



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
1017 E. ROBINSON ST., ORLANDO, FL 32801 | 407-423-3567
www.cfdioocese.org

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Erik Guzman, Director of Communications

Phone: 407-719-1981

Email: eguzman@cfdioocese.org

Bishop-elect for 15 Central Florida Counties to be Consecrated by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, Highlights Safe Church Initiatives

(Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida) The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida received notification March 1 from Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael B. Curry that Bishop-elect Dr. Justin S. Holcomb, 49, has received the required majority of consents in the process required by The Episcopal Church.

In giving consent to Holcomb's ordination and consecration, standing committees and bishops exercising jurisdiction in The Episcopal Church attested to "knowing of no impediment on account of which" he ought not to be ordained as bishop, and that his election was conducted in accordance with its ecclesiastical laws, known as canons.

Holcomb's consecration, to which all are welcome, is set for June 10, 2023, at 11 a.m. at Calvary Orlando, Winter Park, Florida. It will be led by [Presiding Bishop Curry](#), chief pastor and leader of The Episcopal Church, whom many consider one of the most dynamic preachers of our time.



Bishop Gregory O. Brewer (L) prays as Bishop-elect Dr. Justin S. Holcomb (R) delivers the blessing at the Special Electing Convention to elect the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Central Florida. | Photo: Jhon Franco Gamboa Vargas

Upon receiving notification of consents, Holcomb noted his priorities for the diocese, which include a long-held focus for him and his wife, Lindsey: preventing, recognizing and responding to abuse.

"It is heartbreaking that some church leaders, from various denominations, respond to survivors of abuse with platitudes, suspicious questions, shallow theology or blame.

Additionally, we have heard too many stories of churches covering up abuse," Holcomb said. "In contrast to this, as the chief pastor of the diocese, one of my emphases will be on safe

church initiatives. The prevalence of abuse is staggering, and the only thing more staggering is

the acute damage done to survivors. We have the privilege of offering survivors gospel-based hope, help and healing. In addition to responding to survivors in ways that are compassionate, practical and informed, we also want to promote safeguarding initiatives to prevent abuse in our churches and communities.”

Holcomb, who has served the diocese as canon for vocations since 2013, was elected as the diocese’s fifth bishop on Jan. 14. The election came on the first ballot out of a slate of three nominees at a Special Electing Convention held at Trinity Preparatory School, Winter Park. He received 63 % of votes cast among laity and 60% of votes cast among clergy. He will succeed the Rt. Rev. Gregory O. Brewer, who has served as diocesan bishop since 2011 and announced his mandatory retirement last year.

“Many throughout the diocese have prayed and worked fervently to ensure this election was conducted with integrity and transparency,” said the Rev. Jonathan French, president of the Diocese of Central Florida Standing Committee. “Now that this process is complete, we look forward to many years of flourishing under Bishop-elect Justin’s leadership.”

The bishop-elect will lead a diocese that spans 15 counties and has become known throughout the Central Florida area for its efforts to address food inequality in the wake of the pandemic along with the hurricanes and resultant influx of Puerto Rican nationals that have impacted the area over the past few years.

“An important characteristic of being Episcopalians is the way parishes relate to their surrounding areas,” Holcomb said. “Parishes can be significantly involved in ministries that respond to particular needs and opportunities that emerge in our neighborhoods and regions. Civic-minded, social mercy ministries are common in the Anglican tradition, and I will continue to support them enthusiastically throughout the diocese and beyond.”

Ordained as a priest on May 28, 2006, Holcomb has also taught theology and apologetics at various seminaries for 22 years and has written or edited 20 books. Prior to his current position, he was a professor at the University of Virginia, served as a parish priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and was an executive director of an interdenominational ministry. He earned his Ph.D. in theological studies from Emory University and has both a Master of Arts in theological studies and a Master of Arts in Christian thought from Reformed Theological Seminary as well as a bachelor’s in biblical studies from Southeastern University. He and his wife have two daughters, Sophia and Zoe.

Holcomb pointed to an additional priority in his coming leadership of the diocese’s churches, clergy and community at large. “For us to succeed in the ministries to which the Lord has called us as a diocese, we need healthy and supported clergy and empowered lay leaders,” he said. “That is my priority so that we are equipped to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to each other and to our neighbors, both for those who are church-ed, and especially for those who are unchurched or dechurched.”

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The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida is comprised of over 30,000 people worshipping in 81 congregations across 15 counties in Central Florida. It stretches from Crystal River, Ocala and Ormond Beach in the north to Port St. Lucie, Okeechobee and Lake Placid in the south, with Orlando as its major metropolitan center. It includes the horse country of Ocala, over 150 miles of Atlantic beaches and the Space Coast as well as rural citrus and cattle country. The diocese has dozens of schools, Camp Wingmann, Canterbury Conference Center and the Institute for Christian Studies.