

## REPORT FROM THE TRUTH TELLING TASK FORCE

This report to the 2023 Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real includes (1) the Charter of our Committee, (2) the preliminary actions of our Committee, and (3) a brief conclusion.

### **1. Truth-Telling Task Force Charter (as of September 2023)**

- a. **Mission** - The Truth-telling task force is established by the Board of Trustees to begin an audit of the historical and current relationships, financial or otherwise, between our diocese and all Indigenous peoples on whose ancestral and territorial homelands its churches and buildings now occupy. The task force is also directed to explore land acknowledgements.
- b. **Background** - In July 2022, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved several resolutions about Truth-telling, reckoning, and healing. In November 2022, our diocesan convention approved a resolution directing the Board of Trustees to establish this task force as a first step in our own healing process.
- c. **Task Force Goals**
  - i. Examine the founding and history of our parishes and missions for documentation of interactions with Indigenous peoples.
  - ii. Examine the history of Indigenous people in this part of California, engaging with Indigenous peoples to bring their perspectives of what has occurred and what continues to be held in memory.
- d. **Task Force Report**
  - i. The task force is directed to report to convention in November 2023. The report should include:
    - ii. Interactions between our diocese, or parishes or missions in our diocese, and the Indigenous peoples whose homelands these entities occupy.
    - iii. Starting with the original parishes of the Diocese of California (1861) from which our diocese was separated, the history will include notations of any financial relationship between our diocese, or parishes or missions, and the Indigenous peoples on whose homelands these entities occupy, as accurately as can be determined.
    - iv. A description of the research undertaken, including conversations and other inputs from representatives of these Indigenous peoples.
    - v. Recommendations for further steps
- e. **Task Force Leadership/Members**
  - i. David Howard-Pitney, Chair (St. Andrew's, Saratoga)
  - ii. Christina Blessing (Santa Clara County)
  - iii. The Rev. Mary B. Blessing (St. Luke's, Hollister)
  - iv. Ann Clarke (St. Dunstan's, Carmel Valley)
  - v. James White Bear Connor (St. Luke's, Hollister)
  - vi. The Rev. Jerry Drino (Santa Clara County)
  - vii. The Rev. Rob Keim (St. Barnabas, Arroyo Grande)
  - viii. Sr. Greta Ronningen (Community of Divine Love, St. Paul's, Cambria)
  - ix. Ethan Dupris (Hollister)
  - x. The Rev. Ian Delinger (St. Stephen's, San Luis Obispo)

2. **Truth Telling Task Force Preliminary Actions** - As of the writing of this report we have been working on this for three months.
- a. **Recorded history** – we are discovering that there is silence, especially going back to when we were the Diocese of California. We would be interested in knowing what are the earliest records of relationships across our Diocese This is our common history. How can they be accessed is a large part of what we have been discovering in 2023.
  - b. **Reconstructing Indigenous history to audit** – We realized that we have to construct a history in order to do an audit. The primary history is that of the individual Indigenous Tribes in our area and their current Federal and State status. In parallel we have begun to construct a diocesan history from seven of our parishes listed below.
  - c. **Reconstructing Church history to audit** – For this audit our church history begins with the arrival of the first Episcopalians in the land that became California. The “official” Episcopal Church was founded in San Francisco in 1851-56 with the Diocese of California which covered all of the lands that were to become the Great State of California. Our current Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real (EDECR) was spun off from the Diocese of California in 1979-80.
  - d. **Parish Audits** – We have started to invite EDECR parishes, especially the oldest dating from 1861 (and continuing into their founding in the 20th Century) to form history research teams to assist the task force in building local histories against which we can do our audit. We have found great parishioner interest in joining these teams especially when set in the context of the Truth-Telling Task Force mandate.
  - e. We have developed a **“Starter Kit”** with key documents, including the Diocese of San Diego’s list of links to the national initiatives. We encourage congregations to research and gather local histories and identify its earliest members and those who were a part of or can point to family roots going back into the 1800s in their area.
  - f. **Initial parishes** to research
    - i. Calvary, Santa Cruz - 1863
    - ii. Holy Family (including St. Philips First Nations Ministry - 1989), San Jose -
    - iii. St. Barnabas, Arroyo Grande – 1901
    - iv. St. Dunstan’s, Carmel Valley -- 1955
    - v. St. James, Monterey - 1890
    - vi. St. Luke’s, Hollister - 1897
    - vii. St. Stephens, San Luis Obispo - 1867
    - viii. Trinity Cathedral, San Jose - 1861
3. **Conclusion** – We thank the diocesan convention for supporting this important work as we continue to understand our churches’ part in the history of this part of the world. We recommend the continuation of this work into 2024, and beyond. To that end we have submitted a Convention Resolution to continue this committee.

This work of the Truth-Telling Task Force is specially targeted at our history with Indigenous peoples, but we acknowledge there is other work to do in the future with other groups.