

The Ecumenical Catholic Communion

Office of the Presiding Bishop

The Most Reverend Peter E. Hickman
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Greetings to All the Sisters, brothers, and Friends of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion!

I am pleased to announce that on February 4 at 5:00 PM at Saint Matthew Ecumenical Catholic Church we will be celebrating the ordination of our beloved sisters, **Mandy Bennett** and **Nancy Sladak**, to the order of the diaconate. You are most welcome to attend as your presence would only add to the joy of this event and would be a great sign of solidarity to everyone present. A reception is to follow in the parish hall. Please remember both Nancy and Mandy in your prayers especially in your celebration of this Sunday's eucharistic liturgy.

We are planning the formation of a new ECC parish community in Claremont, CA later this year. **Mandy Bennett** will serve as pastor. This will occur soon after she is ordained priest which will probably take place sometime after Easter. She will be assisted by **Michael Hoopes** who will be graduating from Claremont School of Theology later this year. Mandy taught church history at the Claremont School of Theology and the prospective ECC parish in Claremont will focus on reaching out to the many college students who live in that city.

Nancy Sladak will be assisting the **Rev. Martha Rogers** as a deacon at **Saint Junia House** in Anaheim, CA as well as serving at **Saint Matthew Church** in Orange, CA. Nancy is currently serving the ECC as the coordinator for the upcoming **Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion** which will be convened in Orange, CA on October 23-25 of this year. Delegates from ECC communities throughout the world will be attending the Synod. Each member faith community of the ECC will have official delegations present for voting purposes but the Holy Synod is open to all who would like to attend as non-voting observers. During the Synod the three branches of our governing body will be in session: the House of Laity (HOL), the House of Pastors (HOP) and the Episcopal Council. Various workshops of interest will also be offered by some of our leading teachers on topics ranging from theological and ethical issues to practical ministry, spirituality, and liturgical matters. The synod experience will also be enriched through times of celebration in eucharistic and prayer liturgies throughout the three day Synod.

The **Rev. Janine Stock** will be returning from Argentina where she has been meeting with the leaders of another independent Catholic jurisdiction who has expressed interest in forming a relationship with the ECC. They have been officially invited to attend the upcoming ECC Synod in Orange, CA. Another group in the Philippines is also being

officially invited to attend as well. The ECC European Mission continues to expand as the faith communities in Belgium, Poland, Austria, and Lithuania are being joined by a community in the Netherlands. Interest in the ECC is now being expressed by people in France, Croatia, Serbia, and Germany. I am very grateful to all those within the ECC of America who continue to support our international outreach through their ongoing prayers and past financial support.

It was announced in an earlier communication that my office has designated the formation another ECC Region in the USA called the **Great Lakes Region** which includes the states of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Kentucky. **Bishop Rafe Adams** has been appointed suffragan for this newly formed region. A region is an interim arrangement where a given geographical area is administered directly through the **Office of the Presiding Bishop** by means of an appointed vicar (priest) or bishop (suffragan) until which time a diocese (local church) is formed around a duly elected bishop.

[A diocese may not extend beyond the borders of a given state.](#) However, a diocesan bishop may be appointed by the presiding bishop to serve a mission or region beyond the diocese in which that bishop is ordinary. For example, **Bishop Steve Roszczewski** was duly elected by the ECC people of the State of Florida to be the diocesan bishop (ordinary) of their newly formed diocese which was affirmed by the ECC Synod in 2010. But I have also appointed Bishop Steve to be my suffragan for the Southeast USA outside of the Diocese of Florida. I have also appointed him to serve the ECC Mission in Austria. Again, all ECC Regions are administered through the Office of the Presiding Bishop by means of an appointed vicar or suffragan. The Presiding Bishop is the Ordinary who provides ministerial faculties for all ECC ministers who are not already members of a diocese of the ECC.

It is my hope that in the coming four years that many more dioceses of the ECC will be formed in order that leadership within our beloved Communion would not become overly centralized. The formation of dioceses (local Churches) in the ECC will ensure that the voice of the laity and clergy will be maximized in the governance of the Communion and that synodal principles of collegiality and self-determination of local churches will be fully realized. This synodal practice is dramatically different than that of the Roman Church in which every diocese, every cleric, and every lay member is under the direct jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome who, as of Vatican I (1869), has been given universal primacy over the entire Roman Catholic Church. When a state has three or more ECC faith Communities then those same communities may elect a candidate to be presented as their local bishop for ordination and to organize a local diocese to be presented for affirmation during a Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. I believe that there is one state, Colorado, in which this could happen anytime soon given that they already have four well established faith communities with the possibility that three more could be added before the end of this year. I also believe that the ECC people of the States of Arizona and Washington may likely be in a position to form their own dioceses within the next four years.

Therefore, my sisters and brothers, as we look to the unfolding of this new year of 2012, let us continue the work that has been set before us by the Spirit so that we may continue to build up one another through our ever increasing faith in God, through our enduring hope in Christ Jesus, and through the endless love that has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit!

With grateful love,

+Peter Elder Hickman
Presiding Bishop
Ecumenical Catholic Communion