



The Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin
Report to the
242nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New York
November 10, 2018

Bishop Dietsche, Bishop Glasspool, Delegates and Guests:

It is an honor and a privilege for me to address the 242nd Convention of this Great Diocese and my fifth Convention as Bishop Suffragan. Yes, my fifth, and what a wondrous and humbling journey this has been! I am ever grateful to Bishop Dietsche and Bishop Glasspool for their steadfast friendship and support. It has been a great joy to be part of the best episcopal team in The Episcopal Church. I also feel privileged to work alongside the members the Bishop's Staff who are dedicated and committed to serving the Diocese, giving of themselves for the mission at hand. On any given day, I can tell you that many of the senior staff members are on the road, visiting parishes and meeting with clergy and lay leaders of the Diocese. I would like to recognize them for their hard work and thank them for their patience with me when I fall short.

At our convention last year we were faced with a deficit budget. We have been able to get past that with a lot of good and hard work by the finance office and the budget committee. If the church's financial statement is the most important spiritual statement, the budget before us, I believe, reflects an important turning point in our collective spiritual life of the Diocese. This presents us with an opportunity for a hopeful new beginning. So, Friends, I invite you to dream with me and with your bishops on how we can build this Diocese as the Beloved Community God has called us to be.

I read with great interest and curiosity the most recent issue of the Episcopal New Yorker which is on the theme of Giving. I must confess that when Nick Richardson told me that this issue of the Episcopal New Yorker was going to be

on giving, I was rather skeptical. But, as I was reading it, I found myself moved and informed by many inspiring stories. In many of the stories I noticed an important underlying theme that in giving the giver receives the life-changing grace and is transformed. The idea that the giver's life is changed in giving is perhaps counter-intuitive and certainly counter-cultural, especially in this day and age. But, the life of selfless giving that brings about a radical transformation of life is precisely the way of Jesus, the loving, liberating and life-giving way of life as the Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is fond of saying. This selfless giving, must, then, be at the heart of the Beloved Community.

General Convention

The biggest highlight this year was the General Convention in Austin, TX. The Convention really began with the House of Bishops' liturgy of listening to #MeToo movement stories the night before the official opening of the General Convention. This was a moving witness to the Beloved Community the Presiding Bishop has often preached about, and it set the tone for the whole Convention. In a similar manner yesterday, we also had the liturgy of listening on the #MeToo movement stories from our Diocese. The stories were powerful and moving. I am grateful to those who gave of themselves to share their stories. Good communication is really more about listening and not so much about talking. And the Beloved Community Jesus has called us to build must be grounded in listening to one another and receiving one another's stories with the spirit of generosity and vulnerability. I pray that this 242nd Convention is the beginning of our journey toward building such a community of listening in this Diocese.

Another significant moment in the General Convention was the passing of the resolution that made the same sex marriage available to gay couples in those dioceses whose bishops have so far opted out. While it was the painful final draw for those who opposed the same sex marriage, for the majority of the delegates in both Houses it was an inevitable and necessary course of action to make this sacrament universally accessible to all members of the Episcopal Church.

Then in the middle of the Convention, the Presiding Bishop led the delegates on a caravan trip to Hutto Residential Center in Taylor, TX where the migrant refugees, all women, from Central America were detained. We held a rally in solidarity with the women, many of whom were separated from their children and now detained in this center. We sang and prayed in witness to the love and mercy of Jesus. At one point the women inside the center recognized what we were doing and began rubbing white sheets of paper against the windows to let us know their appreciation. It was a moving moment of witness to the Beloved Community across the boundaries neither side of us could cross. It brought tears to my eyes and to many others who were there.

The climax of the General Convention for many was the reception of the Episcopal Church of Cuba back into The Episcopal Church. There was much debate about the canonical technicalities of how to do this and how we could not do this. But, in the end the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies voted unanimously to welcome back the Episcopal Church of Cuba and we did so with a resounding yes and applause. Cuba is now not only a Diocese in The Episcopal Church and but also a member of the Province II. This, too, was an inspiring witness to the Beloved Community, a moment of reconciliation with the Episcopal Church of Cuba which was perhaps wrongfully removed from The Episcopal Church seventy some years ago. This was a moment of joyful tears all around.

New York Service and Justice Collaborative (Episcopal Service Corps of EDNY)

The Episcopal Service Corps program of the Diocese, which is now called New York Service and Justice Collaborative, has had an important milestone under the leadership of its executive director, Judith Douglas and the new formation director, Elaine Song. I am immensely pleased and excited to report to you that they have opened a new home at Trinity Church Morrisania with five new fellows. With three fellows at St. Mary's Manhattanville, this ministry is expanded to eight fellows in two sites. The hosting churches have already been impacted by these fellows with new energy and transformation. The fellows serve in social justice and community service, while living in an intentional community for spiritual and faith formation and development. I am deeply committed to this ministry because this is one important way of nurturing

young leaders in our midst and honoring the young people in their passion for service and justice. These fellows are passionate about making a difference in the church and in the world, and they give of themselves out of the deep wellspring of their spirituality. If you have young persons graduating from college, tell them about this ministry. This has been a life-changing experience for many young people, some of whom are priests in our diocese. This, friends, is yet another fine example of the Beloved Community in our midst.

Young Adult Network

Young Adult Network is another thriving ministry to the young adult members of the congregations in our Diocese. Under the leadership of the Rev. Mary Cat Young and now with the Rev. Ryan Kuratko, who was began in January this year, this ministry continues to serve young adults from Manhattan as well as from the Bronx, Westchester, Brooklyn and New Jersey. Lenten Sushi Fridays were organized in four congregations across the city, including a guest speaker from the Anglican Commission on the Status of Women. The Young Adult Lenten Reflection Day was held at St. Michael's with The Rev. Kyle Oliver, The Rev. Leigh Mackintosh and Bishop Dietsche on the theme of "Stories that Changed Us." Recently, Young Adult Network was a grant recipient from the Office of Campus and Young Adult Ministry to host a Retreat Day based on Becoming the Beloved Community: Story Sharing Methods as a fool for reconciliation. This event was held on October 20 with representatives from eight congregations and was led by the Rev. Hershey Mallette Stephens. The young leaders shared their stories and learned practical tools and skills to take back to their respective parishes. It is my hope that in the next couple of years the Young Adult Network will focus on nurturing young adult leaders for our local parishes and for the Diocese. The church today is in urgent need of transformation and renewal. What better way than to equip and empower the young people to lead the way in this endeavor! Yesterday a group of 20s and 30s young adults participated in workshops and the liturgy of listening. I would like to recognize the 20s and 30s young adults who are still here today. Would all 20s and 30s please stand? Thank you for your participation and leadership. Young Adult Network is intentionally nurturing new leaders through building the beloved community in their midst. I ask you to take notice.

Youth Ministry

Summer Youth Conference at the Incarnation Camp is the longest running youth ministry in this Diocese. I would like to thank the lay and clergy leaders of this program for their commitment to this important ministry. I can tell you that this ministry is important to many young people of our congregations for the nurturing and strengthening of their faith and the development of their leadership skills. The youth are not the future but the present members of our churches. The adult leaders and the chaplains have dedicated themselves and have given of themselves year after year for this incredibly important ministry of nurturing and formation of our youth in this Diocese. I have witnessed firsthand the lasting friendship those young people form and the deep faith they develop out of this experience. And a number of young people return again and again also to serve as volunteers at this camp. This again is an inspiring witness to the beloved community in the midst of our Diocese. I encourage you to send the youth members of your parish to this conference.

Asian Ministry

For the past couple of years, Episcopal Asian Supper Table (EAST) has steadily grown. They have had a number of well-known and interesting guest speakers such as Tomoko Masur, the widow of Maestro Kurt Masur, Rabbi Angela Buchadahl, the Korean-Jewish Rabbi at Central Synagogue, Professor Kwok Pui Lan, and the Rev. Dr. Patrick Cheng. With the new leadership and planning team, the group will continue to explore the Asian spirituality and identity, to build a beloved community across diverse Asian cultures and to nurture stronger core members and new leaders. Next Saturday the group is joining forces with the Anti-Human Trafficking taskforce of the Diocese to host an event on Labor Trafficking and US Law with the guest speaker Bernadette Elorin at St. James Madison Avenue. In the coming years, with the help of some of its members and other Asian Episcopalian leaders across the country, we are embarking on a new project, called Weaving the Memories: Stories of the Asian Mission in the Episcopal Church. Asians have been integral part of the Episcopal Church for more than a century since 1875 when the first Chinese mission was founded in the Diocese of Nevada. Despite the anti-Asian immigration policies and the Japanese internment during the WW II, Asian Episcopal Congregations have persevered and prospered. I believe their stories must be told and weaved

into the history of the Episcopal Church, lest they are ignored and forgotten. I ask you to take notice of any Asian members in your congregation and encourage them to be connected to this network.

Congregational Development Commission

This year 35 congregations will have gone through Renewal Works program sponsored by the Congregational Development Commission. Close to half of our congregations have now participated in the program in the past four years. Overall the program has meant a deepening of the conversations in congregations regarding their strengths and growth areas as they seek to be more faithful in discipleship and service.

The “I Want My Church to Grow Conference” held in the Spring at Trinity–St. Paul’s brought together 206 participants to learn about Congregational Development, One–on–One Conversations, Asset Based Congregational Development, Vestry strategies for a changing church and Stewardship. A mini–regional conference was held in Staten Island in mid–October, with great success, and the plan is to have two more, in the Bronx and in the Mid–Hudson Region.

Latinx Ministries Committee has been gathering to share best practices and strategize about ways to grow and support Latino ministries in the Diocese of New York. A good representation from our diocese went to Nuevo Amanecer a conference in this past August. A plan is being made for the first diocesan–wide annual celebration of San Romero de Las Americas on Saturday, March 23, 2019 at Holy Rood/Santa Cruz Church in Washington Heights, Manhattan.

Yesterday the Commission is introduced the Kaleidoscope Institute in this Convention. The work of the Institute is to train leaders in the Diocese on skills to support their community engagement across lines of difference. There will be regional conferences in 2019 where leadership teams, especially those who feel called to do the work of evangelism, can come and build skills and learn techniques to equip them in sharing the good news.

Under the leadership of Canon Altagracia Perez–Bullard, the Congregational Development Commission has been very busy providing resource and workshops for congregational vitality and renewal. I hope you take notice of the Commission’s work and use their resources for your congregation’s renewal and growth.

Congregations in Strategic Settings consist of nine congregations that have been identified as having a mission and ministry crucial to the life of the communities in which they are located (Strategic Settings) in poor rural and urban areas. Little change is foreseen in terms of the numbers of congregations in this program.

Christian Formation

This past year Christian Formation Commission has gone through some transition under the new chair, the Rev. Michael Bird. The Commission now includes Youth Ministry, Summer Youth Conference, Young Adult Ministry, Cursillo and Campus Ministries. This allows the Commission to be more robust and bring these formation ministries into mutual accountability and transparency to the Diocesan Council. The commission has gathered lots of resource for Christian Formation, and Fr. Bird and his staff have worked diligently to develop a Christian Formation resource website, which you see on the screen. The website address is www.ednyformation.org. Please visit the website and give feedback. We hope to continue to develop and provide useful formation resource for the local ministries around the Diocese. Many thanks to the Commission members, Fr. Bird and his staff.

Conclusion

Last year we adapted the Reparations Committee’s resolution to embark on the Year of Lamentation as the first step toward a reparation of the systemic sin of slavery and racism in the history of this nation. As we are seeing the rise of white nationalism and the increased incidents of racial and anti–semitic violence as well as violence against immigrants and refugees, this work, I believe, is very timely and urgently important. Extreme hatred stoked by irrational fear has now manifested itself in incendiary rhetoric in the name of free speech and in cold–hearted murders of innocent people. This must stop!

And we as the Church, we as the Episcopal Diocese of New York must stand up against such manifestations of hatred in our communities, in our society and in our nation. The Reparations Committee is inviting us to embark on a Year of Apology as the second cycle of our spiritual journey. This is critically important for our vision and effort toward building the Beloved Community in this Diocese.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I ask you today:

Will you persevere in resisting in evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return the Lord? *We will with God's help.*

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? *We will with God's help.*

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? *We will with God's help.*

Being empowered by the loving, liberating and life-giving God, let us stand up for justice, practice mercy and spread the love of Christ to bring healing to the world that is broken by fear, hatred and violence. I yearn for the day when the Church on earth may truly be the Beloved Community Jesus intended it to be. And we will with God's help. I yearn for the day when all of humanity may be the Beloved Community God created us to be. May God bless all our churches of this great Diocese and bless us all to this important mission of God!