

The Rev. Scott J. Brown
Head of School, TMI Episcopal
Presentation to 115th Annual Council of the Diocese of West Texas (2018)

Good afternoon. I have missed you all!

One year ago next week, I began my ministry as the 31st Headmaster of TMI Episcopal. I am the ninth clergy member to serve in this role since our second bishop, James Steptoe Johnston, founded our wonderful school in 1893.

Having served as chaplain at TMI from 2004-2007, it's great to be back on the campus of a school I dearly love. Serving a school community that is 124 years old is incredibly humbling, at times overwhelming, and never, ever boring.

With 460 students in grades 6-12, 125 faculty, staff, and coaches, and 80-plus acres of Hill Country beauty, TMI Episcopal is an active community of lifelong learning, servant leadership, and Christ-centered community.

Our Episcopal identity is one of TMI's most lasting and valuable assets. To further emphasize that legacy, since late last year, we've simplified our common name as "TMI Episcopal," and tweaked our logo to reflect that focus.

I began this school year with two main goals for TMI. The first is to strengthen our community and the second is to define our purpose.

Our scripture verse for this school year comes from the book of Romans, chapter 12:4-5

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Our theme is "we belong to each other." That theme is certainly true for our students, our faculty, our families, and our alumni. It's also true for our diocese. TMI belongs to the diocese and strengthening our relationship with the diocese is a priority for me.

Thank you, Bishop, for inviting your diocesan school to open this Council with the posting of colors and starting this Council off with such a strong TMI presence. Thank you especially to our members of the TMI Corps of Cadets and TMI senior Peter Fera for leading us in the singing!

Episcopal schools are a jewel in the crown of our denomination, a vital part of our outreach.

Raise your hand if you have a mother's day out...a preschool...an elementary school...and a middle school associated with your community.

Now raise your hand if you have a high school associated with your community.

ALL OF YOU should have your hands in the air, because ALL OF YOU have a high school associated with your community! It's called TMI Episcopal.

TMI is the flagship school of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. We are the oldest surviving Episcopal school in this diocese, and more important, we are YOUR diocesan school.

At TMI, we live our faith every day. We have daily chapel services, conducted by the amazing Father Nate Bostian, our chaplain; monthly Eucharist, required Religious Studies courses and community service opportunities. If you come to visit us, you would feel very much at home...and that is exactly what I'm proposing to you today.

I invite each and every one of you to our campus.

We are blessed in this diocese to have many places to congregate other than our beautiful churches. Whether it's Camp Capers, Mustang Island, Duncan Park, or the Good Samaritan Community Services, just about all of you will have attended an event at one or more of them – and every one of them has special qualities for worship, reflection and fellowship.

TMI Episcopal has hosted several diocesan events, including Happenings, the annual Abide in Me conference, bishop's elections, and more. On Sundays, we share our All Saints Chapel with Grace Church, the newest parish in the Diocese of West Texas!

We've loved welcoming you to our campus, and we want to see more of you.

If you need a place for a parish retreat or an outdoor venue for a parish picnic or a swimming pool or a gymnasium for a youth event, we are your school; we have room for you!

If you're having a parish meeting, or a convocational meeting, or an all-day workshop, and are looking for space, we are your school, we have room for you!

If you need a space for up to 600 people to gather for worship, to ordain a clergy or worship as a convocation...we are your school...and we have room for you!

And if you're looking for a private middle or high school for your child or your grandchild or another young person close to you, we are your school...and we have room for you.

Never let it be said, "I would love to have my child go to that school if it weren't so expensive." Let us figure out how to pay for it.

Hear me loud and clear, if you're interested in TMI, call me. Reach out to us, and we will find a way to make the finances work. We are not the "Dominion Country Club ISD." We are your school. We are TMI Episcopal, a school founded, owned and served by the Diocese of West Texas for nearly 125 years.

My second goal for this year is to help our community define our purpose. To make sure we are the best school we can be as we reach that 125th anniversary mark, we've put in place a committee to create a strategic plan. Before we grow, before we change, we must first know who we are, where we are going and *why we are going there*. "WHY" is always a better question than "WHAT" so we are embarking on this strategic plan and answering our deeper "WHY"?

Last year at Council, I reported that we were on the verge of building new buildings and beginning a capital campaign. With a new headmaster, a new chairman of the Board of Governors in Bishop Reed, and a new executive chairman in David Oppenheimer, a member of TMI's class of 1967, the Board wisely decided to press pause on that plan. Rather than try to figure out how to fly the plane while up in the air, we have decided to stay grounded and have some more conversations first!

Don't get me wrong, we're not standing still. TMI remains a first-class college preparatory school, but even more than that, a life preparatory school. Preparing our graduates for college only seems short-sighted. Preparing them for life seems like a goal worthy of our best efforts.

We are in the midst of a research-based technology initiative including a shift to a BYOD (Bring your own device) campus. We have increased professional development by 40 percent to support our faculty, and we have added classes in Innovation and Design, Digital Citizenship, and Character Education. Our capital campaign may be on hold, but our efforts to grow and improve and serve and learn are not on hold, nor will they ever be. So even as we await the completion of our strategic plan, we continue to move forward.

So thank you, Diocese of West Texas for partnering with TMI Episcopal to raise servant leaders and lifelong learners. We belong to each other, and I look forward to our future together.

Thank You. Go Panthers!