

# Walking A New Path of Emergence

By *The Rev. Cornelia Eaton*

Recently, I walked the Animas River trail in Farmington, NM, which is adorned with cottonwood trees and sounds of rushing melodies of waters flowing with content. The elder cottonwoods stand strong and beautiful on both sides of the trail and their branches hover above, providing shade, wonder, and new discoveries. I began my walk quickly but slowed down when I saw a yellow leaf that slowly glided her way down and gently landed in front of my path. That solitary leaf made me aware that the change of season is approaching, and the beauty of autumn leaves will soon surround us.

A change of season in the Episcopal Church in Navajoland is also approaching. We are in a time where we are changing our status as an Area Mission to a Missionary Diocese. What does this mean for Navajoland-Diné Be Keyah?

The people of Diné Be Keyah are coming together in beauty, hope, and Ké (Relationship) to discern (Nitsahakees) and listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to God's people in Diné be Kéyah as we walk the next steps of emergence as a Missionary Diocese. One of those steps is weaving a new mission statement focusing on



*Rev. Cornelia Eaton anoints passersby with ashes along the gently flowing river, where its crisp, muted blue waters reflect the soft light of the day. Surrounded by early growth and the soothing sounds of nature, this serene backdrop enhances the spiritual significance of Ash Wednesday, inviting all who come by to pause, reflect, and embrace the moment.*

identity- who are we? In preparation for this, listening sessions and workshops began in the Spring of 2024 with visits to the three missions of Navajoland. Updates on the progress were offered at our Convocation in June by Canon Lee Curtis and Rev. Michael Drinkwater, who are facilitating the process. Many themes have come from this work. However, we have yet to align these themes with God's vision for us in the season of harvesting and the sacred time of the blessing way. We hope to draw near our recreated mission statement during Advent to share with the world.

In the meantime, planning is underway with the Standing Committee, Bishop Beisner, and Chan-

cellor Steve Hutchinson, with the involvement of the Diné council, to develop a Constitution and Canons that will best serve the Missionary Diocese. We hope to have this completed for a vote by the Convocation at a Special Meeting in January 2025.

As I reflect on this process, our own change of seasons—a holy time— as nature has communicated, I invite us to continue to walk in prayer, faith, harmony, and beauty. Let's walk in wonder and discover who God needs us to be as servants of Christ.

In Hozhó,  
Rev. Canon Cornelia Eaton

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