

Bishop's Report

This is my last report to the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i as Bishop Diocesan. I am writing this at the House of Bishops meeting being held in Camp Allen, Navasota, Texas. I'm here with Bishop-elect Libby. This gathering is an important part of the transition of leadership and a reframing of our shared ministry in the Church and God's mission. Ministries and responsibilities change, but the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit hold us as one in the Church.

This past year has been filled with preparing for my retirement and the calling of the sixth Bishop of the Diocese of Hawai'i. On April 25, 2025, I formally announced that I would be resigning in November 2026, and I called for the election of my successor. Much of the past year included activities and gatherings related to the Bishop's search and nomination process. As the sitting Bishop, I had no more to do with this than any other clergy member of the Diocese. Oversight was entrusted by the canons to the Standing Committee. It was a gift to me. I trusted the Holy Spirit and others to take up the responsibility of calling the sixth Bishop. It is the rare time in the ministry of a Bishop of a Diocese when one has no say in the process and is truly just one of the clergy with a single vote in the outcome. I appreciate the time and hard work of the Standing Committee, the Search Committee, and the Transition Committee on our behalf.

The election, of course, took place on May 16, 2026. I know too well the anxiety and expectation of those who entered into discernment with the Diocese. This includes all those who were in prayerful conversation with the Search Committee, the two candidates — the Rev. Cn. Andrew Arakawa and the Rev. Tim Yanni — presented by the Search Committee to the Diocese, and the Rev. Libby Berman who came forward to us by petition. I profoundly appreciate all those who entered into discernment with the Diocese. It is a time of vulnerability. Mahalo!

As a Diocese, we elected the Rev. Libby Berman. She will become our Bishop on November 14, 2026. She will become my Bishop! I am confident that the Holy Spirit guided us as we need. I genuinely look forward to supporting Bishop-elect Libby in her new ministry. It is now the responsibility of every Episcopalian — lay or clergy — in this Diocese to do the same. Most importantly, we are bound to pray for our new Bishop.

Soon after the election, someone left the Diocese who was important to me and my ministry as your Bishop.

The Rev. Cn. Sandy Graham had served for nearly a decade as Canon to the Bishop. He oversaw many clergy searches and helped many congregations. He was of particular support to Maui after the Lahaina Fire. In his last year with us, he also took on the difficult task of serving as Priest-in-Charge of St. Elizabeth's Church, Honolulu. A congregation in conflict and administratively

disfunctional, it had been involuntarily named an “Aided Parish” by the Standing Committee and me. Canon Sandy shepherded the congregation, oversaw reorganization, and rebuilt trust while continuing to fulfill his duties to the Diocese. His ministry allowed the calling of a settled Priest-in-Charge to move the congregation into a healthy and flourishing future. Sandy was a very good Canon to the Bishop. I appreciate all that he did in support of my ministry and of the entire Diocese. I know his departure allowed Heather to follow her calling as a school chaplain, but he has been missed in these last months of my time as Bishop Diocesan.

In mentioning the Lahaina Fire, I am reminded that the work of recovery continues. The Rev. Dcn. Kalani Holokai has been a blessing to Maui and to the Diocese by working with local agencies and coordinating with Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD). The future of the old site of Holy Innocents is still unclear. Recovery efforts in support of those impacted continues.

This past year has brought new weather related crises. Thanks to Deacon Kalani and so many of God’s people in our churches, the Diocese has responded. Because of her contacts with ERD, resources have been brought to support efforts on Saipan, Kaua’i, and other points where needed. Food banks and thrift shops across the islands have opened to those in need. We must understand that disaster preparation and response must be a regular part of Diocesan life. The last six years have taught us that we must be prepared. I am grateful to Deacon Kalani and all who have stepped up. I am proud to be the Bishop of this Diocese.

This past year with hurricanes and typhoons I have been reminded that we are interconnected with, through and by the Pacific Ocean with the rest of the world. I was the guest bishop observer at both the Supreme Council of Bishops of Iglesia Filipino Independiente and the General Synod of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia. Representatives of ‘Iolani School and St. Andrew’s Schools joined me at the anniversary celebration of the founding of St. Andrew’s School in the Kingdom of Tonga (the school was founded by Bishop Willis after he left Hawai’i in 1902). We sent a delegation to our companion dioceses in the Philippines (the IFI Diocese of Batac and the ECP Diocese of the Northern Philippines). As a Diocese of the Episcopal Church, we have a special responsibility to maintain relations with Asia and Oceania. We are a diocese of islands from Hawai’i to Guam. Guam and Saipan are part of the broader geographic and cultural region known as Micronesia. The Hawaiian islands are part of Polynesia. We are called to look west and south. We are more a part of the Pacific world than we are of North America.

The reality of connections was further brought home to me as Bea and I traveled around the Diocese to say mahalo and aloha. The farewells at regional gatherings, churches, and schools have brought me to tears. I deeply appreciate the outpouring of love. While I am leaving the office of Bishop Diocesan, Bea and I have no intention of moving. I will be a retired clergy member of the Diocese. This is our home.

The staff continues to be a source of care and support. Not seeing them day in and day out will be hard. So, Nani, Kaori, Rae, Cammy, and Jasmi, thank you for all that you do. Likewise, I appreciate the extended members of the Diocesan Support Center who work remotely: the Rev. Cn. Andrew Arakawa, Stuart Ching, the Rev. Dcn. Kalani Holokai, Spencer Lum, and Sybil Nishioka. Thank you, also, to my Archdeacon, the Ven. Cn. Steven Costa, and our Vice Chancellor: Douglass Adams. And to the faithful volunteer Chaplains to the Retired Clergy: the Rev. Cn. Frank and Mrs. Norma Chun, the Rev. Heather Mueller, the Rev. Carol Arney; our office volunteer: Maiesha Stovall-Nakoa – mahalo. Finally, I depend and give thanks for two key volunteers: Ryan Kusumoto and Wayne Yoshigai. Ryan as our Diocesan Treasurer and Wayne as the Chancellor have been a gift to my ministry. Thank you. The Diocese runs smoothly because of these people. I have been blessed as Bishop.

This has truly been a year of transition. Bishop-elect Libby has now been welcomed into her newly painted office. We have had formation and clergy gatherings focused on transition and preparedness. We are ready for November 14, 2026.

I look to leaving the office with confidence that all is well. I must admit that I do look forward to handing Libby the crozier. While I will always be a bishop, the time has come for me to no longer be THE BISHOP. The gift of the past year has been being able to say mahalo and to receive your gracious love.

As I have often, I leave you with these words from St. Paul:

“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.” I Corinthians 15:58

Yours faithfully,
Robert Keali‘ikoaakeakua Fitzpatrick,
Fifth Bishop Diocesan of Hawai‘i