Five priests of the diocese accompanied Bishop Megan last week to the annual Diocesan Convention of our sister diocese – The Episcopal Church of Honduras. We flew to San Pedro Sula (location of the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd and the Diocesan Offices), and then traveled about two hours away to the diocesan retreat center in Muchilena, Omoa, about 10 miles south of the Guatemalan border on the Gulf of Honduras. Here are some reflections from each member of the group.

Bishop Megan Traquair was received warmly by Honduran Bishop Lloyd Allen, and her presence showed the commitment we have to re-building our relationship with this amazing group within our Episcopal umbrellas. Here are Bishop Megan's reflections:

> Faith, Baleadas and Innovation in the face of need, describes my experience of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Honduras this past week.
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> We found a dedicated and joyful expression of faith when we met with congregants and leaders. There are 130 congregations and about 30 of them are in the poorest area of that country. Their Canon to the Ordinary, The Rev. Connie Sanchez, described how they cared for each other and even with limited ability to read were devout in their study and alive with the Holy Spirit in their prayers.
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> Their many bilingual schools were in the middle of a tech /science conference at the time of our visit. They are full of innovation - already training their students with skills for the future.
>
> Finally, Baleadas, are a kind of folded over quesadilla that is made with black beans, with a giant tortilla that was made only moments before.
>
> The joy of the visit and the deep sense of fellowship and shared faith are enduring gifts, that are still playing in my head and in my hearts, as does the theme song of their convention (about being clay in the great Potter's hands, waiting to be made new)!

The Rev. Mack Olson (priest in charge at St. Patrick's, Kenwood) was the only member of the group to have recently visited Honduras, and his facility with language and his willing help showed up right away, as he served as impromptu translator for Mark Dibelka's presentation. He reflected on our return home from the trip:

When we arrived back at SFO, as we were standing at the gate, the Bishop gathered our group in a huddle for prayers and asked that each of us share a word about the trip. The word the first came to my mind was "kinship," which for me, meant that I left Honduras feeling a strong desire to have meaningful relationships with our Honduran brothers and sisters in Christ. At that time, I also realized that I ran out of my business cards while I was there, each given in the hopes that a simple gesture of sharing contact information and expressing a desire to nurture these budding relationships would reap some stronger connections. I am so happy to report that less than 24 hours of returning home, I received my first email

from Honduras! It came from Pastoral Leader Javier Rivera, who also serves at a church named St. Patrick's (San Patricio). I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit will take us!

The Rev. Christy Laborda Harris (rector at St. Stephen's, Sebastopol), one of the truly bilingual members of the group, already knew several of the female clerics, who she'd first met through a women's clergy conference in the Dominican Republic a few years ago. Here's what Christy says about her experience:

It is a blessing to have the opportunity to build relationships with Episcopalians in such a different cultural context. Hearing their stories about the specific realities of their lives and ministries, finding the things we share in common and the differences, opens my eyes to my own context and gives me a fresh perspective on our diocese and my own congregation and ministry.

The Rev. Mark Dibelka (Missioner for Disaster Resilience) presented on climate-caused disasters as part of Bishop Lloyd Allen's opening talk for the convention. Mark reflected on his experience:

To witness, firsthand, the daily impact of a changing climate and how an entire nation has learned to live into disaster preparedness everyday was sobering. We have so much that can be learned from our Honduran siblings.

The Rev. Ken Erickson (Missioner for Church Vitality) made this his first trip to Latin America. Of the things he most wanted to share was this beautiful video of our closing worship at the convention: https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1NLToL9DhG/?mibextid=wwXIfr

The Rev. Canon Julie Wakelee (Canon to the Ordinary) got excited about this trip after meeting the Honduran deputation at General Convention last summer. She reflected:

I was so honored to be part of this trip. I had met my counterpart, Canon Connie Sanchez, last summer at General Convention, but since then we've communicated via WhatsApp and a few zoom calls. It was great to have time to be together in person, to meet with other clergy. To see that so many connections are already there for work together.

What I saw in the Diocese of Honduras made me so proud to be part of the Episcopal Church. I witnessed brave, counter-cultural ministries, such as anti-domestic violence programs, medical care for those with HIV/AIDS, workshops followed up with microloans and training organic farmers. I was humbled by how clear they were that all of this grew out of their faith and was unquestionably part of what it mean to live faith out loud. These folks are no strangers to hardship – infant mortality is high. There is little national infrastructure.

Especially in this time in our country, it was a great teaching experience for my heart – they know that to truly live their baptismal vows is to be someone different than what society expects.