

A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Skirving

April 23, 2021

To the people of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina,

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

Yesterday morning, it being Earth Day, my morning contemplation focused on the beauty of God's creation and I found myself drawn to the following prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose: in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ([Book of Common Prayer](#), page 827)

In particular, the phrase "the infinite complexity of living creatures" stood out to me. Of late, I have been challenged by the difficulty of saying anything about local or national current events without watching the resulting discourse fall victim to politically partisan rhetoric. We "living creatures" who are human dwell in a deeply complex time, and it has become difficult for many of us to understand or be sympathetic to perspectives besides our own.

It therefore seems to be an appropriate time to share a first glimpse of the logo we will more fully introduce when we launch our diocese's new website. For now, I simply want to point to the bridge featured in the logo. There are many bridges across the waters of our diocese. This image is intended to represent that reality, but also the ministry of reconciliation given to us by God (2 Corinthians 5) and affirmed in our Church's catechism: "The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ" ([BCP](#), p. 855).

As I write today, the people of Elizabeth City are living in turmoil as they seek answers about events of Wednesday morning when Andrew Brown, Jr., an African American man, was killed by police. Let us commit ourselves to pray for the Brown family, for all members of the Pasquotank County Sheriff's office and other police services, for community leaders and for all members of the community. Let us pray that the people of Christ Church, with others of faith, will effectively bear witness to God's love for all in their community, while working together to bring peace and calm, healing and reconciliation.

All of us across the Diocese of East Carolina are called to this work, as we live more fully into the promise of God's kingdom here "on earth as it is in heaven." I give thanks to God for our Diocese's [newly reformed Racial Healing Commission](#) and the ministry they will lead, and for this Easter season's prayerful discernment of mission priorities for the Diocese. All are invited to join in this prayerful process, using the resource titled "[We Will, With God's Help.](#)"

May God's Holy Spirit hold us together when other forces seek to divide us. May that same Spirit lead us in seeking God's justice for all people. And may God's Holy Spirit empower us for the ministry of reconciliation in the name of his risen Son Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

