

43rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana
The Art of Gathering
Pineville, LA

Saturday, March 5, 2022

7:30 a.m. Resolutions Committee

8:00 a.m. Registration

10:00 a.m. Convention Assembles

1. Call to Order: The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. The Very Rev. Dawnell Stodghill, President of the Standing Committee, opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Verification of Quorum: The Rev. Madge McClain, Chair of the Committee of Credentials and Privileges, reported that 31 congregations of the 42 eligible congregations are represented; 41 clergy of the 51 eligible clergy are present; 89 lay delegates of 135 eligible lay delegates are present at Convention. The Convention has the necessary representation in each category for a quorum.

NOTE: Bishop Owensby announced that delegates and guests are to be seated at assigned tables.

3. Election of Convention Secretary: Karen Hayward was nominated as Secretary by Bishop Owensby. The convention approved.

Bishop Owensby appointed Holly Windham as Assistant Secretary.

4. Adoption of Rules of Order: The Rev. Frances “Boo” Kay moved to adopt the Rules of Order as printed. The convention approved by acclamation.

5. Report from the Committee on Dispatch of Business: The Rev. Frances “Boo” Kay moved to adopt the agenda as presented with no changes. The Rev. Whit Stodghill seconded. The convention approved.

An explanation for the use of the QR code to access the diocesan convention website was given. Katie Chapman invited the use of the prepared coloring sheets distributed to tables.

6. Appointment of a Parliamentarian: Bishop Owensby appointed Chancellor Kyle McInnis as Parliamentarian.

7. Introductions and Courtesies by the Bishop

A) **Convention Guests** (Institutions and Ministries):
Wesley Center in Woodworth

B) **Clergy Resident since the last convention:**
The Rev. Terry Deokaran (Rector of St. George’s, Bossier)
The Rev. Michael Cannon, (Rector of St. Paul’s, Shreveport)

C) **Members of the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council**

Standing Committee Terms Ending
The Rev. Ally Perry (Lake Charles)

Sandra Broussard (Acadiana)

Diocesan Council Terms Ending:

Fr. Michael Bordelon (Acadiana)
Loulie Middleton (Alexandria)
Cindy Robertson (Lake Charles)
Brenda Davis (Monroe)
Andrea Petrosch (Shreveport)

D) Diocesan Council newly-elected members:

The Rev. Laurent De Prins (Acadiana)
Patti Noel (Alexandria)
Colleen Fontenot (Lake Charles)
Debbie Harkness (Monroe)
Ginger Paul (Shreveport)

8. Minutes of the 2021 Diocesan Convention:

The Rev. Deacon Michael Parham moved and Nancy Shaw seconded a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to accept them as presented. The Convention approved.

9. Report from the Committee on Credentials and Privileges:

The Very Rev. Madge McLain moved for a vote to allow seat and voice for College Student Presence. As this was presented by Committee, no second was needed. The Convention approved by acclamation.

College Student Presence:
William Salvaggio: ULL
Logan Harris: ULM
Rebecca Jones: ULM

10. Table Introductions: Members of each table were asked to introduce themselves, name their congregation, and say something about themselves of significance along with a recent close moment to Christ.

11. Elections: Standing Committee, Disciplinary Board, General Convention Deputation

Report from the Nominating Committee: Nominating Chairperson, The Very Rev. Rich Snow moved to accept The Very Rev. Madge McLain and Nancy Shaw by acclamation to the Standing Committee; he also moved to accept The Rev. Frank Hughes by acclamation to the Disciplinary Board. As these were moved from Committee, no second was needed. The Convention approved both motions.

Nominees for University of the South Trustee:

The Rev. Michael Bordelon
The Rev. Deacon Bette Kauffman

Nominees for General Convention 2024 Clergy Deputation:

The Rev. Canon John Bedingfield
The Rev. Michael Bordelon
The Very Rev. D. Seth Donald
The Rev. Annie Etheredge
Archdeacon Lois Maberry
The Rev. Thomas Nsubuga
The Rev. Deacon Michael Parham

Nominees for General Convention 2024 Lay Deputation:

Will Harp
Karen Hayward
Roy Rosenthal
Nancy Barnes Shaw
Ashley Thom

Present Ballot #2 to the delegates (GC2024 Deputation)

12. Report from the Committee on Resolutions: Canon John Bedingfield stated that no resolutions will come before the Convention.

13. Appointments by Bishop Owensby

A. Convention Committees: as listed in Convention materials

B. Treasurer: Will Harp

C. Other Appointments:

Deans of the Convocations:

Acadiana: The Very Rev. Annie Etheredge

Alexandria: The Very Rev. Rich Snow

Lake Charles: The Very Rev. Paul White

Monroe: The Very Rev. Dawnell Stodghill

Shreveport: The Very Rev. Mary Richard

14. Bishop's Convention Address:

**Bishop's Address
43rd Annual Diocesan Convention**

She greeted the four of us with a smile of recognition and chatted with us briefly. We were regulars and had spoken to each other dozens of times. At least, she had taken scores of our drink and dinner orders.

For some reason, I noticed her brown eyes that night as if for the first time. I saw the tiny laugh lines that framed them on either side and felt the earthy warmth and worldly sincerity they conveyed.

I kept sneaking discreet glances while she was talking to my friends. Then those eyes looked directly into mine. She asked, "What will you have?" My throat froze for an awkward moment.

In a rush I was feeling—not so much thinking—something like, "I wish you would pull up a chair. Tell me who you are or what you're thinking or the kind of music you like. It's just, looking into your eyes, I believe I caught a glimpse of you. And I think you caught a glimpse of me."

After an awkward moment I managed to mumble, "I'll take the nachos."

That night I had no idea that this cheerful, relaxed person had been a social justice leader since high school, had graduated summa cum laude from the University of Georgia, and had walked away from a successful career teaching high school students to search for something more adventurous in life.

At that moment, I only had the vague sense that we had connected.

Some time later, this woman, Joy, and I would agree to get married. Now, when I look into her eyes, I am reminded of all that our eyes have seen together. Joy and I remember, albeit from different angles, the winding road that we have traveled. Our shared road has made her who she is, me who I am, and most

remarkably, us who we are. It is the very idea, the living reality, that I am part of a “we” that makes my life worth living. That “We” has changed over time.

In Germany we were newlyweds. In Florida we became parents. In Sewanee we were becoming a clergy family. Today most of you know us as either the Bishop and his spouse or Joy and her bishop-husband. We remained true to who we are even as we adapted to changing circumstances.

I tell you all of this because the Church is facing a new set of circumstances. The pandemic has hastened the changes to our world that had been evolving for years. We need to adapt to those changes while also remaining true to who we are.

To be intentional about this process, I want you to explore with me three questions this morning:

1. Who am I really?
2. How am I my true self in the Church?
3. Who should the Church be in this changed and changing world?

Who Am I Really?

In his book *The Second Mountain*, David Brooks takes a careful look at how many of us Americans think about the self and the bind that an especially common concept is putting us in. In his view, American individualism has departed from its original sources.

Thinkers like Edmund Burke, John Locke, and Adam Smith valued individual virtue and personal responsibility. And yet, they also underscored the importance of belonging to and showing loyalty to a community.

Brooks argues that we’ve come to see each person as a “buffered self.” The true self is the cluster of desires and opinions, impulses and ideas that rise up from within the individual’s own inner life. I am true to myself only when I freely act on my own cravings, promote my own perspectives, pursue my own agenda.

In other words, I don’t need you—or anybody—to be my true self. I don’t receive my sense of self—my sense of purpose or meaning or value—from belonging to something greater than myself. All I’m willing to do is walk with those individuals who happen to agree with me so long as they continue to agree with me.

I am deeply concerned about the level of conflict and animosity in our country today. And I think that this debased sense of the self is at the root of it. It propels us toward a “my way or the highway” universe. To echo the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, it’s like a war of all against all. And in that war, life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

What a nightmare!

By contrast, the Bible tells a very different story. In the first chapter of Genesis we read that each of us is created in the image of God. The First Letter of John summarizes what the Scriptures have been telling us all along. God is love.

So, to be true to ourselves is to love. We’re all still learning how to love. That’s why forgiveness, reconciliation, and above all mercy are such crucial parts of human life. But the key for us here is that we need each other to be our true selves.

How am I my true self in the Church?

To be our true self—to love—requires being part of something greater than ourselves. To use the Ubuntu phrase: I am because we are.

St. Paul underscored this principle with the earliest Christian communities. He insisted that the true self emerges from participation in and an abiding commitment to a web of relationships. We are who we are because of the Body to whom we belong: the Body of Christ. He writes, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

What this means is that each of us is part of an integrated, organic whole. We are not like LEGO pieces that can be attached to or removed from other pieces with no change in who we truly are. Rather, each of us is part of a body, such as a limb or an organ. To be itself, the body needs every limb and organ. Conversely, every limb and organ provide a function that makes sense only in the context of the whole body.

The hand, for instance, relies on the eye to catch a ball. If the hand is removed from the body, it can no longer do “hand-y” things. It ceases to be what we mean by hand. The now lifeless tissue can no longer grasp a fork and bring food to the mouth. Nor can it scratch an itch or wave at a friend.

Each member of the body is truly what it is by virtue of belonging to and functioning within the whole. However, belonging does not require conformity. On the contrary, each member of the body must retain its difference from the others in order to participate in and sustain the life of the whole.

The foot cannot be a hand. The ear cannot be an eye. Otherwise, the body would be a confused heap, not a coherent whole. Every member of the body needs every other member to be what it is as a different member.

So, despite the individualistic emphasis of our culture, the truth is that God created us to be an integrated part of a “we.” Each of us is different, yet none of us is self-contained and self-sufficient. The well-being of each of us is connected inextricably to the well-being of everybody else—so much so, that we misuse our gifts and talents when we employ them merely for our own selfish advantage.

As Paul wrote, “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit *for the common good*.” (1 Corinthians 12:7; emphasis added) When we exercise our gifts for the common good—when we love one another—God is present in those acts of love.

Who should the Church be in this changed and changing world?

Simply put, the Church is who she has always been: the Body of Christ. And God gave Christ’s own body for the healing of the world. God is giving us for the healing of the world.

We hear Christ’s Word in worship. We receive Christ’s Body and Blood at the eucharistic Table. Formed and nurtured by Word and Sacrament, we go into the world sent by God to do the healing, reconciling work that God has given us to do. Again and again. Adapting to changing circumstances as we go.

And here are some examples of us—the people of Western Louisiana—doing just that:

We have joined with partners across the state to engage the massive work of longterm hurricane recovery. Archdeacon Lois Maberry, Missioner Joy Owensby, and Cindy Robertson have taken the lead in northern, central, and southwestern Louisiana respectively. Episcopal Relief continues to be generous in their financial support and offering weekly guidance with our team. We are hurricane survivors here in Western Louisiana. So we know that this work will continue for several years.

As you will hear in more detail later today, we have been facing head on the significant financial challenges at our beloved Camp Hardtner. A Task Force was appointed to explore options for a sustainable, viable, and vital future. They have turned that work over to the Board who are now moving forward with a new and narrowed focus on Summer Camp.

In what I affectionally call the Northern Kingdom—the Monroe Convocation—we’re seeing a new model of cooperation between congregations. Their clergy—several of whom have been locally formed—act as a team. Larger and smaller congregations work together to enhance vitality and ensure sustainability.

Finally, I have called together a group to reflect on the structures of our congregational life across the Diocese, our methods for priestly formation, and the size of Diocesan Convention. Our aim in these reflections is to adapt to our changing world in ways that will strengthen our local ministries and promote spiritual growth for years to come.

I could go on. But here’s the shorthand.

We are people of the Resurrection in a world that still crucifies people. In a world where Russia still invades Ukraine, where hard working souls still go hungry, where people can still hate others just because they’re different.

Jesus once said, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:23). In other words, we can be true to ourselves or not. True to the image of God or not. As the Church, we choose the way of healing and nurture. The way of forgiveness and mercy. A way that requires adaptation. We choose the way of love.

The Right Rev. Jacob W. Owensby, PhD, DD

IV Bishop of Western Louisiana

15. Table Talk: What do you like best about your congregation? What are your hopes for your congregation? What are its biggest challenges? What does it need to thrive?

16. Report from Elections Committee: The Very Rev. Rich Snow reported on elections.

Elected for University of the South Trustee:

The Rev. Michael Bordelon

Elected for the 2024 General Convention Lay Deputation:

Karen Hayward

Will Harp

Nancy Barnes Shaw

Ashley Thom

Roy Rosenthal, Alternate

Elected for the 2024 General Convention Clergy Deputation:

The Rev. Michael Bordelon

The Very Rev. Thomas Nsubuga

Present Ballot #3 to the delegates: Vote for 2 clergy.

17. Acknowledgements for Ministry and Service

Bishop Owensby recognized the following:

Canon John Bedingfield’s transition from Canon to Rector of St. James with the agreement to serve as Transition Consultant to the Bishop was announced.

Long term disaster recovery team members (Cindy Robertson, Lois Maberry, Joy Owensby)

received Bishop Jake's sincerest appreciation for their ongoing work. Scott Fleming, designer of the art for convention, was given applause in absentia for sharing his talent with the diocese. The birthdays of the Rev. Rowena White and the Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry were acknowledged with the traditional song by the entire convention.

Recess for lunch (noon to 1:15 pm)

Convention Reconvenes: Bishop Owensby called the Convention to order at 1:15 PM.

18. Report from Committee on Dispatch of Business: The Rev. Frances "Boo" Kay" recognized The Rev. Paul Martin for his retirement from the priesthood following years of service.

19. Report from Elections Committee: The Very Rev. Rich Snow reported the following elections.

Elected for the 2024 General Convention Clergy Deputation:

The Very Rev. Seth Donald
The Rev. Canon John Bedingfield
The Very Rev. Annie Etheredge, Alternate

The bishop thanked all who stood for election.

20. Review of 2022 Budget: Treasurer Will Harp first thanked the Bishop, the Diocesan Council, the diocesan staff, and particularly Kathy Richey for their team effort in developing the 2022 budget. He then, referring to convention materials, presented an overview of the 2022 budget which has been passed by Diocesan Council; he also included noteworthy changes from 2021. The 2022 budget is smaller than 2021 mostly because of the extraordinary one-time \$250,000 disaster recovery initiative in the 2021 budget. For 2022, 63% of diocesan revenues are projected to come from endowment funds; 27% from Congregational Giving, 10% from the Board of Trustees Extraordinary Grant, and less than 1% from Miscellaneous Cash Income. Annual revenue does not include revenue from the Board of Trustees Extraordinary Grant which is revenue neutral. Congregational Giving is projected to go up slightly from 2021, the amount depending on circumstances from the pandemic which are still unknown. Thankfully, the diocesan endowment continues to perform well. Overall, annual revenues from all sources are projected to increase by \$175,975 over 2021, an amount that bodes well for a balanced budget. Overall, expenditures are divided into Program and Outreach Ministries (the support of the multitude of ministries across the diocese) and Diocesan Operational Ministries (the expenses incurred with operating the diocese). Funding for Program and Outreach Ministries exceeds Diocesan Operational Ministries. Changes in the 2022 budget necessitated by a variety of groups and ministries were addressed specifically. This balanced, perhaps "slightly surplus" budget has been approved by the Diocesan Council.

Representing the Finance Committee, Chancellor Kyle McInnis moved that the convention accept the 2022 budget as presented. No second was necessary. Motion passed.

21. Diocesan Presentations (have been submitted by title—see convention materials on the website)

22. Table Talk: All attendees were asked to discuss the following questions: How does your congregation serve the surrounding community? What challenges in your local community might your congregation help address? What do you value most in a clergy person?

Following this time, the Bishop invited delegates and guests to offer to the entire convention their comments about traits valued in their clergy.

23. Report on Camp Hardtner: Director Daniel Chapman introduced Blair Johnson as our camp intern from Oklahoma. Daniel then read a quote from former diocesan Bishop Giralt Jones' book *A Camp Hardtner History* whose cure established Camp Hardtner in 1945 as an effort in gratitude toward our youth who had sacrificed so much during World War II. The camp's first summer session was in 1948. Hardtner's 75th summer is coming. The pandemic's impact on youth has been reminiscent of past world events.

Since 2020, urged on by the pandemic, the Camp Hardtner Task Force was established to confront the hard truth of unsustainable financial decline. This realization took the group's focus to answer the core question of how Hardtner best serves the diocese. The answer led the task force to see the path to sustainability in a new direction with summer camp as the core of Hardtner through the way it reveals God to people. The Board of Trustees now is working to create a three-year plan of revitalization to move this vision to an action plan.

Therefore, the sole focus going forward will be summer camp in order to put the full force of camp resources into that program's ministry. Various groups who had used the facility during the year are now looking at other venues to meet their needs. Goals for this period include increasing summer camp enrollment and building fundraising and development. The need for learning and discernment to see the road forward will be ongoing.

Summer Camp 2022 promises to build on the past to move into the future. Post pandemic, camp can be the healing presence that youth need now and that can sustain them throughout the year. Daniel noted how often he has heard congregations lament the lack of youth in churches; he emphasized that Camp Hardtner is the diocesan ministry to young people helping them to encounter God, be changed, and go on to change their world. Daniel then spoke of his pride in what is happening at Hardtner and his gratitude to the people of the diocese for their support.

Questions from the floor of the convention were addressed. Congregations are encouraged to pray for camp sessions, staff, and campers and to spread the news of Camp Hardtner outside of our churches. The Rev. Whit Stodghill expressed his gratitude to Daniel and Katie Chapman for their devotion to Camp Hardtner.

24. Report from Committee on Courtesy Resolutions: The Rev. Annie Etheredge, Layperson Sherl Picchione, and Deacon Michael Parham presented the Convention's eight Courtesy Resolutions. Motions were all accepted by acclamation.

Resolution 1: WHEREAS Justin Portal Welby has faithfully served the diverse needs of the Anglican Communion as the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury for more than eight years, And WHEREAS Archbishop Welby has a passion for reconciliation of all persons and is committed to the pursuit of peace throughout the whole world at a time when peace is at a premium, And WHEREAS Archbishop Justin is committed to the spreading of the gospel through our particular expression of faith, And WHEREAS Archbishop Justin calls us to the freedom of extraordinary, Christ-liberated courage... BE IT RESOLVED: that the 43rd annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana extend to Archbishop Welby our greetings and warmest wishes. I so move.

Resolution 2: WHEREAS The Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry has faithfully served the worldwide Episcopal Church as our 27th Presiding Bishop for these past seven "very interesting" years; And WHEREAS Bishop Curry has taken our beloved faith tradition to more authentic levels of inclusion as our first P-B of color; And WHEREAS Bishop Curry's contagiously enthusiastic love for our Lord Jesus Christ has prompted us all to join and celebrate the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement; And WHEREAS Bishop Michael has led us through **two**, count 'em, **TWO** crazy years of pandemic with positivity, candor, and humor; BE IT RESOLVED the 43rd annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana extend to Bishop Curry and his spouse and partner in hope Sharon, our greetings and warmest wishes. I so move.

Resolution 3: WHEREAS the Right Reverend Jacob W. Owensby, bishop of the Diocese of Western Louisiana, leader of Episcopalians of the Northern Kingdom above I-10 and its tastier, saucier sibling, the Southern Kingdom, is approaching his eleventh year of ministry in this most august office; And WHEREAS "Bishop Kinda" Jake Who has matured delightfully into his position as Diocesan and most exalted story teller and re-teller has garnered a significant following and fan club, And WHEREAS Bishop Jake had the good sense to choose as his partners in ministry his most beloved "D.J. Jazzy" Joy Owensby AND Diocesan First Canine Gracie, both of whom have their own fan following; BE IT RESOLVED the 43rd annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana extend to Bishop Owensby our heartfelt thanks and admiration by raising the roof on his behalf. I so move.

Resolution # 4: WHEREAS The Rt. Rev. David Bruce McPherson was the third bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana; and WHEREAS Bishop McPherson has passed from this life, therefore; BE IT BE IT RESOLVED that this 43rd Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana extend warm wishes, prayers, and abiding affection to his widow Susan. I so move.

Resolution #5: WHEREAS The Rt. Rev. Robert J. Hargrove was the second bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana; and WHEREAS Bishop Hargrove has passed from this life, therefore; BE IT BE IT RESOLVED that this 43rd Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana extend warm wishes, prayers, and abiding affection to his widow Linda. I so move.

Resolution #6: WHEREAS The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana has long enjoyed a relationship with the Diocese of The Dominican Republic; and WHEREAS members of this diocese have found opportunities for ministry and friendship 4while visiting the Dominican Republic; and WHEREAS Bishop Moises Quezada Mota is now in the fourth year of his episcopate, therefore; BE IT BE IT RESOLVED that this 43rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana send greetings and our kindest regards to Bishop Moises and the clergy and people of the Diocese of The Dominican Republic; I so move.

Resolution #7: WHEREAS, The Reverend Charles Dana Krutz is finally retiring after serving the Church universal as Executive Director of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference; and WHEREAS, Fr. Dan has been a friend to this diocese and to the children of Camp Hardtner, and WHEREAS, Fr. Krutz has been with the LIC for half of its existence on this earth, doing important work for the furtherance of unity in the Church of God; and WHEREAS, after more than twenty-five years of watching her husband drive away from their home to points unknown all across the state of Louisiana, Julie will finally have him home for more than twenty minutes at a time; therefore; BE IT BE IT RESOLVED, that this 43rd convention of the Diocese of Western Louisiana extend to Father Dan Krutz our gratitude for his service and our warmest wishes for a joyful retirement and a travel schedule that doesn't involve the packing of a Cleri-Cool collar; I so move.

Resolution #8 WHEREAS, the tentative emergence of our Diocese and world from the constraints of this pandemic has made any planning difficult, and WHEREAS, this is the first Diocesan convention we have been able to attend in person in two long years, and WHEREAS, the return to an in-person Eucharist, the delight of connection with new friends and reconnection with old ones through handshakes and hugs and the sharing of communal meals has been happily reinstated, therefore; BE IT BE IT RESOLVED, that this 43rd convention of the Diocese of Western Louisiana extend to Holly (rhymes with Holly), Kathy, Joy, Canon John and the Diocesan staff deepest regards with a rousing round of applause. I so move.

25. Commissioning of Diocesan Leadership: Bishop Owensby invited all the newly elected and appointed Diocesan leaders to rise for commissioning and prayer.

26. Other Business of Convention: The Rev. John Clark commented that our congregations should remain aware of the children we might sponsor to Camp Hardtner from our neighborhoods. Appreciation was expressed to the Bishop and Will Harp for enabling ministries especially for the work of Canterbury.

Deacon Kauffman asked the Convention to send college students to our diocesan Canterbury groups and to let the appropriate chaplains know of their arrival.

27. Closing Prayers, Blessing, and Adjournment:

Bishop Owensby invited the convention to stand and pray together The Lord's Prayer.
Archdeacon Lois Maberry offered a prayer to dismiss the Convention.

The Convention was adjourned at 2:24 PM.

The Standing Committee met briefly following the Convention.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen C. Hayward
Secretary of Convention