

From the Bishop

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai‘i



A Reflection on Transitions

May 28, 2026

My dear Siblings in Christ Jesus,

The author of Ecclesiastes is referred to in Hebrew as *Qoheleth*, “Teacher of the Assembly,” in the very first verse. Chapter 3, verses 1-7, are the most famous lines from the book:

There’s a season for everything and a time for every matter under the heavens:

*a time for giving birth and a time for dying,
a time for planting and a time for uprooting what was planted,
a time for killing and a time for healing,
a time for tearing down and a time for building up,
a time for crying and a time for laughing,
a time for mourning and a time for dancing,
a time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones,
a time for embracing and a time for avoiding embraces,
a time for searching and a time for losing,
a time for keeping and a time for throwing away,
a time for tearing and a time for repairing,
a time for keeping silent and a time for speaking,
a time for loving and a time for hating,
a time for war and a time for peace.*

I hold these words close as I look to a time transition within our Diocesan ‘ohana.

The famous passage is a carefully structured poem in Hebrew listing fourteen pairs of opposites — birth and death, planting and uprooting, weeping and laughing, mourning and dancing, and so on. The pairs are not moral choices but observed realities. Qoheleth is not saying we should do these things in turn, but that life contains all of them, whether we want it to or not. The structure itself enacts the argument: life comes at us in opposites; we don't control which season we're in.

In this new season for the Diocese, I am delighted that Libby Berman has been elected the sixth Bishop Diocesan of Hawai‘i. The election was wonderful and a keen gift of the Holy Spirit. The Convention acted quickly and decisively. I look forward to having her as **my** bishop! Thanks be to God!

Pastorally, I hope everyone in the Diocese will give her time to transition and to settle. The process is now underway for her election to be confirmed by the bishops with jurisdiction (many diocesan bishops) and the Standing Committees of the Dioceses of the Episcopal Church. This will take a couple of months. Likewise, she is still the Rector of the Church of the Holy Nativity, ‘Āina Haina, and will continue through the summer.

Libby and I will begin meeting soon to prepare for the transition. Her diocesan email address and calendar will be set up in early June. I have invited her to Diocesan Council meetings beginning in June. She will officially be in the Diocesan Support Center and on staff beginning on September 1, 2026. During September and October I will introduce her to the boards and organization on which the Bishop sits. I will work with her to make the needed appointments for the October annual meeting of Convention. Libby will also be involved with coaches and classes set up by the College for Bishops and the Presiding Bishop's Office for new bishops.

In addition, with the reality of two important positions now open related to the ministry of the Bishop (the Canon to the Bishop and the Dean of the Cathedral [remembering that the Bishop is the "Rector" of the Cathedral and the "President" of Chapter, and that the Dean is the Bishop's "Vicar" and Vice President of Chapter]), she will have to have time to evaluate needs before making appointments.

Her ordination as the sixth Bishop Diocesan (and twelfth in the Hawaiian Islands) is scheduled for November 14, at which time she will formally assume the episcopate.

Said another way, our Bishop-elect has much going on. The days ahead are going to be hectic. We all must be supportive. In my remaining months as Bishop of Hawai'i, I will do all that I can to ensure a smooth transition and to do everything I can to empower Libby in her ministry as the next Bishop. I will also keep Libby in my prayers each and every day.

What do I ask of you – God's people in this Diocese? Be patient with the Diocesan Support Center staff, Libby and me during these days as we operate shorthanded amid changes. Most importantly, pray for the staff and for me, but especially for Libby.

We can all hold fast to the words of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 15:58): *"As a result of all this, my loved brothers and sisters, you must stand firm, unshakable, excelling in the work of the Lord as always, because you know that your labor isn't going to be for nothing in the Lord."*

Everliving God, strengthen and sustain Libby, that with patience and understanding she may love and care for your people in the Diocese of Hawai'i; and grant that we together may follow Jesus Christ, offering to you our gifts and talents; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Aloha ma o Iesu Kristo, ko mākou Haku,

+Bob

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The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i
The Episcopal Church in the Hawaiian Islands, Guam and Saipan

HE LANAKILA MA KE KE'A: Victory through the Cross