since 2013 (*shown below with his daughter, Calleigh*) and the church has benefited from a long time of stability with his leadership. Today was the last day before their Associate Rector, the Rev. Ashton Williston leaves for sabbatical. She has served here since 2017. The Rev. Becky Rowell, who has served here since her ordination to the priesthood in 2015, took the earliest service for me so I could focus my energy on the other two of the morning. She



assists the Diocese of Georgia in situations of conflict and also does a lot of work with vestries when things are going well.

May 20

A day off at home.

May 21

Canon Katie Easterlin and I were at the offices of the law firm Bouhan Falligant as Rob Brannon handled my signing the papers to sell the former vicarage for St. Richard of Chichester on Jekyll Island. The vestry voted to close the church last year following many years of decreasing year-round residents on the island. We will clear \$600,000 that the vestry hoped could assist Honey Creek. We are working with the appropriate diocesan bodies on that possibility. In the afternoon, Canon Easterlin and I met on Zoom with Mendi and Todd from Armstrong McGuire and Associates on our strategic planning process and then Canon Loren Lasch and I met by phone with a priest who has been on disability and is looking to serve again.

May 22

A staff meeting went over a lot of upcoming events and things to get done. Then an in-person check in with Carey Wooten, a layperson from Calvary in Americus who oversees our Leading with Grace course as our Director of Leadership Ministries, gave me and Canon Lasch time to consider with her how to shift this offering based on recent experience. We tried shorter meetings with no overnight stay, but see how the higher expectation offerings are better for the participants. I also had a quarterly check in with John Hayes and Karen Cote who co-chair RacialJusticeGA.



May 23

A full day included a Zoom check in with an aspirant for Holy Orders and an in person meeting with the Revs. Melanie Lemburg and David Rose as Chair of the Commission on Ministry and President of the Standing Committee. This was to further our work on the process of discernment for ordination.

May 24

I began the day replying to Ember Day Letters from those in formation to become deacons and priests while the diocese's car was serviced at Savannah Toyota. I finished my two sermons for Sunday, including one in Spanish taking much longer than I care to admit as it will be a Trinity Sunday sermon and my first time to preach in Spanish. I am not that good at the language, but work on it daily. The Spanish language version of the Episcopal Church's Sermons that Work as invaluable with giving me language for discussing the Trinity and in recent weeks, I worked my way through years of sermons at that site on these readings and on the Trinity to get a sense for the Spanish and wove some of what was in those sermons with my own take on what I hope will speak to the congregation. In

the afternoon, I met with my spiritual director.

May 25

A day off at home included a lot of studying and practicing the Spanish for the liturgy and the text of my sermon in Spanish.

May 26

Trinity Sunday at St. Paul the Apostle/San Pablo Apóstol in Savannah made for a 7.5-hour visitation. The morning began with an 8:30 am parish meeting to talk with interested parishioners about where we are at this point a year into the transition from a long-term rector with the Rev. Kevin Kelly serving as interim. This was followed by the 10 am liturgy in English, where I had to remember my dance steps for an Anglo Catholic liturgy, which I always enjoy, but it does take more thought about my actions. The 12:15 liturgy in Spanish (*shown above*) was an amazing service with 10 baptisms, 25 confirmations, and many first communions. It was also my first time preaching in Spanish. I have so much more to learn, but I am glad I decided to make the effort as I felt more connected to the congregation than in my two previous visitations where I

preached in English, pausing throughout for translation. The Rev. Leonel Polanco has done such great work in building on this service begun by the Rev. Charles Todd. A native of the Dominican Republic, Leonel brings such evident care for his people to shepherding this congregation.

May 27

A day off at home on Memorial Day.

May 28

I met with Canons Varner and Easterlin on a variety of matters and noticed my view of Honey Creek shifting as I am aware that I am trying to do what we have always done, but trying to work harder at it. That never works well in a parish. We need to consider other ways our retreat center can thrive. I see an inkling of what that can be that made more sense when I spoke to our Executive Director, Dade Brantley, by phone. This should be a fruitful part of the strategic planning process. I also met with a deacon who has moved to Savannah to be near family.

May 29

A fulsome staff meeting on upcoming matters, including discussing Honey Creek further and working on plans for the June 8 Diocesan Council meeting. In the afternoon, I met by phone with a convocation dean and in person with a priest who has moved to the Diocese to care for aging parents.

May 30

The fourth anniversary of my ordination as Bishop was a fairly low-key day with no appointments. I responded to requests from our consultants for the strategic planning process including considering how best to staff the planning committee.

May 31

Friday included a check-in meeting with a priest who is working full-time running a non-profit and wrote a sermon for Sundays two visitations. Canon Loren Lasch and Maggie Lyons are working hard on interviews for a church discipline matter referred to us by a bishop who had to recuse himself.

June 1

A morning off at home. A drive to Augusta and a Saturday afternoon meeting with the vestry of St. Alban's.

June 2

A blessed Sunday morning started with the congregation of St. Alban's in Augusta for a 9 am Eucharist. The prayers of the people had a lovely prayer for Michael Curry as he finishes his amazing tenure as our Presiding Bishop. In the parish hall after the liturgy, I sent a text to Bishop Curry with the prayers and a photo of the congregation sharing their prayers with him. He replied later, touched by the many ways the church is holding him in prayer. St. Alban's has been sharing a priest for some years and so we next went to the Church of the Atonement on Tobacco Road for a Eucharist in their parish hall following the theft of four HVAC units around the church building. This recent loss did not slow the congregation down as they moved the liturgy to the parish hall and worship continues as we work through the insurance claim.

June 3

A Monday off at home.

June 4

Tuesday began with a Zoom meeting of Province IV bishops in a check-in before General Convention. I then had a lengthy check

in with Canons Katie Easterlin and Loren Lasch on a lot of matters and also finished drafting with them the first choices to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee.

June 5

I sent out emails to everyone I want to serve on the planning committee with a job description from the consultants. I also met on Zoom with a priest who is a finalist for Interim Rector at Christ Church in Savannah.

June 6

I met in person with a priest and by phone with a Senior Warden and checked in with Canon Lasch on the church discipline matter we are handling for another diocese. By the end of today, all nine persons I asked to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee responded saying “yes” to the opportunity, even though the request came with a pretty ambitious job description. I am so thankful they want to take the lead on this work.

June 7

An appointment free day of finishing up work to prepare for Diocesan Council and handling a variety of matters via phone and email ended with a 5:30 pm meeting with the vestry of St. Paul the Apostle in Savannah.

June 8

I am thankful to Diocesan Council members for making the drive to Jesup to gather at St. Paul’s as we get ready to kick off our strategic planning process. The two previous meetings, in December and March were on Zoom and so it was all the more helpful to be together in person. We started with a Eucharist that Canon Lasch celebrated and I preached. We checked in on the work of several Task Groups on our

Diocesan Convention Schedule, the Saluda Cottage, and an Assessment Review. That last group was also asked to look at our standard on which congregations need an annual audit by a CPA. They recommended a move from \$500,000 to \$675,000 in order to keep that indexed to inflation from the last time we changed it in 2013. I drove to Savannah, picked up Victoria, and drove to Douglas as she wants to be there for tomorrow’s visitation.

June 9

St. Andrew’s in Douglas had three times as many people as when Victoria and I were last with them, from 7 to 22 in worship. I confirmed and received four parishioners at this congregation whose vestry thought they only had months to go back in late 2022. This happened even as they have been served by a variety of priests during the intervening months. Everyone credits the energy of their Senior Warden, Shannon Pojedinec, who is a champion for The Episcopal Church having much to offer Christians in Coffee County.

June 10

The Most Reverend Stephen D. Parkes, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Savannah (*in an ussie below*), and I had a great time talking over lunch at his home today. We both travel so



many of the same roads to towns across central and South Georgia as chief pastors and our talk did take in which routes we like to take and the hotels we prefer in various small towns even as we discussed the needs of our clergy and congregations. We also talked about the joy and the difficulty in this vocation before sharing with each other the spiritual practices that sustain us. We let it go a few years since our previous meeting and plan to get together much sooner. After lunch, I visited a priest in the hospital here in Savannah.

June 11

Tuesday included a meeting with a contingent of three persons from a vestry that wanted input from their bishop. I also met via Zoom with Jim and Haydee Toedtman, who represent the Diocese on the Board of the Dominican Development Group.

June 12

I always begin the day waking up at 5 am, having coffee, and praying Morning Prayer. By 6 or 6:30 am, I stop at a half pot of coffee and don't usually have any more, so that some people I know well are surprised to learn I drink coffee. I name this is I worked in the office this morning with our two intake officers, Canon Loren Lasch and Maggie Lyons, on reading and rereading the canons on church discipline as we are working on a complaint on behalf of the bishop of another diocese whose impartiality could be questioned on some complaints the bishop received. And at one point, Loren noted that I looked like I needed coffee. I did need more. This and other concerns have not leant themselves to restful nights on sleep. I also worked to ensure we have the right people to serve as an advisor and to provide pastoral care to the member of clergy who is the respondent

even as I kept up with a variety of emails and letters with routine diocesan work.

June 13

I usually start work at home by 6 am to handle any significant writing that I save for mornings to have space before new things interject themselves. This morning, I wrote a detailed email to Bishop Todd Ousley and the Presiding Bishop's Chancellor, Mary Kostel, to verify how we are going about some of the details of procedure for the church discipline matter referred from another Diocese that describes what we mapped out yesterday. I have a lot of experience with these canons, but not when acting on behalf of another bishop. I offered to talk in the email and Mary called at 7:30 am and was most helpful in making one small change as she signed off on how we are handling these complaints. I also met by phone with a convocation dean and on Zoom with an aspirant for Holy Orders. Canon Joshua Varner, Liz Williams, and I also set the two youth we want to ask to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee.

June 14

I began the day combining two proposed resolutions to General Convention in hopes of brokering a compromise on how we handle making clear what supplemental liturgies are authorized for use under which conditions. Liz Williams and I also went to St. Matthew's in Savannah to meet Toni Blue and her daughter, Rachel Blue Jones. We interviewed them on video about why they go to church on how Jesus has been with them in difficult times. In the evening, Victoria and I joined so many others at the Ships of the Sea Museum in Savannah for a sendoff party for Michael and Helen White as they step back from being



The altar party and choir are ready to process in to worship at St. John's in Bainbridge.

Rector and Associate Priest at Christ Church in Savannah.

June 15

I finished my sermon for tomorrow. Victoria and I drove to Bainbridge.

June 16

We had a lovely visit to St. John's in Bainbridge. They are claiming their identity as a church that that is making a larger impact on their community than one would expect from their beautiful gem of a small church building and the small size of the congregation in worship on Sunday. I was delighted to confirm/receive four parishioners. This was also Wyatt Poe's last Sunday as organist before he goes to Sewanee to study for an MA in Theology.

June 17

While I did not go into the office, Monday in a short week before leaving for the General

Convention was not a day off. I worked to keep up on all that needs doing while still in Savannah.

June 18

On Tuesday, I met with the Canons and then all of the staff before lunch. With Dade Brantley, our Executive Director of Honey Creek, also with us, it was our first meeting with all eight diocesan staff members together in quite a while, which was helpful as we sync up as we move further into summer. In the afternoon, I met in the office with a deacon feeling the call to priesthood.

June 19

This was the second Juneteenth as a national holiday and the office was closed. The Reference Panel of the Church Disciplinary Board met on Zoom concerning the complaints we are overseeing for another Diocese. We reached a decision and, in the afternoon, I met on Zoom

with the priest and their advisor for the Title IV process. There was a lot to do to get ready to be gone for nine days.

June 20

Victoria and I drove to Louisville, Kentucky. I continued to work with Bishops Andy Doyle and Kai Ryan on resolution B008 where we set out what is the Book of Common Prayer and how trial use leading to a revision happens as well as which are authorized alternate texts or additional liturgies and what has no such standing.

June 21

On Friday, I worked with Bishop Kai Ryan to get a group together to work on further perfecting resolution B008 on authorized liturgies. This will be essential if a second reading on a Constitutional change to Article X on Prayer Book revision passes at this convention. I also looked at a possible amendment to that Constitutional change. I am not sure how this will play out in convention, but the Prayer Book matters to all of us and I am working to make sure we have a plan to avoid confusion by either getting the right canons in place, as imagined when the first reading on the change to Article X passed or amending the language in the proposed change to the constitution.

June 22

The General Convention is underway in committee work. I served on the Church Planting and Future Church Committee which completed its work today. We ended with sharing times and incidents that strengthened our faith in Jesus and discussing what we have been learning about evangelism, church planting, and revitalization in our many contexts. After lunch, bishops joined their

deputations to hear from our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the President of House of Deputies, Julia Ayala Harris. Then each House had their own orientation session. Our deputation gathered in the suite we have for meetings and went through some upcoming legislation and the Presiding Bishop election. In the evening, we went to the Episcopal Revival preached by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry at Louisville's Yum Center. He hit on his main themes saying, "If it's not about love, it's not about God...love that can't be sentimentalized, commercialized, or trivialized."

June 23

Worship is always such an important part of a General Convention of the Episcopal Church. This morning, President of the House of Deputies, Julia Ayala Harris, brought the Word in our morning Eucharist with an inspiring sermon on what we can and must do serving together in love. The House of Bishops got organized today (with the roll call, etc.) and then got to work on considering the first group of the more than 300 resolutions proposed to this convention. Discussions on the seven resolutions today on Israel and Palestine were tense, though respectful as bishops get along with one another quite well even as we can disagree on how to word a resolution or whether to support it. The House rejected four and passed three. After several amendments during vigorous debate, the House of Bishops passed a resolution condemning both Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack on Israel and Israel's response that has led to so much suffering and death in Gaza. Underscoring why we consider this at all, The Most Reverend Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, was with us in the gallery. He did not speak to any resolution or in any way express any preference about how we act, but the concerns we discussed are front and



OUR CANONS TO THE ORDINARY
SAID NO SCOOTERING



center for him and the Palestinian Christians he pastors who want to know they don't stand alone. We also passed several resolutions related to the care of creation. After the Convention stopped for the day, the Diocese of Georgia Episcopalians here for the meeting went to Feast BBQ for a meal together.

June 24

The 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church continued today with a hearing on the budget for the coming three years, the House of Bishops passing a framework for Prayer Book revision on a required second reading, and more. I also worked on an amendment to a canonical change on intake officers in church discipline matters to continue to permit diocesan staff to have a role as long as at least one intake officer does not work for the bishop.

June 25

I learned that the second of the two teens I asked to be on the Strategic Planning Committee has accepted that role and so I have a full committee of eleven. I worked with our consultants to get out word to the group on a first meeting of that body happening very soon, depending on schedules. The General Convention continued with a long and varied day, beginning with Presiding Bishop nominees names being placed on the floor of convention ahead of tomorrow's vote and we worked through plenty of the 396 resolutions this convention is asked to consider. The Deputies elected Julia Ayala Harris for a second term as President of the House of Deputies. I worked with Julia on Executive Council and had encouraged her to stand for election at the last convention. I was pleased at her being returned to office. The evening ended with a Bishop and Spouses dinner in appreciation of Presiding Bishop Michael and Sharon Curry.

June 26

Today began with a Eucharist for everyone at the Convention. Like always, the music was amazing, and the sermon was so helpful as the Rev. Yejide Peters Pietersen preached, "We are not in a self-improvement project here. We are being remade by the Holy Spirit." Bishops left the liturgy before the dismissal to walk together to Christ Church Cathedral for the election of the next Presiding Bishop. It took time to get everyone in the cathedral and a roll call completed. We completed paper ballots from the large group on hand that included many retired bishops I had not seen in the House of Bishops. In just a half hour after the ballot, we learned that Bishop Sean Rowe was elected (*I am shown below with the Presiding Bishop elect in an ussie at the General Convention*). With five well-qualified candidates, I am grateful for the clarity the first ballot result offers. I met Sean when he was 22 and I was 34 as we both arrived at Virginia Theological Seminary to begin our three years of study. I immediately came to respect his keen intellect, deep faith in Jesus, and his often-surprising sense of humor. He





The Diocese of Georgia's Deputation to the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

would go on to be the youngest bishop in the Anglican Communion for many years after being elected on the first ballot at the age of 32 from a slate of four well-qualified candidates seeking to be the Bishop of the Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania. When you get to know Sean, the pattern is not surprising. He is the one so many of us in the House of Bishops go to for counsel. By the time of his installation as Presiding Bishop, he will have served for 17 years in this unique call. He has a pastor's heart and knows the role well. He loves our church and yet sees how we must change to respond to the challenges of decreased membership, giving, and attendance. Yet, he is not interested at all in the institution for its own sake, but for the sake of people who need to know Jesus. Bishop Matthew Cowden of the Diocese of West Virginia recorded a brief video of me in the loft of the cathedral sending word to Georgia of this

election and the hope it gives me for the next nine years in our church.

June 27

Typical diocesan issues continue to arise and, with the assistance of staff back in Georgia, we keep moving on everything we can. Today, I got a priest from Georgia permission to celebrate and preach in the Diocese of Chicago while there on vacation and spoke with a bishop here about a priest accepting a call in their diocese. As the priest is also at the convention, I will set up a meeting in person.

Meanwhile in Louisville, the House of Deputies passed the Constitutional Change to Article X that defines how a new Book of Common Prayer is created. When bishops and deputies passed the "first reading" of this change in 2022,

the intent had been to establish a constitutional foundation for elevating to “prayer book status” certain liturgies that are not yet in the print version of the Book of Common Prayer, whether replacing older liturgies or standing on their own as additions. This means that the work I was doing on June 14, 20, and 21 will matter a lot to the convention as this change needs to have canons in place for it to work. The resolution B008 that began with Texas Bishop Andy Doyle and Texas Suffragan Kai Ryan and me is intended to help clarify canonically the difference between liturgies included in the prayer book and other texts, such as trial-use liturgies and supplemental liturgical resources. The bishops took part in an Episcopal youth-led event decrying gun violence. The Deputies worked into the evening as the bishops took off after dinner so they could give us more to consider. Any resolution must pass both houses in the same form to be approved by the convention.

June 28

The 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church moves toward its conclusion, beginning the day with a Presiding Bishop Michael Curry celebrating the Eucharist with a sermon by Presiding Bishop Elect Sean Rowe. The sermon is a perfect example of his seeking to put faith into practice. Sean said, “what about our idolatry of structures and practices that exclude and diminish our witness? We have to get it together. That’s going to mean laying some things down.” By the end of the day, an announcement went out to the church that our Presiding Bishop Elect canceled the big, expensive installation at Washington National Cathedral opting for a small service in the chapel of our Episcopal Church Center that will be broadcast to the church online. This is what leadership looks like.

Several significant actions were completed today, including moving the Navajoland Area Mission to being a Missionary Diocese. The wording change is small, but the importance is huge in that it gives the Diné Episcopalians the right to elect their own bishop, rather than having the House of Bishops do so. Also, the three dioceses in the state of Wisconsin joined to form a single statewide diocese again and the dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan had their merger approved to form the Diocese of the Great Lakes. Meanwhile, the House of Deputies has been moving very slowly through the resolutions they have to consider. I was feeling like I am getting sick and so I decided to leave early. When the bishops took a break just before 3 pm as we awaited more resolutions from the House of Deputies, Victoria and I started driving toward home. We stayed in touch with the convention through GroupMe and WhatsApp messages. The work finished at 6 pm. Shortly after, we stopped for the night in Clinton, Tennessee.

June 29-30

We drove the remaining seven hours home and tested negative for COVID. I visited with my Mom after the time away for convention. Sunday was a rare one off from work and given that I was still not feeling completely well, I attended worship online.

July 1

I enjoyed a Monday off, cutting the grass, but otherwise recovering from the convention as I learn of more people who left the General Convention with COVID. About 100 people have self-reported getting the virus during the meeting.

July 2

I enjoyed a slow work day on Tuesday that





included taking my mom to a routine cardiologist appointment and catching up on things that could wait until after the General Convention.

July 3

Wednesday began with several pastoral care conversations with clergy. I also met with two members of St. John's in Savannah who are doing a feasibility study for a new ministry to caregivers. I am grateful for their work to determine the need and how best to meet it following similar ministries with years of experience. I am happy to support the effort as I can.

July 4

With the office closed for the Fourth, I stayed home and worked on devotions for the book *Holy Mysteries: Encountering the risen Jesus* that Victoria and I are creating to give the Diocese for Eastertide 2025.

July 5

I met in my office with the newly called interim rector for Christ Church in Savannah. The Rev. Cathy Zappa does not start her work until September 1, but we used her visit to Savannah to have a good conversation before she begins that call. Liz Williams and I met with Jess Mikell and her daughter, Vivian, at Christ Church to record a second video of Episcopalians talking about their faith. We will continue adding to this group of videos for our diocesan convention in November. Elias and Ezra Lasch visited the office in the afternoon, which is always a treat. I invited them to fill a piece of pottery in my office with water to float the rubber duck bishop I acquired at the Lambeth Conference in 2022 (*shown at right*).

July 6

A Saturday off at home.

July 7

I drove to Cordele in the morning for a lovely summer visit to Christ Church, welcoming four new parishioners who I confirmed or received. The lunch that followed was so good, both the food and the conversations.

July 8

The Strategic Planning Committee met for the first time on Zoom this morning, led by their Chair Carey Wooten and our consultants Mendi Nieters and Todd Brantley from Armstrong McGuire and Associates. A lot got done in the hour and half meeting.

July 9

I visited the former St. Michael and All Angels today with Canon Lasch to see all the work on the property that Canon Katie Willoughby (Canon Easterlin has returned to using her maiden name) has overseen with our project



manager Pembroke Faucette. They have done a lot to catch up on deferred maintenance using funds from the sale of the Rectory. I looked at the second-floor offices and wondered why we couldn't find a tenant as the space is quite good for a non-profit office. Then I had the uneasy feeling of wondering why we had not considered the space for our diocesan offices. I talked with Canon Willoughby about it and then called the Rev. David Rose, who is the President of the Standing Committee. He invited me to join the Zoom meeting they had scheduled for 4 pm today. It will be David's last as he has accepted a call to serve as Rector of a church in Virginia. I let the Standing Committee know what I was beginning to consider. We discussed the sort of due diligence that is now needed as we consider this possibility. I am strongly influenced in this by our Presiding Bishop elect Sean Rowe having announced that there will be no big installation service for him at Washington National Cathedral. It is a move he made to save money not just from the churchwide budget, but from all the dioceses sending their bishops to the event. That shift is significant as it embodies the church we are called to be. It caused me to wonder again about why we are in a fine multi-columned home from the 1880s. The Standing Committee was supportive of our engaging in that work to see what the costs and benefits of this move would be.

July 10

I met on Zoom with the Rev. Walter Hobgood who was selected as President of the Standing Committee after I left the meeting yesterday. He is my fifth president and I have begun each time with a conversation about how we want to work together in these roles. We will add a monthly Zoom meeting for us to check in with each other the week before the Standing Committee

meets. In the afternoon, I had two Zoom meetings, one with a priest in another diocese trying to think through how to consider a possible call to serve as a bishop and then with an aspirant for Holy Orders who feels called to be a deacon.

July 11

I had a check in meeting with a priest and Canon Lasch and I met with Ken Shrader by phone as we get the process lined up to approve him for ordination to the priesthood. I met with the Very Rev. Melanie Lemburg in the afternoon. I had asked her as the Dean of the Savannah Convocation to assist me in thinking through the pros and cons of moving the diocesan office.

July 12

I had an early morning meeting in the office with a person feeling called to the priesthood. Then I met with the diocesan staff who are in town to tour the former St. Michael and All Angels together as we consider how we could use the second floor to accommodate us if we move the office there.

July 13

The Gospel involves risk. 20 years and 1 day ago we started King of Peace Episcopal Day School in Kingsland, a full day, year-round preschool with eight staff and five students. This evening the yard at King of Peace Church was full of students and alumni who include high school and college graduates. The Preschool has been listed by Georgia's licensing agency as within the top two percent of preschools in the state for more than a decade. Quality-rated childcare matters. I give thanks for Director Gillian Butler, for the volunteer treasurer of two decades, Joann White, and so many wonderful teachers and staff, board members, parents and



The 20th anniversary of King of Peace Episcopal Day School in Kingsland. Director, Gillian Butler, speaks to the gathering (at left) and a portion of the fun and games is shown at right.

students. While started to be a ministry, the symbiotic relationship between the church and school allows each to run less expensively than if on its own so that each is more successful in meeting its mission because of the other.

I was so very saddened to learn that a shooting at a campaign rally today ended with two people dead and our former President Donald Trump injured. I am so distressed by this shooting. It is scary how close the gunman came to an assassination, and he did kill a member of the audience. I called on social media for others to join me in praying for all who mourn, for a quick recovery for President Trump, and pray for our nation.

July 14

While I did not preach today, a sermon of mine was preached in quite a few churches as I supplied a sermon on the 23rd Psalm for this Sunday in the Sermons That Work series. I wrote of how Jesus is with us as we make our way through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

July 15

A Monday off at home.

July 16

I had an early morning coffee shop meeting with a priest, checked in with the Canons on staff, and caught up on emails, mail, and phone calls.

July 17

The day included a morning check in call with a seminarian, an afternoon Zoom board meeting of the Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center, and an in person check in with a retired priest. I also wrote to the members of the Standing Committee to provide an interim report on the possibility of selling the current house that serves as the diocesan office and moving to the former St. Michael and All Angels.

July 18-21

I met with an aspirant for the priesthood by Zoom and a phone call with the Bishop of California as a reference for a priest considering a call to join a diocesan staff. Then Victoria and

I drove to Mississippi to take part in the ordination and consecration of the Rt. Rev. Dorothy Sanders Wells as the Bishop of the Diocese of Mississippi. There was a dinner at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson on Friday (the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum are co-located) followed by the liturgy at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Ridgeland (*a group photo of the bishops is shown below*). It was such a moving occasion with good music, a great sermon by the Rev. Dr. Teresa Frye Brown, and the solemnity of being able to join colleagues in laying on hands as Dorothy was made a bishop. What a joyful day. We returned on Sunday.

July 22

A last day before vacation began with Canon Lasch and I meeting on Zoom with a person who will be assisting us with a church in transition. Canon Willoughby and I met with our consultants Mendi and Todd and Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Carey Wooten, on

planning dates and locations for listening sessions. I also sent the committee an email sharing the Living Hope theme for the planning process and this year's convention. The hope within us is to be embodied in our actions as we step out in faith. We deepen our trust in Jesus when we move from having hope to living hope.

July 23-30

Victoria and I made a pilgrimage to Mexico City to experience something of Latino spirituality. We stayed in an AirBnB just outside the grounds of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We also took part in the monthly Feast of St. Jude at San Hipólito Church as we prayed in those places with fellow pilgrims. This is both time away from work and time to pray. It was also a part of our learning more about Latino culture and practicing our Spanish. I really enjoyed being able to spend some time with the Rt. Rev. Sally Sue Hernandez, the Bishop of Mexico.



July 31

A soft landing back at work with time in the office to begin catching up by meeting with staff and following up on emails and mail.

August 1

The Board of the Corporation of the Diocese met to check in on the investments of the Diocese and those overseen by the Diocese on behalf of congregations. The combined assets are currently worth \$14.4 million. This is, in part, due to the diocese adding \$300,000 between paying off internal loans to buy the diocesan office and a campus ministry house in Statesboro. I also visited yesterday and today with the Rev. Canon Bob and Jan Carter. Bob has gone into hospice care at home as there are no remaining options for battling cancer.

August 2

Jan Carter called me as I arrived at the office to let me know that Bob had just died. I was able to be with her across those first hours of making notifications and arrangements. They had been such great friends and partners in ministry for 39 years. I also contacted all of the chairs of advisory Commissions and the Committees with canonical authority, including the Finance Committee, Commission on Ministry, and Liturgical Commission. I am beginning the process toward nominating persons to convention to fill the roughly 50 positions on these groups.

August 3

I wrote my sermon for tomorrow and caught up on emails in the morning and took time off in the afternoon.

August 4

Victoria and I rode to Vidalia this morning for a lovely visit to Annunciation to begin the



2024-2025 schedule. There were four confirmations and one reception and a covered-dish lunch afterward. The Very Rev. Denise Vaughn has served here since 2015 and she loves her people and they love her. In the afternoon, I followed news of a tropical storm intensifying in the Gulf of Mexico. (*An acolyte from Annunciaton is shown above*)

August 5

Monday started with checking in on the storm that is now Hurricane Debby. I worked with staff to get an email out to clergy and wardens with prep and insurance info as well as our source (Enki Research) for good coastal Georgia interpretation of the data that has proven reliable across the years. The storm is expected to bring historic rain levels with inland flooding. Having done what we can, we wait, and watch, and pray.

August 6

The tropical storm did not dump as much rain as feared. We checked in with our churches and found no significant damage, though there is some relatively water damage to a couple of churches and to clergy and parishioner's homes.

I met with the Canons on staff via Microsoft Teams. After lunch, I had a Zoom meeting with a possible successor for Chancellor of the Diocese. The Rev. Jim Elliott is not looking to step down from the role any time soon, but we want to have significant overlap of at least a year or some years as this seems wise. Today, I met with Jim and an attorney who clearly has the proven skill, loves the Episcopal Church, and could certainly do the work with the right spirit. Now, we allow time for prayerful consideration.

August 7

Our Wednesday staff meeting focused on upcoming events from next week's Standing Committee meeting through the 2025 diocesan convention. Two legal matters arose during the day, one needing a referral for an attorney in Texas that the bishop of Northwest Texas assisted me with. The other an immigration matter for a priest. I also met on Zoom with the Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center.

August 8

On Thursday, I spoke to two priests by phone and worked on sermons for my next three days of preaching different texts in varied contexts.

August 9

I officiated and preached the funeral of the Rev. Canon James Robert Carter, Jr. at St. Paul the Apostle in Savannah. To say that he loomed large as a positive and affirming person in my discernment and formation process for the priesthood is to put it mildly. Bob and Jan Carter were present at the Commission on Ministry meetings and then visited us while at Virginia Seminary. I asked Canon Carter to preach my ordination to the priesthood. Born in Selma, Alabama in 1938, eventually making his way to the Diocese of Georgia in 1973, Bob was ordained in 1977. Beginning in 1988, he

became the Canon to the Ordinary, serving under both Bishop Harry Shipps and Bishop Henry Louttit until 2004. As I said in my sermon, "For decades, Bob and Jan have been a vital, sustained, pastoral presence that has knit us all together with phone calls, notes, and the occasional package in the mail. They are among those wonderful prayer warriors that you know when they say they are going to pray for you, that they will be praying faithfully. Bob and Jan Carter are people you knew you could count on. Always." (*The committal is pictured below*)

August 10

We were standing on holy ground today for a Celebration of New Ministry at Christ the King in Valdosta as the Rev. Jim Pace became the congregation's second rector since it came into the Episcopal Church on Easter Eve 1990 with the Very Rev. Stan White as their founding Rector. Dr. Pace arrived in Valdosta in June 2020 as a bi-vocational priest who was taking the role of Dean of the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences at Valdosta State. A clinical Professor of Nursing with three decades of experience in teaching, I told the congregation that I was praying for continued healing after Stan's death and I should not have been surprised that the Holy Spirit sent a nurse.

August 11

Victoria and I were in Quitman for a visitation to St. James Episcopal Church, where our



diocesan Chancellor, the Rev. Jim Elliott, is Rector.

August 12

A Monday off at home.

August 13

Some matters that arise needing attention are difficult to track in a journal as they get a little time each day for emails, texts, and phone calls. I had been working with the Rev. John Butin, a bi-vocational priest who has expertise in immigration law, and the Rev. Kevin Kelly, Interim Rector of St. Paul the Apostle in Savannah since the middle of last week on securing a new type of visa, H1B, for the Rev. Leonel Polanco de la Cruz. Padre Leonel is a citizen of the Dominican Republic who since 2019 has been pastoring the Spanish language congregation San Pablo. He is becoming a mentor for seminarians from Sewanee's School of Theology who want to serve in a Latino congregation. San Pablo is particularly well suited for this as they are unusual in the broad representation from a number of Latin American countries. This ongoing work needed more attention from me and diocesan staff this week even as we worked on the strategic planning process, making the case for moving the diocesan office, and the usual issues we face.

I spoke to the downtown Kiwanis Club meeting at The Pirate's House restaurant on how something from my profession, keeping a Rule of Life, can add something to time management taught to business professionals. I also met with Tom Welch, the Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. Like the Daughters' of the King for men, the group is older and influenced the founding of the DOK. At 4, I met on Zoom with the Standing Committee to discuss selling our current office and moving to

the former St. Michael and All Angels. I sent out a presentation outlining the case last Thursday via email to give them time for due consideration. Canon Katie Willoughby did a lot of work on that case presentation. Not all of the members could be present and for an important matter like this, we all want the input of the full committee. An email vote will follow.

August 14

Work on a complete renovation of the rooms in Lodge Two at Honey Creek is progressing nicely. This was funded by the sale of the Vicarage of the former St. Richard of Chichester on Jekyll Island. We had a staff meeting in the morning and then I met with the Finance Committee at noon. In the afternoon, I met with a deacon considering moving to serve a different congregation as the church she has served is searching for its interim rector. Work on the case for an H1B Visa continued.

August 15

I started the day at my doctor's office where routine blood work looked good. Phone calls with clergy started the day. I also met with a person that a diocesan discernment committee declined to advance to the Commission on Ministry as an aspirant for the priesthood. We discussed licensed lay ministries that could be a way to engage more with what the Spirit is doing in his life. In the afternoon, the Rev. John Butin filed the papers on the immigration matter. There is no doubt that Padre Leonel meets the hopes for that type of visa that allows employers to bring in people from other countries if they provide an essential skill that is needed. Hopefully we made that case well as his ministry is thriving and we have the opportunity to do more with the new mentorship program with Sewanee.



August 16

I was at Savannah Toyota at 7 am for an oil change after 115,000 miles on the Camry Hybrid they gave the Diocese for my use. Today offered time to catch up after a very full week. During the day I learned that Canon Katie Willoughby has been offered a position with United Way that is a nice step up for her. I knew that she was looking to use her considerable gifts and expertise to serve the community, so that this is not a surprise. We have been colleagues for 10 years, as I was Canon to the Ordinary when she became the Canon for Administration. Katie and her daughter Amelia will be missed from the team. They will, of course, continue to be a part of the Diocese as parishioners.

August 17

A day off other than writing my sermon for tomorrow after a busy week.

August 18

An enjoyable Sunday morning with St. George's in Savannah is a reminder about the deep satisfaction of serving in one place over the long haul (24 years as priest with 14 on diocesan staff). I have been with them as Canon to the Ordinary and as Bishop. As in so many of our congregations this has created strong bonds that matter a lot to me with people all across the Diocese.

August 19

A Monday off at home.

August 20

In the morning, emails went to former parishioners of St. Michael and All Angels and the current email list of the Church of the Epiphany notifying them of the plan to sell Diocesan House and move our offices to the new Episcopal Center at Washington and Waters Avenues (*shown here at left*). These were followed a half-hour later by my email to the clergy and wardens of the Diocese. A construction dumpster in the driveway at the office heralds the beginning of a necessary purge. In the 2018 change of offices for the Diocese, everything in the building was moved to the new location other than some materials donated to our collection at the Georgia Historical Society. We need to look through everything to only move what is needed in order to effect a thorough reset since the Diocese moved to 611 East Bay Street in the 1950s.

August 21

News of the new Episcopal Center at the former St. Michael's and All Angels was in today's *From the Field*, which also included notice of Canon Katie Willoughby taking a new job and the first two listening sessions for the Strategic Planning Process happening this weekend in Albany and

Augusta. A lot of change is taking place in the latter part of this year. Staff met in the office in the morning and at the new office space in the afternoon. I also spent time on the phone with a deacon at a church experiencing some conflict.

August 22

The purge begins as I worked with staff in the morning on what we can get rid of before the move whether by throwing away or having shredded. This included getting rid of some office equipment that had not been used in some decades that was moved with us in 2018 as well as working with Canon Loren Lasch to go through boxes in the basement that had been in an off-sight storage unit on Bull Street near DeRenne Avenue. The more than 50 boxes include bank statements from the 1990s and correspondence files from Bishop Louttit and Bishop Benhase. Some we are throwing away, some will be shredded, and about a third we will offer to the Georgia Historical Society for the collection they maintain. In the afternoon, I turned back to the Title IV case recused from another Diocese and took steps designed to conclude the matter with a pastoral directive. I checked in with our consultants ahead of this weekend's listening sessions for the strategic planning process.



August 23

For about an hour and a half this morning, we continued the purge at the office, carefully working to preserve what we need while decluttering and getting rid of things like binders of information from conferences that met 40-50 years ago. I have said in some different settings that if the church could be saved by conferences with neat solutions in binders, we would not be in decline. What we need is faithfulness to the Gospel that is never a one-size-fits-all solution. I met with Pembroke Faucette at the new Episcopal Center. A parishioner of St. Paul the Apostle, he is the project manager for the renovation. He estimates another six months of work will be needed with the next big project being a significant upgrade to the wiring to change the capacity of the 1950s school rooms to be able to handle the needs of an office today in both electricity and internet.

August 24

I wrote my sermon for tomorrow and we drove to Albany. I met Kristi and Bob Baranko, a mother and son at St. Patrick's to record another video for our convention in November. The first listening session met today at St. Paul's in Albany. Canon Joshua Varner is assisting at the site to make sure everyone has what they need, but I am not going to be in the sessions and neither will my staff. They are being interviewed separately for the strategic planning process.

August 25

What a grand morning in Albany as we held a Celebration of New Ministry at St. Patrick's as the Rev. Kyle Mackey has become their seventh Rector since the founding of the congregation in 1961. The liturgy also included confirmations/receptions (*shown at left*)

As the morning was unfolding, I got a call from my Mom's friend Claudette while getting vested for the liturgy. She was checking on Mom as they go to church together and she had not seen her yet. She discovered Mom had fallen and was in pain. As the procession was getting underway, Mom was in an ambulance headed to the Emergency Room. Victoria and I cut the after-church time short and drove back to Savannah. Thankfully Mom did not break any bones, but she was bruised and confused when I got to the ER. Claudette had so kindly stayed with her the whole time.

August 26-28

I had to mostly set aside work for a few days, keeping up with texts and emails as best I could while being a son came first. Mom was moved to the ICU on Monday as no step-down rooms were available. She remained there until I got her discharged on Wednesday. Her needs have changed and I was able to get more assistance for her on the return home. I moved her from Independent Living to Assisted Living at Harmony with volunteer assistance from some diocesan staff as well as clergy and staff of her church, St. Peter's, making quick work moving her down a floor when it would have taken professional movers some days before they were available. We worked to get her enough to start living in the new apartment, but left a lot in the old one for now. Fellow residents greeted her like a returned hero, cheering Mom as she arrived back home. I have seen this before when other residents come home from the hospital and found it a touching way to return.

August 29

I met with staff, working to catch up on so many various concerns after my time caring for my Mom. Of course, I also visited with her for

a good while including hanging up art on her walls. But, today was mostly about answering emails and phone calls and handling mail that had come in.

August 30

On Friday, Victoria and I dealt with Mom's old apartment, getting everything out, and the empty apartment clean. This was a good home for her for 18 months.

August 31

On a Saturday off, visiting with Victoria's Mom and family gathered in Statesboro, I learned that the Rev. Tom Arledge died. He was a priest of the Diocese of Atlanta who lived on the border of the dioceses in Perry. He devotedly served Christ Church in Cordele for 13 years in retirement, before fully retiring in 2014. With Bishop Rob Wright out of the state on the family's preferred day for the funeral on October 5, I will officiate. It is an honor. I find clergy funerals to be a meaningful part of this call as chief pastor.

September 1

I made my visitation to the closest congregation, the Church of the Epiphany, that meets in what we are creating to be the new Episcopal Center. It is .4 miles from our home in the Live Oak Neighborhood north of Daffin Park.

September 2

A Labor Day Monday off at home.

September 3

An 8 am Zoom meeting with Province IV bishops started my day. I checked in with staff on ongoing projects and upcoming meetings. I



My visitation to the Church of the Epiphany shows the diocesan chapel as it looked in September 2024 with pews sitting on the floor after the carpet was taken out due to flooding.

also met with a person about licensing him as a lay preacher and lay worship leader.

September 4

I spent Wednesday morning with my Mom at the eye doctor. I also met with both an aspirant for and a postulant for Holy Orders to support two persons answering a call to the priesthood. In the evening, I met at the Episcopal Center with the vestry and other parishioners of the Church of the Epiphany.

September 5

I had a lot of meetings on Thursday including a priest returning from rehab, the President of the Standing Committee, and my interview with a consultant for the strategic planning process. During the full day, we got word that the approval came through for an H1B visa we

worked on for the Rev. Leonel Polanco. We knew he qualified for the program. I am relieved that our application made that clear to the proper officials. The Rev. John Butin and his paralegal assistant, Carmen, did a lot of work on this as did St. Paul's Interim, the Rev. Kevin Kelly.

September 6

I wrote my sermon for Sunday, met with a priest and a deacon who came in for appointments and did some catching up, but still have a lot of follow through needed after taking off days last week to support my Mom. I delegate what I can, but some things have to fall to the bishop.

September 7

On our 39th anniversary, Victoria and I drove to Thomasville. I officiated a small wedding in

the chapel and recorded video for convention. The Valdosta listening sessions for lay people and clergy met at Christ Church today.

September 8

I made my visitation to St. Thomas in Thomasville, where they are doing well with the Rev. Wallace Marsh as a bi-vocational priest and lay leaders taking on more. This model of ministry can work, but it is not easy to achieve and maintain balance. During the liturgy, we had one adult baptism as well as confirmations and receptions. I held a discussion in the parish hall afterwards where the United Methodist congregation that meets in that space provided the reception. Victoria and I had a rainy drive home. The final in-person listening session met this afternoon in Savannah.

September 9

A Monday off at home.

September 10

The morning began with an 8 am Zoom meeting with the Diocesan Treasurer. I also had a long meeting with Canons Katie Willoughby and Loren Lasch as we worked through the transition as Katie leaves the diocesan staff after nearly a decade as Canon for Administration.

September 11

On Wednesday morning, I met architects at the Episcopal Center as we seek professional input on the planned elevator and other accessibility issues. Canon Willoughby and I met with the Finance Committee at noon and Canon Varner and I met with our strategic planning consultants and committee chair, Carey Wooten, on themes emerging from the listening sessions.

September 12

Diocesan staff in town today (Dade is busy on renovations at Honey Creek and Liz is at a Communicators meeting in Oklahoma) took Canon Willoughby out to lunch on her next to last day of work. I also had a couple of phone appointments with clergy.

September 13-14

On Friday, I headed to Honey Creek after lunch to meet with the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee at Honey Creek for a Postulancy Retreat. One person is feeling called to be a deacon and four feeling called to the priesthood. The two groups have worked a lot to create and refine this retreat to improve on the prior process of two 45-60 minute interviews, one each with the CoM and SC separately to an overnight retreat. Now we have worship and meals together with those we are discerning with and in this case four interviews, each focused on a different area like one's sense of call or the aspirant's spiritual practices and rule of life. These are with smaller groups with CoM and SC members both in each small group, instead of sitting across the table from a large committee. This takes the pressure off any single interview. I am so grateful for the faithful work these two groups do in discerning the Spirit's call in those with whom they meet. The meeting ran longer than I planned on and I didn't end up with time to pick up Victoria before I drove to Albany after the meeting. I spent the drive calling those we met with to give them the news as I made my way across the state. Together with some other needed calls, I ended up in conversation almost all the way there.

September 15

The Mother Church of the western part of the Diocese, St. Paul's in Albany, is thriving with



RacialJusticeGA unveils the marker and an ussie with the Copes as we visited both churches he serves.

the Rev. Galen Mirate as rector and the Rev. Joy Davis as deacon. The choir sounded great with Trip Parker's leadership. My visitation included welcoming new Episcopalians and blessing a completely renovated parish hall thanks to a bequest from parishioner, Jo Jones. I drove back across the state on a rare weekend on the road without Victoria.

September 16

On Monday, I was at a Savannah Hospice's Demere Center to give an hour-long presentation as part of their Institute for Story's annual StoryCon. This is led by the Rev. Bertice Berry, PhD., the deacon assigned to Christ Church who began a storytelling ministry online in pandemic. She asked me to use my photography and stories to show a different way of sharing stories. It seemed to connect well with those attending the event. I was glad to be able to both support Bertice's ministry and Hospice Savannah, who is assisting me in care for my Mom. Hospice's Story Keeping program helps in recording the life stories of patients at end of life and so provides an important resource to the community.

September 17

In preparation for the sale of our office on E 34th Street in Savannah and move to the new Episcopal Center, work is being done on the roof of our current building. The work will not only ensure a safe and secure building while the staff continues to work on E 34th Street, but will also encourage the sale of the building once it is listed. In the afternoon, I was at the new Episcopal Center to go over options on insulation and HVAC to bring down the electrical costs for our new offices.

September 18

Today was the last one for applicants for Canon for Administration. I met with a supply priest in the morning and a lay person with a Masters in Divinity interested in being licensed to lead Morning Prayer and preach at his church that is not able to secure a priest for every Sunday.

September 19

The Reference Panel of the Church Disciplinary Board met on Zoom and followed up as needed. I also worked on my sermons for the busy weekend ahead.

September 20

Members of Racial Justice Georgia unveiled a marker in Brunswick today remembering those killed in racial violence in Glynn County. Located on the grounds of the former Risley School, the marker has a QR code where those seeing the marker can find out more about the history of lynching as we look to make better communities through healing and justice. It was good to have Dr. Catherine Meeks with us as she has been a great partner, assisting me personally and RacialJusticeGA in this work. Her aid began when she was Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center in Atlanta and has continued after she retired from that role.

September 21

I was honored to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the Church of the Good Shepherd just ahead of the September 24 Feast Day of the founder, Deaconess Anna Alexander. This Saint of Georgia is recognized for her holiness of life by the whole Episcopal Church since 2018. RacialJusticeGA was also present with those ending the pilgrimage with our worship today.

September 22

We enjoyed a blessed morning at St Athanasius in Brunswick as we continued celebrating the feast of St. Anna Alexander in this church inspired Anna to start Good Shepherd Church and School. The meal after worship was so good. I should comment on this more as people go to a lot of trouble to make the visitations special and meals are often a part of that. Also this Friday to Sunday gave Victoria and I a window into the Rev. DeWayne Cope's ministry as he is a part of RacialJusticeGA and also serves both Good Shepherd and St. Athanasius churches.

Then I presided and preached at the closing Eucharist for Cursillo #129 as that retreat came to a joyous close today at Honey Creek. This is the second Cursillo retreat this year, which is the first time we have had two in a year since the lock-down of the pandemic. It takes a whole team to make each weekend a transformative experience for those attending and I really appreciate all the work that goes into it going smoothly.

September 23

A Monday off at home.

September 24

I started the day meeting with a vestry member of a congregation who wanted to talk through some concerns with me. Daniel Garrick and I went to the Episcopal Center to walk through the space with our internet provider who will also be handling our door systems with cameras and a remote open function to let in visitors. In the afternoon, I met with a woman feeling called to the priesthood.

September 25

A large tropical storm in the Gulf is now Hurricane Helene. The track looks like it will go on a line just east of the Alabama/Georgia state line and will likely prove devastating for Bainbridge and Thomasville, Albany, and Americus in our diocese. As usual, Episcopal Relief and Development is holding daily Zoom check-ins with those in the likely path. In the afternoon, I met on Zoom with my bishop colleague group which includes bishops from Maryland, California, Michigan, and Texas. It is so helpful to be able to have this small group to support me in my ministry as I help assist them in theirs.

September 26

Canon Loren Lasch and Joshua Varner and I interviewed three people for Canon for Administration today. We were also staying on updates on Hurricane Helene. The likely track shifted very slightly eastward today, but is still aiming at the western side of the Diocese. By evening, the eye is very clear as the storm has been upgraded to Category 3.

September 27

Hurricane Helene made landfall in the big bend of Florida as a massive Category 4 storm and rapidly moved into Georgia. The powerful storm impacted every corner of the Diocese of Georgia and we have a lot of clean up ahead of us in many areas. Our towns are hurting from Valdosta and Douglas to Vidalia and Louisville. The track went much farther east and Augusta has so many trees down and damage that will take a long time to recover from. This includes the Rev. Erwin Veale who is relieved to have survived the night as he and Virginia were in the house with trees crashing into their rooms. Truly terrifying and he is so clearly grateful and concerned for others as we talk about the experience. Honey Creek has a lot of trees down, and Jonnard Cottage and the cabin by the dock have relatively minor damage. Our retreat center is otherwise okay. There is significant tree damage in so many homes and at four churches. Christ the King in Valdosta's roof is damaged. St. Andrew's in Douglas has a large tree on their classroom building that punctured the roof there. At St. Bartholomew's in Savannah, a pecan tree hit a power pole and crushed into the sanctuary roof. In Swainsboro, the parish hall has severe damage with two pine trees in the building. The diocesan staff is working through the day to stay in contact with folks and assess damage. The AlertMedia system that Episcopal Relief and Development

provided us some years ago is a huge help with this as we send out a call and people can answer by texting a single number to let us know if they have damage at home or the church and then we follow up where there are issues.

September 28

Victoria and I are offering worship tomorrow that will go live at 10 am at the Diocese of Georgia's Facebook page. Victoria reads and I officiate Morning Prayer and preach from the Episcopal Center in Savannah. We used music from around the Diocese created when we were offering online worship in pandemic. There was no power at the Episcopal Center, or at home, but we recorded on an iPhone and then I edited it in the undercroft of Christ Church as the Mother Church of Georgia is in the part of downtown with underground utilities that got power and internet back sooner. We know of churches that can't be in their buildings tomorrow, and while many folks don't have power and internet, we do see them on Facebook using their cell phones in some places where they can't be in their church.

September 29

Victoria and I drove to Augusta for my planned visitation to the Church of the Good Shepherd. It was to be the last Sunday before their new rector, the Rev. Dr. Porter C. Taylor starts work this coming week. But he had moved to Augusta to settle in just before Hurricane Helene paid a visit, totaling one of their cars in the driveway. Porter jumped right to work, meeting others at Good Shepherd to check the property and then to clean it up. As he was already serving, I invited him to preside as I preached his first liturgy at Good Shepherd before his first official day on the job. There is no electricity and many streets in the area are blocked by trees. But we were given a path to get there and had no



trouble arriving at the church for a single, unforgettable, candlelit Eucharist that included receiving one person into the Episcopal Church. They had a great group of acolytes including one serving for the first time, in a dark church with the bishop. We saw long lines for gasoline, learning that people were waiting 2-3 hours to get to the pumps. We were blessed in having gas in Savannah that was sufficient for the round trip.

September 30

I had a Monday off at home instead of going to Honey Creek for the Fall Clergy Conference that we had to postpone due to the Hurricane. The Retreat Center came through well and could host the event, but it is not the right time for clergy to gather with so much ministry taking place in the aftermath of the storm.

October 1

We are continuing as a staff to stay in touch with folks around the Diocese on insurance issues and using Episcopal Relief and Development funds together with money raised through the Bishop's Fund for Disaster Relief to provide direct aid both to neighbors who are hurting and to congregations that suffered damage.

October 2

I drove to Thomasville as previously planned to be at All Saints for an evening gathering of parishioners from our three Episcopal Churches in the town. On the way, I was able to stop by our three Episcopal Churches in Valdosta, visiting with the Rev. Susan Gage and some parishioners at St. Barnabas and with the Rev. Hal Weidman at Christ Church. While the churches came through okay, except for minor damage, the town is suffering with thousands of

trees down everywhere. I saw so many damaged homes and businesses. It will take a long time to recover. At All Saints, there was an excellent presentation on Good Shepherd Church's buildings and their history put on by Thomasville Landmarks. We are raising money to restore Good Shepherd's buildings, not just to preserve the history, but also as a site of great ministry now.

October 3

I started the day in Albany as the only place I could get a hotel room in Southwest Georgia. This made it easy for me to stop by St. Andrew's in Douglas to see the tree damage first hand. There is a large pine on the classroom building, but the county and the town sustained much worse damage. The church and parish hall came through with no damage and the people of St. Andrew's have been feeding the community and providing other assistance. The Diocese of Alabama has disaster assistance en route with portable showers and lots of necessary items to hand out in a town where stores have not been able to fully reopen.

October 4

On Friday, I had a regular check-in call with the Rev. Walter Hobgood, who is the President of the Standing Committee. I also wrote my two sermons for this weekend, while catching up on phone calls and emails after being on the road.

October 5

On Saturday, I was at Christ Church in Cordele for the Rev. Tom Arledge's funeral. It is a privilege as bishop to officiate and preach at funerals for clergy. I enjoyed learning more about Tom, who I knew as Canon to the Ordinary when he was advocating for Christ Church to get a grant from Bishop Benhase'

Campaign for Congregational Development. He succeeded and as he fully retired from serving in Cordele after 13 years of ministry during his retirement, he was followed by a full-time priest. Tom served for 21 years at St. Christopher at the Crossroads in Perry and St. Mary's in Montezuma. All the stories that people told me amplified what I already knew about his steadfast, faithful ministry that touched so many people's lives.

October 6

On this joyful 50th Anniversary of St. Francis of the Islands on Savannah's Wilmington Island, we baptized Betty, confirmed Cami, and received Barbara as we gave thanks for the past half century and looked ahead to the next (*baptism shown above at right*). Some of the founding members remain active in the church that is well led by the Rev. Ian Lasch.

October 7

A Monday off at home.

October 8

I met in the afternoon with the Standing Committee to check in on two people preparing for ordination. I also used the time to catch up on all that has been going on of late in the Diocese with this group that is an important way I receive counsel on my work.

October 9

On Wednesday, Canons Loren Lasch and Joshua Varner joined me in interviewing the last two of five people for the Canon for Administration position. These interviews had to be rescheduled because of the Hurricane. We will pause to prayerfully consider the five candidates before deciding on who to interview in a second round to be in person.



October 10

As I needed to get to Augusta today ahead of my visitation to EDS, I used the opportunity to see some people in person. First, I visited Saint Paul's where I surprised the Revs. Eric Biddy and Kimberly Dunn as well as Parish Administrator Elisabeth Price and her son, Timothy. As the church is served by underground lines on the same grid as the Army's CyberCommand, they had electricity and internet across the many days when almost no one else in the area had either. They always open their church doors as a warming or cooler center through the year, but they went all in to also provide food for those looking to recharge their devices and themselves. There are so many stories of how they were able to meaningfully support the downtown, including being a good place for National Guard members to be during time off in their post-Hurricane deployment.

Next, I visited with the Rev. Larry and Pam Jesion at the Byllesby Center that has served more than 2,000 meals since the Hurricane passed through. They have been working with members of other churches to support neighbors in need in the Harrisburg area. The Jesions have been doing such faithful work to



realize the vision of the ministries of Christ Church continuing after the vestry voted to give me the keys to the buildings in 2020. I learned that the refrigerator that was less than what they needed was on their last legs and so used the Bishop's Fund for them to purchase what they need. It will be delivered on Saturday.

Then I was at Our Savior in Martinez to record an interview with Kiara and Matthew Bouyea to talk about their faith for a video for convention. The vestry was meeting as the interview ended and so I dropped in to the first of their meeting at the Very Rev. Al Crumpton's invitation. The church sustained no damage, but they have many trees down on the property and have been sustaining an ongoing clean-up effort.

October 11

I count it all joy that I get to be the Bishop for Episcopal Day School in Augusta and support, as I can, the ministries of the faculty and staff to a great student body. They got back to school on Wednesday after Hurricane Helene in a city very much still in early recovery and still celebrated Episcopal Schools Week. The gym was full with more than 400 students, faculty,

and parents. Canon Lasch sent me a video of the hand motions for their theme song for the year, so I was able to join in on the fun. I then talked to them about prayer, teaching them how they can talk, whisper, shout, or even dance. God just loves for them to share what is on their hearts and minds. I visited with third graders, using the symbol of my office—the mitre, crozier, pectoral cross, and episcopal ring—as an entry to talking about what a bishop does. They had so many great questions, from “Why do I have to wear that weird hat?” to “What is most difficult about being bishop?” I also checked in with the senior staff as they will be calling a new school chaplain as the Rev. Sonia Sullivan Clifton has taken a call to a congregation across the river in South Carolina.

October 12

What a wonderful day in Dublin as I got the privilege of ordaining the Rev. Ken Shradar to the Sacred Order of Priests at Christ Church, the same church he was baptized in at 13 (*shown at right with his wife, Kristy as I take an ussie*). A bishop gets a close connection to those preparing for ordination in corresponding quarterly in Ember Day Letters and the response to those as well as in meetings with the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee.

October 13

Victoria and I enjoyed a delightful morning at St. John's Church in Savannah where they have added new ways of connecting with their neighbors including outdoor art exhibits in a covered walkway on their grounds and Sunday Evening Sessions that make great opportunities to invite someone to attend.

October 14

A Monday off at home included getting a letter

written for the Rev. Leonel Polanco to take with him to his Visa interview in Santo Domingo tomorrow.

October 15

Met with Canons Loren Lasch and Joshua Varner to catch up on a variety of concerns before the three of us met with our strategic planning consultants on Zoom. We touched base on several matters and then after the meeting, we looped in Liz Williams and edited the survey set to go out this Thursday. News came during the morning that Leonel's Visa interview went well.

In the evening, the Diocesan Council met on Zoom. I presented the budgets pointing out the new line item for \$50,000 in budget support from the Diocese to Honey Creek that is in addition to covering the Executive Director's salary and benefits. This level of support for our retreat center had been the practice 15 years ago and in recent years, the Diocese has needed to send money to Honey Creek as events cancel and the fixed costs have to be covered. Putting that number in the budget still leaves a nearly \$19,000 deficit in the Honey Creek budget as I could not find a responsible way to reduce the diocesan budget to add more to the HC support line item. We have to take a new, hard look at our diocesan Retreat Center in 2025 as working harder on the same model will result in closing Honey Creek and selling the property. That is not the outcome we want. I will appoint a Task Group of Diocesan Council in December to do that work.

In the Council meeting, the Very Rev. Tom Purdy presented the work of the Saluda Cottage Task Group that did the detailed work in getting an inspection of the house the Diocese has owned in North Carolina since the early



1900s and looking at usage. They also polled people around the Diocese for their thoughts on the cottage. This was a perfect example of the work that needs to happen on our retreat center.

October 16

Our staff meeting covered both upcoming diocesan events and planning for our move in early 2025. I met via Zoom with a person feeling called to the priesthood. I also had a call to check in with a priest who is serving a curacy in another diocese.

October 17

I had an early morning phone call with a priest, set up via text last evening. She wanted to check in as she is addressing a situation with parishioners and wanted to think it through with me. Her instincts are right as she addresses the situation well. The visioning survey for our strategic planning process went live today. By the Zoom meeting of the strategic planning committee this evening, we already had 96 responses, which shows strong interest. I also met in the afternoon with staff about a plan to



shift Canon Joshua Varner's job responsibilities in order to address the need for greater connection that is at the forefront of what we are hearing in the strategic planning process.

October 18

In the morning, I checked in with a priest by phone on which licenses best fit the lay person's training and the congregation's needs ahead of issuing lay minister licenses in her congregation. In the afternoon, I met with a priest to assist in dealing with conflict in a congregation and then I toured the office again with the real estate agent, Jesse Valentine, who is listing the property for sale. He now lives in the former rectory of St. Michael and All Angels and so will be next door neighbor to our new Episcopal Center.

October 19

On Saturday, I wrote my sermon for tomorrow and edited a video of Kiara and Matthew Bouyea at Our Savior in Martinez talking about their faith and why they go to church. This is for the upcoming convention. The video work is something I enjoy and doing that editing on what would otherwise be a day off did not feel

like work as it is something I enjoy giving to the Diocese.

October 20

On Sunday, Victoria and I were at St. Matthew's in Savannah. This is another church where my serving as Canon to the Ordinary for a decade before becoming Bishop created strong ties to a congregation (*at left, Toni Blue assists acolytes before the liturgy at St. Matthew's*). They are in a transition after the Rev. Guillermo Arboleda took a full-time call with the ELCA. He works out of his home in Savannah while serving as the denomination's Program Manager for New Starts. During a previous transition, I officiated two funerals for the congregation and also was with them Palm Sunday through their Holy Week services to Easter. I have also worked with multiple wardens and members of vestry. I got to serve with two new, young acolytes. After the Eucharist, we enjoyed a great lunch and I talked with the full parish hall about where we are as a church now with there being more openings than priests, with many of those being part time positions. I explained what we are doing to support lay leaders while we raise up more priests.

October 21

A Monday off at home.

October 22

On Tuesday, Canons Loren Lasch, and Joshua Varner, joined me in my office at 10 am to interview the first of two candidates we are bringing in to continue discernment toward calling our next Canon for Administration. Some follow up questions had already clarified points from the first Zoom interview and so the conversation was more informal about how the team works together and the needs of the coming years as we respond to the input from

the strategic planning process. I drove the candidate to my home in the Live Oak neighborhood on 38th street to pick up Victoria so the three of us could have lunch together. After dropping Victoria back home, we went to the Episcopal Center, that is just .4 mile from our house to tour the ongoing renovations and get a feel for the space where we will work. We ended back in my office, joined again by the Canons for more discussion. The 4.5 hours together was very helpful. This is a great candidate who could well be the right call.

October 23

On Wednesday, I met with staff in the morning and after lunch, Victoria and I went to Grace Church in Sandersville for my visitation. This is a small and thriving congregation experiencing the difficulty of keeping a priest every Sunday. I met with the vestry at 4 pm for a discussion. They are considering whether to share their priest, the Rev. Steve Clifton, with another congregation and so have lay-led worship on the other Sundays. Steve is working in retirement and wants the discernment to be about the direction the vestry chooses as he will be fine either way. After that meeting, I presided and preached at the Eucharist and then enjoyed a nice dinner, before driving toward home.

October 24

On Thursday, I repeated the process from Tuesday, in meeting with a second candidate at 10 am, then lunch, visiting the Episcopal Center, and returning for more conversation. The 4.5 hours again proved helpful and showed that this too is another excellent candidate who could be the right call for this important job.

October 25

On Friday, our assistant administrator, Daniel Garrick, let me know that he is leaving diocesan staff for personal and health reasons. He had

come to work as a temporary way to fill the gap as Gayle Dawson went on leave for surgery in 2020 and then he became invaluable in supporting our all-online convention that year and was part of our Diocesan House music in pandemic as staff with a talent for singing worked beyond their duties to record songs as a gift to the Diocese.

October 26

The day began with the news that Bishop Dabney Smith died of cancer that he had been battling courageously for some years. He was my buddy from years together on Executive Council when I was Canon to the Ordinary. He has been a good friend. His daughter, the Rev. Ashton Williston, let me know via text. She is an associate at Christ Church Frederica. I wrote my sermon for tomorrow. In the afternoon, we drove to Honey Creek to spend the night at Jonnard Cottage.

October 27

We had a gorgeous morning for blessing the outdoor altar and prayer garden at Holy Nativity in the Village on St. Simons Island.



The prayer garden (*shown on the previous page*) is a wonderful sacred space offered to the community in a very walkable part of the island. I received five persons into the Episcopal Church in a very full church and talked with the whole parish over a tasty lunch following our worship. This church is thriving with the Rev. Tommy Townsend and their gifted lay leaders as they head to their 60th anniversary this Christmas.

Andrew Austin has accepted my offer to become the Canon for Administration. The current Treasurer of the Diocese and an active parishioner of the Church of the Good Shepherd, he had already brought a helpful perspective on our management of the funds entrusted to us. We had other well-qualified applicants. The decision took some discernment about our direction at this time.

October 28

A Monday off at home. After a final review, we sent the last three weeks of our seven-week devotional for Easter 2025 to Joni Woolf to edit for us. She has edited weeks one and two and six and seven. Today, we sent the middle three weeks. A parishioner of Calvary in Americus, she was once the Editor of *Macon Magazine* and we are glad to have her insight benefit this 42,000-word book. It was Victoria's idea to have an Easter devotional as Episcopalians are good about marking Advent and Lent, but often do nothing for the Great 50 Days of Easter. I have written my parts of *Holy Mysteries: Encountering the risen Jesus* outside of my time of work so that it is a gift to the Diocese.

October 29

On Tuesday morning, I finalized the propers for the convention Eucharist and the prayers of the

people for that liturgy. I started writing my convention sermon, bishop's address, and a closing talk. I find these are best written each with the others in mind about what properly goes where for the arc of the convention. Our next Canon for Administration, Andrew Austin, asked to join today's convention meeting. He took part via Zoom ahead of his November 8 start date. I met with the Episcopal Church's Court of Review from 1-3 pm as we continue to work toward a hearing on a priest who is appealing his being deposed from ministry. Then I met by phone with a senior seminarian as we continue to discuss possible first calls out of Sewanee.

October 30

Wednesday in the office began with a staff Eucharist and staff meeting. The Board of the Corporation met today at noon in a hybrid meeting with most of us in person and two joining online. The Board received and accepted the 2023 audit, heard a detailed report on the third quarter performance of our portfolio, and to set the draw rate for 2025, which they kept at 4%. I worked with Loren Lasch and Maggie Lyons who are getting our usual 30th of the month checks out.

While I note it here only occasionally, my Mom is in assisted living at Harmony at Savannah and in Hospice Care since her return from the ICU after a fall in August. I visit with her every day that I am in town. This month, that is every day of the month. I didn't get to Harmony until a little after 4 pm today and I did not find her at a party welcoming new residents, or in her room, or in usual places she might be (game rooms or a friend's room). After a half hour of increasingly anxious searching, I alerted the nursing staff who began to help indoors, while I

looked outdoors. Fifty minutes into the search, someone said that Mom was at church. I then recalled that while she often goes to church on Wednesday mornings for a Bible Study, she planned to also go this evening. I called the Rev. Kelly Steele, the Rector at St. Peter's on Skidaway Island. She left a class to take my call and confirmed that Mom was there, happy, and all was well. It seems a reversal that Mom had remembered church, while I had forgotten that she planned on going this evening and arranged a ride with Deacon Cathy Henderson. St. Peter's has been very good for her.

October 31

In the morning, I had an in person check in with a priest who is serving as interim rector. During the day, I worked with staff on convention details including adjusting the schedule based on input from our strategic plan consultants. In the afternoon, I met with staff at the Episcopal Center as we checked in on progress and considered paint and flooring for our new offices and then went back to Diocesan House to finish the day.

November 1

On Friday, I met by phone with the Rev. Walter Hobgood, to check in with him as President of the Standing Committee ahead of that group's organizational meeting at the end of convention. I finished a first, full draft of my convention sermon. I also met with my spiritual director in the afternoon.

November 2

On Saturday, I joined more than 20,000 others from across the Episcopal Church in watching the Livestream of Investiture of Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe. I remain so grateful for Bishop Michael Curry's nine years in that call and am so pleased for Sean's election.



Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe receives the primatial staff from his predecessor, Bishop Curry.

November 3-4

I went to Atlanta to meet with a group convened by our new Presiding Bishop to reflect with him on changes he is making to adapt church structures to current reality. Much of our governance was created not just for the church of the 1950s and 60s, but for the church we thought we have governance that does not fit well the Episcopal Church as it is. Bishop Rowe was on the The Task Force for Re-Imagining the Episcopal Church (TREC) that worked from 2012-2015. That group proposed sweeping reforms to the church's structures, governance and administration to create a "more nimble and accountable governing structure to undergird the mission of the Church." Their work came to little effect, but the current President of the House of Deputies, Julia Ayala Harris, was also on TREC and there is hope of the church revisiting the idea of adjusting our governance appropriately.

On Sunday afternoon and early Monday morning, I wrote my convention sermon on the move from despair to hope saying, "Despair is what arises in our spirits when we look realistically at this situation but do so without the hope in a God who acts in human history."



An ussie with clergy lined up for the procession into St. Anne's in Tifton for the convention Eucharist.

Adding later, “Whatever causes us to despair, when we tap into the certainty that God can, does, and will show up, we have a reason to hope.”

November 5

Tuesday was election day and across the Diocese of Georgia we have many people very passionate for each of the presidential candidates. I often note how much I value the fact that each Episcopalian here knows fellow parishioners who differs greatly from them on politics yet they miss each other at the altar rail if one of them is not there. In the afternoon, Canon Lasch and Canon Varner and I met with our consultants Mendi and Todd on their plans for the convention.

November 6

Lots of varied convention work on Wednesday included finishing my Bishop’s Address and talking with Mendy Grant, a lay person in Augusta well connected to youth programs in the Diocese. She will assist me in naming a committee of those who work with youth and teens in youth programs to guide me in what comes next as we look to create a position description and hire someone. The position is becoming vacant as I have asked Canon Joshua Varner to become our new Canon for Congregational Vitality as we respond to the listening sessions with a staff member whose work is to better support our lay and ordained leaders through more training and gatherings to offer connections among our churches.

November 7

Lots of last-minute work including going through the convention sermon and Bishop's Address to make final edits. I also wrote my closing presentation for the convention. Victoria and I had very rainy drive across the middle of the state that included a section of road closed by the flooding as every ditch was overflowing as we passed through Tattnall and Toombs County. We met for dinner with diocesan staff including Dr. MJ Harris, who used to work for Bishop Benhase and comes back to volunteer at convention. It was also Andrew Austin's first time with us as staff with his first official day on the job tomorrow.

November 8

The schedule for this year's convention is new as for many years we have begun with Evening Prayer on Thursday. That used to be the context for the Bishop's Address, but in recent years has become optional while remaining well attended. Responding to feedback given to a Task Group of Diocesan Council working on our conventions, we started with the convention Eucharist at 10 am at St. Anne's. We then met for a noon lunch at the UGA Center in Tifton followed by a 1 pm start of convention business. At 5:30 pm, we broke for dinner at the center, which included giving the Deacons' Award,

Deans' Award, and Bishop's Award (*Below shows the applause as Cissy Bowden receives the Bishop's Award*).

Within that schedule, the convention agenda was stripped down to the canonical essentials, such as electing people to offices and presenting the audits for last year and budgets for next year, adding only Todd Brantley and Mendi Nieters presentations and facilitated table discussions. They shared the data on what they have been hearing and then gave clergy and lay delegates further opportunity to rate the priorities. The Living Hope theme infused the meeting and discussions were very hopeful about what we can do together. The positive energy in the room was quite evident.

November 9

Convention resumed on Saturday at 9 am with worship led by youth present for a lock in. We completed the work of the convention in passing the budgets and a resolution on the threshold for when a CPA audit is needed. We watched the fourth and fifth of the FaithStories videos with Episcopalians talking about their faith. These proved to be quite helpful as they kept us from focusing solely on the institution and kept faith in Jesus in the midst of our discussions. Mendi and Todd offered a final







session with delegates offering some potential strategies and tactics of how to work toward our shared goals. For the third year, I offered a closing that is intended to be something like a TedTalk-style talk that sums up where we have been and frames how we go back home from the meeting. It does change the energy of how we leave the meeting with a dose of inspiration rather than a slow winding down of business. Victoria and I grabbed fast food for lunch and then went back to St. Anne's. At 1:30 pm, we held a Celebration of New Ministry with the Rev. Nathan Wilson as their fairly new Rector (*shown above*). Victoria and I arrived home in the dark, tired and grateful.

November 10

I had a Sunday morning off and then we drove to Baxley so Victoria and I could make our visitation to St. Thomas Aquinas Episcopal Church, which meets in St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church. This remains a beautiful ecumenical arrangement.

November 11

Early Monday morning, I met Sarah Stonesifer Boylan in Richmond Hill. We served together on the Episcopal Church's Executive Council. Sarah and I drove to Orlando for the funeral of the Rt. Rev. Dabney Smith, retired Bishop of

Southeast Florida. We met up with the President of the House of Deputies, Julia Ayala Harris, for a snack before the liturgy. The three of us served together with Dabney on Council. He and I became friends during my five years serving with him. I miss his humor and wisdom and grace. One of his daughters, the Rev. Ashton Williston, has been an Associate Rector at Christ Church Frederica since her 2017 graduation from Sewanee. Ashton did a beautiful job in offering the commendation for her Dad in a lovely liturgy at the Cathedral. I dropped Sarah back off at her car so she could get back home tonight to her husband and son in Charleston.

November 12

Tuesday was a day off for staff after the convention. I did a little bit of catch up work, but took most of the day off as well.

November 13

On Wednesday, a photographer took the listing photos of our current office. We waited until after the election to place the 1880s house at 18 East 34th Street on the market. After he finished his work, we held our first staff meeting with the six of us who now work in this office: me and Canon Loren Lasch as Canon to the Ordinary and Chief of Staff; Canon Joshua Varner who remains Canon for Program and Liturgy until he heads on the rest of his sabbatical in mid-December; Canon Andrew Austin in his first day in the office as Canon for Administration; Liz Williams as Communications Manager; and Maggie Lyons as my Executive Assistant. There is a lot of follow up to do from convention.

November 14

While Canon Lasch is doing most of that work, I have been assisting with getting Andrew up to



Canons Loren Lasch and Andrew Austin work together in Loren's office to get Andrew logged into some of the websites he will routinely use as Canon for Administration.

speed on his work. I met in person with a person wanting to be a priest. The real estate listing went live today for the current office.

November 15

Staff met at the new Episcopal Center for individual headshots and a group photo as we revise that page on the website. I assisted in getting Andrew as our payroll administrator with ADP, which took a lot more time and persistence than should be necessary. I also met on Zoom with a person feeling called to the priesthood and met by phone with several priests. The real estate listing went live today for the current office.

November 16

A Saturday off at home.

November 17-20

I flew to Baltimore to convene the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance,

Constitution and Canons. On Sunday, I checked in with the President of the House of Deputies and Presiding Bishop and then Monday through Wednesday, I chaired the meeting as we received the resolutions referred by the General Convention and the changes recommended for clarity by Sally Johnson, who is the first person in the new role of Custodian of the Constitution and Canons. We are also taking up the Presiding Officers commitment to recommend changes to the 2027 General Convention. I organized the work in seven sub-committees, four of which started work at this meeting with the other three waiting a year until this initial work is completed. We are prioritizing projects that will take longer, like better responsiveness to dioceses confronting challenges and how to handle lay-leader accountability now that the majority of parishes do not have a priest in charge. We are holding back on some straightforward changes to the

church discipline canons, which require action by the next General Convention. During the meeting, the commission elected me as Chair for this triennium. There is a lot of substantial work in front of us, which should be doable through the four sub-committee chairs moving forward the work in smaller groups to be brought back to the whole commission.

November 21

Today was my Mom's 88th birthday, which she wanted to keep low key. The staff and the strategic planning committee chair, Carey Wooten, met with our consultants for a post-convention update. I also met with the Commission on Ministry via Zoom.

November 22

I met in my office with an aspirant for the priesthood. I also worked with Canon Andrew Austin as he continues to get up to speed as

Canon for Administration. I met on Zoom with the co-chairs of RacialJusticeGA to check in on how to support their work, largely focused on the Anna Alexander Pilgrimage in the fall and the planned Weeping Time Memorial unveiling planned for Darien in the spring.

November 23

A Saturday at home included writing my sermon for tomorrow after being away the first part of the week.

November 24

Victoria and I enjoyed a wonderful morning at St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Richmond Hill (*shown above at right*) where the Rev. Dwayne Varas has continued connections to the community like their preschool and thrift store, and added more, like the gymnastics program that uses the area that doubles as a play space for the preschool and a practice gym for the

The photo below shows everyone joining in laying on hands during a prayer for Canon Joshua Varner at the closing Eucharist of Happening #110. This was the last event with Joshua leading youth ministry. He will become Canon for Congregational Vitality in the new year.





high school team. They are doing a lot to serve their rapidly growing community, knowing that people don't just move to town and show up in church, but need to be invited, welcomed, and connected.

November 25

Monday began at Savannah Toyota, reading a book as they serviced the diocese's car. Then a couple of issues arose that required my engaging with them today. The day ended with a 2.5-hour meeting of the Court of Review to hear oral arguments in a case with a priest appealing their being deposed (removed) from Holy Orders for an offense in the Diocese of Virginia.

November 26

I started the day at the Episcopal Center with our Project Manager, Pembroke Faucette, and the Rev. Michael Chaney and Nicole Koplik from the Church of the Epiphany that meets there as we made decisions on finishes for the chapel.

November 27

A varied Wednesday of emails and phone calls

ahead of Thanksgiving and my trip to Minnesota next week for the House of Bishops meeting.

November 28

We spent Thanksgiving Day in Statesboro with Victoria's family.

November 29

A day off included finishing my sermon for Sunday.

November 30

Victoria and I drove to Albany ahead of tomorrow's visitation.

December 1

We enjoyed a joyful start to Advent at St. John and St. Marks in Albany, congregations that merged after the flood in 1994 that minister well to the Radium Springs community. On my first visit with the Rev. Teri Hunter as their priest in charge, it is great to see them doing so well. (*Deacon Ri Lamb getting assistance with the dismissal is pictured above*).

December 2-5

On Monday, I flew to Minneapolis ahead of two days of meetings. On Tuesday, I met all day with my colleagues from the southeast US as we moved the Province IV meeting planned this week from gathering in Alabama to being together in Minnesota after our Presiding Bishop called for a one-day meeting on December 4. Province IV was a helpful time of being vulnerable with colleagues about the real challenges and joys of this call that we reflected on in Bible Study and studying the Baptismal Covenant and our ordination vows as bishops. The next day, 140 bishops met with 85 in person and 55 online in a meeting called by

Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe to talk through and get feedback on changes he sees as needed to align church governance with the needs of congregations as we seek to be faithful to following Jesus in the coming years. On Thursday, I flew home while handling some phone calls and emails in the Minneapolis and Charlotte airports as I had time waiting for flights.

From 6-7:30 pm, I met on Zoom with the Strategic Planning Committee as Todd Brantley of Armstrong, McGuire, and Associates passed the baton to the group that now takes the lead in our planning.

December 6

I had my coaching call on Friday morning with Dorothy Wells, the Bishop of Mississippi. Her predecessor, Brian Seage, was my bishop coach for my first three years and now I return the favor, while continuing to coach David Read of West Texas. I also met online with consultants assisting a parish in conflict and in person with my spiritual director.

December 7

On Saturday morning, I went back over my sermon for tomorrow and Victoria and I drove to Valdosta ahead of the visitation.

December 8

On Sunday, Victoria and I were at St. Barnabas in Valdosta for our visitation that included baptizing Hailey, a helicopter pilot stationed at Moody Air Force Base. I also received her wife, Amber, into the Episcopal Church. They had a great group of family and friends on hand supporting them on this important day. The Rev. Susan Gage met them at the Pumpkin Patch sale the church holds and began talking with Hailey and Amber about how this could be

the right church home for the two of them to grow in their faith in Jesus.

December 9

A Monday off at home.

December 10

I had a phone appointment with a Junior Warden and then Canon Austin and I met to catch up on a variety of matters as he continues to move into his new job. I met with the Standing Committee on Zoom from 4-5 to keep them updated on a variety of matters, including selling the current office and renovating the Episcopal Center. Our organizational meeting for Diocesan Council met on Zoom from 6-8 pm.

December 11

I was in the office early, but took time to be with our daughter's father-in-law and his Mom. They live in Arizona, but are visiting her daughter (his sister) in Charleston. They came to Savannah to visit our home and go to lunch together. Then Victoria and I drove Louisville for our visitation to St. Mary Magdalene. The church was full as darkness fell and we gathered in the cozy church to confirm Andrew in the context of our worship. After the service, we went with the whole congregation for a wonderful dinner in the home of Andrew's sponsor. This congregation responded so faithfully when their county was hit by Hurricane Helene and it was great to spend time with them. We drove home to Savannah with full hearts (and bellies).

December 12

I finished writing my script for a Christmas Message video and sent it to others for input (both staff and a priest not in the office for a different perspective). The full day that followed

included a coaching session with Bishop David Read of the Diocese of West Texas and meeting with a person feeling called to the priesthood. We have seven people currently in formation for the priesthood and three for the diaconate, with two more starting their studies for the priesthood in 2025. The meeting today was with one of six persons who will be discerning a call to Holy Orders in 2025.

December 13

I wrote my sermon for Sunday and finished the text for my Christmas Message video together with the usual emails and phone calls.

December 14

Victoria and I went to Honey Creek on Saturday and recorded my Christmas Message video in the chapel. We spent the night in Jonnard Cottage.

December 15

Victoria and I enjoyed a blessed Third Sunday of Advent at Grace Episcopal Church in Waycross with an adult baptism and twelve confirmations and receptions. This congregation is engaging well in ministry to its community including essential support for persons who are homeless and so much more. These initiation rites were the fruit of that faithful ministry.

December 16

A Monday off at home included a congregation issue that needed attention and a 5 pm Zoom meeting of the Board of Transition Ministry.

December 17

The Christmas Message video is done and lots of dates are set for the coming year that needed and other little year-end things coming together.

December 18

On Wednesday morning, I was in the office working with staff on more matters that need resolution before I head out for a week of vacation on Monday. In the evening, Victoria and I were back at King of Peace for a mid-week service. It was great to see such a wonderful turnout to support those I received into the Episcopal Church and a person reaffirming her faith. There was such a sweet, sweet spirit in this place on a lovely December evening.

December 19

Thursday began with an early morning call with a rector and senior warden. I met on Zoom with the Chair of the Commission on Ministry and the President of the Standing Committee concerning scheduling meetings with people needing candidacy interviews and the Reference Panel of the Diocese also met on a matter of church discipline.

December 20

I met with the Diocese of Mississippi's Bishop Dorothy Wells via Zoom to continue coaching her during the first three years of her ministry. I also met in person with a priest who is working as Executive Director of a non-profit. In the late afternoon, I met on Zoom with a group from the Third Order Society of St. Francis for my Mid Novice Review, one year into my two-year novitiate as a Franciscan. I also began replying to Ember Day Letters. These are a quarterly letter from someone in formation to be a deacon or priest sent to the Bishop to reflect on their academic and other experiences in formation as well as their spiritual life and anything else going on in their lives. I value this connection to the fourteen postulants and candidates who write me quarterly at present, with ten preparing for the priesthood and four

to be deacons. We also have seven people preparing for the Holy Orders Retreat in September 2025, with at least one other likely to join this group before we get to that gathering at Honey Creek.

During diocesan convention, the Rev. Alan Akridge challenged delegates to match a \$15,000 grant from the Vestry of St. Mark's in Brunswick to buy a tractor for Honey Creek. The delegates made that match and the tractor, nicknamed Martha, arrived at The Creek today.

December 21

On Saturday, I continued responding to Ember Day Letters (caught up with those received so far) and finished my sermon for tomorrow before Victoria and I drove to Dublin to be ready for tomorrow's visitation.

December 22

On Sunday, we made the last of 53 visitations of the year to Christ Church in Dublin. I

received two people into the Episcopal Church at this congregation served by a group of supply priests. Parishioners expanded the food pantry this past year and are now assisting 150 people a month.

December 23-30

Victoria and I flew to New Mexico to be with our daughter and son-in-law, Griffin and Chaz, for Christmas. It is so good to see them thriving with Griffin loving Aztec Veterinarian Clinic, the large practice where she works, and Chaz now certified as a Master Gardener. It was nice to sit in the pews at the Cathedral in Albuquerque and fun to do some hiking near their home. This has been a helpful respite as another very full year ends.

December 31

I was back in the office on this last day of the year tending to some of the mail and emails that accumulated in my absence and making some pastoral calls.





