

2025 NCC President's Message

Dear Brothers Andrew,

Over 140 years ago, our founding Brothers and early peers in the Chicago area saw and recognized human and spiritual concerns among men in their immediate surroundings. These early Brothers quickly mobilized, formed, and initiated action plans to assist men who were in need physically and spiritually. Today's environment has put us in the middle of Episcopal Men's Ministry, which has the format to address two significant areas of need: spiritual direction and those who are alone and lonely. These efforts, which began as a modest and sincere attempt to assist other men, have persisted for 140+ years. These efforts originated not just out of a desire for camaraderie or fellowship, but because they were called to help brothers. They did so unselfishly as Christian men, donors, and supporters, recognizing that "Bringing men and youth to Christ" was not just a slogan or banner but an actual call to be a Brother and a spiritual friend. This has become our call, mission, and purpose from that time forward. We see this in our actions and in the responses of men throughout the country. This time last year, we were showing visible signs of a troubled financial ledger and a continued but slow decline in our ranks. But that has changed. Today, we have seen a resurgence of growth and renewal, fueled by a persistent and patient cadre of leaders, from local chapters to the provinces. We have a healthier budget because of our giving, generosity, and resource management. We have seen a resurgence of dormant and new chapters, a significant number of new

members since this time last year, and an overall profile that focuses on our mission and discipline. This is real progress toward our mission, and it will continue because of the will, determination, and persistence of each member as we strive to share our message and support other men as an episcopal men's ministry. Our ministry is about men sharing with men. These men empower men to be caring and loving, to recognize that loneliness and isolation can be overcome even with the simplest of focuses, as we know and understand through Matthew 18:20. These men are you. We meet, have fellowship, trust, study, and serve together whenever two or three meet. We communicate, demonstrate, and actualize this focus to other men, one man at a time. We do not accept that we are slowly becoming irrelevant, as so many are quick to rationalize. We have persevered through COVID and the apparent phase of spiritual decline. We only accept that we can grow one man at a time, one chapter at a time, one assembly at a time, one diocesan retreat at a time, one phone call at a time, one man's support group at a time---all through one ministry of men. We tell each other what men want to hear: You're a good man, I want you on our team, Teach me, you are a good and faithful servant, and I love you, brother. The sole purpose of our non-profit organization, known as the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, is not just to have a national service center, national board, ministry committees, etc., but a well-supported local structure to lead, support, organize, and lead our mission and discipleship activities that gather men together two or three at a time. We exist as a men's ministry only to develop and share programs, activities, and events that bring all the local and individual

energy of “bringing men and youth to Christ.” We are a community of men grounded in faith, using our discipline to grow strong in our personal spiritual development, continue building God’s kingdom, and counteract loneliness and isolation. We must listen to each other and be more responsive to the needs of our brothers. Our Brothers have been active volunteers in provincial, local parish, and diocesan leadership positions. We are good men, and we invite other men like us to join our team. We should not worry about what we get in return for our generosity but worry about what we can do for other men in our communities to support and assist them in their spiritual growth and bring other men to Christ. Every so often, we should ask ourselves, “What do Brotherhood members and volunteers do to promote our mission, and how important is it to our mission and discipline?” We do actualizations by taking positions as volunteers and leaders of actions among other Brothers nationally, as well as among our peers locally. We thank you so very much for all your service and support over the past year. We are grateful for your service and support.

The Brothers in the Brotherhood must be aware of some cultural and social trends that make it more challenging to sustain our Mission and Discipline. Yet we continue to persevere and remain persistent in our mission. We must recognize that we function as a volunteer organization with a minimal annual budget. We continue to endeavor to make our yearly projections without seeking additional gift support. To this end, your generosity is inspiring. We do all these things in this era with an organization of 1995 plus members. This is noteworthy. We continue to

allocate 84% of our small budget to the men's ministry. This effort supports our mission, discipline, and various men's ministries. Our current budgets are based primarily on annual member dues, sustaining gifts, fundraising, and the generosity of our members. We must improve our budgeting by fulfilling our fiduciary duties.

Let me share our recent initiatives that have been in effect this past year

- We continue to focus on Growth, Renewal, and Development at all levels**
- Thanks to the brothers' generosity, we have revised and updated our website through Neon One Web support**
- Enhanced the “Members Only” portal on our website for pertinent documents**
- Continued restructured Ex. Board meetings that include two workshops and one business meeting per quarter**
- Continued the monthly popular Educational Webinars**
- Empowered the “Governance Commission” this past year**
- Continue to meet with Province Presidents in a Round Table format regularly**
- Participating in the National Day of Prayer for the 5th consecutive year**
- Initiate monthly member and chapter director Training ZOOM sessions**
- Successfully moved to monthly digital Cross publications with print subscription availability**

- Enabled our Executive Director to complete at least two regional training and support venues
- Celebrating the addition of over 320 new Brothers Andrew, 16 new Chapters
- Resurrected a 4-Segment Orientation Study Guide for New Members
- Implemented our professionally crafted Communications/marketing Plan
- Completed our financial management transitions together with the Finance Committee
- Activated Neon Pay for membership donations and dues
- Participated in several diocesan workshops/retreats
- Endorsed and supported Province-level Sacred Ground Dialogue Circles
- Continued our “Mid-Day, Mid-Week” prayer sessions

Brother, we've worked together, and we've advanced the mission and discipline of our men's ministry. I salute you and your commitment.

Roy C Benavides, President