

Episcopal Diocese of Maine Consecrates New Bishop

[June 22, 2019] Portland, ME – The Rt. Rev. Thomas James Brown was ordained and consecrated the tenth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine today in a ceremony witnessed by more than 900 people at St. Luke’s Cathedral.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, was the chief consecrator along with six other bishops from across the church including Jim Hazelwood, Bishop of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bishop Curry is the American preacher who delivered a rousing sermon at Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s wedding and recently presided over the funeral of President George H. W. Bush.



Bishop Thomas James Brown

In all 27 Episcopal bishops, along with more than 100 clergy from Maine, participated in the two-hour service which serves as a celebration for the whole church. Bishops from eight of the denomination’s nine geographical provinces were on hand to celebrate the new ministry. Each of the six diocesan bishops from Province I, which includes Maine, were in attendance.

Brown said, “The Episcopal Church in New England offers a closeness that is partly about geography and partly about culture that the church outside of New England doesn’t always have. I am especially grateful to be welcomed by loving and wise bishops in New England.”

The first woman ordained a bishop, and who is also an African American, Bishop Barbara C. Harris, was on hand to witness another first. Brown is the first openly gay, married man to be elected to the office of bishop in Maine. Retired Diocese of New Hampshire bishop, Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop, was in Maine on Saturday to wish Brown well. The new bishop says he “stands on the shoulders of many other LGBTQ priests,” and stated, “what the church in Maine is doing today is also every bit about them.”

Brown is the chair of the Church Pension Group, Inc. which provides retirement, health, life insurance, and related benefits for its clergy and lay employees. Bishops in the Episcopal Church often serve the wider church in many different ways. Brown said that he is excited to continue the tradition of service and leadership that both of his immediate predecessors offered the church. In fact, he commented, it is those leadership opportunities that “remind me that it’s all about serving others.”

The family of the Bishop and his husband, Tom Mousin arrived in Maine from all over the country to witness the joyful occasion. The couple’s fifteen year-old nephew, Andachew Mousin, served as an acolyte in today’s service. Seminary classmates, mentors, former parishioners from Massachusetts and Vermont joined hundreds of people from Maine congregations at St. Luke’s Cathedral to witness their son, brother, uncle, friend, and priest as the laying on of hands by the bishops continued the tradition of Apostolic succession.

The guest preacher was the Rev. Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad, the Joe R. Engle Professor Emeritus of Preaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and a friend of the bishop’s family. She is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Reverend Lundblad spoke of the many small congregations in Maine and how the Spirit is not geographically limited. She mentioned how some parishes may be one of the primary social service agencies in a town or village.

Lundblad went on to talk about how some people feel “it’s not safe to advocate for poor people if it means raising taxes. Not safe to challenge the racism that shapes our nation and some of our churches. Not safe to stand with those seeking asylum at our southern borders. Not safe to care for creation more than we care for profits”. Lundblad challenged the witnesses to this new ministry in Maine to “follow the Spirit to the State House as well as into the sanctuary”.

The new bishop is both humbled and excited to be asked to serve a Maine-wide denomination that has proudly proclaimed the good news of Christ since 1820. Looking forward, as the church plans to celebrate 200 years of service next year, there will be the opportunity to honor the past but more importantly, to plan for the future. A future that this church of ours is “open to all”.

Brown, originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, relishes the idea of serving in Maine, including the many parts that might feel a lot like home. Before his election, Brown trained at parishes in Menlo Park, CA; Traverse City, MI; and San Francisco, CA. Brown reflected, “These chapters of my life – from college until ordination – stand out for their significance in my growing relationship with Jesus Christ, a joyous journey that continues day-by-day.” The priests from both California churches, and his sponsoring priest from Michigan, were in attendance today, along with scores of other cherished friends and mentors.

In 2000 Brown was called to be the rector of St. Michael’s Episcopal Church in Brattleboro, VT, and most recently, the parish of the Epiphany in Winchester, MA. Today’s service was live streamed and parishes all across Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont hosted watch parties to celebrate with their priest and friend.

The new Bishop will be traveling to Waterville on Sunday, his first full day on the job. He will celebrate the Eucharist with the people of St. Mark’s. Maine’s eighth bishop, Chilton Knudsen will be the guest preacher at St. Luke’s Cathedral in Portland while the Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, will preach at an ecumenical service at the Temple in Ocean Park.

A reception followed the service on the lawn of St. Luke’s Cathedral. The Episcopal Diocese of Maine is comprised of more than 10,000 people in 59 churches and ministries across Maine.

Click [here](#) for Bishop Brown’s bio and related information.

Click [here](#) for Presiding Bishop Curry’s bio and related information.

Click [here](#) for more about the Diocese of Maine.

Click [here](#) for more about the Episcopal Church.

For more information contact:

John Hennessy
Communications Director
Episcopal Diocese of Maine
jhennessy@episcopalmaine.org
207400-6619

