

Responses to the Addresses of Bishop Lillibridge and Bishop Reed
February 20, 2016

1. Prayers of Appreciation and Welcome – Rob, Angie

Heavenly Father, we give “un mil Gracias” for our Diocesan staff, particularly Nancy Stinson, volunteers, and St Alban’s, Harlingen, for their faithful service and in providing outstanding hospitality at this Council.

We also give you thanks for Gary and Catherine, David and Patti, for their ministries, for their embodiment of servant leadership for our Diocese. We also give thanks for Bishop Folts and Sandy, and our long time mission partners and friends, the Rt.Rev. Francisco Moreno, and his wife, Pery; the Rt.Rev. Benito Juarez, and his wife, Angelica; and the Rt.Rev. Lloyd Allen; and our fellow Diocese in Province 7.

We make this prayer with joy and thankfulness in our partnership in the gospel and pray for strength and grace to bring it to completion.

Lord, In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer

2. Resolution to Dioceses of Province 7 – Kelley

"Whereas, the 112th Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas met in McAllen, Texas, from February 18 - 20, 2016. And whereas, as part of our time together, the clergy and delegates passed this resolution of greetings to send to all of the dioceses of Province 7. Therefore, be it resolved that this communication is coming to you with our greetings, our friendship, our prayers, our best wishes, and our thanks for our partnership in the Gospel. Our diocesan theme for 2016 is ***"The joy of the Lord is your strength"*** (Nehemiah 8.10). Together, may we find joy as we serve in Province 7 and beyond."

Right Reverend Sir, We so Move.

3. Prayer for Study – **Andrea**

Most gracious God, we are always thankful for the many gifts which you bestow upon us each and every day. Guide us we entreat you, to give us an unwavering commitment to study and absorb the Gospel of Luke. Make it so that it becomes a part of our very spirit and fiber, creating in us a renewed sense of urgency to walk in the way of Jesus, sharing the gospel with joy and love for you and one another. Give us courage to go into the world and do the work that you have prepared for us to do. We ask all of this in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

4. Prayers for Habitat – Roger. Lorena

Lord Jesus Christ, we make our homes in broken communities, in places of violence, in places scarred by extremes of wealth and poverty, in places divided by boundaries of race, gender, class and culture. Too many among us lack a safe and decent place to call home. We know that we have created and sustained these divisions. You made us in your image and blessed us with wisdom, creativity, skill, compassion and love. Give us sight to see your children in need, ability to hear your call to serve and willingness to be your hands and feet. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest—a place near your altar, O Lord. Heaven is your throne and the earth your footstool. Empower us with your strength and wisdom to build four safe dwellings in 2017. You have called us to share our food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when we see the naked, to clothe him. You have graciously allowed the homes in Lockhart and Seguin to survive, in spite of the efforts of Bishops Lillibridge and Reed. Give us willing hearts, Lord, and inspire us to action. All this we pray through your Holy Spirit. Amen

Lord, In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer

5. Prayers for Good Sam – Liz

Father in Heaven, we thank you for the Good Samaritan Community Services programs that reach across the diocese, especially the summer program known as Camp Good Sam. We are grateful for those who are working toward supporting educational achievement, reducing risk factors for children during the summer, helping young people explore college and career pathways, and helping youth grow in leadership development and learn about civic engagement. We are especially grateful for the opportunity to serve in six communities: Pharr, Corpus Christi, Alice, Sonora, Wimberley and San Antonio. Thank you for the opportunity for our congregations to share in “the joy of the Lord.”

Lord, In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer

6. Prayers for Camps and Conferences and in thanksgiving for the completion of the Master Plan, covering also the Kingdom of God and BR's leadership (BL address and expanded to include BR) – **John and Beth**

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the wisdom and vision you bestowed on Bishop Everett Jones for his ministry to the young people of our diocese, especially through the founding of Camp Capers.

We thank you for its flourishing ministry which has spawned one of the finest camping programs in the United States through Camp Capers, Mustang Island Conference Center and Duncan Park, Colorado.

We thank you for calling the necessary leadership to ensure it continued growth through the witness of Bishop Jones' successors and the strong lay leaders of the Diocese.

We thank you for the expansive vision that acknowledges the importance of sacred places for spiritual formation in the image of Christ, for fellowship with one another, and the strengthening of discipleship coupled with the strategic integration of the Gospel in our daily life and work.

We thank you for the fruits of this ministry which have been embodied in so many people, especially Bishop Lillibridge, who has come full circle from Camp Capers camper to Diocesan Bishop and chairman of the Advisory Council for Camps of the Episcopal Church. We thank you for the leadership of Bishop Reed, who was also formed deeply by his camping experience.

We thank you also for the witness of Bishop Folts and his beloved wife Sandy, who met at Camp Capers in 1959. We celebrate the blessing the new activities building named in their honor will be to those it will serve.

We thank you for the vision cast in the Diocesan Master Plan, which has come to fruition under the dedicated leadership of Mollie Zachary and many others who have contributed so generously with their "time, talent and treasure."

We give thanks for the Development Committee and its Chair, Gregg Robertson, who faithfully go about the work of maintaining and expanding the ministry of our Camps and Conference Centers.

We give thanks for Jeff Rochelle and all those who will continue to inspire us to complete the New Dining Hall at Camp Capers, honoring the importance of table fellowship and our need for sustenance. We celebrate all that has been done and ask for wisdom and discernment to continue this important work on the eve of Camp Caper's 70th birthday.

We give thanks for the on-going vision for Mustang Island Conference Center for additions of a welcome center and additional housing and pray that generous hearts will make this expansion possible.

We ask for your generous spirit to inspire our giving in the coming years to continue this work and be inspired by the words of the psalmist, , *'that the generations to come might know, and the children yet unborn....might put their trust in God...'*. (Psalm 78:6-7)

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

7. Prayers for TMI – Philip

Gracious God, we pray for the mission of TMI Episcopal School. Guide by your Holy Spirit their teachers, and staff as they help to form the next generation of leaders in our church, our communities, and the world. Be with all students, as they discern your will for their lives, and grant them courage and wisdom to follow it, throughout their lives.

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

8. Prayers for formation, young adult and College Missions – Stephen

O Gracious and ever-living Creator, Thank you for forming us in your image with the gifts of reason, discernment, and intelligence. We ask that you strengthen our longing to become more wholly formed as the intelligent beings you created us to be. We ask that you guide us in our formation and study as we move further toward being a people transformed by the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ. We also ask that you continually mold us into disciples through learning, study, and formation. Gracious God, inspire the people of the Diocese of West Texas to follow and learn from Jesus as his Disciples so often did.

Father, we thank you for the joy of young adults and the 300,000 college students within the borders of the Diocese of West Texas. Help us to provide for their spiritual growth and formation. We ask your guidance and support in addressing the need for your church to serve the areas of opportunity for college students especially by being with Mrs. Ann Renfro as she chairs the Valley Advisory Council which will work in conjunction with the College Missions Board. Send also your spirit to build up our young adults as we put into action the work you have given us to do.

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

9. Prayers for community and sharing faith dinners, including Small Church, Big Mission Conference – **Ram and James**

Come Holy Spirit, move among us, as you did in the early Christian community at Pentecost, and gather us to be a holy community that we might give form to the “very fabric of Jesus’ life and ministry” in our particular locales being nurtured through the many opportunities you offer us through this Diocese.

Come Holy Spirit and move through the Small Church, Big Mission Conferences at St. George, San Antonio and St. Bartholomew’s, Corpus Christi that all churches participating will share wisdom with each other from their ministry contexts; be encouraged to faithfully face challenges together; learn best practices and find opportunities for growth in leadership, stewardship, and ministry best practices; and to find again that the “joy of the Lord is their strength.

Come Holy Spirit and enliven our gathering as we break bread together during our Sharing Faith Dinners so that strangers who worship together will be transformed into the Body of Christ as they share and hear stories of faith which build Godly relationships.

Come Holy Spirit, we pray, and fill all the life of our diocese: make us, who have come to this land of opportunity on many different ships, a people of Godly joy together in one boat: reveal our unity, guard our faith, and preserve us in peace, that we may be a living sacrifice to the praise of your Name.

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

10. Prayers for transition of leadership – Daniel and Nancy

Dear God, we pray that you guide Bishop Reed as he transitions from Bishop Coadjutor to Diocesan Bishop. That you instill in him, as a spiritual leader, the ability to make wise decisions based on appropriate input from followers, advisors, staff, and most of all, You. Provide him with insight and the gift of listening and enable him to hear the Word You convey as he forges a spiritual path for our diocese.

Father, we pray for Bishop Lillibridge and his family over the next 16 months as he prepares for the next phase of his life. Bless him in his endeavors, and we pray that he continues to provide blessed guidance to all who seek his advice.

Give guidance and wisdom also to the Standing Committee as they discern plans for the election of a new Suffragan Bishop and continue to evaluate our election process.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

11. Prayers of reflection and a call to Godly Joy, covering also the Kingdom of God – **Caroline and Richard**

Heavenly and Gracious Father, we thank you for the sending the Holy Spirit to birth the church, for Jesus to call us in to participate – to come and follow and be his witnesses. Realizing that despite our fears, flaws, hardness of heart and our struggles to be faithful; you continue to insist that we are your evidence of the resurrection, signs and reminders of the coming of the Kingdom.

May we always remember that there is opportunity for the Church – the Body of Christ; knowing that the set of circumstances we face make it possible to do something – to reach outside our walls and love and serve. Help us identify, individually and together as a congregation, what opportunities are before us to be Christ to one another.

Set in motion within us willingness and readiness to put our faith into action. We ask your encouragement, guidance and strength as we respond to the opportunities as the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus Christ. As people transformed by the saving love of God in Jesus Christ help us invite others to come join us in this holy adventure going the way of Christ, the way of the Kingdom.

We beseech you to fill us with Godly joy in which we will “always trust, always hope, always preserve”. Remind us that Godly joy is the intertwined love of you and love of neighbor. And, when the opportunities overwhelm us, may we remember Your love and Your grace; realizing that every moment, every opportunity is a gift and we must take each opportunity and un-wrap the gift with joy – Godly joy.

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

12. Prayers for clergy deployment and congregational development, including Eastern Partnership, Coalition of Corpus churches and Curacy Program – **Caroline**

Father, we thank you for the congregations which are the Christ-filled composition of the Diocese of West Texas. We are grateful to you for the grace-filled shepherding of our Bishops Gary and David. Thank you for your wisdom in guiding the areas of vocational discernment, clergy deployment and congregational development.

Pour upon your servants who are called to ordained ministry your heavenly discernment allowing them to be called to congregations where they will be effective and faithful leaders.

Heavenly Father, continue to bless us with wisdom in creatively looking at ministries, which draw from more than one congregation. We are thankful for the congregations who have already partnered; connecting them deeply in their community, cultivating opportunities for shared ministries with churches and social service organizations. Guide us to follow the examples set forth by the Eastern Partners in Ministry in the Eastern Convocation and the Coalition of Corpus Christi Churches.

And, Father as you send your Spirit to your faithful ordained servants and leaders, strengthen them early in their vocation with the curacy program. Please support, guide, and form our new priests; helping them to serve the medium and smaller churches. May you continue to bless us with funding and partnerships necessary for expanding the curacy program growing your Kingdom on earth.

Lord, In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer

13. Prayers for continued work of Diocesan Development Committee –
Kelley

Holy and Gracious Lord, we give you thanks for the work of the Development Committee. From its inception their work has enabled the Diocese to meet the ever expanding ministries of the Diocese. We give you thanks for the work they began in 1997, for Greg Robertson's faithful work and for the work they continue to do. We especially ask your continued blessing in areas of Camps and Conferences, Good Sam, Mustang Island and exciting new areas of opportunity for the Diocese, including the formation of regional groups to better serve the Diocese. May all our work done be in Your honor and to Your glory. Lord, you are abundant in Your provision. From Your own gifts, do we give to You.

Lord, In your Mercy
Hear Our Prayer

14. Prayers for Evangelism and Church Planting – Nancy

Holy and Gracious God, we give you thanks for calling us to be Kingdom People.

We ask you to bless the work of the Evangelism committee as they engage all of us in the urgent and holy work of spreading the Good News of Your Son. Give us the courage and strength to go and make disciples and teach them to obey what Jesus has taught us.

Father, prepare us for the great and risky work we are called to as a missionary people. Inspire the Church Planting group with the power of your Holy Spirit as they explore opportunities for new church starts in our diocese.

Guide each and every congregation throughout the diocese as we live into our purpose of drawing people to Christ and sending them out to be the signs and reminders of the coming of the Kingdom.

Lord, In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer

15. Prayers for Veteran's Ministries – Liz

Heavenly Father, we are blessed to have our diocese be home to many thousands of military personnel who are on active duty and who are veterans, as well as their families. We are thankful for the Wounded Warriors program, which promotes growth and healing at Mustang Island, Camp Capers ad Duncan Park. Now we ask your support as we inventory other dioceses who have active veterans' ministries so that we can assess future needs, form a vision and prepare a plan to further serve those who have sacrificially served on our behalf.

Lord, In your Mercy

Hear Our Prayer