

South Dakota Episcopal *Church News*



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FALL 2020

Virtual Diocesan Convention 2020

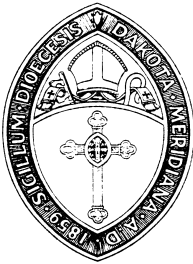
Thank you to Emmanuel, Rapid City, Calvary Cathedral, Sioux Falls, Bishop Jones Center, Mission, St. Marks, Aberdeen and Trinity, Pierre for being our host sites.

And **thank you** to everyone that put time and energy into the planning making this a reality.

And **thank you** for all your thoughts and prayers for those attending.



**The Diocese of
South Dakota**



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“Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.”
In the name of our triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

When we began last year’s Diocesan Convention, as some of you might recall, I had not yet been consecrated as your bishop. As a result of this timing, and in accordance with our diocesan canons, our Chancellor, Steve Sanford, was to be the President of that Convention. So Chancellor Sanford and I worked up the convention script – he had his speaking parts in that convention, I had mine – and, after the motion to adjourn the convention was made and accepted, I said to no one in particular, “Well, at least next year’s convention will be normal!”

Apparently, the Holy Spirit’s gift of prophecy had not yet befallen upon me.

Last April, when COVID-19 was changing the way that many of us have ever envisioned ministry being done, there was a point when I thought that had I known what the year 2020 would bring, my address to you last year would have been very different. In hindsight, however, I don’t think that my words in 2019 would have changed all that much. And this is why: God’s mission, and our participation in God’s mission, is where our true focus lies. Living into Jesus’ Great Commandment – loving God and loving our neighbor – that is our focus! Living into Jesus’ Great Commission – worshipping God, making new Christians, forming new Christians, and transforming God’s world! – that is our focus! COVID-19 and all that it entails? That is not our focus! It is part of our current picture! It is certainly a part of our current picture! But it is not – and I pray to God that it never will be – our focus.

This is the difference: a Christian congregation who chooses to make COVID-19 their focus is a congregation that, I maintain, will most likely not survive this pandemic. Christian congregations who have become so set in their ways that they cannot possibly imagine doing anything differently because of this virus – these congregations will indeed perish! And they will perish because they have no vision. They have no vision. And the words of Proverbs 29:18 will become their prophetic reality – because as that passage so rightfully states: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

And it is not overly hard to understand why this will be the case! The people of congregations such as these are stymied! They are looking forward towards nothingness! They have not discerned any new or different ways in which to worship. They have not looked for different ways to be in relationship with or to communicate with each other! They have not thought about different ways of offering Christian education! And they have given absolutely no thought as to how they can be the transformative agents of God that God has called them to be! And why? Because they cannot meet in person! They cannot do things as they have always done them in the past! And, if they cannot meet in person, and if they can't do things in ways that they have always done them, then, well, heavens to Betsy, what in the world are they going to do?

How does one sing the Lord's song while being held captive in the city of Babylon? What answer does one expect to hear when a person, such as in Psalm 121, looks upon the dangerous mountains, sets their gaze towards uncertainty, and cries out, "Oh Lord, where is my help? How can we be your people, God, while living in the midst of a worldwide pandemic?"

Such a person, such a congregation, can think of no answer. And maybe it's because they're not expecting one. Or perhaps it is the fear of having to do ministry differently that is keeping them from hearing what God is trying to say. In any event, and for whatever reason, such congregations have chosen to put their participation in God's mission on hold. On hold! "We'll be back in your life," such congregations seem to be saying, "and God will be back in your life – when things get better. When it's safer. When things are normal. When COVID-19 is gone, and in the immortal words of Arnold Schwarzenegger, 'we'll be back.'"

God's mission in the world, however, has not been put on hold. God's mission, thanks be to God, continues – and it continues through those who believe in God's mission and through those who choose to participate in God's mission! And blessedly, and with great thanksgiving, we certainly have seen this happening in the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota!

Stories abound concerning the leaders and the people of our congregations who have chosen to keep God's mission as their primary focus. COVID-19, as I said before, is certainly a part of the picture that these congregations are looking at! The people of such congregations are not denying COVID-19! They don't refer to COVID-19 as something other than the serious virus that it is nor do they refer to it as something that is inconsequential! Yet at the same time, COVID-19 is not their primary focus! God's mission is their focus! And as a result, what has happened?

What has happened is that our clergy and the people of our congregations such as these have found ways in which to worship God and to follow Jesus despite COVID-19. They have found ways to share fellowship and to stay in relationship with each other despite COVID-19. They have found ways to form their people and they have continued to transform their communities!

They have even found ways in which to welcome new members into their congregations! Get this now...some people who live within the Standing Rock Mission area and yet who were not a member of any church? They chose to become a part of a congregation! Ask Fr. Kim Fonder about his experiences during this past spring! People decided to become members of some of his congregations before they had even stepped foot into one of his church buildings! "I want to join

your church!” they said. “What do you mean, you want to join our church? What are you talking about? You haven’t seen the insides of our buildings! You haven’t seen our stained glass windows, you haven’t heard our music! You haven’t had the uplifting and life changing experience of turning to page 355 in the Book of Common Prayer! You haven’t even tasted our coffee...”

Just thinking that someone would join a church before stepping into a church’s building just boggles the stereotypical Episcopalian mind! And it really shouldn’t! It really shouldn’t. People joined a congregation because of how God’s mission was being put into action! These people saw God! These people saw Jesus! They saw hope and compassion! And most of all? – they saw love. They saw love in action.

I’ll offer you another example. The people of the Cheyenne River Episcopal Mission – a reservation which is the size of Connecticut and which is now being served by two priests who formerly came from Connecticut! – the people of the Cheyenne River were rolling along with the help of Fr. Jim Marrs and Canon Chris Corbin when COVID-19 hit. And at that point, travel and other gathering restrictions were put into place. And they, like so many others, began asking the question, “How are we going to reach our people?” They couldn’t gather indoors! No priests (or bishop!) were being allowed to come to them! (I know because I tried! I came as close to begging as much as a bishop should!) And in addition, unlike other places in our diocese, internet service is not readily and easily available. So what did they do?

Ask Deacon Iva Traversie about what they did! To their credit, and to their belief in God’s mission, they didn’t quit. They didn’t throw up their hands in the air and walk away. Instead, they went to a local radio station! And they did Morning Prayer services, on Sunday mornings, over the radio. And these services, and their prayers, and their messages of God’s hope, and their sharing the good news of Jesus Christ – their words reached a number of people far greater than the number of those who normally would be gathering in their church buildings.

Now, I want to be clear on this point, because I think it is so important – Deacon Iva and the leaders of the Cheyenne River Episcopal Mission made this decision. They were the ones who took the initiative! They responded to God’s call to act! They didn’t call me and ask, “Bishop, we have no priest! And because of the restrictions, no priest can travel to us. What should we do?” They responded to God’s call. They responded to God’s call to reach out to God’s people, and they responded faithfully. And I am so proud of them. I am so very, very proud of them.

I want to offer you a third and final example by asking you this question – how can a church host a mission trip during a pandemic? How can one of our congregations tell the story about what God is up to when there is no one around to hear the story? Ask Mother Lauren Stanley to tell you about her experiences! Because Rosebud West Mission faced that particular challenge! – and do you know what they came up with? Virtual mission trips! People sent funds; Mother Lauren Stanley put those funds to use; and then, using video, she provided the missionaries with a show and tell of what God had done because of what they did and had offered. And she continued to teach such groups about God’s mission in South Dakota.

So...what do you think the major difference is between congregations whose focus has remained on God's mission and congregations whose focus has remained in the past? Romans 12, I think, provides us with a very strong clue when St. Paul writes these words: "Rejoice in hope; be patient in suffering; persevere in prayer." Hear those words again: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer."

How well do St. Paul's words apply to us and to our participation in God's mission at this time? When we read the news every day; when we look at many of the things that are happening all around us; it sounds a little silly, or maybe it sounds really foolish, to speak of hope, much less to rejoice in it! We are also not a culture that is overly known for its patience. We want instant cures and instant solutions. And insofar as persevering in prayer is concerned? My experience has been that some people tend to persevere for only so long...because when their prayers aren't being answered to their liking or on their timetable, they throw up their hands, walk away, and stop praying altogether.

And yet Paul's words contain, I believe, some of God's very best directions to us during this time: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." Allow me, therefore, to share with you how these ten simple words have been manifested and lived out on a diocesan level since we last met.

At last year's convention, you will recall, we identified ourselves again as being a missionary diocese! We began talking about our new star quilt initiative. We talked about looking at, and praying about, and acting upon how the people of our diocese could best participate in God's mission. And we identified five different areas, five different star quilts, to focus upon: our relationships with each other; our communications with each other; the ways that we are forming our people in the Christian faith and life; the ways that we are transforming our diocese to best reflect God's kingdom; and the ways in which are advocating for ourselves, telling our stories about what God is doing where we are!

We then started to do some planning. We started to design some potential patterns for these five star quilts – and about halfway into it, along came COVID-19. And as a result, we were left with a choice. Were we going to live in fear? Or were we going to live in hope? When our patience is tested, are we going to pass the test? Or will we fail? Will we persevere in our prayers? – or will we put our participation in God's mission on hold and wait until things get better?

This is how I would choose to best illustrate the situation in which we found ourselves facing. One evening, a couple of weeks ago, my wife, Kim, and I were watching a baking competition – and it was one of those baking competitions in which the contestants are given a theme or a certain item to bake and a time limit. About halfway into their time, the host of the show came out with a certain ingredient and she said to all the contestants, "Surprise! You have a special challenge! You now have to incorporate a can of pureed pumpkin into whatever it is that you are baking!"

Now, some of the contestants who were working with chocolate or with vanilla cream...oh, they were thrilled! One contestant, however – she was working with lemon curd. And perhaps needless to say, she was not thrilled by this turn of events. The pumpkin puree challenge totally disrupted her vision. However, she didn't quit. She didn't give up. She didn't throw up her hand in despair and walk off stage. Instead, she chose to live in hope – she chose to be patient – and I'm assuming that she chose to persevere in prayer, because she was going to need some!

So – what has happened to us as a diocese as a result of the COVID19 challenge? How have we chosen, as a diocese, to respond to God's invitation to participate in God's mission when, half-way into our year, we learned that we would have to cope with a pandemic?

Well, for starters, we have been spending a good deal of our time focusing upon our relationships and our communications across our vast diocese of over 77,000 square miles. Your clergy and I, for instance, have been meeting weekly using Zoom technology since March of this year. These meetings of ours, initially, were all about how to do ministry in light of COVID-19. Because, as you will no doubt remember, the pandemic hit us during Lent and we were all trying to figure out how to conduct Holy Week and Easter services.

Now these clergy meetings are not mandatory – and yet the majority of our active clergy members sign on every week for one hour. And whereas there are, of course, continued updates and news regarding our participation in God's mission despite COVID-19 – we also use this time to share information about diocesan programs and processes; we have offered a couple of workshops; we share resources; we share prayer requests; and we share fellowship. Two or three of our clergy members log on to these meetings thirty minutes before they are scheduled to begin, just to see and to talk with each other! Many have commented and continue to comment on how good it is to see everyone's faces and how much they look forward to this time together. One clergy person even shared with me a couple of weeks ago that he can remember a time when he only saw and visited with his fellow clergy members at the annual diocesan convention.

Here's an interesting little fact: had we not had to respond to this challenge – had we not considered how we were going to participate in God's mission despite COVID-19? –I don't know if we would be having these meetings. I cannot honestly say whether I, or anyone else, would have come up with the idea of having a weekly clergy meeting on Zoom! And get this part – our diocesan clergy want these meetings to continue even when COVID-19 has passed us by! Clergy people, asking for meetings to continue – another idea that boggles the Episcopalian mind!

Another program that has been initiated are what are known as clericus deanery meetings. These are times when I will travel to one 13 of our seven deanery locations to meet with the clergy. The first clericus gathering took place last Thursday with the clergy from the Black Hills – and we used our time together to share information about the diocese, our congregations and ourselves. We also used this time to discuss a book that I have asked all of our clergy to read concerning racism and how to be agents of reconciliation and healing in our respective communities. Be-

cause of COVID-19, everyone who attended was properly distanced and properly masked – and those who cannot attend will be given the opportunity to participate using Zoom technology in places where it is feasible to do so.

Additionally, we will be trying on a new idea when it comes to bishop visitations in 2021. After Kim and I enrolled our daughter into college last August and became true “empty-nesters”, we purchased an RV. And our plan is to take the RV on visitation trips whenever possible between April and November. Now, like unto last year, each reservation in our diocese, and each congregation that is not in a reservation, will be receiving a visitation. The change is that, in addition to those visits, I will be spending about a week or so in each deanery of our diocese – and we will be calling these events “deanery visitations.” On the Sundays of those weeks, I will be making official visitations -- but during the week itself, I will be remaining in the deanery. And what will happen during this time will be constructed by the clergy of these deaneries and by me. If a deanery-wide service is wished for, we’ll make it happen. If there are tribal, political or community leaders whom it would be beneficial for your congregation to have me visit with, we’ll make it happen. This is a brand new idea that we are trying on – it will be an interesting experience using a mobile office – and I look forward to offering reports about these events as they occur.

Insofar as our communication star quilt is concerned, we have begun making use of programs which allow us to send out emails to entire groups in a format that is much more helpful than just sending a plain email with various attachments. We began using this program for our Diocesan Council meetings and for our communications with clergy. Most recently, as I hope that the majority of you have experienced, we set up a separate list for those who were interested in knowing about our Diocesan Convention matters. And one of our plans for this next program year will be to create a Diocesan-wide E-news for those who wish to receive it. Although we realize that not every person in our diocese has reliable internet access, our clergy do. And just as we asked and relied upon the clergy to share diocesan convention news with their delegates who do not have good internet access, we will be relying on our clergy, especially those serving congregations where the internet service is spotty, to print and post copies of these notices in their churches and to share what is happening in the wider diocese in whatever way they are communicating.

The technology that is behind this convention is another way in which we have been working on our communications with each other. As a result of having to conduct our convention differently because of COVID-19, we were able to purchase some communication equipment that some of our sites are using today! Our goal, ultimately, is to have one set of such equipment in each deanery. And I want to thank the St. Mary’s Leadership Board in particular for their donation of funds towards making this project a reality.

Because of the COVID-19 virus, this new equipment became more than just a wish or an idea – it became a necessity – and it has become a genuine blessing. For many of our events, people have to travel a number of miles to attend – and we also are very dependent upon the weather. So having this technology and equipment will therefore widen our ability to meet and offer diocesan-wide programs, and especially those regarding Christian formation.

Turning now to the Christian formation star quilt, Canon Portia Corbin has begun putting together a new curriculum ministry group for our diocese as a whole. One of the purposes of this group will be to do research into the different kinds of Christian education program materials that are out there and to categorize them in terms of the different contexts of our congregations. Leaders of any congregation, regardless of size, and regardless of how many children are in their church, will be able to call upon this group or upon the work of this group for recommendations for Christian formation materials for children, teenagers, college students and adults.

Moving forward, Canon Portia, the Rev. Cody Maynus, and the Thunderhead Episcopal Board will be continuing their focus on Thunderhead Episcopal Center and its role in the formation star quilt. And I want to note in particular our appreciation to Fr. Cody and to Cassie Boettcher for their work in presenting a virtual camp experience last summer. Although the COVID-19 required us to have to cancel having a summer camp program on site for campers in 2020, this team persevered and was able to think and to act outside of the proverbial box!

In addition, Archdeacon Paul Sneve will be offering a new antiracism course this October in Pierre, as well as a Dakota Learning Experience in Rapid City. Niobrara Weekends will be continuing as well as a Safe Church training program which all of our clergy will be taking. I am also pleased to announce that the process for those discerning whether God and the Church may be calling them into ordained ministry has been revised over this past year and has reopened. We had our very first priesthood/diaconate information day this past August which was very successful. Two people who were interested in learning about the priesthood attended, five people who were interested in learning about the diaconate attended, and we had eight facilitators. Two other areas that have been identified as being part of the formation star quilt pattern are congregational formation for clergy and lay leaders and formation opportunities for licensed lay ministries.

When it comes to our Transformational Star Quilt, there are eight different areas that have been identified as being a part of that quilt's pattern and they are as follows: racism, suicide, addiction, care for God's creation, disaster preparedness, creating a partnership with the South Dakota Lutheran Synod, interfaith relationships, and helping congregations create local partnerships in their respective contexts. Our hope and plan as we move forward in these areas is to create eight different groups of people who are interested in these areas of transformational ministry with representation of at least one person from every one of our deaneries.

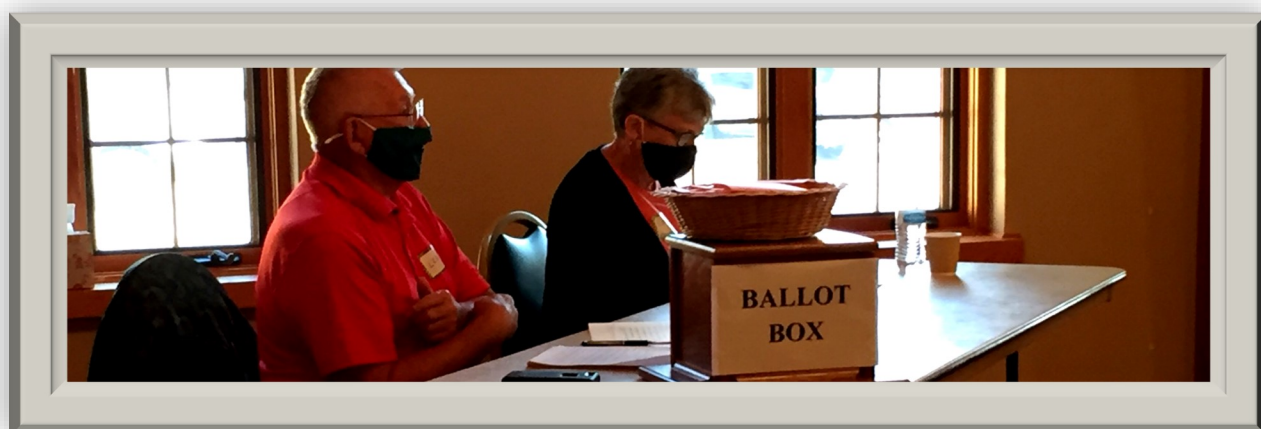
The last quilt that I will touch on is Advocacy – the telling of our stories. One of the ways that we are beginning to tell our story better is by revamping the format of our diocesan budget and categorizing our expenses underneath our respective star quilts. Just as a congregation's budget should accurately and transparently tell the story of how it is participating in God's mission, a diocesan budget should do exactly the same thing. And thus I wish to publicly thank Mitchell Honan, our new Canon for Property and Finances, for working with me in crafting the format of our new diocesan budget and for putting the story of what God is up to in South Dakota into a Microsoft Excel format.

Another part of the pattern of this quilt will be to better tell the story of how we are participating in God's mission in our reservations. All clergy who are serving in our reservations will be meeting with me and with our diocesan staff three times each year, and our first gathering will be next month. One of the items on our agenda will be to begin crafting and publicizing the ministry efforts of these mission churches. Working with Canon Chris Corbin, we will begin putting these stories onto the website and including them in the two reports that we are required to give to the National Church concerning how we are using the Block Grant of \$763,550 that is used to pay the salaries of all our mission clergy.

Now, having said all this – and having looked back on how our diocese has been participating in God's mission since our last convention, and especially so during the past seven months – I continue to think about that baking show that my wife and I saw. I remember well the look on the face of the contestant who was challenged with pumpkin puree while working with lemon curd. I can relate to that look! And so can all of you. Initially, when we were faced with the challenge of COVID-19, we were shocked and stunned. But we reached deep inside of ourselves. We made use of the faithful resiliency and tenacity that God has given us. We believed in God, we continued to follow Jesus, and we trusted each other.

In everything that we have done – in everything that we are currently doing – and in everything that we are planning together to do despite the COVID-19 challenge – we are rejoicing in hope. We are being patient in our suffering. And we are persevering in our prayers. The fruits that our ministry is growing is testimony to the truth of St. Paul's words – and to what can happen when a diocese, and when congregations, faithfully participate in God's mission. And so, my brothers, my sisters, my siblings in Christ – may those words of St. Paul be our continual mantra until COVID-19 is no longer a challenge and is no longer a part of our picture. "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." Stay safe. Remain faithful. Continue to love your neighbor and don't forget to love yourselves.

And may you know and always remember – Jesus is still our Lord; we are still children of God; the Holy Spirit is still calling us to go forth as God's missionary people; and most importantly of all, you are loved. Amen





Test, 123, can you hear me now??



And from Millie, our smallest attendee, Hurry up Deacon Marty, "lets get this thing started I have things to do."



The Rev. Richard Zephier, St. Marks, Aberdeen
Deacon Bitsey Ceisel, the Rev. Conrad Ceisel, The
Rev. George Parmeter, Sisseton Mission and the
Rev. Kim Fonder, Standing Rock Mission



Anticipation



People from around the Rosebud Deanery listening and participating.
Virtual Convention 2020





We are ready at the Cathedral.



Thank you for asking Canon Mitch Honan your question Beth Brenner, Grace Church, Huron



Getting better acquainted. Judy Miller, Messiah, Pine Ridge Mission, Deacon Iva Traversie, and the Rev. Kurt Huber, Cheyenne River Mission



Winter holidays can be a joyous time for all, but nearly 50% of civilian fire deaths occur throughout the winter season: November-February. Most heating fires in South Dakota involve fireplaces and chimneys. The most dangerous place to be, with regard to fire, is in your own home. Your home can be a cozy, warm place away from a harsh winter, but it can also become dangerous if you don't take special precautions.

Tips to Eliminate Winter Fires: **1)** Safety around heating equipment and appliances is an important first step in reducing the threat of fire. **2)** Keep children and loose clothing at a safe distance. **3)** Use a yardstick to measure the distance between heating equipment and combustible material. **4)** Unless you have three feet of clearance, you are at risk. **5)** Always turn off portable heating appliances when leaving home or retiring for the evening. Be sure the fire in the fireplace is out before going to bed. **6)** Have chimneys, fireplaces, and other heating devices inspected by a qualified professional at the start of every heating season. **6)** Use a sturdy screen or glass closure in front of your fireplace, and burn only clean fireplace wood. Never burn treated lumber. **7)** Install smoke detectors on every level of your home, including the basement, and test them monthly. **8)** If you smell gas in your home, contact your local utility company or qualified professional heating contractor and follow their advice. **9)** Inspect heat tape before using it. Never thaw frozen pipes with an open flame.

Winter Safety Tips Protect neighborhood homes this winter. **1)** Keep your nearest fire hydrant clear of snow. **2)** After holiday parties, check wastebaskets and furniture for smoldering cigarettes. **3)** Place holiday decorations well away from heat sources. If you have a tree, water it daily. **4)** Do not burn holiday wrappings in a fireplace; it may cause a chimney fire. **5)** Pay attention when cooking. If a pan is on fire, cover it with a lid. Water will spread the fire. **6)** Turn off and unplug lights and decorations before going to bed or leaving your house. Buy electrical decorations that have been approved by a national testing laboratory. Don't overload outlets.

Candle Burning Safety Tips: **1)** Place candles on a secure surface in sturdy noncombustible holders that won't tip over. Make sure the holder is large enough to catch drippings. **2)** Keep candles away from children and pets. Candles should be out of children's reach. **3)** Keep candles away from combustible items such as curtains, books, and paper. Remember the "three-foot rule" - anything combustible needs to be kept three feet from a heat source. **4)** Keep candles away from flammable liquids. Do not use a candle for light when fueling a kerosene heater or lantern. The flame may ignite the fumes. **5)** Avoid using candles during a power outage. A flashlight is a safer option. Don't carry a lit candle. **6)** Remember to extinguish candles when leaving the room or going to sleep. Never leave children or pets unattended in a room with a lit candle.

Winter driving can be extremely hazardous at times due to poor road conditions or reduced visibilities from heavy or blowing snow. During these times, travel is difficult and not recommended. Many people still venture outdoors not knowing what they will encounter. Many winter deaths and injuries can be attributed to people becoming stranded and venturing away from their vehicle. To avoid this, you should, **1)** Stay inside your vehicle and wait for help. When traveling this winter season: **2)** Listen to the forecast before departing and postpone travel if inclement weather is occurring or expected. **3)** Avoid traveling alone. Inform others of your timetable and planned routes. **4)** Keep your gas tank near full. **5)** Adjust your speed to the condition and increase following distances. **6)** Have a Winter Survival Kit in your vehicle at all times!

Items that should be in your Survival Kit: **1)** Shovel & flashlight with extra batteries **2)** First aid kit & medications **3)** Non-perishable food, such as granola bars and peanuts **4)** Candles & matches **5)** Extra clothing, sleeping bags, or blankets **6)** Jumper cables **7)** Battery-operated radio **8)** Cell phone with fully charged batteries **9)** Windshield scraper & brush **10)** Brightly colored cloth to tie

on the antenna so the vehicle can be easily located

If you are stranded in your vehicle during a winter storm: **1)** Stay with your vehicle. **2)** Use your cell phone to call 911. Be aware of your location and situation. **3)** Move all your emergency supplies from the vehicle's trunk to the interior of the car as soon as you realize you may be staying for a while. **4)** Check your supplies to see what you have available and arrange them in order for their use. This will help you ration them in case you are stranded for a long period of time. **5)** Run the engine sparingly. Start with 15 minutes every hour and adjust if needed. While running the engine, keep a downwind window cracked to prevent carbon monoxide buildup. **6)** Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow **7)** If the cold is extreme, it may be necessary to keep the engine running continuously. It may not restart if shut off. **8)** Never go to sleep with the engine running. **9)** Turn on the dome light at night while the engine is running. It may help others to locate you. Turn it off when you turn off the engine so you don't run down the car's battery. **10)** Put on warm clothing right away, before you start to get cold. It is easier to stay warm than it is to regain lost warmth. Loosen tight clothing so body heat can circulate. Remove metal jewelry, as it can chill you. **11)** Keep your feet off the floor if the heater is not on. **12)** Use newspapers, maps, or even the removable car mats for added insulation. **13)** Do mild exercises to help you stay warm. **14)** Watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia. **15)** Eat a snack of high calorie food just before sleeping to stimulate your metabolism & heat production. **16)** If you awaken due to the cold, eat some more high energy food and add another layer of insulation such as more clothing or a blanket. **17)** Tie a colorful banner on the car antenna. **18)** If you need to leave the car for any distance during the storm, tie a nylon rope to the car and yourself so you will be able to find your way back to the car.

Winter can be a particularly difficult time for pets. Give your pet a safer, healthier weather season by following these tips: **1)** A temperature of 10°F or below is too cold for any pet to tolerate. The physical stress of cold temperatures can make pets more susceptible to illness or infection. **2)** Provide outdoor dogs or cats with a dry, insulated pet house or shelter out of the wind. Staying warm demands extra calories, so increase your pet's food intake, particularly protein. **3)** Remove ice, salt, and caked on mud from your pet's paws and coat right away. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pet has frostbite. Frostbitten skin may turn reddish, white, or gray, and it may be scaly or sloughing. **4)** Cats and kittens often nap on car engines. Knock on the hood or honk the horn then wait a few minutes before starting the car. **5)** Pets like the smell and taste of antifreeze, but even a small amount can kill them. Thoroughly clean up spills at once. Tightly close containers and store them where pets cannot get to them. **6)** Never let your dog off its leash in the snow or ice. Dogs can lose their scent in snow and ice and become lost in the harsh weather. Make sure pets, such as dogs, always wear their ID tag. **7)** Don't use metal water dishes outside; your pet's tongue could stick to the frozen metal. **8)** Many plants, including holly, mistletoe, and poinsettia, are toxic to pets. Keep them out of your pet's reach. **9)** Always have fresh, clean water available. **10)** Dogs confined to the house because of winter weather may lack proper exercise and suffer depression. Help by giving more attention and encouraging them to be active & monitored.

Contact the county sheriff's office to ask if they will relay critical weather forecasts to the school. **1)** During the winter months, guidelines need to be established regarding outside recess periods. Temperatures and wind chills need to be monitored and criteria set as to when outside recess will be allowed. **2)** School bus drivers should receive extra training on driving during winter weather. Snow and ice can often accumulate quickly and unexpectedly on roads creating dangerous driving conditions. **4)** Children can be especially susceptible to the dangers associated with winter weather. Their youthful enthusiasm often takes over when common sense and safety should prevail. Even if they are cold, wet, or exhausted, they often are not conscious of the potential impact these conditions pose.



[Diocese of South Dakota] When the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota held its annual convention on Saturday, Oct. 10 it didn't look like any other convention that had preceded it.

Instead of gathering at a hotel or the First United Methodist Church in Pierre, as it had in years past, and instead of having 350-400 people present, in the year of coronavirus, the diocese went where it had never gone before: online.

Like so many other dioceses across the country and around the world, an in-person convention could not be held. South Dakota is tied with North Dakota for highest infection rate per 100,000 people in the nation, so the idea of meeting in person for the 136th Convention was a non-starter.

In mid-July, as the coronavirus pandemic raged throughout the country, the bishop of South Dakota, the Rt. Rev. Jonathan H. Folts, consulted with diocesan leaders via Zoom to discuss what to do with the two-day convention scheduled for late September. By early August, the decision had been made to take convention to online.

Going online, Folts told the diocese prior to the meeting, would keep everyone safe. Six sites across the diocese, which encompasses the entire state, were chosen, and special rules were set allowing only for delegates, or alternates taking their place, to attend, along with assistants to handle the technical details and to serve box lunches. Safety procedures were outlined, including the mandatory wearing of masks, social distancing at each meeting site, health checks at the door, and the continual use of hand-sanitizer and bleach wipes throughout the day. Special health instructions were created for the preparation and serving of food, along with instructions for how to vote remotely from each site.

“Whereas I know that other dioceses are conducting their conventions 100% virtually,” Folts said, “I haven't heard of any diocese meeting ‘virtually in person.’ Even if we had the resources to conduct an all-virtual convention, a number of our regions are not privileged to have good or reliable internet service. So, if we couldn't all meet in person – and if we all couldn't meet virtually – this was the next best option to bring us together and to stay within our canons.

“Often, the only thing you can plan on in South Dakota is that nothing will go according to your plan. So you have to be remarkably flexible – and, with God's help, our people are.”

By convention time, the Cheyenne River Reservation site had to be dropped because of COVID



The Rosebud Episcopal Mission host site at the Bishop Jones Building in Mission, on the Rosebud Reservation, was one of five sites for the Diocese of South Dakota “virtual in person” Convention on Saturday, Oct. 10, 2020. Photo: Lauren Stanley

concerns, and several other sites experienced a drop in participants when various clergy and delegates were quarantined due to COVID exposure, or decided to stay home due to pandemic worries. In the end, 111 delegates attended, down from the usual 190. There were no vendors, no displays and no visitors allowed.

In his convention address, Folts, focusing on Romans 12:12 – “Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer” – praised Episcopalians in South Dakota for keeping their focus on God’s mission.

“Our participation in God’s mission is where our true focus lies,” he said. “Living into Jesus’ Great Commandment – loving God and loving our neighbor – that is our focus. Living into Jesus’ Great Commission – worshipping God, making new Christians, forming new Christians, and transforming God’s world! – that is our focus. COVID-19 and all that it entails? That is not our focus. It is part of our current picture. It is certainly a part of our current picture. But it is not – and I pray to God that it never will be – our focus.”

The bishop emphasized various ways in which South Dakota Episcopalians have overcome pandemic difficulties to continue to serve God’s people, through online and radio services, taking the sacrament and prayers to the people – and seeing Church membership actually grow as a result – and by making videos of “virtual mission trips” to keep in touch with mission teams that were not able to travel this year.

“What has happened,” Folts said, “is that our clergy and the people of our congregations ... have found ways in which to worship God and to follow Jesus despite COVID-19. They have found ways to share fellowship and to stay in relationship with each other despite COVID-19. They have found ways to form their people and they have continued to transform their communities.”

Rosebud Episcopal Mission Senior Catechist Erroll Geboe, who served as master of ceremonies at the Bishop Jones Building in Mission, liked the online format of convention.

Going online and meeting remotely “was a great idea because it helped keep us safe, and it was a good way to see each again.”

“Some of us,” he said, “haven’t seen each other in seven to eight months, so it was a nice way to visit with each other.”

Geboe added that “economically, it was better, because before you had to travel and spend money,

but we didn't have to do that this time. Maybe in time, we can perfect this, and just do it this way. It might save us money doing it this way all around. It worked out well for our first time. We got all the business done in one day. We didn't have to go up the night before and have banquets. We had our communion service, and everything went well. It was very well organized."

"There were definitely concerns about what to do if one of our sites lost signal," Folts said, "and I give our Worship Committee high marks for their creativity. If a host site went down, they were given five to 10 minutes to get their signal back. If that failed, they would need to call in on the Zoom phone line. We put our convention within the context of a Eucharist service, and all the assigned liturgical leaders had back-ups in case we lost them electronically. We had concelebrating priests at the other four host sites who were softly praying the Eucharistic prayer along with me, and we gave them instructions for what to do should our signal be dropped, namely... 'Speak up and go on!'"

The diocese was able to hold convention this way by using a grant from the St. Mary's Leadership Board, a group that provides scholarship assistance to students and supports youth formation, to purchase the necessary microphones and projectors, which will then be used for other on-line meetings and training sessions.

"Because of the COVID-19 virus," Folts told the convention, "this new equipment became more than just a wish or an idea – it became a necessity – and it has become a genuine blessing. For many of our events, people have to travel a number of miles to attend – and we also are very dependent upon the weather. So having this technology and equipment will therefore widen our ability to meet and offer diocesan-wide programs, and especially those regarding Christian formation."

He added, "Initially, when we were faced with the challenge of COVID-19, we were shocked and stunned. But we reached deep inside of ourselves. We made use of the faithful resiliency and tenacity that God has given us. We believed in God, we continued to follow Jesus, and we trusted each other."

-The Rev. Dr. Lauren Stanley is superintending presbyter, Rosebud Episcopal Mission (West).



“SEMPER GUMBY” IS THE MOTTO FOR THE ROSEBUD EPISCOPAL MISSION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting The Episcopal Church in South Dakota through the Rosebud Episcopal Mission. Working with network of Sioux Tribal leaders who formed a COVID task force, a relationship with a local community grocery store and scrupulous volunteers, the mission is providing relief to one of the nation’s hardest hit groups. According to [APM Research Lab](#), in the US, one in every 1,500 indigenous Americans has died, compared to one in 2800 white Americans—making them the second most at-risk ethnic category in the US after Black Americans. Indigenous people are particularly susceptible to getting the coronavirus disease for many factors including pre-existing conditions and poorer nutrition.

“Semper Gumby,” a mix of Latin and nod to the clay animation cartoon character, is the mission’s motto which means “always flexible.” Each day, the Rev. Dr. Lauren Stanley, Erroll Geboe, Danny Gangone and other members of their response team face failing infrastructure and a lack of medical supplies which causes a range of need, and they do their best to find the items. It is with great heart that they assess needs and deliver supplies over a widespread area in coordination with the tribe health representatives and the community chairman. By working with an established point person, they are able to maintain the privacy of individuals making requests for aid, asking for anything from eggs to pencils and crayons to entertain out-of-school children.

“I received a call from one of our elders, to whom we normally supply firewood through our [#FirewoodfortheElders](#) program. I thought she was calling for firewood, because it had been very cold the night before (38 degrees),” said the Rev. Dr. Lauren Stanley, who leads the efforts. “Instead, she was calling simply to say, ‘Thank you’ for helping her get supplies. She said she was beginning to get desperate for bleach and other cleaning supplies, because of her own health, and the health of her grandchildren, whom she is raising. That call alone made all the miles worth it.”



Episcopal Relief and Development article.

As we are in the eighth month of the covid-19 pandemic and it seems apparent, from the statistics of the rising number of cases of people being infected, we will be in this for the long haul. With that being said, I would like to share an excerpt from the Turning Points devotional by Dr. David Jeremiah; August 2020: “Viral Servanthood”: When the coronavirus struck China earlier this year, millions of people fled or were quarantined, as fear spread across China to the world. One group of people, however, had a different response. Christians in the city of Wuhan—the virus’ epicenter—went into the streets distributing face masks, passing out Gospel brochures, and sharing the message of Jesus. One pastor said, “It is readily apparent that we are facing a test of our faith. The situation is so critical, yet [*we are] trusting in the Lord’s promises, that his thoughts toward us are of peace, and not evil, and that he allows for a time of testing, not to destroy us, but to establish us”

With that in mind I would like to pass along three examples from Bishop Jonathan’s address at the Convention of how the clergy and the congregations found ways to worship and share fellowship despite the limitations of the pandemic.

- 1) People in Standing Rock reservation are choosing to become members of Fr. Kim Fonder’s congregations.
2. Because of travel and gathering restriction in the Cheyenne River reservation Morning Prayer services were conducted over the radio, reaching more people than the usual average gathering.
3. Through the creative and “out of the box” thinking, and with the collaborative efforts of the community and the funds provided by missionaries, Mother Lauren Stanley was able to make a show and tell video of what God has done because of what they did and with what they offered.

This brings me full circle back to my message of support for the five star quilt initiatives Bishop Jonathan introduced in his address during his consecration. Not only are the people of the Episcopal Diocese meeting the challenges of the restrictions and limitations of the pandemic but they are doing it in the spirit of God’s mission for love and unity as they carry out the initiatives of the five star quilts: Communicating and collaborating with each other as they form and transform relationships by advocating our vision for God’s hope. Let us remember, “we are trusting in the Lord’s promises, that his thoughts toward us are of peace, and not evil, and that he allows for a time of testing, not to destroy us, but to establish us”

Blessings, Eileen Grinnell, ECW President

We are pleased to announce the **2020 Honored Woman is Marilyn Jones, of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Rapid City.**

Marilyn was the wife of Bishop Walter Jones and quite active in many projects across the state over the years. Children and youth were her special focus. We will be celebrating her election when it is safe to do so.

Now that Convention is completed, we will be scheduling our fall ECW meeting. If you would like to be included in the emails (or postcards) about this and other events across the state, please contact me at hhflutterby6@gmail.com or give me a call (or text) at 605/569-2618. Please leave a message if I don't answer (I don't always have my phone where I can hear it). We would like to hear from someone from each church. If you aren't that person, please pass this on to someone who is.

Please continue your good work raising money for our annual project. Funds collected through the spring meeting will go to the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew camp, held at St. James' Episcopal Church, Enemy Swim. This ministry is in the northeast corner of South Dakota. Checks should be sent to Lisa Kautz, 1412 Whitetail Drive, Sturgis, SD 57785.

Your UTO and CPC funds are to be sent to the diocesan office in care of Canon Mitch Honan. 408 N. Jefferson Ave., Pierre, SD 57501-2626

For more information on any of these, talk to your priest or contact me to put you in touch with our state coordinators.

Blessings, Holly Moseley, ECW Vice President

Seeing the Face of God

The “Seeing the Face of God” workshop was held Friday, October 16 and Saturday, October 17 and marked a new chapter in the life of the Diocese of South Dakota. This class is designed to satisfy the requirements for newer Anti-Racism training as set by the last General Convention of 2018.

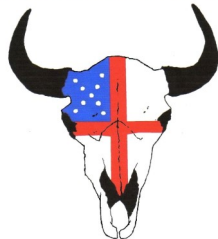
All employees of the national Episcopal Church have been required to have Anti-racism training for many years now, but this is the first time the specific teaching points have been universally established. In the Diocese of South Dakota, the Very Rev. Dr. Martin Broken Leg began teaching “Dakota Experience” to satisfy this requirement and for the most part it worked. Dakota Experience taught (and still does) the basics of Lakota Culture especially within the Diocese.

Lakota People comprise the largest percentage of our Diocese and so one can understand how this training was so important, but just as the racial and cultural make up of the national Church has changed, so has our Diocese. We are seeing many new ethnic groups move into our state and as a result our ministry is also changing. It must also be said that within the fields of Sociology and Anthropology, the study of Racism has deepened and intensified. The Executive Council’s Committee for Anti-racism and Reconciliation was established to ensure that Anti-racism trainings reflect this new knowledge and so a “Framework” for trainings was developed and we are beginning to see a ripple throughout Church as we become a more culturally welcoming and richer place.

We have tried to meet these new requirements by adding a second training event, “Seeing the Face of God” in addition to Dakota Experience, that builds on work began by The Very Rev. Dr. Martin Broken Leg. This added workshop, stresses that Racism is not just about Racist Behavior but also about unfair systems within our church, local, state and federal governments that favor whites over all other racial groups. Racist behavior supports such systems and so it isn’t enough that we don’t participate in racist behavior, we must also actively oppose racist behavior AND the systems that such behavior enables.

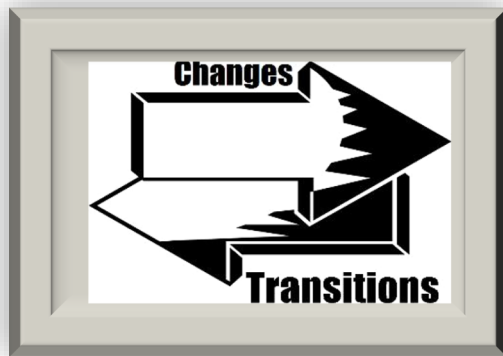
This recent training was also the first time where we had a virtual class. Most of our participants used the Zoom application to participate in the workshop. This new virtual format enabled more people to attend, but it also made it more difficult to teach since it was harder to fully participate by easily asking questions. It is expected that even after this pandemic is over, we will still offer some form of online presence and enabling more people to attend than would not otherwise attend. If you’ve never attended one of these events, please consider attending the next “Dakota Experience” which will occur at St. Andrew’s on Friday, November 16 and end on Saturday afternoon, November 17. In person slots are limited so consider participating virtually. More information and registration is available at the Diocesan website at: <https://episcopalchurchsd.org/>

NIORARA SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF
SOUTH DAKOTA



Transition Update

Please welcome the Rev. Ellen and Rev. Kurt Huber, who recently arrived at the Cheyenne River Episcopal Mission. The Rev. Hubers and family began their new ministry with the CREM on September 1 and have made several connections despite COVID restrictions.

Christ Church, Yankton continues their deliberations on what direction will best fill their needs.



Thank you, Pat LeBeau

The TEC Board would like to publicly thank Pat LeBeau for 37 faithful years of service to Thunderhead. Pat was instrumental in many building and maintenance projects throughout the years. Pat and his wife Dottie started the \$1.00 a day challenge for TEC.

Please consider attending the TEC work weekend in May. During this weekend we work on repairs, maintenance and upkeep projects. No special skills are required except the love for TEC, the love of fellowship and the willingness to give of your time.



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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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

The Bishop Visitation schedule is tentative and dependent on COVID in the communities.

NOVEMBER 2020

Nov 8 **Sisseton Mission**
 Nov 14 **Diocesan Council**
 Nov 15 **St. Luke's, Hot Springs**
 Nov 22 **Pine Ridge Mission**
 Nov 28 & 29 Diocesan office closed
 Nov 28 Thanksgiving weekend

DECEMBER

Dec 3 **Northwest Deanery Clericus meeting**
 Dec 6 **Cheyenne River Mission**
 Dec 21-4 **Diocesan Office will use limited in office hours.**
 Dec 24 Christmas Eve
 Dec 31 New Years Eve

DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIMES

Ends: November 1, 2020 Fall Back
Begins: March 14, 2021 Spring ahead

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 all of the information.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Clergy Retreat

April 12-15, 2021 @ Abbey of the Hills



Check out our website
Episcopalchurchsd.org
 for updates regarding the upcoming

FEATURES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Does the Diocese have your correct contact information?

COVID-19 has presented the world and our diocese with even more communication challenges. Church on Facebook, radio, or You-tube. Diocesan Convention on-line, Niobrara School for Ministry week-ends, online and in person.

There is not a single method of communication that works for everyone in our diocese. Please help us spread the Good News of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota with your family, friends and neighbors by making sure we have accurate contact information.

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