



**DIOCESE of
CHRIST our HOPE**

Statement from The Rev. Canon Alan Hawkins

Finalist for the office of Bishop Coadjutor
Diocese of Christ our Hope

What has formed you as a person?

There are seven influential and formative dimensions of my life. First, I was born in the Hawkins family in 1970. My parents, who are still alive, have shaped me in so many ways. I am deeply grateful to them for all they have done for me and my family. My hometown was a small farming community in north-central Oklahoma. It was primarily a Baptist and Lutheran community where church attendance was socially expected. In my early years, I attended a Lutheran Church with a parochial school. By late elementary school I had dropped out of church school but never forgot my childhood worldview of faith. Second, I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s. I think this cultural period has profoundly shaped the world. It certainly shaped me. The push of the 1980s was “more” and “prosperity.” Third, I met Jesus Christ as my personal savior and Lord in 1989 over Christmas break. This event changed everything for me. Fourth, I have been formed by marriage to Angela Kaye Hawkins (AK). I have learned more about grace and truth by being in this relationship with AK as well as being continually shaped by it. Fifth, the Church, especially her ministries and mission, has also formed me. Sixth, the responsibility of parenting has helped me see the love of God in ways I could never understand. Seventh, I have been influenced by active saints in my life and historic saints from the past. The active saints have been my friends, my Anam Caras, which is a community of brothers who challenge and encourage one another. The historic saints are those whose lives, in all their ups and downs, have led me to understand them better and emulate them. I have grown significantly by learning of the courage of Athanasius, the graciousness of John Stott, the brilliance of Martyn-Lloyd Jones, and the apologetics of Cornelius Van Til.

What has formed you as a priest?

I was formed, in my younger years, by my experience in CRU. I learned to seek God, to study his word, to initiate with others in a discipleship context, and to share my faith through this 'para-church' experience. Another deep influence on my life has been the next generation ministries where I grew in Christian leadership and shepherding others. My seminary experience, where I learned the depth of my faith, was such a positive time. I encountered not only great teachers and authors but also reading *The Reformed Pastor* changed my direction completely. This work, written in the 17th century, has had a profound influence on how I live out my philosophy of ministry as a Parish priest. Additionally, a profound experience for me was planting churches. I learned the balance of sacraments and liturgy at the intersection of gospel mission. The Anglican way of life, church, and ministry has also shaped me. By serving and receiving regular communion, practicing a devotional life based upon the daily office, submitting to the three-fold order of ministry, being connected to the global and historic church, living on a calendar not driven by the culture, and walking in a heritage of the people of God are the habits that have brought maturity to my life in Christ. I have also been formed deeply by staying in Greensboro as a priest for these past 15 years. Learning to stay in one place and grow deep roots has helped me mature as a pastor. I am a better shepherd because of Anne and Rosie Gant and her late husband Roger, Ashley and Kearns Davis, David and Lee Williams, Doug and Sarah West, Eloise and Logan Porter, Lynne and Larry Bost, the late Marilyn Thebeau, Jeff and Becca Whitworth, Jim and Alice Wolfe, and Glenn and Robin Wise. These dear friends have walked alongside me in leadership, believed in our common vision, given deeply for the work of COTR, and taught me that being a local priest is the greatest privilege and highest calling of my life for ministry. I have also been impacted positively by the camaraderie and partnership of Drew and Natalie Hill as well as the faithfulness of the people of Church of the Redeemer. My dear friends, Scott Vosburgh and Canon Dan Alger, have helped me learn to trust others with my heart and experience deep friendships with true brothers.

What is your vision for the diocese?

Since I have participated in the diocese from its inception, I have wholeheartedly supported its mission. I have truly been grateful for the leadership of Bishop Steve and Sally Breedlove. Our diocese has had an incredibly strong mission impulse. The longer question is “where” are we going? This is vision. God has put together this diocese and its leadership to do something very special. I think our scope is perceived as too small. I prayerfully believe that God is calling us to dream bigger. Our diocese sits on a footprint with one-fourth of all the people who call themselves Americans. And of these nearly 80 million men, women, and children, a majority of them are not connected to the Christian faith in a meaningful way. Our vision is to transform our field (1 Cor. 3:9) economically, spiritually, and socially with the Gospel. This goal would mean planting many more churches and building new networks of leadership and collaboration. And, I really believe, our life as a diocese will continue contributing meaningfully to a healthy and vibrant Anglican Church in North America.

What are the challenges and opportunities for your diocese?

We face serious challenges. Existentialism, economic inequality, technology, and the onslaught of secularism seem to be some major challenges. These challenges have accentuated the reality that the church’s dominant force on American society has now moved to the back seat of cultural leadership. We live in the full-blown Post-Christian age at the time in human history when all of these factors are colliding. Though our current cultural situation seems daunting, the opportunities are amazing. These seven opportunities, that I see, are not arranged in order of importance but alphabetically.

[1] Contagious Christianity: My favorite picture of the church comes from Acts 2:42-47 with its devotion, experience of the power of God, generosity, irresistible community, and growth. This verse was central to the founding of Church of the Redeemer. I think for the church to operate in this new cultural reality, she will have to bear a significant contrast between light and darkness. She will have to look more like what we see in this passage.

[2] Depth of Deaneries: A year ago, I collaborated with Rev. Aubrey Spears and other diocesan leaders to envision the “deanery” system for Christ Our Hope. This move was birthed out of the belief that our diocese needed to grow smaller, more intimate and proximate in partnership, in order to grow larger -- reach more people and plant more churches. While our diocese will and could grow bigger from a deep mission commitment, we also need our diocese to have greater places of connection and relationships. I am very excited to get to collaborate more with some of the leaders of our area and especially the lay leadership.

[3] Diversity of Leadership: I will strongly emphasize the growth of women in leadership roles and ministry in compliance with our diocesan vision (c.f. [Ministry of Saints, Holy Orders, and the Ministry of Women in DCH on our diocesan website](#)). From the early days of COTR, we have modeled both male and female voices preaching, teaching, leading, and serving. Our ACNA bishops admitted several years ago that they had failed to take seriously the role and the ministry of women in the church. In addition to the growth of women’s leadership, our diocese should increasingly reflect the great Telos of the church that we are from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. I have been tasked with serving Bishop Adam Andudu in developing the *Every Tribe and Nation Initiative* (ETNI) in our diocese. Our hope and desire would be to see the Diocese of Christ Our Hope look more and more like the vision we see in Revelation 5:9.

[4] Greater Theological Training, Catechesis, and Christian Formation: I think the pace and complexity of our lives results in less discretionary time. In 1960, twenty-five percent of American households were dual-income. Today, it is 65%. This means the average church-involved person has less time for activities. Nevertheless, we are going to have to assist our members to out-think our culture, out-love our culture, and out-live our culture in order to win people to Christ.

My doctoral degree is on Catechesis, and I am convinced our churches are going to need to grow in an understanding of Catechetical processes and thinking in order to evangelize and disciple effectively going forward. We must be focused and thoughtful about the lack of time in our culture.

[5] More Assisting Episcopal Ministry: I think it will take *more* episcopal leaders to serve this growing diocese. While this is a divergent trend from where ACNA has stood, I believe it will become increasingly tenuous for one or two bishops to serve a growing group of churches. My expectation for more of these assisting bishops is that they are stable, exemplary, and mature rector with a demonstrated track record of great leadership who can help give excellent leadership to a major city area.

[6] Next Generation Ministry: As a Gen-Xer, we sit between the two largest generations in American history: Boomers and Millennials. Today, college students and younger teens, represent an emerging force in American culture: The Generation Z. This new Generation will be quite different from the Millennials, who are driving more and more leadership in our national systems. Gen Z will be the most unchurched generation in hundreds of years in American history. Our diocese will need to redouble our efforts to catechesis and family ministry to reach this generation. All my children are Gen Z, and I have a very sober, and even encouraging, understanding of this generation and what they will bring to the table of church leadership in the next 20 years.

[7] Planting More Churches: Our diocese is too small. It is too small to sustain the kinds of church planting systems, Anglican formation works, and the financial wherewithal to build “prevailing churches.” Planting more churches will make our diocese larger and facilitate more mission and growth, which will reach more people.

I fully believe that focused and committed Church Planting makes our diocese stronger and bigger for all the Lord is calling us to do. I also wholeheartedly trust that God wants to use this diocese to see many more men, women, and children to come to know, love, and worship Jesus Christ. We will need to plant more churches and find better ways to present the gospel and see our churches grow by conversion.

Given who you are, what difference would you make in the diocese?

I am certainly very aware of the requirements of Episcopal Ministry. I am also equally aware of my limitations and weaknesses. My exposure to all the bishops of the ACNA and their particular challenges has reinforced for me that the office of overseer is a 'noble task' (1 Timothy 3), but also a very challenging one. Angela Kaye and I feel that we are prayerfully ready for this process regardless of the outcome. We also believe that Church of the Redeemer and the team is also ready for this process. There are five 'differences' that I would bring into my potential role as a diocesan bishop.

First, there is already a tremendous support team around me. I have the most amazing spouse, who loves Jesus and the church. Being married to AK has helped me not only become a better person, but also a better leader. She is my biggest cheerleader and my greatest critic. Her loyalty and devotion has taught me more about resilience than any other teacher in my life. I also have a great group of friends. And finally, I really love the members of our Diocesan staff and leadership. This is just a wonderful diocese to serve as a priest, much less as a bishop. Many of us have enjoyed years of friendship and collaboration.

Second, I thrive in the Apostolic dimension of leadership. There is a great deal of discussion about the nature of the office of Bishop. I certainly resonate that a bishop is the inheritor of apostolic authority. The Apostles expanded the gospel. They broke new territory. They preached in places where the gospel didn't exist. For years, I have always been impressed by the Apostle Paul, who writes, "Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern

for all the churches.” I love the different churches and leaders of this diocese. It is so humbling to see how our clergy and laity labor faithfully to see the gospel go forward. It has been a joy as Canon Missioner to serve many of these places.

Third, I build teams and bring people into collaboration. My style of leadership is decisive and directional, yet, I welcome other leaders and voices. In fact, I rejoice when other leaders shine. By nature, I don’t want or need the ‘limelight’ -- I gladly want to see others thrive and grow.

Fourth, I am firm at the core and flexible at the edges. I have convictions, opinions, and persuasions. While I hold tight to what I believe, I really enjoy working with all kinds of people. In my opinion, good leadership is the ability to hear differing voices, styles, and strategies while creating a forward trajectory.

Fifth, I have worked for years in National and International leadership. I have served as the National Director of Church Planting, the Director of Development for ACNA, the Canon Missioner of Christ our Hope, the Chief Operating Officer of ACNA, and the Network Director for Church Planting for GAFCON. These roles have exposed me to leaders, to experiences, and to learning that has developed my understanding of the church and ministry. I am indeed very thankful to have these kinds of experiences, which have helped me become prepared for the possibility of serving this diocese with its systems, complexity, geography, and international relationships.