

Earlier this week we, along with other parishes who are part of 'the Chiapas Project,' received a letter from Bishop Chilton Knudson. The bulk of her letter to us was concern about sharing photos of the children in San Cristobal and Yo Chip, the two communities where we interact with Episcopalian congregations. She reminded us that sexual predators troll the internet in search of vulnerable and accessible children, and that there remains an active international (underground) market and sexual slavery. She asked us to be careful about including names and photos in social media.

However, this concern was bracketed by compliments about our commitment to the 'ministry of connection' we've developed over the years with the people who populate these two congregations and to the work of the Diocese of Southeast Mexico in general.

As the program year 2022/23 looms before us, beginning as usual in early September, Bishop Chilton's note reminds me of two important ministries of our congregation here at Church of Our Saviour.

Our commitment to public health is deeply integrated into parish life. We are still struggling to respond to the ongoing reality of the highly contagious strains of COVID and to our many parishioners who are currently finding their own way back to pre-COVID patterns of life. We are committed to this work. We also have a long and well-established tradition of Keeping God's People Safe, which recognizes that a corporate faithfulness to a safe environment is good not only to keep sexual predators at bay but keeps goodness itself front and center of congregational life.

Bishop Chilton reminded us that we always have ways to grow in our understanding of this issue and in the environments of safety we can participate in creating.

Second, her recognition of the important ministry that has been done in both directions as we've developed relationships with the remarkable Episcopalians among the Maya of southern Mexico, reminds me of the importance of outreach ministry for the overall health of any congregation.

We support outreach here at COS beginning with our junior high members who have traditionally learned about and raised money for Heifer Project International. I look forward to boosting this program again later this fall. Our A.S.P. trip and the annual dinner that the senior high students host form two of the most important aspects of congregational life. But support for outreach ought not end with young people. It's vital that all of us reach beyond the comfort of our daily lives to interact with others, to share our Christian worldview, and to be of service to a world we share with others.

Hence, as we gradually emerge from COVID, I look forward to renewing the various programs and special events that invigorated COS life in the past, including adult mission opportunities. Please join me in thanking all the COSers who've provided leadership, either in Keeping God's People Safe training or in any of the many ministries that enrich our life. And please pray with

me that a first-rate candidate for our Parish Life Director role will apply in the near future. These corporate activities really need this staff attention, and I hope we find the right person soon.

Thanks to all of you. I look forward to greeting all of you, new and old, over the next few months.

Pax,

Brian