

1 Please share a vocational and spiritual experience that has influenced your consideration in your call to the office of bishop, and to the Diocese of South Carolina in particular.

I walked into a packed parish hall. People you didn't expect to see around the same table were sitting together. Just before we began, a man approached me. "Are we really going to tell the truth here today?" he asked. "Yes," I responded, "we are."

We spent a full Saturday together in a process of reconciliation. I don't recall a single person leaving early. At the end of the day, the same man who'd approached me earlier returned. "You were right," he said. "I didn't believe you. But we did it. For the first time, we told the truth about the things that have hurt us here."

"You did indeed," I said.

That meeting was the culmination of months grounded in prayer, relationship, and truthfulness. It was part of a larger arc of work, spanning more than a decade, to transform the culture of a diocese marked by chronic tension. What we did across multiple years helped an entire diocese re-focus our attention from grievances toward vision.

As I read your profile, I thought about the many days like that Saturday that comprised the long arc of careful work I did with my bishop in Colorado. Much of my ministry has been focused on building a vision bigger than our divisions. For two decades, I was the primary person working alongside my bishop in Colorado to shift the culture of a diocese away from single-identity politics to our deeper common ground as people of Jesus' resurrection, allowing us to avoid a schism that might otherwise have occurred. I've done similar work in several other dioceses. My most formative spiritual experiences have been at the table where people with longstanding differences have committed to reaching for something deeper. I see Christ in those exchanges. I see the 12 disciples in the upper room, scared, yet at the threshold of a new world. In the midst of such work, I've been drawn to consider a call to the episcopate.

I hear you longing for a bishop who will walk with you into a future that is truly bigger than the divisions of the past. This is the work that makes my heart sing. And I know how to do it.

When I was a child, my father would tell us about his mother's early years in Charleston. I believe God invites us to keep rediscovering parts of our stories that had been for a time lost to us. As I pray about you, I am rediscovering a lost part of my story. I wonder what God will do among you as you welcome back those who have been, for a season, lost from your story. I anticipate an inspiring future as folks you don't usually see around one table gather together again in South Carolina. Should I be called as your bishop, it would be my joy to be at the table with you.

2 Bishops are to carry out the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. What talents and strengths do you bring to the shepherding of the Diocese of South Carolina through the challenges that we are facing:

a during the transition to reconciliation with the returning congregations,

Through years of experience, I've learned that the most important strengths I can bring in times marked by anger and pain are an open heart and a non-anxious presence. Whether I'm working with a vestry, a diocesan gathering, or our clergy, I begin by listening with respect, seeking to understand each person's perspective and interests. Prayer, meditation on scripture, my curiosity, and life-giving interactions with family and close friends all equip me for this work.

I also know how to build a joyful team culture that attracts and invests in talent. I think one of the most valuable assets a diocese can develop is an authentic, vulnerable body of leaders.

Over the course of my ministry – as a rector, as a canon to the ordinary, and in church-wide ministry – I've had to do difficult work, including guiding disciplinary processes, intervening in longstanding conflict, and making unpopular decisions. I have learned not to take other people's anger personally while also attending to it in ways that help the body move forward.

In my work with leaders of dioceses where there's been division or schism, I've become adept at helping people learn how to pivot from a focus on the conflict to a focus on the future. This capacity to pivot will be critically important in your next season.

Taken together, I believe the strengths I would bring as your bishop would prepare me to wed a pastoral sensitivity with a pragmatic, big picture approach grounded in the hope Jesus gives.

b as a result of historical and current issues of inclusion and diversity (age, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality)?

My first jobs were in a nursing home and a mental hospital. Through that work as well as the experiences of family members and close friends, I've developed respect for the courage it takes to face indignities on a daily basis.

Growing up in Mississippi during the Civil Rights era forged in me a lifelong commitment to race justice. I've learned that the journey of justice always begins in my own life.

In Denver, I was one of the founding members of a city-wide group, begun by faith leaders, focused on racial reconciliation and justice. I bring a knowledge of how to do

this work in a way that builds consensus. I also worked to build a strong Latino ministry in Colorado. Our goal was to create a diocese where everyone truly has a place at the table.

Burying parishioners who died of AIDS without family by their side during the 90s showed me the importance of just laws. I saw the pain caused when lifelong partners could not even be by their beloved's bedside as they died. In Colorado, I led diocesan efforts to allow same sex marriage and ordination of partnered gay and lesbian clergy, doing so in a way that built trust with those who disagreed.

When we build trust and we seek to understand the pain of another, we can create inspiring change. If the Spirit draws us together, I will work to respect the dignity of every person whom I serve.

3 Where do you envision the Episcopal Church's ministry during the next decade? What actions have you taken as an active participant in the future of the church and how will that inform your work in the Diocese of South Carolina?

In every age, the Church has had to meet new challenges. We are called now to engage a rapidly changing landscape, one marked by a decreased capacity to engage those with whom we disagree, one where we are both experience unprecedented advances and existential threats, one marked by technology that both gives us increased and decreased capacity at the same time, and one in which our conceptions of how to be the Church are being upended.

It's a season that calls us to have deep theological moorings and a strong appetite for engaging the unknown with the kind of entrepreneurial spirit that led the first followers of Jesus to go beyond their known world to bring his good news.

I think in the next decade we need adaptive leadership, which involves the capacity to spend time in liminal space engaging questions that have no formulaic answers. We need to hear the gospel with fresh ears and regain an ability to communicate it with conviction and clarity. And we need to be much more connected to the world beyond our walls to understand the relevance of the gospel of Jesus in our world to meet the specific challenges of our day.

I am fully engaged in ministry focused on the future of the church. My work as a canon involves guiding change in an exciting partnership between two dioceses who are trying to extend mission and ministry by combining resources. Our teams are experimenting with the kind of creative endeavors that will be essential to the future church—such as local partnerships where clergy are shared and ministry capacities are expanded.

In the other half of my work through the Building Fund, we serve as catalytic partners to bishops and dioceses eager to leverage their property and assets in projects that are

taking them beyond their walls into the commercial and cultural lives of their communities. Working with ecumenical partners and experts in property and finance, we bring assets that amplify and extend their internal capacity.

I recently put together a webinar for a group of bishops and diocesan leaders where priest author Sam Wells argued that our future vitality lies in our getting out of our silos and into partnership with local leaders of commerce and culture in endeavors that bring the gospel into full relief in the heart of our cities and towns.

Through my work, I've learned how to leverage the Church's assets – be they real property, financial resources, or leadership capacities – to make the gospel tangible in our communities.

As your bishop, I would bring this experience and a wide range of connections to support the initiatives of leaders in South Carolina.

The churches that are likely to thrive in the future will be the ones that move into the public square with an entrepreneurial spirit, a willingness to engage commerce and culture, and an understanding of the power of the gospel.

4 How have you built relationships in your ministry and how might you build relationships among the diverse worshiping communities in our diocese?

The beauty of the Body of Christ can be summed up in one word: relationship. Our relationship with Jesus, with one another and with ourselves makes everything we do come to life. The joy we have in building trusted friendships in Christ over decades of faithful ministry, facing times of gladness, of hard work, and of sorrow and hardship demands everything we are. I love being part of what our Presiding Bishop refers to as “the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus movement” through the life of a diocese. I see the partnership between bishop, clergy, and parishioners as a cord where each strand is an integral part. I build relationships around table with people as we work on common efforts. I also build relationships with people by being genuinely curious to learn their stories and understand how each story is woven into the bigger picture of our common life.

I believe a bishop's work necessitates bringing as many perspectives to the table as possible. We can only move at the speed of trust, as one author has said. I understand building relationships to be a daily practice. Relationships require tending over a long arc. When such tending happens, relationships become the engine that powers the mission of the church.

Relationships are nurtured in environments where everyone feels free to speak up without hesitation and be heard and needed. My first step in building such relationships is to show up. My ministry in diocesan leadership has taken me into many congregations over the years. I always enjoy the variety of worship and culture I find in

different worshipping communities. I respect the diversity of local context in worship. And I respect the wisdom and skill of clergy and lay leaders. They are usually the ones who know best what will work in their setting. I would build relationships that begin with respect for the work they have been doing since before I arrived.

As your bishop, I would be present and engaged in the congregations of the diocese. I have seen first hand what happens when bishops enter churches with open hearts, open minds, and humility – rather than from a posture of clinging to positional power. I would enter churches with the intent to listen, to learn, and to build trust. I would avoid coming into the diocese with lots of preconceived ideas about how worship needs to look.

I know from experience that we work best when we seek the right people to do the work they know how to do best and then give them wide berth. I am not a micro manager. Nor do I need to be protected or held on a pedestal. I ground my work in strongly developed relationships. I'm eager to get to work without the trappings that can get in our way in the Church. I understand well the breadth and scope of work required for operating a diocese and initiating and supporting ministry. As your bishop, I would develop a highly relational model with the worshipping communities whom I serve.

5 The larger societal context of health and economic uncertainty, divisiveness and social change leaves many with a sense of pessimism, anxiety and even despair. How have you proclaimed a message of hope during these difficult times? As we struggle with these issues in the world, how have you gotten in the trenches with us and led others to do God's work?

Your framing of this question speaks to the magnitude of the challenges we're facing in one of the most turbulent years we've known. These are days when we all need to take stock, to reflect, and to be willing to learn new ways of seeing.

During the pandemic, our two adult sons have been home with us. Early on, we decided to take each Sunday afternoon to reflect together. Our work has led us to ask beautiful questions, such as, "What habits of heart and mind could begin to shift how we address our present cultural challenges?"

One of the habits I've been working on as a result of these family conversations is the practice of embracing what Buddhists call beginner's mind. Both the pandemic and our reckoning with race require us to let go of what we think we know in order to see with fresh eyes.

As I sat with your question about where I'm in the trenches, I found myself wanting to shift the metaphor. I'm drawn instead to ask, "Where and how do we intervene to end the experience of wartime that has us being 'in the trenches?'" That is, how do we,

together, get out of trenches and to the work of building peaceful, hopeful lives? We are living in collective trauma. What we most long for is to get out of the trenches entirely.

I really believe the first step out of our present trauma is to suspend what we think we know about those whom we perceive as the enemy in what we're experiencing as war. What does the person who is feeling despair need us to see? What does the person who thinks and votes and believes differently than we do need us to hear? The answer is different for each person. For one, it may be the depression that has come from being isolated for too many months. For another, it may be fear of physical harm born of race hatred. For another, it may be fear of losing our collective capacity for public discourse. For yet another, it may be fear of losing tangible assets like homes or jobs.

I'm trying to listen with fresh ears and see with fresh eyes in each setting where I'm drawn into ministry to understand the pain of others. I'm writing a regular blog where I speak to the spiritual issues with which we are grappling. I also have opportunity to do my small part in seeking a way out of the trenches as I work with leaders who are grieving the death of a way of doing church they have held dear but that is not working in this rapidly changing landscape. Sometimes, I get to help them discover new possibilities that emerge as they let go of what they have known.

If we are to transcend our present sense of hopelessness and division, we need to develop habits of mind and heart that strengthen our capacity to engage those who see the world differently than we do.