



Dick Snyder photo

Anna Fowler, a member of the ECN Design Team, visits with Canon Bailey in Navajoland.

Navajoland Elects Canon Bailey as Leader

The Episcopal Church in Navajoland (ECN) chose the Rev. Canon David Bailey Oct. 17 to become its next assisting bishop.

Forty delegates from ECN's three regions gathered for a special leadership conference held at All Saints' Church, Farmington, N.M. They chose between Canon Bailey and the Rev. Dr. James Leehan, who had served as vicar in the ECN's Southeast Region until his retirement.

The Rt. Rev. Rustin Kimsey, retired bishop of Eastern Oregon and a retired bishop of Navajoland, presided at a conference Eucharist and the election, which occurred during the Eucharist.

Bishop Kimsey noted in his homily that Navajoland "has a uniqueness unknown in the rest of the Episcopal Church" because of its status conferred by General Convention as the church's only area mission.

"Your bishop is [Presiding Bishop] Katharine Jefferts Schori," Bishop Kimsey said. "Whoever is elected today will be an assisting bishop."

ECN's proposal asks that the presiding bishop appoint Canon Bailey as her canon to the ordinary for Navajoland and that he serve in that position until the House of Bishops votes in March on his becoming a bishop.

The proposal calling for the conference was developed after an ECN convocation in June, which the Presiding Bishop attended. The Presiding

Bishop had suggested Canon Bailey as the ECN's next assisting bishop. The convocation decided to postpone the election. It designated three representatives — one for each region — to work with the Presiding Bishop's staff in developing the procedure for the conference. The resulting procedure called for the election to occur during the Eucharist.

After Bishop Kimsey's homily and the prayers of the people, the business session began. Delegates were given time to speak for either candidate, and then visitors had time to speak as well.

Ballots were collected as part of the offertory, and then counted by tellers. Both Canon Bailey and Fr. Leehan joined Bishop Kimsey at the altar for the Great Thanksgiving.

Bishop Kimsey announced the result at the conclusion of the Eucharist, just after his blessing. No vote total was announced, in accordance with Navajoland custom.

Canon Bailey currently serves as canon to the ordinary for the Bishop of Utah. Before his arrival in Utah, he served as rector of St. Stephen's Church, Phoenix, and oversaw Native American Ministries in the Diocese of Arizona.

If affirmed by the House of Bishops, Canon Bailey will succeed the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, who served as assisting bishop of Navajoland from 2006 until his resignation in July.

(The Rev.) Dick Snyder