

South Dakota Episcopal *Church News*



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FALL 2019

Consecration of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Jonathan H. Folts XI Diocesan Bishop South Dakota

Cameron Folts, Ash Braga, Garrett Folts, Chloe Folts, Bishop Jonathan, Kim Folts



Bishop Folts, So. Dak. and Bishop Douglas, CT



Presiding Bishop Curry, Bishop Tarrant,
Bishop Douglas, Bishop Carlos

**The Diocese of
South Dakota**



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CONSECRATION SERMON

You may have wondered why the Presiding Bishop has called this meeting. Well, he did so because you who are the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, in concert with the Holy Spirit, have called Jonathan Hunter Folts to be your eleventh bishop.

I happen to know him very well.

Now, lest any of you are thinking that I'm going to stand up here and tell stories on Bp.-Elect Folts --- of which I know many --- rest assured, I am not.

For you see, Jonathan and I have a long-standing agreement. And that agreement is this: I won't tell stories about him in public, if he won't tell stories about me in public --- and he also knows many of those!

During the lead up to your recent Episcopal election, your current bishop, John Tarrant, together with the Rev. Dr. Chris Corbin, wrote two fine articles on the history and role of bishops, and especially the bishop of South Dakota.

Dr. Corbin traced the history and rationale of the episcopacy from the original apostles, chosen by Jesus, down to the present apostles, whom we call bishops, men and women called by the church through the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, into apostolic ministry.

Bishop Tarrant wrote specifically, and with great affection and wondrous appreciation, about apostolic ministry in South Dakota with all of its opportunities and challenges.

He undertook this holy calling ten and more years ago, and he did so even as you would have expected him to. His love for, and devotion to, the people he was called to serve rang clearly all through his writing.

You who are the Diocese of South Dakota were blest to have had him, and I am sure that he would declare without hesitation that he was even more blest to have been called by you into this holy relationship and ministry.

In my twelve years of driving all over the sixty-six thousand square miles of my home Diocese of West Texas, it was not an uncommon experience for me to encounter people who wondered what in the world I did besides drive fifty thousand miles a year without ever going north of Austin.

And when time permitted, I would tell them. Basically, the work and ministry of anyone who is called to serve as a diocesan bishop, in South Dakota or anywhere else, is described and defined by three basic responsibilities; and these are responsibilities that the bishop, and the bishop alone, has.

Let's take them one at a time.

First, the bishop is the chief vision-caster for the diocese; this is the prophetic role.

Now, the bishop can talk with whomever he chooses, and he can elicit input from any number of sources, and he will. But when all is said and done, the vision for the life and ministry of the diocese during his episcopacy is his to proclaim, and proclaim it he must.

Such a vision must be exciting, attractive, engaging, and energizing. It must entice people to want to be a part of it. It must call people into an enthusiastic and willing embrace of real sacrifice.

A real sacrifice, you must remember, is always a gift we make from our very being, not a gift we make from our excess, not a gift we make from that which we have but do not need, but rather a gift we make from our very being that gives Glory to God by being of benefit to somebody else.

First and foremost, such a vision must be focused on growing the church, on making the Christ known to those who know him not . . . of whom there are plenty.

Remember, Jesus did not say to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and keep my church small."

We Episcopalians sometimes are overly enthralled with our quaintness and coziness, and we use that as an excuse pridefully to proclaim that we don't have a need to talk about numbers. Well, a good Baptist pastor friend of mine says, "Yes, but the truth is that you Episcopalians don't want to talk about numbers because you don't have them!"

We in our dioceses, led by our bishops, must always remember that the church is the only institution in the world that exists primarily for those who don't belong to it. They are our reason for being; we are not our reason for being. Those who know not the Christ are our reason for being. We are not our reason for being.

So, the first task of the bishop is to be the vision-caster for how, together, we are going to be faithful to our Lord's command to go forth into all the world and grow the church.

The second task is this: the bishop must be the one to provide primary leadership to access the re-

sources, both human and financial, that are going to be necessary for the diocese to be able to live into that vision.

But remember, the bishop cannot lead the diocese into that vision all by himself. The bishop has to have help, and he has to have a lot of it. Remember, Jesus was not a one-man show. He first surrounded himself with a group of seemingly less than stellar companions. He then encouraged them and equipped them, through the power of his Holy Spirit, to live with him into the vision that he was casting. And then and only then, when they had begun to embrace the vision that he was casting, only then did he send them out to make disciples to grow the church.

Jesus made apostles, apostles made disciples, and disciples grew the church. In our faith tradition, as Dr. Corbin so clearly stated, we believe that our bishops --- and this will soon include your bishop-elect --- are direct, historical descendants of those first apostles.

They are charged by our Lord through the power of that self-same Spirit, to go into all the world, proclaiming the good news of the never-ending love of God for all of his children. Remember that. And remember, too, that just as the bishop must access the human resources that are necessary to live into the vision that he will cast, so must he also access the financial resources necessary to live into that vision.

In essence, the bishop must be the primary stewardship educator of the diocese, and he must be good at it. For continually, the bishop will have to contend with voices proclaiming that we are just a poor church, a church without resources adequate to the vision that he is casting.

Oh, we Episcopalians are so good at that! In our congregations and in our dioceses, we seem always to be tempted to think poor. And when we yield to the temptation to think poor, then we talk poor. And every time we do that, every time we think poor and talk poor, we end up acting cheap.

But, let me let you in on a little secret. Truth is, every bishop in this church already has all the money he or she needs to enable the church to live into the Spirit-inspired vision that he or she is casting.

Such is surely the case back in the Diocese of West Texas, a geographical area just a little bit smaller than the whole state of South Dakota. My diocese, the Diocese of West Texas, includes three of the five poorest metropolitan areas in the United States . . . areas covered up right now with thousands upon thousands of political and economic refugees fleeing oppression and hopelessness and despair in their own countries.

The need is so great, and the resources seem to be so lacking. But the truth is, we in the Diocese of West Texas already have all the money we need to live into our bishop's vision for us. Just as do

you who are the Diocese of South Dakota. For the truth is that there is no shortage of money amongst Episcopalians!

Every rector, priest-in-charge, vestry, and bishop's committee in this church already has all the money they need to enable the church to live into the Spirit-inspired vision that is being cast. This is true in your diocese, even as it is surely true in my diocese.

So, what's the problem? The problem is that most of that money is still in our pockets!

So, first the bishop must be the chief vision-caster.

Secondly, he must also access the resources both human and financial, that are necessary to enable the diocese to live into that vision. Those are the two fun things, the exciting things the bishop gets to do.

But the third thing the bishop has to do is not so much fun. For the third task of the bishop is to maintain order. And this the bishop must do, for if he or she does not maintain order in the diocese, there will be no order. Chaos will ensue, and our ancient enemy, the devil, will have a hay-day. To maintain order, the bishop must be willing and able to hold people accountable, laity and clergy alike.

The problem with that is that there is nothing at all in the human spirit that rushes with enthusiasm to embrace accountability. Sure, is true for me, and I bet it's true for you as well. On several occasions back when Sandy and I were driving all over West Texas, I would glance in my rear-view mirror and see one of our governor's faithful troopers behind me in his cruiser with his lights flashing. He would pull me over, and he and I would have a little prayer meeting right there on the side of the road, a meeting which he always led, and for which I always paid.

Each time that happened, I was reminded yet again that I do not like the experience of accountability. And yet, we all know that serious commitment to mutual accountability is essential to the maintenance of any healthy relationship. Just try maintaining a marriage without accountability. Try raising children, teaching school, supervising employees, or getting along with your neighbors without accountability.

We who are the church really need to remember that we do have an ancient enemy.

We often call him the devil, and visualize him in long red underwear with horns and a pointed tail. Would that he would always be so easily recognizable!

First and foremost, we must always remember that our ancient enemy hates the church, and he

despises the clergy of the church, and he is bent upon the destruction of both.

Some of his favorite tools for the destruction of both the church and her clergy are alcohol, drugs, money, and sex. If you also throw into that nasty mix several goodly doses of self-doubt, false pride, and good old-fashioned sloth and self-aggrandizement, you will have the makings for many difficult days for your bishop and the congregations for which he is responsible.

Your new bishop will hold you accountable, because he must. He will do so because he loves you, and he loves the church that has been entrusted to him. So, all of that is what a bishop has to do; that's his job. He has to cast the vision into which he will lead the diocese during his episcopacy. He has to access the resources, human and financial, that will be needed to enable the diocese to live into that vision. And while he is doing all of that, he must also maintain order.

Jonathan, my son and soon to be my brother, would you now please stand. This is not the first time in your life that I have had occasion to admonish you. But God willing, I do believe that it is going to be the last. By the time this day is done, you will have been ordained three times.

Twenty-three years ago you were ordained a deacon.

Twenty-two years ago you were ordained a priest.

And now, today, you are to be ordained a bishop.

Of those three events, those three ordinations, you must always remember that the one that changed your life the most was that first one, the one that made you a deacon. For in that one, your ordination to the diaconate, you declared your desire, your intention, and indeed, your willingness, for the rest of your life, to be a servant.

Then, in the due course of time, you responded to the call of your Lord through his church to submit yourself to ordination as a priest. And now, today, you are about to submit yourself to ordination as a bishop.

Truth is, ordination to both the priesthood and the episcopacy are but subsets of that first ordination, your ordination to the diaconate. For essential to all three, but the one declared first and foremost in your ordination to the diaconate, is that willingness, that commitment, first and foremost, to be a servant.

I have every reason to believe that you know this great truth, and that you believe this deep in the very core of your being. The office and ministry of bishop is now about to be entrusted to you. Treasure that office, protect the integrity of it, but take great care never to equate yourself with the office. You no doubt will remember that years ago you and I would occa-

sionally play chess, a game which you came to play very well, so well that you usually beat me. My final admonition to you this day is to remember always that when each game of chess was over, both the bishops and the pawns all were put back into the same box.

My daily prayer for you now is that you will continually be filled with utter joy at the privilege of being able to serve in this beautiful and promising diocese; and that God, through the power of His Holy Spirit, will keep you safe as you drive mile after endless mile tending your blessed flock.

The Rt. Rev. James E. Folts
VIII Bishop Diocese of West Texas,
And Bishop Jonathon H. Folts, father



From the Claims Desk: Seven Winter Weather Suggestions

Each season holds specific property- and liability-related challenges, but winter can be especially brutal. Here are a few potential hazards and offers guidance.

Service your boiler and furnace.

Sam encourages church leaders not to wait until too late in the season to have heating equipment inspected. It's easier to deal with a broken furnace if the temperature hasn't dropped below freezing.

"And service companies get busy in the winter; you may be on a waiting list for a couple of months to get your maintenance addressed," he says. Plan ahead and schedule boiler and furnace inspections early in the season.

Check for drafts.

Many religious organizations' buildings were built a long time ago. That could mean your organization is losing heat—and money—to cracks, crevices, and drafts. "You can call in a company to inspect and make repairs, or you can have the maintenance person systematically go around the property and seal windows," Sam says. It can make a big difference.

Inspect for holes.

Holes at buildings' perimeters can cause problems for a couple of reasons. They could provide a means of entry for critters to nest indoors, and they could be an injury hazard. "Fill in holes to prevent twisted ankles," Sam advises.

Clean your gutters.

Much of the routine for organizational building maintenance and hazard prevention is the same as for a homeowner. You have your home's gutters cleaned after leaves fall, and you should do that for your institution's buildings as well.

"When gutters are clogged with debris, melting snow may not drain properly. This can cause preventable problems, such as ice dams," Sam says. These barriers can prevent appropriate water flow, allowing water to sit on your roof, eventually leaking into the building and causing interior damage.

Trim your trees.

"One cubic foot of snow could weigh as much as 15 to 20 pounds," Sam says. He encourages organizational leaders to hire a professional and have trees inspected and trimmed. "You see utility companies cutting trees around wires for this reason. Snow can take down limbs or even entire trees. Manage your trees so they don't fall on a car, your building, or a person."

Plan for snow removal.

Maybe your organization has a relationship with a snow removal company to clear walkways and parking lots. Or maybe you have volunteers who shovel. Either way, make sure you have a comprehensive plan to provide a safe place for visitors to walk, drive, and park. "Arrange for a back-up, just in case the people who usually do the snow removal can't get there," Sam suggests.

Close up when weather gets bad.

“Sometimes it’s okay to close the church,” Sam says. “It’s not only the safety of the visitors when they’re on the property that’s at stake, but also their safety as they travel there.”

Sam recommends that you take these tips into consideration as you do your winter weather planning, but be sure to tailor your preparation to your particular needs. It might be cold outside, but your organization can provide respite to your community. Keep everyone safe in the process!

Article from CPG, November newsletter, Sam Carucci, Vice President of Claims for the Church Insurance Companies

Property Manager Report Fall 2019

Questions that I have been getting in my 2-3 years in this position.

Graveyards or Cemeteries:

Who cleans, mows, fences, makes repairs, maintains roads?

The church & its membership is responsible for all of the above.

Plus, a record of the plots showing where people are buried.

The members whose deceased family members are buried are the main people who should be maintaining their relatives grave.

Who takes care of the up keep and repairs of the mission churches?

Who pays for the electricity, water & sewer and heating costs?

This is the responsibility of each individual church and its membership.

What expenses are expected and are the responsibility of the church?

Every church is asked to Pledge 16% of income or an adjusted amount.

Insurance on the buildings, including liability for any personal injury.

Candles for the altar, wine and bread for Holy Communion.

Delegate registration fees to Diocesan Convention and Niobrara Convocation.

Up keep and operating of the church and its buildings.

Cost share to the main mission office above the cost of altar supplies.

Insurance Claims:

We have a thousand-dollar (\$1,000.00) deductible.

This means if the damage is less than \$1 thousand, we (church/building) cannot put in a claim. If you ascertain that the cost will be over \$1 thousand dollars, then call me with where the damage is located on the building (ie: roof, siding etc.) the date of the incident, get an estimate of a cost to repair/replace. I will call the insurance company and get a case number (claim #) We then wait for the insurance to let us know how much will be awarded.

WARNING: if we (Diocese) call in a lot of frivolous claims (claims that do not come up to the deductibles of \$1 thousand or claims that are a few \$\$ over the deductible (ie: \$1,200 total cost we only receive \$200) since they would deduct the \$1 thousand plus we have to pay for the adjuster to visit the site and pay for his/her expenses.

The Property Managers job is to help you with questions or problems, no to come and do the work!

I will come and look at what you deem as a problem or question and do the best to help you. **My phone numbers are (cell) 605-295-4467 or (home) 494-0102.**

You can leave a message on either phone.

The 2019 camp season saw well over 100 campers—keeping our registration numbers steady with the past few years. The camp program for all grade levels focused on the old monastic tradition of exploring and writing rules of life.

The word “rule” comes from a Latin word, *regula*, which implies a way of regulating and regularizing our lives so that we can stay on the path we have set for ourselves. This season, Thunderhead Camp instituted its own rule of life, which we read from at every meal (just as many monastic communities do!) Similarly, the program focused on giving campers the opportunity to consider and create their own rule of life. We explored our relationships with God, relationships with others, relationships with ourselves, and our relationships with resources in order to more clearly define our individual rules of life.

The fifth and sixth grade camp welcomed some very special guests from the Diocese of Maine. 6 high school students and three chaperones flew into Rapid City to teach the program for the fifth and sixth grade camp—exploring the same rule of life topic. Our visit from the Diocese of Maine is just the beginning of what we hope will be a fruitful and lasting friendship. The Diocese of Maine is hoping to help raise funds to bring the 2020 camp counselors to the camp in Maine. Our hope is that we will begin to enter into a relationship of equality, where all of us, no matter how resourced, may visit each other and learn from one another. If you would like to donate to this shared mission experience, please let us know!

Our sewing club at Thunderhead continued this summer, as campers and counselors alike learned how to sew and give back to the world in service. Over the course of the season, our campers made 36 dresses to donate to the “Little Dresses for Africa Project,” 20 Pillowcases to donate to hospitals and shelters, and 3 full-size quilts. These projects are a significant increase from last year, and we are incredibly grateful for your donations of both money and supplies to make these projects possible.

Also because of your generosity, the chapel renovation project is well underway. Thanks to RAM Construction in Spearfish, the chapel has a new (and gorgeous) tongue and groove ceiling. In the coming months, we hope to continue the renovation by replacing the flooring and windows. At the same time, we will replace more of the flooring in Supertent to finish out the main dining room. Thank you, for donating so generously to these projects so that we can keep the camp updated, beautiful, and safe for years to come.

The regular summer season concluded with a quilting retreat at. Eight adult quilters gathered to work on their own projects, while enjoying the beauty of the camp. The women’s retreat is also scheduled for late August. Like last year, we will continue to use the space for various events in the fall. The Black Hills Chamber Choir is returning in September for their fall retreat.

Finally, Thunderhead Camp would/could not continue if it weren’t for the commitment of the young adults who work there throughout the summer. These young adults are truly incredible—giving their time, energy, and talent to the young people in our diocese and beyond. This season, our camp staff featured three seminarians, and counselors from South Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, Virginia, and Connecticut. Thank you to Grant Gonsor, Ramsey Allen, Tristan Flute, Abel Flute, Dominic Payer, Ben Miller, Makaela Moser, Caroline Landry, Allison Gross, Annabelle Eastman, Demi Langdeau, Lydia Simmons, Natalie Dillivan, Cassie Boettcher, and Ben Crosby for sharing your hearts with our campers and each other. Your witness to the love of Jesus in community astounds me year after year, and we couldn’t do it without you. Thank you!

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Portia Corbin
Missioner for Camping and Retreats
Director of Thunderhead Episcopal Center

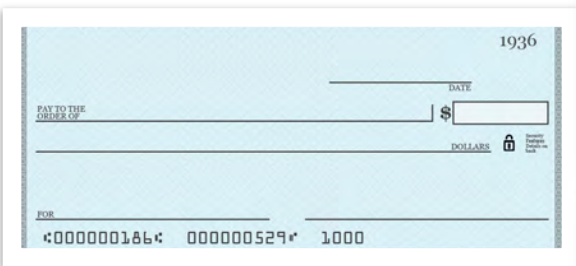
My apologies, this was to be in the last issue, before convention and I mistakenly omitted it from the Church News.

Reminder to everyone

Have you sent in your UTO offerings from the Fall Ingatherings.

And a reminder that UTO Grant applications open on Dec 1.

Thank you I appreciate it.



Is your church caught up on your Diocesan pledge?

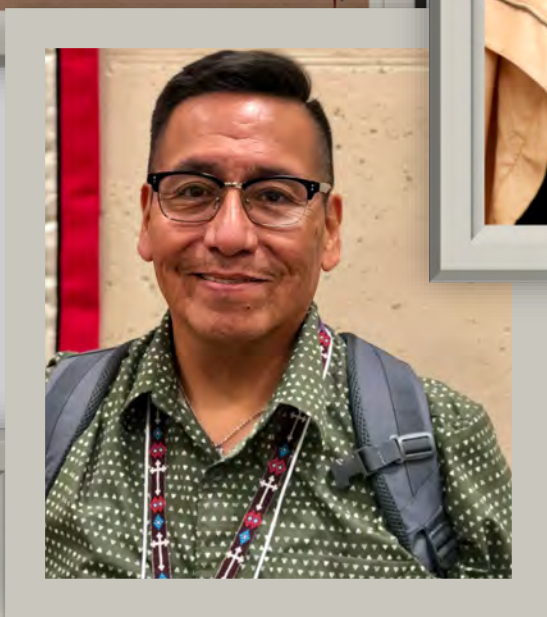
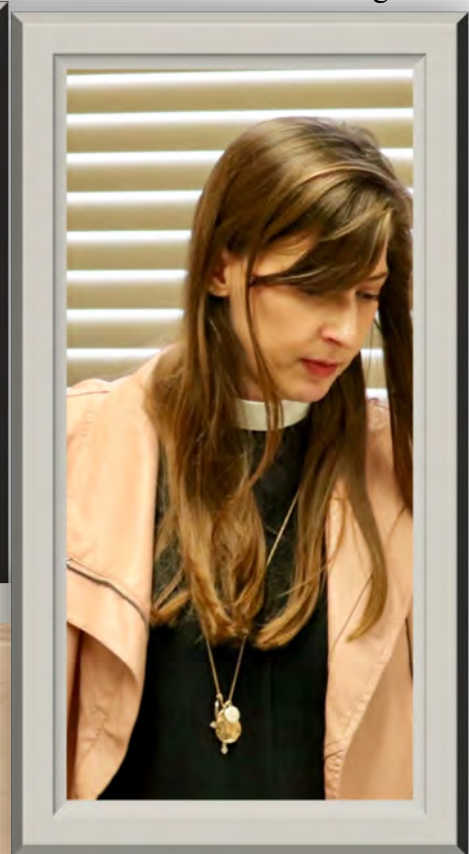
2019 is coming to a close and soon your church will be receiving the 2020 Common Mission reports. (asking pledge)

The Rev. Kim Folts, preparing for the Clergy spouse meet and greet.



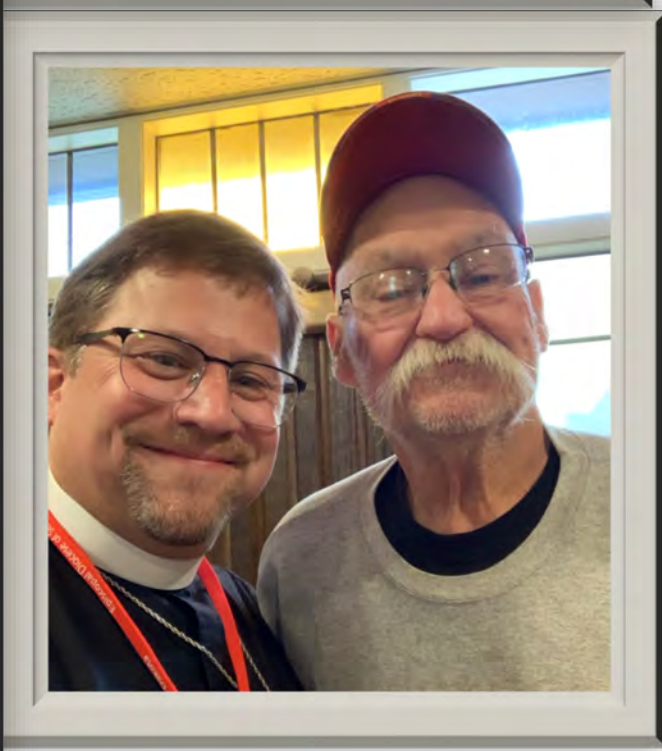
The Rev. Webster Two Hawk and Tammy Fonder











Excerpts from the **Diocesan Convention Address 2019**

Dear Friends in Christ —

It is good to see so many of you here at our diocese's 135th Diocesan Convention! And I have to say, it's great to see you all in person! The last time that I saw this body gather together in this place was on May 4th. You were here — I was in Connecticut — and our connection was made possible by the Holy Spirit...and Face Book!

It was on that day that you and the Holy Spirit invited me and my wife, Kim, to move to South Dakota. On that day, you invited me to live amongst you, and lead you, and serve you as your eleventh bishop. To be quite honest, since that time, not a single day has passed that I have not woken up feeling both blessed and very humbled by this new reality. And having now been physically with you, on the ground, since August 1st — and literally having traveled in all directions across our diocese over these past two months — what I suspected was the case back in the fall of 2018 when your search committee and I first began to visit with one another— what I suspected to be the case here in South Dakota proved to be 100% true. The people of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota are a blessed people! We are a very blessed people!

I used to call these five areas the “Five Umbrellas” — but that was before I was introduced to star quilts. I love seeing people being wrapped up in and enveloped by a star quilt as it is draped over them. I did the same thing for a dear friend of our family, Ruth Schumacher, who lived in Connecticut and whose funeral was two weeks ago. When I returned from Niobrara Convocation, I brought back a star quilt that I had won at Niobrara Convocation — it had been made by St. Elizabeth's Church — and I wrapped that quilt around her just as I had seen done before by others. And Ruth's facial expression was one of joy, one of love, and one of deep blessing.

Thus I now refer to these five areas as being the five star quilts of South Dakota. And as I introduce them and as we begin to live into them, I invite you to see yourself being wrapped up inside each of them. And my prayer and hope is that your life will radiate with that same kind of joy as together we grow and make improvements and adjustments in each of these five areas.

These five star quilts are: Relations; Communication; Formation; Transformation; and Advocacy.

These five star quilts are listed, I believe, in order of greatest importance. And that is why you hear ***“relations” being listed as number one.*** Our relationships with one another through Jesus Christ are the most valuable thing that we have. Without relationships, we are just individual silos — individual silos of faith scattered across our diocese with no connections. When

that happens, people begin to feel that they are all alone in this diocese of ours, especially if they are serving and worshipping in far out places. People begin thinking that maybe no one cares

— that no one knows that they even exist. And yet — and yet, ironically, when opportunities come around to share fellowship, and to take counsel together at different events, and to build relationships? — too often, I have heard, the response has been, “I’m not going to go. I’m too busy. It’s too far. I’m too needed where I am. I cannot come.” And the opportunity is missed.

So when you hear me speaking about how we’re going to work on our relationships, know that I am speaking about the whole spectrum of our relationships — I’m speaking about all of our connections with each other, connections that go both ways. I’m speaking about my relationship with our clergy and their relationships with me; I’m speaking about my relationships with our congregations and about their relationships with me. I’m speaking about the relationships that are enjoyed amongst our clergy and the relationships that exist, and that can exist, between two or more congregations. And I’m talking about your congregation’s relationship with the diocese as a greater whole.

As I said, our relationships are the very best thing that you and I can invest our energy in — and why? — because we cannot be the Church all on our own. I was taught that in the early days of South Dakota, people’s livelihood and even their very life depended upon the relationships that they had with their neighbors! You could not afford to be on the outs with your neighbor over silly little stuff! Relationships are important. They are life-giving! They are a blessing! And together, our relationships help us to become an even greater blessing!

So there are two things that I am going to invite us to focus on during this next year as far as our relationships with each other are concerned. The first is this — if you are not already doing so, I would like to invite your congregation to consider entering into a partnership relationship with another congregation in our diocese for a year’s period of time. That congregation may be within your own town or city — it may be within your own deanery — it may be on the far side of the diocese. I am inviting you to reach out and connect with another congregation. Learn about each other’s strengths — your joys — your challenges — and how you both are living out the Christian faith. Learn about how you can support each other through your prayers as well as through your gifts and talents. I am inviting you to explore having a partnership relationship — and then let us know who you have partnered with. For it is my hope, that at our next diocesan convention, we can have some old-fashioned testifying! — and have some people who will come up and witness as to how their partnership has led them to become a stronger blessing of Jesus Christ.

The second thing that I am going to ask to happen is that when there is a clergy conference or a clergy retreat — unless there is a really, really good reason or an absolutely dire emergency, I

want our clergy to be there. And I want them there so that they be with each other. And visit with each other. And pray with each other. And support each other. Some of our clergy live in very remote parts of our state. Some of our clergy are serving multiple churches without much support. So when opportunities arise for clergy to come together — I need them to be there. And I need congregations to make sure that they are able to come and that they are given and provided with the means to come! Because when they return to you? — when they come back to do the day in and the day out ministry that they have accepted the call to do — they will come back to you re-charged and renewed. They will come back to you knowing that they are not working alone in this diocese that we live in. So when a clergy person tells you that they are going to be away for an event with other clergy? Give them your blessing — support them — reschedule whatever may need to be rescheduled — and make sure that they take full advantage of being able to check in with their bishop and with their fellow sister and brother clergy.

The next area or star quilt that I want to address is communications. You obviously can't have a relationship unless you are somehow communicating. Thus I want us, as a diocese, to start looking creatively at the ways that we are communicating with one another.

There are parts of our diocese that do not have easy access to internet capability. Some of our members have to travel to get online. That's a reality that we have here in South Dakota. So we need to discover ways to ensure that our communications reach those who need them and in a timely fashion. Because if you are not informed, you cannot act. Or worse — if you are not informed like everyone else is being informed, it goes back to that feeling of being alone and out of the loop.

So for my part, and speaking for our diocesan staff, we will be addressing this issue from a diocesan standpoint. And we will come up with a system that will ensure, to the very best of our ability, that information gets to where it needs to get to successfully.

On another note, I have had people in parishes tell me that they have no idea what is happening on our reservations. And that's where most of our congregations are located! At the same time, and this was just a couple of weeks ago, I had a person from one of our reservations tell me that she has no idea what is happening in our parishes! So how we are communicating with each other will also be one of the areas that will be addressed in the coming year.

The last question that I would raise when it comes to communication has to do with how we are communicating with those who are living in our communities. If your parish has a website, how up to date is it? Go home and check that out. If your church has an answering machine, is the message on your machine listing ALL of your services? Is the message listing the times of ANY service? (Check that out when you go home — I guarantee you, speaking as a person who

was calling churches, and trying to put this year's bishop's visitation schedule together, some of you are going to be surprised!)

How are congregations getting the word out in their communities about who they are? — and about what they do? As some of you heard me say during the walkabouts, the days of us sitting in church and waiting for people to discover us all on their own have gone and left! Those days have been gone, in fact, for over fifty years, if not more! So how are we communicating information about who we are and about what we do with the people who live in our communities?

So I am inviting you to return home and talk with your clergy, your leaders, and with your congregation about your communication needs and about your communication methods. This will be one of the areas of conversation that I will look forward to having with you during a visitation. And if you are a congregation that publishes a newsletter? I'd be grateful if you would add me to your list! At this point, out of our seventy-eight congregations, I believe that I am currently receiving three. And I'd love to see that number go up!

The third quilt is the area of formation. How are we forming our people on both a diocesan level and on a congregational level? Thunderhead Episcopal Center is a wonderful jewel in our diocese. It has had a long history and has much potential — and I am grateful to those who care about it and who will be willing to explore how it can be used in the future, year round, to be a place where God's people of all ages can come and be formed.

How are we forming our seminarians and the people who are being prepared for ordained ministry? This conversation has begun already — and a hold has been placed upon new people coming into our process until our process can be easily defined and best suit the purposes for ministry here in South Dakota. As I said before, we are a missionary diocese at heart...and thus those whom we will help to form for ordained ministry will be trained to be missionaries. They will be trained to serve missions on reservations and parishes alike. They will be fearless, energetic visionaries with a heart for God's people! — because that's what we need. I am very excited about this formational kind of conversation — and I am particularly excited about the fact that our diocese has garnered the attention from seminaries in the Episcopal Church in training future priests from other dioceses!

Formation will also be a topic of conversation during episcopal visitations — for I am genuinely curious about what your congregations are doing to help form your people. And if you need help in finding resources or ideas, let's raise those questions up. If you haven't thought about raising up a catechist in your church to help form your people, let's talk about that as well.

People are hungry for learning — and in many of our congregations, especially those on our reservations, this kind of formation is going to have to be done, and done well, by the laity.

The fourth quilt is transformation. As Christian people — as blessed people — as people of a missionary diocese — we have been called to go forth into God’s world and to be God’s agents of change! We have been called to be God’s agents of transformation! We are people of hope! — with some of us living in areas which, on the surface, can seem pretty devoid of hope because of the number of challenges facing them.

Last June, when I was at a College for Bishops gathering, we had a workshop on how to interact with those in the media. And we took turns being interviewed by the leader who acted like a reporter. And when it came to be my turn, the leader asked me to describe the challenges that we were facing in the Diocese of South Dakota. And so I told him. We have a high unemployment rate; we have a high alcoholism rate; we have a high suicide rate; we have people living in third world conditions right here in the United States; we have racism — I’ve been told that the ratio of young Native American males being shot by police compared to the ratio of young African-American males being shot by police is four to one; we have false narratives being told by the government insofar as how much “help” Native Americans receive; we have priests serving a multiple number of congregations on their own; we have congregations that cannot be reached during certain parts of the year, etc.

To be honest with you, I thought that I answered the reporter’s question pretty well. My colleagues, on the other hand — the other bishops who were in the room? — afterwards, they looked at me and asked, “Where’s the hope? Where’s the hope? What is your diocese doing about all those situations?” And I looked back at them and defensively said, “Wait, wait, wait! I wasn’t asked a question about hope! I was asked a question about our challenges!”

And then they said to me words that I will never forget...words that I will always, as a bishop, remember when talking to other people about the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota. These bishops said to me, “No one...no one is ever going to ask you about hope! No one is ever going to ask you about how your diocese is helping to make a difference in people’s lives! Our country? Our country right now thrives on disaster! When was the latest hurricane? When was the last tornado? When did the latest flood occur and how many people died in it? When was the last mass shooting? What’s the latest scandal? Tell us all about the latest conflict!”

Those kinds of stories sell. Those are the kinds of stories that our nation hears about and they feed off of them! Rarely do we hear what’s being done in response to those situations. We rarely, if ever, hear about how people are trying to make a difference! And do you know why? Because two or three days after a conflict is over, we’ve become focused on a brand new disaster! And the

previous disaster?...the previous situation?...and the lives of people who were affected just 48 to 72 hours ago? — they're forgotten. They're forgotten.

My brother and sister bishops taught me a very important lesson that day. They taught me that I've got to be one who brings hope into the story. We've got to be the ones who bring hope into the stories of South Dakota.

Quick case in point — there was a young woman who went missing, and who was later found to be hanged — her family believes that she was murdered — on the Rosebud reservation. Did the reservation police go looking for this woman when she was reported missing? Nope. Did the FBI go looking for her? Nope. Do you know who went looking for her? We did! The Church did! Mother Lauren Stanley, who is the Supervising Presbyterian of the Rosebud Mission West, she got her people moving! She worked with the victim's family, she organized them, she instructed them, she fed them, she energized them...she even involved the two seminarians who were in her charge last summer! And that group of people? — they were the ones who found that young woman. And Mother Lauren helped her community to bury that young woman. And in response...all those officials...all those officials who initially had refused to help or give any assistance whatsoever to the search...they repented. They repented. And they publicly said, "Never again...never again."

That's a transformative story of hope. That is what being a transformative agent in God's kingdom looks like! Even when a part of God's kingdom is confronted by many challenges, we cannot allow ourselves to be convinced that we are powerless! We cannot be convinced that there is nothing that we can do! We are a blessed people! We are a missionary diocese! And as a missionary diocese, we can bring God's hope where God's hope is needed! We can bring justice where justice is required! And we can bring love...we can bring God's love...and we can apply that love to hearts that are hurting...and make differences that count...and that matters...and that lasts.

And that leads me to the fifth and final quilt — the quilt of advocacy.

We are blessed by other people in the wider Episcopal Church — as well as by people who are not involved in the Episcopal Church at all — people who want to come to South Dakota and be with us, and to do things for us and for our people. We are the harvest that the Holy Spirit has called them to explore and to go and do work in. And that's fine. That's fine. We welcome them. And we want them to come.

It honestly does not matter to me that some of these initially may be coming to us because of their curiosity — or because of their sympathy. What does matter to me is that they come — I want them to come and spend time with us. Because in addition to doing whatever it is they are feeling led by the Holy Spirit to do — I want to insist that they take time to listen to us. And be taught by us. And be gifted by us. And be transformed, through the Holy Spirit's power, by us!

Because — the people who are coming to our diocese on mission trips? Folks, those people are part of the harvest that you and I are being called to go into! Many of these people, I believe, are coming to South Dakota with the intention of giving and transforming, and thanks be to God that they are! Partnerships and working relationships that are grounded in Jesus' work are to be welcomed and celebrated!

However! — as I said earlier, a relationship goes both ways! I don't want any mission team coming into South Dakota thinking that they are here only to give — and not to receive. I don't want any mission team coming into South Dakota believing that they, and they alone, possess the transforming power of God's Holy Spirit. They already have made the decision to come and be with us and to work amongst us! And so I want us to deeply engage them — and invite them to sit with us, and listen to our stories, and learn from our elders. I want these folks to return home knowing what God is up to in our diocese, how we have come to know God and how we have come to love God! For in doing so, we will be transforming them — and we will be giving them a far, far better gift to take home and use than they could ever purchase at Wall Drug.

Our work is cut out for us. It's a large agenda — there's a lot of work to be done — and I believe that we're up to the task! Because we're God's blessed people — and God is already at work preparing us for some very good things ahead.

Thank you again for inviting me to join you in this newest chapter of our history — may God bless our efforts — may God bless our diocese — and may God bless each and every one of you.









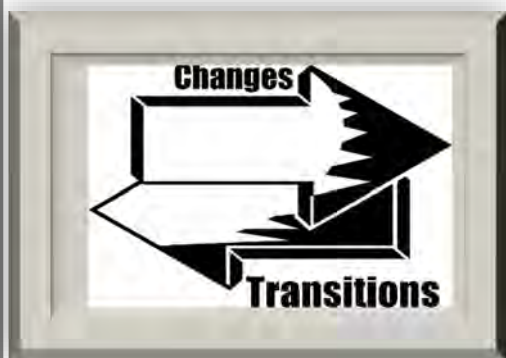
Transition Update

As of the writing of this update (October 30, 2019), three congregations in the Diocese of South Dakota are in the transition process.

St. Andrew's, Rapid City and Christ Church, Yankton are both seeking half-time priests and the Diocese is actively working with them to find clergy to meet their worship and pastoral needs.

After Fr. Chris Roussell's departure for a new congregation in Virginia this summer, Emmanuel in Rapid City began working with the Diocese on their search for a new rector. They have just finished gathering survey data from their congregation and will have a finished profile by early December.

At that time, they will begin accepting names of those interested in becoming their new rector. If you know of anyone interested in any of these positions, please pass their names along to the Rev. Chris Corbin, Missioner for Transition and Leadership, at chris@episcopalchurchsd or 605-881-8153.



Communications Survey

Improving diocesan communications is one of the five "star quilts" that Bishop Jonathan wants to highlight as part of our initiative to reclaim our focus as a missionary (meaning engaged in mission) Diocese.

By improving communications, the Diocese wants more transparency, meaning as much information is available to as many people as possible; more efficiency, meaning that there is no unnecessary information passed along; more timely, meaning that we get out information in time for people to act on it; and more clarity, meaning that the information we send out is as easy to understand as possible.

In order to do this, we first need to have a sense of the current state of communications in our local congregations and between individuals and the Diocese.

Therefore, we've begun a Diocese-wide survey to help us understand how people currently communicate and how they'd like to communicate. This survey will be open between November 15th and December 6th and is available both online and in a paper form.

Each congregation will be sent 10 paper copies of the survey (from which they can make more copies if need be or can request more from the Diocese), and the online version (as well as a link to download more paper versions) will be available at [episcopalchurchsd.org/comm survey](http://episcopalchurchsd.org/comm_survey).

Please help us spread the word and invite as many people in your communities, even and especially those who do not come to church regularly or who have fallen out of the loop, to take this survey.

Completed paper surveys can be returned to the diocesan office at Diocese of South Dakota c/o Chris Corbin, 408 N. Jefferson Ave, Pierre, SD 57501.







Class: Congregational Finance for Clergy and Lay Leaders

Date: Friday January 24, 2020

Location: Trinity Pierre

Starting at 5:30 pm thru Saturday 3:00 pm



Class: Seven Things everyone should know about American Indians in SD



Date: February 21-22, 2020

Location: Trinity Pierre

Starting at 5:30 pm—Saturday 3:00pm

Class Preaching the Bible

Date: May 15 & 16, 2020

Location: Trinity Pierre

Starting at 5:30pm—Saturday 3:00pm



To register for any or all of the classes please go online at

episcopalchurchsd.org/ministry-weekend-registration

Every copy of *The South Dakota Church News* that has an incorrect address is returned to us with a 75¢ postage due charge.

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408 N. Jefferson Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501-2626**

Thank-you



Bishop's visitation & travel dates are in bold letters.

Please remember the Bishop's schedule is subject to last minute changes.

Diocesan Calendar

NOVEMBER

Nov 27, 28 & 29 Diocesan office closed
Nov 28 Thanksgiving weekend

DECEMBER

Dec. 1 No visitation
Dec. 8 Installation Calvary Cathedral
Dec. 14 & 15 Standing Rock Mission
Dec. 22 Grace Church, Madison
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve
Dec. 29 No visitations
Dec. 31 New Years Eve

JANUARY 2020

Jan. 5 St. Marks, Aberdeen
Jan. 12 St. Andrews, Rapid City
Jan. 19 Winter Talk
Jan. 26 Christ Church, Yankton

FEBRUARY

Feb. 2 St. Pauls, Vermillion
Feb. 9 Emmanuel, Rapid City
Feb. 15 & 16 Yankton/Santee Mission
Feb. 23 St. Matthews, Rapid City

Save the Date!

UTO Annual Grant Materials will be released on the first Friday of December!

Be sure to check our webpage, Facebook, and other social media platforms for more information.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Clergy Retreat

Terra Sancta, Rapid City

February 10-13, 2020



Check out our website
Episcopalchurchsd.org

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 South Dakota



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Thank you to everyone that sent in
 your photos from our Convention in
 September and for sharing your
 consecration photos also.

The Rev. Chris Corbin
The Very Rev. Ward Simpson
The Rev. Kim Folts
Barb Simpon

Thank you to all who attended or
 watch the service on line.
 Your love and prayers are this
 Diocese greatest gift.

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