



**Report to the 2017 Synod of the Diocese of Christ our Hope, ACNA**  
**The Rt. Rev. Dr. Steven A. Breedlove**  
**Bishop Ordinary**

Solomon teaches, “Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3) If I could choose a single verse to describe the past year in the life of the Diocese of Christ our Hope, this would tell the tale. 2017 has not been a year of grand, new vision and change: it has been a year in which God has enabled us to walk in what we are already committed to doing. But in the process, surprising and encouraging dimensions of the “big picture,” i.e., the plans, of our Diocese have come into focus.

The staff of our Diocese has continued to serve faithfully, and increasingly effectively, in their respective ministries. Leadership development, pastoral care, church planter training and coaching, operational strength and clarity, ordination support, and communications have all grown stronger and more effective. Thanks be to God for Canons Art Going, David Hyman and Alan Hawkins; for the operations team of Director Ben Bowman, Treasurer Lee Hilts, Admin Assistant Nina Jass, Events Manager Buddy Hocutt, and Communications Associate Kate Breedlove. Thanks to the whole team, and especially Alan’s leadership, our three Regional Retreats reached new levels of effective work and fellowship. With David’s vision, we added three Clergy Day retreats, much-needed oases of encouragement. Ben’s organizational gifts have dramatically improved all operational systems and meetings. A new-look AnchorLines has begun to tell the stories of God’s work in our Diocese more powerfully. With Art, Ben, and David’s faithful work with ordinands, Bp Quigg and I have been privileged to ordain eight new clergy. David has expanded and strengthened the prayer ministry teams. I am deeply grateful for our volunteer staff, Lee Hilts (Treasurer) and Jeff Weber (Chancellor). These men bring incredible passion and skill to their efforts.

I cannot say enough about the work of the Diocesan Council. We meet monthly, and each person on this dedicated team puts in dozens of hours to fulfill their ministry charge. It is a joy to work with enthusiastic and skilled people, bringing our dream of lay-and-clergy collaborative oversight to maturity. The fruit of that labor is seen in the significantly expanded mission and church planting budget for 2018. More than the money invested, the Council has taken our Ministry Partnership application, reporting, and accountability processes to a level which insures we are doing better work than ever in Gospel expansion.

With such a great team hitting stride, I have great support and help in focusing on my calling as bishop. I thank God that I am able to serve churches, clergy, and lay leaders weekend after weekend. Each visit holds the excitement of new challenges, good work, deeper friendships, and evidence of the work of the Spirit of God. I wish you could eavesdrop on some of the incredible spiritual and strategic conversations I’ve had with church staffs and vestries. I’d love for you to be standing there when I hear the faith journeys and spiritual aspirations of confirmands who have been well-disciplined by clergy. Time with a newly ordained clergy and spouses, praying together, is awesome.



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It's been a particular joy to be on the field in places where new churches are getting started – Buffalo, Charleston and Parkersburg, WV, and Crozet and Richmond, VA, and with new morning congregations in Boston (Church of the Cross) and Washington (Church of the Advent). Tremendous Gospel dynamic in each place! I look forward to visiting our new plant in Wilmington, NC, soon. We've been contacted by (and are in conversation with) planting groups, and potential eager young planters, in Canton, OH and New York City. Church planting curacies are thriving at Church of the Rez (DC), Apostles-Raleigh, Christ Church – Winston-Salem, Incarnation (Harrisonburg), Church of the Holy Spirit (Roanoke), and Church of the Cross (Boston).

As I review all of this “everyday activity” of our life and ministry together with you, I want to highlight what I hinted at in the opening paragraph. In the everyday work of our Diocese, the Lord is establishing a clear path – a plan – for the distinctions of the Diocese of Christ our Hope. By God's grace, we are developing strong systems, resources, and leadership for three areas of catalytic growth: church planting, comprehensive leadership development, and proactive collaboration within the ACNA. More and more, it is apparent that “this is who we are.” Let me list some elements of each of those identity-level dimensions of our Diocese.

**Church Planting and Local Mission:**

- Multi-instrument assessment of all ordinands, and especially those who want to plant churches, to determine strengths and weaknesses for church planting, and to shape each potential planters' training, coaching, and placement.
- Highly collaborative work with church-planting curacies and potential launch teams over the course of placing and supporting planters and plants.
- The development of a diocesan Church Planters Boot Camp in 2018.
- Personal coaching for each planter; active support from our entire team for planters and launch teams.
- A consistent commitment to invest over 50% of our total budget in planting AND an additional 10+% in leaders and systems to continue to coach and train planters.
- Strategic support, networking, and resourcing for creative local Gospel mission.

**Comprehensive Leadership Development:**

- A determination to ground leadership development in thoughtful, effective catechesis and discipleship ministry in every church in the Diocese: discipling ministries that bring the highest-quality biblical training possible to children, youth, college and grad students, adults, and families.
- Expanding children-and-youth ministry networks, resources, and support systems; more active shared-staff partnerships with Young Life.
- Growing partnerships with campus ministries in churches that serve university cities.
- More Fellows Programs for young professionals.



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- A growing conversation, strategy, and mobilization for systematic, mentoring and training for ordinands and young clergy that includes instruction in Anglican theology and liturgy and healthy Anglican spiritual formation.

Collaboration

- Persistent commitment to collaborate in mission, church planting, and leadership development with overlapping ACNA Dioceses.
- Persistent commitment to collaborate in leadership development with key theological institutions in our geography.
- Continuing collaboration and partnership with parishes, dioceses, and the Anglican Church of Rwanda, our spiritual parents.

Finally, I want to share with you briefly the vision that the Lord has laid on my heart for the next season of our ministry and mission in Christ our Hope: “7.7.7.n.7.”

- 7 new church plants currently growing
- 7 church planting curacies actively training planters → 7 church plants in the next 7 years
- 7 new plants emerging in the next 4-7 years from prayers and stirrings “in the field”
- “n7,” i.e., 7 years, 21 new churches in the Diocese of Christ our Hope.

I’ve been careful to identify actual plants, curacies, mother-daughter probabilities, and groups we’re praying and talking with to come to the number of 21. Most of our team believes that this number is low. But as Sally and I pray ahead for our ministry in the next few years, “7.7.7.n.7.” brings a sense of peace and hope in us as we look ahead.

More about “7.7.7.n.7.” to come . . .

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your prayers and encouragement to Sally and I. This has been a challenging season, dealing with death and sickness in our close family, medical crises in our lives, and the demands of a large family of five married children and 12 grandchildren (age 11 and under). We need the Lord’s protection and strength, and we need your prayers. God willing, we will be taking a 3+ month sabbatical beginning in late May 2018, our first ever. We would be grateful for prayers that this time will be preserved free of crisis or serious interruption, and that it will prove extremely fruitful for our spiritual lives and minds, and very restorative in soul and body.

We thank God for the Church, who is our family, the grace in which we all live and move, and the Triune God who is the source of all that matters and lasts in life.

We love you in the Lord,

Bishop Steve and Sally Breedlove