



# ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA

## DIOCESE OF THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

The Most Reverend Chandler Holder Jones, SSC  
Bishop Ordinary, Presiding Bishop

### The Episcopal Charge to the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Synod of the Diocese of the Eastern United States

#### *Synod itself*

*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who by thy Holy Spirit didst preside in the Council of the blessed Apostles, and hast promised, through thy Son Jesus Christ, to be with thy Church to the end of the world; We beseech thee to be with the Council of thy Church here assembled in thy Name and Presence. Save us from all error, ignorance, pride, and prejudice; and of thy great mercy vouchsafe, we beseech thee, so to direct, sanctify, and govern us in our work, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, that the comfortable Gospel of Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed, in all places, to the breaking down the kingdom of sin, Satan, and death; till at length the whole of thy dispersed sheep, being gathered into one fold, shall become partakers of everlasting life; through the merits and death of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

*Praised be Jesus Christ!* It is the supreme privilege of my life to stand before you on this day for the second Synod of my ministry amongst you and for you as Bishop Ordinary of this Diocese. Our Lord Jesus Christ is advancing His Kingdom and the edification of His Church in and through you, each and every one of you. As I consider all of the hard work, commitment, and selfless sacrifice you offer to the Lord every single day on behalf of this branch of Christ's Body, I remain awed as I speak to you today, and profoundly moved by the love and gratitude I have for you all. The Diocese of the Eastern United States remains the flagship of the entire Continuing Church movement.

Please remember I love you all – and I continually go to the Altar of God with all of you on my heart. The Church is eternal - ever ancient, ever new. And the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church. Once more we meet here simply as Church *qua* Church – ‘let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.’ Although the fallen and corrupted world round us may count us but a tiny mustard seed, we are nothing less than a living manifestation of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, the microcosm of the Catholic Church, the Church of the Apostles, the Fathers, and the Saints. Here this grand day gathers the fullness of the Church instituted by and founded on Jesus Christ and established in the Apostles and their successors.

Of your Christian charity, please pray fervently for this Synod and for its ministry and work, as we seek to conduct the administrative business of the Church according to the mind of Christ and His Gospel, and to intensify the mission, governing, formation, preaching, teaching, and evangelistic outreach of our distinctive branch of Christ's Body.

We encourage everyone to take an intentional interest in the meetings and events of this Synod. Most critically, we invite everyone to enter into the spirit and purpose of Synod by prayer. Thank you all so very much for your loving support and encouragement during this special time in our corporate life together.

#### *Our unique vocation*

What is principally on my heart as we gather for Synod in 2023 is the awareness that the Continuing Church needs to be more proactive in extending the Faith and Practice of the Church as found in the Anglican Catholic

expression and in establishing new missions and congregations, outposts of the Faith Once Delivered unto the Saints. Perhaps you feel the way I do – given all that is happening in the secular materialistic heathen culture and collapsing Western world all around us, the window of opportunity for action for Christ and His Church we have heretofore enjoyed is beginning to narrow.

Our Diocese is remarkably stable, holding steady, the healthiest and strongest in the Continuum, and has been indubitably blessed, but the Lord intends us to grow. In the Church there is no stasis, no mere inertia, no neutrality. Either we are growing or contracting. We cannot afford to be complacent or comfortable. No resting on laurels. We are not the ecclesiastical establishment; we are meant to be a missionary Church, a Church comprised solely of missionary disciples. Our contemporary age is much closer to the first century than the twentieth. We have entered an age like that of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles. And we should act accordingly. Our time is now.

Although it may be difficult to explain or articulate it, or describe or pinpoint it, and it may be in fact be somewhat imperceptible, time, as we have experienced it in the past, is tightening. Not to sound overly alarmist, I genuinely believe we have a limited time now in which to do what Our Lord is calling us to do. We need a greater sense of urgency in our work. In the Gospel he authored, Saint Mark the Evangelist frequently uses the Greek word *enthus*, εὐθὺς, usually translated ‘immediately,’ ‘straightaway,’ which appears forty-one times in his narrative. The word doesn’t simply mean ‘then’ or ‘next’ - it functions to thrust the story forward with speed, alacrity, and urgency. Our Lord acts quickly and commandingly, for there is no time to waste. He acts immediately, urgently.

For us, there is absolutely no time to waste. For the Anglican Province of America and the Diocese of the Eastern United States, this is our *‘enthus moment.’* We need to act more quickly, authoritatively, and decisively in building up the Church. ‘And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.’ We need to move on with urgency. We must move from the model of attempting to prop up the old to planting the new. There is no reason why we should not directly compete with neo-Anglican bodies, groups that claim to be Anglican but lack the fullness of the Catholic Faith, by planting new missions. In this depraved and decaying culture, our Church has been given a unique opportunity immediately, in a εὐθὺς manner, to show God’s love to a world that desperately needs to hear the Gospel. The clergy are commissioned officers on the battlefield of a spiritual war. We must pray, sacrifice, and work for an increase, a new wave, of well-formed, godly, and totally committed priests. *O Lord, give us priests, good and holy priests!* It is time to engage - and go on the offensive. Local parishes, clergy, and laity can band together to venture out and form new mission congregations in the same region or state, under the supervision of the bishop. We can do all of this together – if we put our hearts, minds, and souls into it! Ineffective habits and ways of thinking and doing must give way to renewal, a fresh focus, a better direction.

We have the immediate need and unique opportunity to act, and we do not know how long this window will be open. Healthy churches pursue a specific way of worshiping and fostering faithful community. The ‘elephant in the room’ is that only Churches that are healthy will survive and thrive – a conversation topic some Continuing Anglicans apparently prefer to avoid, but one we must now address head-on. To have healthy Churches, we must make our primary emphasis what the Church has always been called to do: to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures and Holy Tradition and to make disciples. Thus, the entire Church, not just the clergy, should focus on baptising new members, reaching the unchurched and those who have fallen away, and building up the faith of those already in the Church. Apostolic Succession and the historic liturgy are increasingly countercultural, and the means by which we accomplish these goals, but they are not an end in themselves. The end is the salvation of souls and the upbuilding of the Body of Christ.

We should see this very moment as the greatest possible juncture, being at the right place at the right time. Many saints and martyrs from ages past longed to see what we see, and to engage such a time as ours, and did not see it and could not engage it. We were born for such a time as this. Our Lord has deliberately and providentially placed us precisely where we are, as we are, right here, right now, for the achievement of His will and for the promotion of His glory. Let us never forget that. It is not by accident or coincidence that we have inherited our task in the throes of the Western 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are here for a reason. And we know that reason. It is time for the Lord to act through us. *Come labor on. Claim the high calling angels cannot share / to young and old the gospel gladness bear. Redeem the time; its hours too swiftly fly. The night draws nigh.*

So, how is it that we act ‘immediately,’ in a εὐθὺς manner? What principles are to underlie our path and labour in the Lord? We have our own unique vocation and character, our own singular way of being and doing Church. Please allow me to reaffirm some fundamental guidelines for our Anglo-Catholic approach to the Christian life and the ministry of the Church. These points will show us the urgency we have in our goal of planting new missions and furthering Christ’s Kingdom under the Anglican banner. You have perhaps read or heard these ideas before, but they bear careful repeating and hearing.

*1. Communion with Jesus Christ, Personal and Real:* ‘Are you born again?’ ‘Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?’ We often hear from our evangelical protestant brethren that we ought to have a ‘personal relationship’ with Jesus Christ to be faithful Christians, and that this relationship is prerequisite for salvation. Although we must not confuse our personal relationship with Our Lord in daily conversion and faith with being ‘born again’ or ‘born from above’, regeneration, which mystery of grace is conferred sacramentally in Holy Baptism, there can be no doubt that our evangelical friends are right, and that they should have no monopoly on the truth that living Christian witness requires a personal communion with Our Blessed Saviour.

Every orthodox Anglican should be able to say most earnestly that he has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, the Incarnate Son of God and Son of Mary, is the crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer of all mankind – only in a personal and intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, God made Man, can any human being be capable of ultimate fulfilment or of the discovery of the true meaning, purpose, end, dignity, and glory of human life. As the Holy Fathers of the Church teach us, Jesus Christ not only reveals God to man; as Man, He reveals man to himself. We must know, adore, and love Jesus; it is not enough merely to know about Our Lord in an intellectual or cognitive sense. Either Jesus is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all...

*2. Personal Holiness - the Greatest Attractant for Evangelisation.* The Holy Fathers of the Church affirm that the greatest means of evangelism is holiness of life. One person sanctified by divine grace and advancing in the way of holiness is more powerful for evangelism than a thousand unconverted or nominal, ambivalent souls. People at large will be attracted to the Church more by the holiness of our lives than by anything else, for personal holiness has an inherent power to attract, convert, and transform: the power is the Holy Ghost, Who makes the Saints His icon, His image. Saint John of Damascus instructs that the Son is the Image of the Father and the Holy Ghost is the Image of the Son. But where or who is the image of the Holy Ghost? It is the Saint, the human being who partakes of the divine nature (2 St Peter 1.4) and is changed from strength to strength and from glory to glory, who bears the image of that invisible Spirit Who ‘goes where He wills’ (St John 3.8). The invisible Spirit is made visible in His Saints.

To escape a corrupt and hedonistic world, the ancient Desert Fathers retreated into the wilderness for the sweet solitude of prayer and communion with God; but the holiness of their lives was so compelling that men and women by the thousands flocked to the desert to be near them and learn Christ from them. We can and should learn from the example of the Fathers. Encouraged by their examples and aided by their prayers, we ought to turn to the Saints and follow the trail of holiness blazed by our forefathers in the Faith. The degree of our

evangelism will be successful only to the degree that we seek to cultivate holiness in our own lives. We sanctify ourselves so that others may be sanctified.

3. *Bible-Centred, Bible-Saturated Religion.* Jesus Christ, the Word of God, lives mystically and salvifically in His written Word. Saint Jerome pronounces, 'Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.' A living Christian witness demands more than a simple profession of faith or regular church attendance; we are called to move from passive observance to full participation in the Christian life. God beckons us to submit our whole selves to the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ and to gauge our lives by the standard of the Gospel, rather than attempting to mould the Gospel to our own limited experience. It is the Christian Faith that should transform us; we should not seek to change the Gospel into a projection of our desires and attitudes, that is, to re-make the Gospel in our own image based on our own experience. We all know painfully well the result of the exchange of the Gospel for subjective or emotional experience, as we have seen its consequences so vividly as of late in mainline ecclesial bodies and in society in general.

We are summoned to be lovers and students of the Holy Scriptures: if we want to know how God works in our own lives, in our relationships with other people, and in the Church and Sacraments, we will be assiduous readers of the Holy Bible and will take its Word into our hearts and lives. If we do not read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Holy Scriptures with the most careful dedication, we shall never grow or mature in our faith, nor shall we become the Christians and Saints God wants us to be. The Bible, in its theological, spiritual, and moral application, should serve as the unique, indispensable, and inexhaustible resource for the faithful Anglican Catholic. Let's go to Bible Study!

4. *The Sacramental System - the Covenantal Means of Grace.* Our Anglican and Catholic Faith teaches us that we are not people of the written Word only; we are united to Our Lord by the Sacraments of the New Testament. The Seven Holy Sacraments of the Catholic Church, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Matrimony, Orders, and Unction, are the direct and most effective means of becoming holy, becoming what God wants us to be. They are given by Our Lord and the Apostles to serve us as covenantal means or channels of grace that assure and guarantee the grace and power of Christ in our lives. We should seek to receive the Holy Sacraments regularly and frequently, with faith, love, and repentance.

If we are to allow ourselves to be more closely conformed to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, and to be empowered to serve as His faithful evangelists and disciples, we should be absolutely unflinching in our attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on every Sunday and great Feasts of the Church, and we should receive the Precious Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion with the greatest fervour. By the Blessed Sacrament, we become one Body with Christ, that He may dwell in us and we in Him. We should also strive to make a consistent and devout use of the Sacrament of Penance. By our sacramental communion with Christ, the life of Our Lord will be actualised in us, and we shall be truly elevated into faithful disciples of the Saviour. A true Christian life is one nourished with the Sacraments, an Altar-centred life in which we live a Eucharistic fellowship - in the deepest communion with our Eucharistic Lord. Genuine evangelism is Baptismal, Confirmational, and Eucharistic evangelism.

5. *Orthodox Liturgical Worship.* 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' The liturgical life of the Church, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, through which the Holy Sacraments are administered and the Divine Office of the Church is offered, anamnetically makes present the Lord Jesus Christ in His saving Person and Work. The liturgy should therefore be celebrated 'in the beauty of holiness,' the *ars celebrandi*, in which the fullness of the Apostolic Tradition is expressed and embodied with all the reverence, transcendence, dignity, and the sense of the numinous that it deserves. The liturgy is not only the work of the People of God; it is the Incarnate Lord Himself present to us in mystery and sign. Only the very highest forms of music, architecture, ceremonial, and Common Prayer are fitting for the celebration of the worship of the Church, elements which unite seamlessly to render unto the Holy Trinity what we call *orthodoxa*, right glory, the right worship of Almighty God. The

Holy Eucharist, the Daily Office, and personal prayer should routinely combine in the Christian life to create a dynamic and graced renovation of the believer. 'It is the Mass that matters!'

6. *Active and Involved Christian Formation.* The administration of the Sacraments must also be accompanied by a living and active presentation of the Gospel message in preaching, teaching, and catechesis: in order for the Sacraments to be fruitful and efficacious, they must be received purposely with faith, hope, and love. To divorce the preaching of the Gospel from the ministration of the Sacraments is to empty the Sacraments of their potential power and transformative energy and to reduce the sacramental life to the mechanical and superstitious. All Churchmen should therefore take the most conscientious care that those who receive the Sacraments be afforded the maximum level and best quality of Christian formation. Especially the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, and Matrimony require that those who sponsor or receive them do so in a committed and devoted way and that those who desire them know the basic truths of the Gospel and manifestly intend to live a Christian life.

7. *'The Obedience of Faith' - Fidelity to Holy Tradition and Avoidance of Private Judgement.* Catholic Christianity is a revealed Religion. Human convention or philosophy has not contrived the Gospel, for the Christian Faith is a divine revelation directly communicated by God. The fullest expression of the Gospel is located in Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, one divine revelation communicated to the Church in two modes but containing the same Rule of Faith. As Saint Basil the Great professes, 'Holy Scripture is fulfilled, clarified, and interpreted by Holy Tradition.' The Anglican axiom is 'the Bible and the primitive Church.' For Anglicans, the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Tradition, and the Holy Church are absolutely inseparable and together transmit the saving Word of God for mankind's salvation. If we are faithfully to live the Gospel and receive it in its entire truth, we must submit all private judgement in matters of doctrine, faith, and morality to the authority of the universal, ancient, and consentient Tradition of the Undivided Church. We are the children of the Church, called to live, worship, work, obey, and pray in the heart of the Church. We are Churchmen, not sectarians. We are called to what Saint Paul characterises as the obedience of faith (Romans 1.5, 16.26).

8. *Faithful Discipleship.* Through Jesus Christ, present in His Word and Holy Sacraments, we are drawn by supernatural grace into a sanctifying and divinising union with Him: justified by faith working in love, we are called to an ever-deepening holiness and equipped by the Holy Ghost for good works in the life of grace. 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Ephesians 2.8-10). In the Church, the School of Sanctity and the Ark of the New Covenant, we should learn to be faithful disciples and to eschew and reject all that is not of God, Who has brought us to the New Life of Christ. Christ's life, death, and resurrection have made us a New Creation.

9. *Personal Evangelism.* The New Testament Church, which is the New Israel, the 'Israel of God' (Galatians 6.16), is 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people' (I St Peter 2.9). In Christ, we are kings and priests unto God and His Father through our Baptism and Confirmation. Therefore, the common priesthood of the baptised shares in Christ's Messianic Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and is given the Great Commission so that all the faithful, the *sancta plebs Dei*, the holy people of God, may be true witnesses of Christ to the whole of creation. We are all to be sent out, 'apostled,' to preach Christ and Him Crucified, and thus we should be formed and readied by the Church to teach the Gospel in word and action. Our determination to welcome others into the Church and to encourage them to follow Jesus Christ, as well as our eagerness clearly to teach the Faith Once Delivered unto the Saints, should be essential components of our Christian witness. Let us perfect the Saints and the work of the ministry, and edify the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4.12).

10. *Unswerving Commitment to the Anglican Tradition.* God has remarkably blessed us and we have a goodly heritage. Our special privilege and responsibility as orthodox Anglicans is to cherish thankfully, preserve unimpaired,

and transmit assertively those tremendous gifts which have been entrusted to us as children of the *Ecclesia Anglicana*. Rigorous commitment to the classical Book of Common Prayer and the Missal, and to the theological, doctrinal, moral, spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral patrimony and ethos of orthodox Catholic Anglicanism should define our mission and our evangelistic efforts. To whom much has been given, much shall be required. Part of our vocation surely lies in our commission boldly to proclaim the Gospel as incarnated and inculturated in our Branch of Christ's Church and to recall our accountability for that rare treasure which has been commended to us. Nothing evangelises like integrity and authenticity. Let us keep the Faith – and pass it on to the world!

If we employ these guideposts, we can be sure that we are on the right track.

### ***The Saint Thomas Alto Appeal and future endeavours***

To this end, we are excited to share news about...

A critical development, and a part of our Domestic Mission Team's plan, our 2023 Lenten Appeal. As you know, this year we have taken a more 'outside the box,' or imaginative, approach to the annual APA Lenten Appeal, as we seek to rejuvenate one of our most promising missions with the sponsorship of a brilliant man who is preparing to be sent immediately to St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Alto, Georgia, upon ordination to the Diaconate. Saint Thomas the Apostle Church will receive the support of our jurisdiction through the funding of Mr. Ian Jarrells, who will serve this promising mission full-time. The exciting news is that we have been able to raise over \$60,000 toward the goal of \$100,000 for a three-year funding programme.

The challenging news is that we still need almost \$40,000 to reach our target. We urge our faithful laity and clergy to be generous as we seek to 'cross the finish line' and create a real and lasting impact for our Church in north Georgia. If one's parish or mission has not yet advertised the Appeal, it is not too late at all – now is the perfect time. If one has not yet contributed to this effort financially, the door is open at this very moment. You can donate directly on our APA website under Donations and select the 2023 APA Lenten Appeal. We do need your help, and we are intensely thankful for your support. Your prayers are profusely appreciated as Ian looks to serve Christ's flock in Alto, Georgia. We are filled with hope for Ian, his wife Joy, and the faithful community of Saint Thomas, as the Lord Jesus continues to build His Church.

In the coming months, there will be a marked shift of focus for the Domestic Missions Team and our domestic appeals, as we seek to look outward and build new mission congregations and ministries. Having accomplished what we believe is practicable for our existing congregations, our Domestic Missions Team work now turns primarily to expansion into new territories and locations with new foundations. Of course, we remain steadfast in our preparedness to assist and support any current parish or mission that requires assistance.

At this time next year, we hope to update you on the formation of two proposed DEUS congregations, the Church of Saint John the Baptist in Lewisburg, West Virginia, and a new fellowship in Aberdeen, North Carolina.

The 2024 APA Lenten Appeal, we are pleased to say, has now already been designated for one of the most encouraging and novel projects in our history, Saint Dunstan's Academy in Nelson County, Virginia. During the Provincial Synod tomorrow, Father Mark Perkins, the newly appointed full-time Chaplain, will update us on the remarkable progress already achieved in this work, the first residential boys' school ever established by Continuing Anglicans for the formation and education of young men in our tradition. Please pray for the burgeoning efforts of Saint Dunstan's Academy.

### ***Our Digital Media Director***

Since early March 2022, Matthew (Stu) Stuart has exercised a brilliant ministry, upgrading Provincial, Diocesan, and 12 parish websites, creating a new APA telephone application, and launching new social media accounts on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. You have surely noticed and have come to appreciate his work on our behalf. That amazing work is now expanding into a whole new range of internet ministry, including podcasting. The APA has taken the lead on internet outreach for the Continuum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, thanks to Stu's indomitable work and enthusiasm, and your support. At the Provincial Synod, Stu will unveil another new feature across our digital resources, a new page for the recitation of the Divine Office from the Book of Common Prayer.

It would be an impossible feat to describe all the work and hours that are being invested in the creation of these avenues of evangelistic proclamation and Christian formation, and I am intensely grateful for Stu's ministry, as I know you are as well. Please thankfully pray for Stu in his work and ministry. We are all delighted with the advances we now behold.

### ***Provincial Synod Presentations***

During the Provincial Synod tomorrow, we will hear particular follow-up presentations on some of the main activities underway in our Province. There are too many to include in one Synod, so specific developments have been selected in order to highlight them and draw them to your attention. Please be sure to join us and attend the presentations at the Provincial Synod!

- + The new Book of Common Prayer Morning and Evening Prayer application.
- + Holy Land Trip, October 2024 – Sondra Colonel – Trip Liaison.
- + New complex, Saint Barnabas Cathedral, Atlanta, Georgia – Father Daniel Trout.
- + Update, Saint Dunstan's Academy, Nelson County, Virginia – Father Mark Perkins.
- + New building, Saint Matthias Church, Dothan, Alabama - Father Steve Miller.
- + New mission, Christ Church, Florence, Kentucky – Father John Longcamp.
- + New building, Saint Patrick's Church, Brevard, NC – Father Nick Henderson.
- + Building addition, St. James on-the-Glebe, Gloucester, Virginia – Father Kevin Fife.
- + Classical School, All Saints Church, Mills River, NC – Father Erich Zwingert.

### ***Concluding remarks***

It would be herculean adequately to thank everyone who has offered so much to Our Blessed Lord to promote His Kingdom in this holy Church and Diocese. If I begin to thank everyone personally, we could be here for many days! So a litany of thanks will not be attempted, to your substantive relief. I shall make the exception here and thank Lisa Ulrich, our Provincial and Diocesan Administrator, without whom I would be totally disorientated. Thank you so very much, Lisa. To all of you - please know how very much I love and appreciate each one of you, and how much I gratefully acknowledge your service and labour unto the Lord. Please remember that the aspiration of my whole life scope is to support you, to guide you, and to serve you – so please never hesitate to contact me at any time with any joy or request or concern. I am here for you. Please pray for me as I always pray for you.

As I conclude, we commend once more our Diocese, our Province, the Anglican Joint Synods, and all of our Christian lives and commission to the prayers of Blessed Mary, the Ever-Virgin Mother of God and our Mother, who says to us... 'Whatsoever Jesus saith unto you, do it.'

God bless you all!

*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*