

# From the Bishop

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The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i



April 23, 2026

## A Reflection on Discernment

My dear Siblings in Christ Jesus,

I am walking with the Diocese of Taiwan as our siblings there are looking to elect their Bishop the week before we do so in our own Diocese. I have been asked to say something at the start of their electing meeting about discernment.

With Ke Aloha Kākou Candidate Meet & Greet gatherings underway, I have been pondering the request from Taiwan for us. What is discernment? What does it mean for those of us voting in the election on May 16?

- **Discern the will of God in our context.** In the situation of the calling of the next bishop, we must first learn about our own congregation, our own immediate community, and our own island. What are things like right now? Who lives around me? What are the stresses in my life and the lives of my neighbors? What will life be like around me five years from now? We then ask what is reality in my broader community (Micronesia, the state of Hawai'i, and the United States) and Church (the Episcopal Church and the Diocese) right now. How does this Diocese fit with the mission of God in Asia and Oceania? We have the advantage of a wonderful [Diocesan Profile 2025](#) to help us reflect on the life of our Diocese and our context. I hope everyone has read the Profile and will do so again before you meet the candidates, and then again before the election. Dare I say, pray the Profile.
- **Seek the wisdom of the community.** Those of you attending Ke Aloha Kākou Candidate Meet & Greet gatherings can bring back what you learn to your congregation. Encourage everyone in your congregation (and even non-members) to look at the material of each of the three candidates on the [Diocesan Website Transitions Page](#). Yes, again, make sure everyone has seen the [Diocesan Profile 2025](#). Talk story with one another about your congregation and the Diocese. What is God's will for us now? Listen to the kūpuna. This isn't politicking for a particular individual. We don't have political meetings. It is listening for the voice of God coming through the voices of others.
- **Listening to the voice of God.** We need to pray and study the Scripture. I commend John 1:35-50 and Acts 1:12-26 to your prayer and reflection. These stories bring confidence that God really does work through others and through the Church in miraculous ways if we listen and are open. We are called to pray and sing together. We must also pray alone and listen. We must remember that God is calling our next Bishop. The Convention is the vehicle for God.

- **Trust God and trust one another.** The cynicism of our world shades our eyes from the glory of God. This is no political process or corporate executive search. There is no grand conspiracy. We are the baptized children of a loving God doing our best together. We are seeking God’s will to be our next Bishop. What is a Bishop? Have a look again at pages 517-521 of the Book of Common Prayer. That is where the bishop’s calling is laid out.

As so often comes to mind, I’m reminded of the phrase of Julian of Norwich, “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well”. It can be taken as a simple statement about life. Julian was reflecting on human sin and even wrestling with God as she wrote:

In my folly, before this time I often wondered why, by the great foreseeing wisdom of God, the onset of sin was not prevented: for then, I thought, all should have been well. This impulse [of thought] was much to be avoided, but nevertheless I mourned and sorrowed because of it, without reason and discretion. But Jesus, who in this vision informed me of all that is needed by me, answered with these words and said: ‘It was necessary that there should be sin; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.’ These words were said most tenderly, showing no manner of blame to me nor to any who shall be saved.

I share this because it is too easy to worry about how things are in a world of confusion and conflict. Julian pushed back and listened to Christ: “... all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.”

This is our time to listen to God.

“No ia mea, e nā hoahānau, e kūpa‘a ‘oukou, me ka nāueue ‘ole, me ka ho‘omau i kā ‘oukou hana nui ‘ana i ka hana a ka Haku, no ka mea, ua ‘ike nō ‘oukou, ‘a‘ole i make hewa kā ‘oukou hana ‘ana ma ka Haku.” Korineto I 15.58

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Aloha ma o Iesu Kristo, ko mākou Haku,  
+Bob

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