

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH

30 September 2018

For Episcopal Schools Celebration 2018-2019

My dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings and blessings to you as you join with NAES and thousands of students, faculty, and administrators around the country to celebrate the beginning of a new school year and another Episcopal Schools Celebration. I began my ministry as a school chaplain, so I fondly remember the energy and excitement surrounding a new school year. Just as the new year grants us a fresh start and a renewed energy, Episcopal Schools Celebration provides us with an opportunity to realign and center ourselves—to orient ourselves towards shared goals and values, even when they may seem counter to the world around us.

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. The words from Isaiah 1:17 that form the theme this year seem to come to us at an opportune moment. As the world sometimes appears to be coming apart at the seams, a shared commitment to these values is our chance to do our part in holding it all together. But these words aren't just nice ideas—in the context of the first chapter of Isaiah, they are actually God telling us that these really are the values by which we should live.

However, with this instruction, God acknowledges it isn't easy. The first word is the key—*learn*. If doing right were easy to achieve the first time, the Bible would be a whole lot shorter. Over the years, even the Church itself has been realizing that we Episcopalians haven't always done it right—in how we have treated our world, our neighbors, and ourselves. Perhaps the greatest challenge of learning to do right is acknowledging the mistakes of the past.

Episcopal schools offer countless opportunities to learn from the past and to respond to the challenges by God to redirect our lives. The 1,200 Episcopal schools spread throughout the United States and abroad are of many different geographic regions, sizes, and types, and yet hold in common a commitment to do right and to redress so many of the imbalances of our culture. So, I invite you to join me in prayer this school year as we consider those values. Then, together, by walking the way of Jesus, which is the Way of Love, we might thereby learn to do right, to seek justice, and to defend the oppressed.

May God bless you and keep you. I remain

Your brother in Christ,



The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church

The Most Reverend Michael Curry
PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE

