

2020 DEUS Special Business Synod for postponed 52nd Synod Bishop's Address, Charge, and Report

“Upholding the Gospel Amid Pandemic and Social Unrest”

Having served as a “Continuing Anglican” for my entire ministerial life, I can dare say A.D. 2020 is the most unusual year in my experience. Just when we were thinking that things could not get much worse, they did. The coronavirus has brought a devastating effect on life as we have known it, not just in our country but throughout the world. We are still struggling through this pandemic, and the Church is called to find our way through this and continue our ministry. God has called us to serve him, to be the light to all those who desperately need him, and especially in a “time such as this.” “Normal” church activities have been put on hold. So much of what we did in the past can no longer be routine but must be carefully planned in accord with “social distancing,” wearing of masks, cautiously administering the sacrament, using video conferencing, etc.

Added to what I have said, we have witnessed over recent weeks a series of protests spiraling into destructive riots, looting, and even murders, spreading to many of our country's large cities. The leadership in most of these cities under attack by radicals, seem to be siding with the law-breakers and opposing the police who were/are trying to maintain order. It is a twisted and convoluted disorder we are witnessing as our society turns from moral values we have accepted as normal to those which are counter-cultural. We must personally and as a Church face these multi-faceted problems and as clergy and leadership in our world of influence, help our people make sense in our response to these issues. We must stand firm in our commitment to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and his message of Love to the world in which we live. Relevant to our situation, I am reminded of a letter sent by St. Cyprian 260 A.D. to a friend amidst “murders on the high road, riots in the streets, pirates on the seas and under every roof misery and selfishness. It's really a bad world, my friend. It is a very bad world. ...in the midst of this, I have found a quiet and holy people. They have a joy and strength...they are often despised and persecuted. But they have overcome the world...these people, dear friend, are the Christians---And I am one of them.” We people are the Christians...I am one of them and you are one of them.

We are entering our 52nd year as a Diocese. Because of the coronavirus restrictions in the State of North Carolina at present, we have officially postponed our regular Synod of 2020. Therefore, the Standing Committee is conducting essential Synod business until the Synod meets again. I am also, with the consultation of the House of Bishops, designating a Provincial Synod in 2021, which was postponed this year as well, to have a joint venue and date with the DEUS Synod in 2021. An important order of business for the Provincial Synod will be the replacement of the Presiding Bishop. The APA House of Bishops elects the new Presiding Bishop from among the Diocesan Bishops, of which we will have two. It is the duty of the Provincial Synod, voting by houses, to ratify the election by House of Bishops of the Presiding Bishop. The Synods will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, at St. Barnabas' Anglican Church, where the new Diocesan Bishop for the DEUS, the Right Rev. Chandler H. Jones will be Enthroned at the Principal Synod Mass. It will be a grand celebration and I anticipate we will have a large and enthusiastic Synod. We pray that the coronavirus will be well into our rear-view mirror by that time.

The year 2020-2021 will be a year of transition as we prepare for Bishop Chad Jones to assume the leadership of the Diocese at the 2021 Synod. There is much to do as he will be setting up his office which will soon be under construction as the new expansion of St. Barnabas' Church takes place. I call on all of us who are of the leadership, both clergy and laity, of our Church to become part of Bishop Jones' team so that we can continue to build on what we have accomplished for the Lord thus far. No one can do this job alone but only by the Grace of God and the support of God's people can Bishop Jones be successful.

When I was elected 26 years ago as Bishop of this Diocese, there was no smoothly planned transition from my predecessor. Those few who are still around from those days, remember the politicking not from those within our Diocese but from those outside. Many of our records for clergy and other important documents were destroyed by those who wished only control and take over. Thank God, we have matured into not just a successful Diocese but established a Province as well. Numerous other significant events have taken place in the intervening years which I will document for historical purposes to provide a narrative to our newer clergy and membership and for posterity.

Additions and Changes of Clergy and Diocesan Activities

We have had multiple ordinations, new clergy, retirements, deaths, and other clergy changes in our Diocese since our last Synod. A full list of these additions and changes can be found at the end of this report.

Our diocesan activities since the last Synod for myself, our Bishop Coadjutor, and our Suffragan Bishop can also be found at the end of this report along with our membership statistics. While we had fewer in-person meetings and events due to the coronavirus pandemic, we still had many uplifting and encouraging visits and meetings.

Thanks and Recognition

I want to express my profound thanks to Archdeacon Erich Zwingert and his Synod Committee for their hard work and dedication in planning the 2020 Synod. Although the Synod was postponed until next year, much work that went into the logistics and planning had already been done. We are very grateful for their efforts. We look forward to a future Synod at All Saints' Anglican Church, Mills River, N.C.

My deepest thanks to those who have served on the Standing Committee, led by President, the Rev. Matthew Harlow, this year. These are unusual times but God has called us to be faithful regardless of the circumstances we are facing. Additionally, a tip of the hat to our Board of Examining Chaplains (BEC), chaired by Dean Mark Menees, who have worked long hours interviewing and examining our candidates. Our Bishop's Advisory Committee, chaired by Dean Nick Henderson, does our initial interviews with aspirants from ministry, which is a vital service to our Diocese. A great thanks to Executive Secretary Lisa Ulrich who keeps track of all the files and ensures all details are complete for each candidate going through the process. I look forward to working with the Bishops, the Area Deans, Clergy, Deaconesses, and our Lay Leaders as we believe God has much for us to do in building his Kingdom.

+*Walter H. Grundorf*

Diocesan Changes (since last Synod July 2019)

Ordinations

- The Rev. Mark Perkins (Priest, All Saints, Charlottesville, VA, by Bp WHG 9/28/2019).
- The Rev. Mr. Stephen Miller (Diaconate, St. Matthew's, Weaverville, NC, by Bp WHG 10/19/2019).
- The Rev. Mr. Mason Waldhauser (Diaconate, St. Alban's, Joppa, MD by Bp CHJ 10/19/2019).
- The Rev. Mr. Billy (Bill) Wall (Diaconate, St. Barnabas, Dunwoody, GA, by Bp CHJ 2/29/2020).
- The Rev. Erik Wilson (Priesthood, All Saints, Wilmington, NC, by Bp WHG 6/20/20).

New Clergy

- The Rev. Myles Hixson, from ACNA, Received 2/5/2020, Winter Conference, St. Barnabas, Dunwoody, GA. Installed Rector, Holy Cross Knoxville, TN, 2/16/2020 by Bp WHG.
- The Rev. Wesley Walker, from Diocese of All Saints, Received 2/5/2020, Winter Conference, St. Barnabas, Dunwoody, GA. Serving as Curate, St. Paul's, Crownsville, MD under Rector, Fr. Tom Burr.
- The Rev. Paul Beutell, transfer from ACC, 4/25/2020. Serving as Vicar at St. Thomas, Alto, GA.
- The Rev. Mr. Raymond Davison, transfer from DHC (pending Oath of Conformity scheduled 8/5/2019). Serving as Curate at St. Paul's, Melbourne, FL, under Rector, Rev. Brian Oldfield.
- The Rev. Stokes Smith, transfer from Anglican Fathers of Corpus Christi (pending Oath of Conformity – date TBD). Serving as Assisting Priest at St. George the Martyr, Simpsonville, SC, under Rector Rev. Paul Rivard.
- The Rev. Dennis Washburn, transferring back to APA from ACNA (pending Oath of Conformity scheduled 9/12/2020). Assisting at St. Peter's, Kingsport, TN.

Within Dioceses Changes

- The Rev. Randall Russell, resigned as Assisting Priest, St. Mark's, Vero Beach, FL, to become non-parochial, 7/28/2019.
- The Rev. Robert Placer, transferred from Vicar St. Peter's Kingsport, TN to Vicar, St. Athanasius, Glen Allen, VA, 8/1/2019; Resigned from St. Athanasius, VA, 2/10/2020 to become non-parochial. Retired, 2/19/2020.
- The Rt. Rev. Robert Giffin, D.D., conferred Doctor of Divinity, Honoris Causa, from St. Andrew's Theological College and Seminary, 10/05/2019.
- The Rev. Myles Hixson, Installed as Rector, Holy Cross, Knoxville, TN 2/16/2020.
- The Rev. William Johnston, Deacon, St. Barnabas, Dunwoody, GA, resigned to become non-parochial, 3/01/2020.
- The Rev. Gary Allen Fisher, transferred from St. Francis of Assisi, Jonesboro, GA, as Rector to St. Michael the Archangel, Matthews, NC, as Curate, 5/01/2020.
- The Rev. Michael Stranz, came out of retirement, reinstated as Rector, St. Francis of Assisi, Jonesboro, GA, 5/01/2020.
- Dss Deborah Kidd, moved and transferred from St. George the Martyr, Simpsonville, SC, to St. Michael the Archangel, Matthews, NC, 6/01/2020.
- The Rev. Mark Perkins, transferred as Curate, All Saints, Charlottesville, VA, to St. Alban's Cathedral, Oviedo, FL, as Curate 6/01/2020.

Retirements/ Removals

- Chaplain Philip Schuyler, Non-parochial, removed from roles due to no communication 10/15/2019.
- The Rev. John Poole, resigned as Priest-in-charge, St. Philip's, Pinellas Park, FL, to retire 10/30/2019.
- The Rev. Kevin Burks, resigned as Priest-in-charge, St. Luke's, Port Orange, FL, due to health and then retired 4/02/2019. (not in Synod 2019 report due to pending health issues)
- The Rev. John Gibson, Non-parochial, retired due to health, 1/03/2020.
- The Rev. Robert Placer, Non-parochial, retired, 2/19/2020.
- The Rev. Dick Miller, retired from All Saints Parish, Wilmington, NC.

Transferred (Out)

- The Rev. Mr. Dennis Ryan, transferred from APA/DEUS to ACA, Diocese Missouri Valley, 09/26/2019.
- The Rev. David Bottoms, asked to be removed from APA roles, no new jurisdiction information given, 01/02/2020.
- The Rev. Mr. Charles Miller, Jr., transferred from APA/DMA to Anglican Diocese of the West, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), 1/6/2020.
- The Rev. William Johnston, transferred from APA/DEUS to REC/DMA, 4/9/2020.

Depositions

- The Rev. Mr. Steevens, Abandonment of APA, Haiti, joined apostate Church of Unity, 9/08/2019.
- The Rev. Tyler Phass, Abandonment of Communion to Eastern Orthodox Church, 11/11/2019.
- The Rt. Rev. Arthur Rushlow, Resigned from APA to become independent, 12/02/2019.
- The Rev. Mr. Clinton McKenzie, Renunciation of Ministry, 4/05/2020.

Deaths

- The Rev. Mark Siegel, May 2020.