

The Bishop's Report  
To the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Convention  
The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i

The Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi  
October 4, 2025

## Introduction

As I write to you on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi from the Ahupua'a of Honolulu, I take this moment as your Bishop to honor and give thanks for the founding patrons of our Diocese, King Kamehameha IV (Alekanetero 'Iolani Kalanikualiholiho Maka o 'Iouli Kūnuiākea o Kūkā'ilimoku) and Queen Emma (Emma Kalanikaumaka'amano Kaleleonālani Na'ea Rooke). I write from the land on which our Cathedral stands that was entrusted to the Church by the Holy Sovereigns. I acknowledge the trust they committed to our Church in 1862 to care for their people – Kānaka 'Ōiwi – and all of the children of these Islands, and for our responsibility to care for all of creation. As the Bishop of the Church invited to these islands, I deeply regret that we have not always fulfilled our responsibility through these many decades. We have often failed and turned a blind eye to those around us. For those things which we as the Church and as individual Episcopalians have done and the many things we have left undone that contributed to the harm inflicted on nā Kānaka 'Ōiwi and these islands, I offer our collective lamentation. I ask God's forgiveness. I ask the prayers of our blessed ancestors and you, God's people, that we, God's Episcopal Church in Hawai'i, will have the will and courage to better fulfill our responsibility – kā mākou kuleana – to the people of these Islands and to God's creation.

On this my penultimate report to you as Bishop, I do so with the following in mind:

Our Diocesan motto is **“HE LANAKILA MA KE KE‘A”** (Victory through the Cross). Our Diocesan 'ohana is united by faith in Jesus Christ and that is what we share with the world.

We take seriously our commitment to incorporate “the Native Hawaiian Christian spiritual concepts of **mana, malāma and pono** into the overall life and work of the Church in all areas of ministry in the Diocese.” Ministry here must seek to care for others, creation and all that God has given us (malāma), to live righteously and in respect one for another (pono), and to find the holy (mana) that comes from God in all creation and all of God's children.

It is into such a vision of ministry and mission that we can welcome all of the children of our Diocese of islands. Our Diocese must be a model of mālama in which we care for one another, for the hungry and the lost of our islands, and, especially, for those living all around us who do not know the love of God in Jesus Christ. We need to live these values so that we embody in our own time the courage of the First People of these islands – “Ka lā hiki ola.”

We are called to look to “the dawning of a new day.” The courage it took to sail into unknown waters guided by the stars, the clouds, the seas and the rising sun lives in us by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are sailing into new waters, but we are guided by the cross of Christ, we are

secure in the love of God through Christ Jesus, we are piloted by the Holy Spirit, and we are assured of the outcome. He lanakila ma ke ke‘a. Holo Imua.

As we look to the election and ordination of the sixth Diocesan Bishop of this Diocese, I will continue to guide the Diocese. I continue to be honored to be your Bishop.

## I.

As I consider the past year, I do so with thanks and deep appreciation for the Diocesan Support Center staff.

Last year in my report, I welcomed Jasmi Regmi as our new Controller. She has proven to be both a wonderful addition to the office and the right person to serve as the successor to the faithful guardians of the diocesan finances in my time as Bishop (here I am particularly thinking of Peter Pereira and Danny Casey). She was joined this year in the “finance department” by Cammy Liu. With them, Ryan Kusumoto as our volunteer Diocesan Treasurer, the Commission on Finance and the Commission on Investments, we can be confident that our finances and investments are in good hands.

I am well aware that Sandy Graham, the Canon to the Bishop, and Andrew Arakawa, the Canon for Ministry Formation, are serving in roles that are truly double duty. In addition to his work in the office including working with congregations and overseeing clergy transitions, Sandy is now the priest-in-charge of St. Elizabeth’s Church, Honolulu. Andrew’s fulltime ministry is as a Chaplain at ‘Iolani School, Honolulu. He is also the Canon for Ministry Formation. This ministry includes being the Dean of the Waiolaihui‘ia Center for Ministry, liaison with Commission on Ministry in support of those in the ordination and licensed lay ministry processes, and assisting with clergy continuing education. I am keenly aware of such double duty and the pressures of trying to balance two ministries. For most of my years as Bishop Chang’s Canon, I was concurrently the Vicar of Mission congregations. I deeply appreciate their taking on double duty at this time in the life of our Diocese.

Kalani Holokai is the Community Relations Coordinator on Maui in support of our Diocesan response to the fires. Her support as the eyes and ears (and hands and feet) of the Bishop on the ground in response to the recovery efforts on West Maui and in support of the ongoing Holy Innocents faithful (now a part of the ministry of Trinity By-the-Sea Church, a Mission). God willing and the people consenting, Kalani will be ordained as a vocational Deacon at this year’s Convention Eucharist.

This year, David “Kawika” Jackson joined the team as the Diocesan Coordinator for Youth Ministry. I appreciate the recent and emerging opportunities for the youth of our Diocese.

Your Diocesan Support Center staff have worked diligently during some unusual times with unique problems. I deeply appreciate all that Nani Carroll, Rae Costa, Sonny Liu, Sybil Nishioka, Spencer Lum, Lynette Wong, and Stuart Ching do for us all.

As my Executive Assistant, Nani keeps me on track. She has the unenviable job of keeping my calendar in order and helping me manage Zoom calls at 2:00 AM and coordinating the many requests for meetings. Following hours of Zoom calls and meetings, she knows when to give me a mini-Kit Kat bar with the guidance to go for a walk.

Rae, Operations Manager, is the glue that holds the Diocesan Support Center together.

I appreciate all that Stuart, our Diocesan Archivist, does with limited space and resources. I do need to apologize to Stuart. We were again unable this year to provide adequate space for his work in preserving our historic records and items.

The Archdeacon and the Chaplains to retired clergy are volunteers who serve the Diocese and their Bishop faithfully. Steve, Carol, Heather, Frank and Norma, thank you.

I am also grateful to the elected leaders of this Diocese on Standing Committee and Diocesan Council, and to those who serve on the various commissions, committees and task groups. I particularly want to thank Chuck Spence, the President of Standing Committee, and other members of the Standing Committee who have taken on extra responsibilities this year at my request and duties related to the search for the sixth Bishop. Finally, I am also thankful for the faithful ministry of the Search and Transitions Committees looking to the election and ordination of the sixth Bishop of our Diocese.

I am particularly grateful to our Treasurer, Ryan, and to our Chancellor, Wayne.

## II.

The lives and ministries of the congregations of the Diocese are full and faithful. Most of our congregations have recovered from the COVID pandemic shutdown. Many of our congregations have ministries of care to the most vulnerable in our communities through food banks, thrift shops, feeding ministries, and special collections. The van ministry of our Maui congregations, A Cup of Cold Water, is serving the unsheltered on that island.

I have, of course, had my usual round of visitations with churches. I was with All Saints, Kapaʻa, for the beginning of the the congregation's centennial celebrations last November. In May, St. Christopher's, Kailua, celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the parish's founding. Trinity By-the-Sea, Kihei, marked the congregation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a luau and special service in May.

The Cathedral settled into stable ministry under the guidance of Heather Patton-Graham who was installed as Dean in March. Nick Lee was installed as Canon Director of Music in August. As Bishop, it has been a gift to have the Cathedral in such capable hands.

The congregations on Maui continue to recover from the impact of the Lahaina fire. The remnant of the Holy Innocents' congregation continues to worship together at Honolulu United Methodist Church, Napili. The ministry of Holy Innocents is now an extension of Trinity By-the-Sea, a Mission of the Diocese. One congregation with one Vicar worshipping at two sites. Once ordained to the diaconate, Kalani Holokai will be assigned to the Mission giving special attention

to the ministry on the west side of Maui, fire recovery and the Holy Innocents' members. Dealing with the County and State about the future of church site is ongoing and slow.

### III.

This past year the clergy gathered together for a clergy retreat in February. The retreat was a pilgrimage to important sites in the history of the Hawaiian islands. In August, the clergy conference was in Hilo, and we had Chuck Robertson, Canon to the Presiding Bishop, with us to offer insights into the Episcopal Church.

There have been announcements of retirements and clergy transitions.

We have had several ordinations this past year: Suzanne Kobayashi (Priest in November), Bill Heran (transitional Deacon in January and Priest in August), Erin Richardson Severin (transitional Deacon in March), Hannah Lee Sung (transitional Deacon in March), and Catherine McPherson-Tamos (transitional Deacon in September),

I am continually grateful for the clergy of this Diocese. I am particularly proud to note the number of clergy who I am honored to have ordained who continue to serve in this Diocese. We are blessed.

### IV.

As Bishop, I serve on the Boards of four schools. Each is in a time of significant change.

I was honored to be the only non-alumnus serving on the 'Iolani Head of School Search Committee. Following a national search that began with 200 candidates, 'Iolani School announced the appointment of Melinda Bihn, Ed.D., as its next Head of School, effective July 1, 2026. She will finish up this year as the Head of the International School of San Francisco, a PK-12 program of more than 1,000 students and 250 staff members. Though the search took a great deal of time, I found it a learning experience and rewarding.

Seabury Hall welcomed a new Head of School this past July. Nicholas Rodriguez was formerly Head of School at Corbett Preparatory School in Tampa, Florida.

St. Andrew's Schools announced the Board of Trustees' decision to go co-ed K-12 beginning with the 2026/2027 school year. This difficult decision was made after an analysis of enrollment and population trends throughout O'ahu.

Finally, St. John's School on Guam is beginning the process of being integrated into the Diocese.

One of my greatest joys as Bishop is service to our schools. I especially delight in sitting in on upper school classes, reading to the little ones, and participating in chapel services. Being with the students is a real source of energy for me.

### V.

As Bishop, I am called upon to be involved in the Councils of the Church. I attend House of Bishops meetings and gatherings of Province VIII Bishops both in person and on Zoom. Within days of the installation of the new Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, in November, I was appointed (and one can't say no to the new Presiding Bishop) to both the Standing Commission on World Mission and the Task Force on the Anglican Communion and Countering the Colonial Mindset. I also continue on the bilateral relations Committee with the Episcopal Church in the Philippines and on the Concordat Committee of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI).

I also served as the appointed Advisor to complainants in a Title IV (clergy discipline) process regarding a bishop. I have also done trainings for other Dioceses' Clergy Disciplinary Boards.

In March, I was the special guest of the Primates of the Oceania Provinces of the Anglican Communion at their gathering, FONNO, in New Zealand.

I represented the Presiding Bishop at the installation of the Prime Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

I missed the House of Bishops meeting in the Dominican Republic last month to attend the meetings of the Executive Commission and then the Supreme Council of Bishops of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) in Los Angeles. I also had private meetings in Honolulu with the Most Rev. Joel Porlares, Obispo Maximo (Supreme Bishop) of the IFI, the Rt. Rev. Dindo Ranojo, General Secretary of the IFI.

I am helping the Diocese of Taiwan in their Bishop search process.

I continue as the Protector General of the Society of St. Francis and the Bishop Protector of the Brothers of the Province of the Americas.

It is easy to see why Nani struggles to keep my calendar in order.

## VI.

Bea and I attended the Conference on Orderly Transitions for Bishops in October 2024. The Conference was to help me prepare for the May 1<sup>st</sup> formal announcement of my retirement and the calling for the election of the sixth Bishop of the Diocese. We took the time to visit Erin Richardson Severin at seminary (University of the South) as well.

We were able to visit our grandchildren in Germany for two quick weeks in August.

With all the traveling, however, I did have a bout of sciatica for the first time. Thanks to a wonderful 'Iolani alum physical therapist (yes, one who graduated when I was on the stage when diplomas were handed out), I am now pain free. It was a reminder of my own mortality.

Likewise, this year's necrology reminded me of friends no longer with us. Three key lay leaders died this year with whom I closely served. Bettye Jo Harris and Art Kusumoto were Deputies to

General Convention many times. I was honored to serve with them a couple of times when I chaired the Deputation before being elected Bishop. Cecilia Fordham was the Standing Committee President when I was elected Bishop. She was a wise advisor. They were my friends.

I am blessed that Bea has walked this year with me.

## VII.

We are all aware that we live in unique times in the United States and the world.

We must engage in ways that are new to most of us.

I have asked David Gierlach to gather a Social Justice Task Force to keep the Diocese informed about responses to the current social and political events in the nation and community.

We need to continue to support the ministries of care in our congregations and our Diocesan Prison Ministry under the leadership of Kaleo Patterson.

The Racial Reconciliation Task Force has prepared the *Hō‘imi Pono* curriculum. This curriculum invites us to tell our individual stories within our context of a living host culture and the many cultures of people who now call the islands of our Diocese home. Based on the “Difference Course” created by the Reconciliation Leaders Network under the auspices of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and adapted and expanded by members of our Diocese working together, *Hō‘imi Pono* seeks to engage every Episcopalian in our Diocese in a healthy conversation about reconciliation that honors our host culture, our heritage, our diversity and God’s creation. In the months ahead, I hope every Episcopalian in this Diocese – especially all the clergy – will take part in *Hō‘imi Pono* as soon as practical.

Kahuaola (The Environmental Justice and Creation Care Ministry Task Force) has called us to reconciliation with creation by sharing resources for action, advocacy and education. The team administers grants for Carbon Reduction Assistance in our congregations. They are guiding this year’s Education Day before the Annual Meeting of Convention.

We must be diligent in peacefully calling for justice. We must pray and organize.

## Conclusion

When I was ordained a Bishop in 2007, Presiding Bishop Katharine gave me a plaque with the words of Roman Catholic bishop Helder Camara of South America:

*The bishop belongs to all. Let no one be scandalized if I frequent those who are considered unworthy or sinful. Who is not a sinner? Let no one be alarmed if I am seen with compromised and dangerous people, on the left or the right. Let no one bind me to a group. My door, my heart, must be open to everyone -- absolutely everyone.*

As one called to serve you, please forgive me when I have failed you. Celebrate with me the times we together have served God and God's people rightly with love and joy.

Years ago, I shared this simple prayer of commitment with the Diocese:

Come Holy Spirit, fill me so that I can:  
Dedicate my heart to Christ Jesus,  
Open my mind to seek truth and justice,  
Lift up my hands to welcome the outcast  
and care for the broken,  
Behold with my eyes the wonders of creation,  
Hear with my ears the story of God in the world,  
And sing with my lips a song of God's love –  
with laughter and without worry.  
And always in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

With this prayer daily on my lips, I look forward to serving you in the months ahead as we together discern God's will for the future of our Diocese.

Submitted with my warm aloha and blessing,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert L. Fitzpatrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross-like mark at the beginning.

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick, Fifth Bishop Diocesan  
The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i