



Iowa Connections

Fall 2018
VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3



The 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church

LOVING with God evangelism
LIBERATING with Each Other reconciliation
LIFE + GIVING with Creation care of creation
the Jesus Movement



From the Bishop

“It’s a beautiful day in the neighborhood, a beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine? Could you be mine? It’s a beautiful day in this beauty wood; a neighborly day for a beauty. Would you be mine? Could you be mine? So, let’s make the most of this beautiful day. Since we’re together we might as well say: Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Won’t you be my neighbor?”—Fred Rogers

Recently my wife dragged me out to see the movie documentary on Fred Rogers; and I came away a believer. His was an effort of Christian ministry as fitting for our current social climate as any. And in some ways he proved that people are looking for community. The movie experience arrived just after I read an article on the politics of resentment that is currently driving our society and while in the middle of a summer book entitled *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Heidt, a study on why good people can behave with such divisiveness across religious and political opinion in our time.

I even followed up by preaching on Mr. Rogers, citing as a sermon illustration his appearance before a congressional hearing in 1979 on behalf of PBS public funding, in which he won over an extremely disagreeable (up to that point) congressional committee chair with the recitation of a children’s song “What do you do with the mad that you feel, when you feel so mad you could bite? When the whole world seems oh, so wrong...and nothing you do seems very right.”

My point was that the writer to the Ephesians sees Christian civility as a key witness to the people of their day. And so it is for us. In his call against anger, slander, etc. Paul warns his fellow Christians, “to be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit.” Because, of course, the essence of the Spirit is to grow fruits such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The occasion for the sermon was the Sunday of a Growing Iowa Leaders weekend. After a wonderfully inspiring day of presenters on Saturday, focused on tackling innovative worship and music, elder ministry and the opportunity

for reaching out and welcoming younger adults, Christ Church in Burlington came over to their neighbors at St. Michael’s in Mount Pleasant, and packed out the sanctuary. We need our Episcopal neighbors. We need to know that we are each called as the Episcopal version of how Jesus is seeking to reach out His loving embrace, and that we are not alone in isolated units. We are in mission with Christ together, through each and all.



Bishop Alan Scarfe

Growing Iowa Leaders, next year’s Engaging All Disciples, and the current launching of the GILEAD campaign are about our common witness to Jesus as we see him in the prism of Anglican tradition and through today’s lens. And they are about preparing ourselves together for such a mission. The Presiding Bishop will be with us as we turn this corner in our post-Revival follow up, to encourage us along the way at Convention. About this I am very excited and very grateful to God for the vision that is motivating us.

We are finding however that the GILEAD campaign or “Growing Iowa Leaders: Engaging All Disciples,” is the part of this movement we need to highlight now. My hope is that by the diocesan convention in 2019 we will all have had an opportunity to make a pledge to God’s future for us which this campaign seeks to underwrite. Half of the funds raised will be expended across the diocese to meet strategic mission needs that no single congregation could meet on their own. This includes ongoing formation events similar to this year’s Growing Iowa Leaders, strengthening new networks of learning, and building communities of practice. GILEAD will also provide support for new and creative mission initiatives that are taking the gospel to those who might never come to church as such, like Breaking Bread or the Way Station in Spencer, but who respond when church comes to them.

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Iowa Connections

Fall 2018 The Rev. Meg Wagner, Editor

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**GROWING IOWA LEADERS
CALLED, FED, AND SENT**
DIOCESAN CALENDAR

September

- 1-3 Happening #45 at St. Timothy's, West Des Moines
- 1, 2 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at Calvary, Sioux City with St. Paul's, Sioux City and St. Thomas', Sioux City, St. George's, Le Mars
- 8, 9 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at St. Luke's, Des Moines with St. Anne's, Ankeny
- 9 North Cedar Valley Chapter Meeting, Trinity, Waterloo, 2:00pm
- 13 PINTS (Priests in New/Transitional Situations), St. Mark's Des Moines, 12:00-4:00pm
- 15 Board of Directors Meeting, 10:30-3:30pm
- 16 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at St. James', Oskaloosa with Trinity, Ottumwa and St. Andrew's, Chariton
- 22, 23 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at Trinity, Waterloo with St. Andrew's, Waverly and St. Luke's, Cedar Falls
- 29 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at Trinity, Denison with Trinity, Carroll; All Saints', Storm Lake; and St. Paul's, Harlan
- 30 Bishop's visitation, Trinity, Carroll

October

- 6, 7 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at St. John's, Mason City with Grace, Charles City and St. Matthew's by the Bridge, Iowa Falls
- 7 Bishop's visitation, Grace, Charles City
- 12-14 New Beginnings #21 at St. John's, Ames
- 13 Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change (GROWING IOWA LEADERS) at Old Brick with Trinity, Iowa City and New Song, Coralville, 9:30-3:30pm
- 14 Bishop's visitation, Trinity, Iowa City
- 20, 21 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at St. John's, Ames with St. Martin's, Perry, and Grace, Boone
- 26 Clergy Gathering with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Des Moines, 2:00-5:00pm, Gathering Eucharist 7:00pm (open to all)
- 27-28 166th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa, Des Moines Marriott Downtown

November

- 4 Bishop's Visitation, Christ Church, Cedar Rapids
- 9-10 Board of Directors Annual Meeting Retreat
- 11 Bishop's Visitation, Church of our Savior, Orange City
- 29 PINTS, 12:00-4:00pm

Schedule subject to change. Visit iowaepiscopal.org for all of the latest schedule information.

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**166th Annual Convention
Schedule Highlights**

All of these events are free and open to the public.

Friday, October 26

- 7:00pm Gathering Eucharist, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry celebrating, Cathedral Church of St. Paul

Saturday, October 27

- 9:00-1:00pm Plenaries 1&2, Bishop Scarfe's Address
- 2:00-4:00 Plenary 3, Presiding Bishop Curry's Address
- 4:00pm Evensong at Cathedral Church of St. Paul
- 6:15pm Question & Response with Presiding Bishop Curry

Sunday, October 28

- 8:30am Plenary 4
- 11:00am Sending Eucharist at the Marriott with Presiding Bishop Curry preaching, live-streamed to all churches in the diocese

All meals are buffet-style and open to anyone with reservations through the online public registration form at iowaepiscopal.org

Healing from the Unexpected

by Richard Graves

Such strong storms weren't expected. Forecasting models produced Thursday morning showed only a slight chance of strong thunderstorms later in the day, said Alex Krull, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Des Moines.

"It didn't look like tornadic supercells were possible," Krull said. "If anything, we were expecting we could get some large hail, if strong storms developed" (Associated Press, 7/19/2018).

So, if I'm understanding what happened in the late afternoon of July 19, 2018 correctly—an F-3 tornado smashing a path through our community—it wasn't supposed to happen!

At most the weather gurus surveying Doppler radar images expected some large hail, but not a whole series of tornados scarring their way across the Iowa landscape—the most significant and destructive of which hitting my residence and my workplace.

Having lived in Iowa since February 1994, I was certainly aware of the possibility that a tornado might rattle my home; but after so many years of this never even coming close to

happening, I probably thought my chances of being targeted by a twister were about as great as my achieving sainthood, which are one in 20 million.

By the way, according to *BookOfOdds.com* "those odds (of being hit by a tornado) are one in 4,513,000. It is more likely a person will die from a fall off a cliff—one in 4,101,000—or will be diagnosed with leprosy—one in 2,930,000."

But I guess I'm prone to be just like most other people. I expect the world and my life in it to be predictable, what I expect it to be. I do not sit around thinking about all of the unexpected things that might happen to me, particularly if such things might threaten my way of living or disturb my peace of mind.

And yet, when we look at our lives, and the world in which we live, we see that we are clearly subject to the unexpected.

When the "glorious" unexpectedly happens to us, as when we are contacted by a long-lost friend or we are the beneficiary of a stranger's out-of-the-blue kindness, we glow with gratitude for such blessings. Life is good.

However, when we suddenly and unexpectedly find our lives unceremoniously turned upside down, shaken rudely and roughly, the wounding we experience is deep.

We wonder how such misfortune could happen to us, our family, our friends, and our community. We wonder how we will recover, heal.



Photos of St. Paul's Marshalltown taken the day after the July 19 tornado. Photos: Mike Wagner



Healing, *continued*



As I have been thinking about my own personal misfortune and that of our community's in the aftermath of the tornado, I have been reminding myself of this truth, "Life does not have to be perfect to be beautiful."

Indeed, life rarely turns out just the way we've planned. And that's not all bad, since just when we're not expecting it, grace comes our way. Suddenly, the plan we had devised turns out better than expected!

As difficult as life may seem to us in the wake of the storm of July 19th, let us continually pray for healing, and commit ourselves to:

- placing our lives in God's hands, who knows our troubles and wants to bear our struggles with us;
- trusting that the one who snatched life out of death in the resurrection of Jesus can bring something good and redemptive out of even the worst of circumstances;
- continuing to encourage each other, help each other, love each other;
- working alongside our fellow citizens of Marshalltown to create a vision for our community that not just restores our town as it was, but makes it better;
- and, believing with all our hearts that we will rise and heal, that God—the source of all hope—will renew our strength and fill us with joy and peace...in ways both expected and unexpected.

The Rev. Richard Graves is the Priest in Partnership at St. Paul's in Marshalltown and wrote this reflection to his parish after the tornado.

The Path Through the Parish

by Richard Graves

St. Paul's withstood the 150 mile-per-hour winds produced by the tornado remarkably well. However, the church did sustain significant damage, mostly to the western side of the structure.

The principal areas of damage included the roofs of both the church and the parish hall; a brick chimney, which collapsed and broke a rafter above the sanctuary of the church producing large cracks in the plaster walls and in both stained-glass and clear-glass windows.

The church building was also pelted with debris from structures to its east, which crushed the wrought-iron handrails at the front steps of the church and damaged the main doors. The church sign that once stood tall has a noticeable tilt and two trees were uprooted.

The Sanctuary itself has not been used since the storm due to falling debris from the cracks in the plaster. The congregation has been worshipping in the Conference Room of the church, a cozy space for our sharing of our collective trauma and the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

On the eastern side of the property, a large tree shading the preschool playground slammed to the ground—badly damaging a fence, pulling up a section of the playground surface, a nearby sidewalk, and crushing a light pole. There was also damage to a telephone pole and a second light pole in the parking lot.

Our Sexton, Mike Blayne, has taken the lead in addressing our losses and he has done a magnificent job of working with contractors, insurance agents and adjusters, and the diocesan staff, to schedule and oversee our needed repairs. Our staff, the Vestry, and our congregation have also been instrumental in assisting with the cleanup.

Bishop Scarfe was in touch with us by phone the day of the storm and is coming for a visit on Sunday afternoon, August 19th. At that time we will be discussing our progress thus far and exploring financial resources which might be available to assist us with damage not covered by our insurance.

Disaster relief donations would be a blessing to us and may be sent to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 201 E. Church Street, Marshalltown, 50158.

Finding Family Across Borders

by Jane Alexandra Clare

A few months ago, my understanding of what it means to be a part of the Body of Christ changed drastically. When I used to read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, most of the scripture would go over my head. I understood on some abstract level what was being said—that there are many different members of the body of Christ and that we all have different gifts that the whole group needs. However, it wasn't until I became a sister to a young eSwatini man that I began to fully understand what it means to be a family through Christ.

I have known Menzi for three years now, and we have had many fun and faith-filled adventures together. Together we've travelled across the United States, gone to religious retreats, and had each other over for home-cooked meals in our dorms (quite a rare feat for college students!). We grew up ten thousand miles away from each other and only met in college, but today I call him my brother and he calls me his sister. To be sure, when we refer to each other as such in public, we sometimes raise some eyebrows, as people notice our physical differences. But my status as Menzi's sister is something that I hold as sacred, because I recognize this as a spiritual truth.

I used to think that family was sharply defined by who we share blood-relation with, and I thought in similar terms about the 1 Corinthians passage. Of course, the “foot” and the “hand” are separate and distinct (1 Cor. 12:15), but I failed to see that they were also part of the larger body. Our relationship with other human beings is like this; we tend



Menzi and Jane. Photo: Jane Clare

to see our family as only one part of a larger whole. But what if the boundaries of family are not so clear?

A few months ago, Menzi asked me to pick him up from the airport. During the two-hour ride back to campus, Menzi and I spoke about family. He shared that he was grateful I had picked him up because he hadn't wanted to ask too much of his host family. We continued to talk about family, and he shared a word in his primary language with me: *Ungitele*. It is a gender-neutral term which can be used for someone of any age, and it means that one has done something for someone else that only a parent would be expected to do for their child. In its literal translation, it means, “You have given birth to me.” Menzi explained that his host parents were displaying *ungitele* by housing him, that the college pastors had demonstrated this in other ways of supporting him, and that I had just now, in picking him up from the airport, done the same. *Ungitele* explains that a parenting work has been done, or what we might call “a

labor of love” in English. *Ungitele* can be used to describe people who have taken on familial responsibilities even if no blood relation is present.

In this conversation, Menzi explained the importance of him having family in the U.S., since he hasn't been able to go home for more than two years. In this same conversation, he offered himself as a brother to me, and said that “having brothers and sisters in Christ is so important” and that they are “some of [his] favorite.” I gladly accepted this offer, happy to be a support for my friend-turned-brother. I also felt deeply honored to have been welcomed into his family and culture.

Through this conversation, Menzi helped me understand 1 Corinthians 12:12 more thoroughly. I became able to see that family is not so much defined by who we are related to by blood, but by the parent in heaven that we all share. To be called “a sibling in Christ” to another helped to open my awareness from just myself and my blood relations to a larger family—the human family.

Finding Family, *continued*

Though as Christians we often call God “Father,” I wonder how often we take the time to think about how that impacts our relationship with other people. If we have a parent in heaven, what does that make our relationship to other people we know? How differently would we act toward strangers, acquaintances, and friends if we treated them with the same love as a family member? How different would the world be if we treated strangers with the same dignity as a parent? How differently would the world act toward immigrants if we saw

them as essential parts of our own body and our own family through the body of Christ? To our own family members, would we hold out an open hand, or a closed fist? If we truly believe that we are all parts of a whole Body of Christ, and that we each have important and useful purposes, how will this change how we act toward others?

Menzi taught me of the importance of having people who will do *ungitele*—people who support and sacrifice for the good of another, simply because they

care. He taught me of the importance of expanding our view of family, because it so enriches our human experience to have an extended family that we call siblings, parents, or children through Christ. I began to understand that our human family is not defined by only our human-blood relations and lineage, but by the blood of Christ, our greatest ancestor.

Ms. Jane Clare is a religion major at Luther College and a member at St. James' Independence.

From the Bishop, *continued*

GILEAD is a way for us to faithfully respond to the beautiful day in the neighborhood that God has given us and to share those gifts beyond our church walls with all our neighbors. The funds raised will support future generations as they respond to the changing demands of mission and ministry. In the past and up to the present, extra-budgetary funds like this have assisted churches' capacity to hire a newly ordained clergy person (curate or associate). I see GILEAD providing for that possibility in a more consistent and expansive way; just as our Youth Fund secures a strong diocesan youth ministry year by year.

It has been more than three decades since we invited the whole diocese to make a capital contribution to boost our common life in this sizeable way, to invest in the future and honor our past.

I have also advocated that half of the funds raised in a given congregation be shared with that congregation for locally discerned ministry, mission, and capital needs. The diocesan Board agreed and voted to advance the costs of those local fundraising efforts, to give the

initiative a kick-start. It is our hope that every congregation engage fully in this process, and take full advantage of the timing of this opportunity. GILEAD is meant to equally address local needs and the wider mission across the state.

Above all, we do not want to handcuff the Spirit of God who is out and about in the neighborhood, looking for those who are ready and open to God by not being ready to support such work financially. Yes, the Spirit needs our hands and our feet, and also our working capital. That is what our shared GILEAD campaign is aiming to provide.

As part of my discernment process I was asked about my vision for The Episcopal Church and how that vision might form my ministry as Bishop of Iowa. Loren Horton shared my response in *A Beautiful Heritage: History of the Diocese of Iowa 1853-2003*:

“The words of the late Archbishop Temple inform my vision for all Churches: “That the Church is the only institution that exists for

the good of those who are not its members’... The world has grown too small for us not to be attentive to one another, and the Church is the place where that attentiveness can grow. The Diocese of Iowa shows me that its people care for such things. You do not have to be a great metropolis to be at the center of God’s purposes. You have to be faithful, honest and unafraid of failure, in a loving relationship with the One who makes all things new, and ready to discover what it is about your neighbor that God really enjoys.”

So, to each and all we say, “Let’s make the most of this beautiful day. Since we’re together we might as well say: Would you mine? Could you be mine? Won’t you be my neighbor?”

In the peace and love of Christ,



The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe
Bishop of Iowa

The 79th General Convention Opens Our Eyes and Hearts in Austin

by Lauren Lyon

One of the metaphors frequently applied to The Episcopal Church is “the big tent.” Our interactive and embodied theological expression and our ability to make room for contradictory points of view while remaining in community allow Episcopalians to be a church that truly lives up to that metaphor. In our best moments, we not only maintain the big tent, but we also work at expanding its boundaries. “Expansive” was a word we heard frequently at the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church July 5–14 in Austin, Texas. This convention was expansive, sometimes quietly and deliberately, other times exuberantly, and occasionally in response to challenge. It has been more than two decades since I attended a General Convention. My prior first-hand experiences of it were the contentious and sweltering assembly in Phoenix in 1991 and its follow-up in Indianapolis in 1994. This year’s meeting showed me how our church has grown in faith and discipleship and the new generations that are entering into its leadership. The big tent grew ever more expansive in those nine days in Austin.

How General Convention Works

Organization and action of the General Convention, which meets every three years, have some things in common with the United States Congress. There are two houses of the convention, one composed of bishops, the other composed of elected deputies, eight from each diocese of the church. Of those eight, four are of the lay order



Cuba returns to the House of Deputies. Photo: David Dreisbach

and four ordained. Decisions are made by voting on resolutions. A resolution is a written description of proposed action usually with an explanation of why it is proposed. Resolutions are submitted to the General Convention by its two houses, through dioceses and provinces and through various working groups within the church. A record 518 resolutions were submitted this year. In order for a resolution to be approved, a majority of each house must vote in favor of it in exactly the same form. Before deputies or bishops consider a resolution, it is assigned to a committee. Those committees meet during the course of the convention to hear comments, discuss the merits and feasibility of proposed action, and sometimes to revise resolutions. Each one is reviewed by another committee whose responsibility is to assure that the proposed action does not violate the constitution or canons of the church. Debate and voting on resolutions by bishops and deputies is scheduled on a calendar that assigns initial action

on each resolution to one house or the other. If one house approves a resolution, either in original or amended form, it goes to the other house in that form for debate and vote. Every convention has its “boomerang” resolutions that go back and forth between the two houses with proposed changes until the two finally agree or time runs out.

Cuba Returns

The big tent stretched before our eyes on July 10 and 11. The readmission of the Diocese of Cuba to The Episcopal Church brings the number of its dioceses to 112. Cuba’s 46 congregations increase the church’s membership by about 10,000. The House of Bishops approved readmission on July 10 and welcomed Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio to take her seat among them. Deputies voted to concur on July 11 and welcomed Cuba’s deputation from the visitors’ gallery to their seats on the convention floor with joyous acclamation. Cuba has been an independent diocese of the Anglican Communion since

79th General Convention, *continued*

1966 when the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church voted to separate from it. Anglican presence in Cuba dates to 1871. Its affiliation with The Episcopal Church began 30 years later. In the early 1960s the Cuban revolutionary government took aggressive action toward religious institutions. By 1962 Episcopal schools and churches had been closed and their property appropriated. Clergy were scattered, some having returned to the United States; others remaining behind. In an extraordinary move, the House of Bishops voted for separation at the 1966 General Convention without concurring action by the deputies. Cuban Episcopalians did not lose heart. They worshiped in house churches, took part in organizations like Episcopal Church Women and continued to pray, keeping alive the hope for reunification. In the 1970s it was envisioned that Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Caribbean would someday be admitted as a single diocese. That never came to pass, but with Cuba's readmission this year, all of those areas are now represented in The Episcopal Church.

Israel-Palestine

The church's vision stretched to the Middle East also with fifteen resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, six of which were approved by both houses. The deputies approved double that number, but several met with opposition in the House of Bishops. The General Convention has discussed the topic of Middle East peace for decades, consistently affirming Israel's right to exist and to defend itself. Those principles were upheld without question at this year's convention. But more specific and substantial action

with regard to the conflict has been a thorny topic for several years. In 2015, the House of Bishops was scheduled to initiate action on a resolution dealing with the church's investments in companies that earn revenue from activities related to the conflict. The bishops decisively rejected that resolution, but not until the next-to-last day of the convention, forestalling any opportunity for action by the deputies. This year, the two houses agreed that the deputies would be scheduled to act first on all resolutions related to this matter in a special order of business on July 7. Early that morning, convention committees charged with work on resolutions related to the conflict held open hearings at which nearly 50 people offered impassioned testimony, often based on personal experience of the conflict.

The two houses agreed with minimal opposition on a resolution calling

on Israel to safeguard the rights of Palestinian children taken into the Israeli military detention system. Other approved resolutions call for the resumption of humanitarian aid to Palestinians, reflection on the deterioration of negotiations for a two-state solution, and affirmation of Jerusalem's status as a shared holy city. Deputies approved a resolution to divest from companies operating in the conflict area and to uphold the civil rights of Palestinians and members of ethnic minorities in Israel. Bishops rejected both of these, but did join the House of Deputies in passing B016 (below).

#MeToo

From a business point of view, July 4 was the day for committee meetings and deputy orientation. From a spiritual point of view, it was a time of preparation. In our tradition's worship,

continued on p. 10

Israel-Palestine Resolutions Approved by Convention

B003 On the Status of Jerusalem: Reaffirms our call for Jerusalem to be a shared Holy City.

B016 Adopt ELCA Action on Israel/Palestine: Directs Executive Council's Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility to develop a human rights' investment screen for Israel and Palestine, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has done.

B021 Support Aid to Palestinian Refugees: Calls on the US government to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency so it can continue to serve more than five million Palestinian refugees and lift the US funding freeze on the USAID programs which aid Palestinians.

C038 Safeguard the Rights of Palestinian Children: Calls on the State of Israel to guarantee basic rights and exercise a prohibition against torture and ill-treatment of detained children.

D018 Negotiating the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict: Reaffirms our commitment to a negotiated solution and recognition of the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians to self-determination and to live as sovereign people in their homeland.

D027 Pursuing Justice in Gaza: Calls on the US government to support calls by the United Nations for independent, transparent investigations into the use of lethal force against unarmed civilians by the Israeli Defense Force and Palestinian forces.

79th General Convention, *continued*

that is the place of the penitential order. On that evening, the night before the convention's opening day, we gathered for a liturgy of lament for sexual harassment and abuse. Bishops read excerpts from accounts of discrimination, harassment, and abuse endured by lay people and members of the clergy. Between the stories worshippers responded with prayers of sorrow and grief. After the final reading, bishops pledged repentance, amendment of life and sound leadership in the ways of justice. The stories were all too familiar to anyone who has experienced gender-related injustice or abuse in the church; but they were also astonishing and profoundly disturbing in the depth and breadth of offense they described.

The confrontation with this issue would not end with this liturgy. In one sense, the rise of women's voices, their presence and their concerns distinguished this convention as profoundly as they did the one 42 years ago at which the church affirmed the eligibility of women for ordination to all orders of ministry. What has changed between Minneapolis in 1976 and Austin in 2018? For one thing, the dynamics of the confrontation. As it has done with many institutions, the #MeToo

movement came to the Episcopal Church this year. House of Deputies President Gay Clark Jennings affirmed a groundswell of energy that grew out of a meeting last fall of GenX and Millennial clergy. Issues discussed at that meeting were reflected in a number of resolutions calling the church to account and to action for gender and racial justice. The leadership of church members between the ages of 25 and 45 in all orders of ministry was apparent at this convention, but most clearly on the floor of the House of Deputies. The millennial generation is at ease with diversity in an array of dimensions that many of its elders are not. The ethnic and cultural collage that is Austin as the backdrop for this meeting of the church only amplified the ethos of just and welcoming inclusion.

Among the most eye-opening moments in the debate were comments from clergy who had attended the GenX/Millennial gathering. A young woman priest described comments made to her by church leaders acting as advisors and mentors through her discernment and initial working years. Their counsel to her included the warning, "the church will chew you up and spit you out," and admonitions to be prepared for the difficulty she would encounter being

both priest and parent. She contrasted what she had heard with words spoken to her husband who is also a priest. His mentors' future vision for him was an extraordinarily promising career with no mention of parenthood at all, let alone its potential conflicts with his work. A male priest who had attended the conference rose and quoted an account of a woman colleague who had been placed on administrative leave for refusing to submit to kissing and touching by a parishioner. It was not long ago that his defense of her and the boldness with which the young woman spoke out about her experience would have been met with embarrassed silence and not-so-secret derision. If the 79th General Convention is any indication, those days are gone.

Gender and Justice

The House of Deputies reached a milestone on July 13 in the long journey that began with the unsuccessful attempt to disqualify Elizabeth Dyer from serving in the Diocese of Missouri's 1946 deputation. The changes brought about by the group of women introduced and acclaimed in the House of Deputies on the last day of the convention as the #MeToo group, and the vocal and visible support

Some of the Resolutions That Address Gender Justice Within the Church

- Changes to Title IV canons on clergy discipline that eliminate the statute of limitations for victims of clergy sexual misconduct for three years (2019-2021), amends the start of the process for filing charges, and provides protection from retaliation.
- Creation of several task forces—one focused on Women, Truth and Reconciliation (D016), one that tracks resolutions that relate to the challenges faced by women in ministry (D022), and one on clergy formation and continuing education, especially regarding preparation for ordination (D025).
- D021 Removes gender and compensation references in the Office of Transition Ministry clergy form.
- D026 adds family status, including pregnancy or child-care plans, to the list of things for which no one in the church can be denied rights, status, or access to an equal place in the life, worship, governance, or employment of the church.
- D037 directs the Church Pension Group to expand its Clergy Compensation Report to include more specifics on items relating to gender.

79th General Convention, *continued*

of their male allies ranged from small and simple to astonishing. Twenty-four years after male deputies attempted to have Ms. Dyer ejected, the church finally approved the canonical change that recognized women as legitimate representatives of their dioceses. In the years since, slowly, and sometimes reluctantly, it has affirmed the vocations of all churchwomen.

In the final legislative session, on July 14, the House of Deputies concurred with bishops on significant actions related to fair clergy pay and career development, specifically statistical studies of clergy compensation and career trajectories for women and members of racial minorities. The church took a step toward gathering actual data that will let us know whether opportunities for ordained leadership and equitable compensation uphold the ideals of justice reflected in the gospel. Those resolutions did not pass unopposed by deputies. A brief debate raised the objection that gathering this type of data would pressure congregations to provide opportunity and compensation that they could not afford. When the resolution came to a vote it was overwhelmingly approved. To date, the church's protection of its women clergy from sexual harassment and gender discrimination has come in the form of guideline and admonition. As we learned at the liturgy of lament on July 4, if not before then by bitter experience, well-meaning entreaty provided insufficient assurance. Those days are gone. A canonical change outlawing discrimination and harassment and providing for action in instances when they are reported was approved by both houses. Perhaps most significantly, the General Convention set in motion



Committee hearing on revising the Book of Common Prayer. Photo: Susan Kleinwechter

a process in which the church will acknowledge and offer redress for past offenses with the establishment of a task force for truth and reconciliation.

A change of the rules does not change behavior, but the ethos of a new generation pervaded this convention, fearless in its willingness to confront injustice and bring it to light.

Prayer Book Revision

We entered this convention with big questions about a new prayer book. Plenty of Episcopalians recall the patchwork of trial liturgies in the 1960s and 70s, the fraught conventions of '76 and '79 and the arduous interval of transition from the 1928 *The Book of Common Prayer* to the one we still sometimes refer to as the "new" one. Those memories came to mind when the question rose whether the 79th convention would authorize preparation of a new prayer book to commence, along with questions about how the process would be different in an era of electronic communication. Committee hearings on prayer book revision attracted overflow crowds and passionate testimonials on all sides. Resolutions on this subject were among the "boomerangs" that went back and

forth between the two houses during the course of the convention.

"Expansive language" was a description offered frequently to describe what was needed for new and revised liturgical forms. The term was never formally defined, but over nine days of discussion deputies and bishops had a sense of what it could be. Masculine language and imagery for God and binary-gendered language for humanity are norms in the 1979 *The Book of Common Prayer*. A more wide-ranging way of envisioning the divine and acknowledgement of more varied human gender identity are elements of expansive language. In the course of the discussion, variations of physical ability were added to the definition, as deputies using assistive devices for mobility and expression offered their comments.

Deputies from the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and Central and South American dioceses brought eye-opening perspectives to the prayer book discussions. Through committee hearings the convention gained awareness about the limitations of existing translations of 1979's *The Book of Common Prayer*. Existing

continued on p. 12

79th General Convention, *continued*

French and Spanish language prayer books do not give idiomatic, dynamic equivalency renderings of the English; they are word-for-word translations that are often grammatically absurd. An advocate for worshipers in the Diocese of Haiti noted that there is no Haitian Creole prayer book. It has been assumed that Haitian Episcopalians worship in French. In fact, a significant proportion of church members in that diocese do not speak French at all. It is the language of a colonial power that their nation expelled more than 200 years ago.

Convention organizers intended that every committee meeting and legislative session have available a Spanish-language interpreter. That plan was not always carried out successfully. Discussion of language accessibility came to the floor of both houses. It opened the eyes of the convention to a gap between the church's expression of welcome and the provision of true inclusion and hospitality to all who are present. A deputy who uses a motorized mobility device noted that rubrics such as "all stand" or "all kneeling" do not truly include all who may be present. A deputy who is deaf noted the absence of real-time captioning of convention proceedings, a reasonable accommodation that is required in many educational, health care, and justice settings to ensure full access and participation. People whom we assumed were inside its boundaries, not because of any overt intention to exclude, but because of an incomplete understanding of what full inclusion requires. The convention heard repeatedly the

admonition that its members who are impacted by translated materials, ability accommodations and other aspects of true expressions of welcome must be part of the discussion about how the church realizes inclusion. These are the edges of the tent that caught the convention by surprise as they unfolded. The challenge to support them was laid before us in a very immediate and compelling way.

Although the House of Deputies voted decisively that the church move forward on revision of *The Book of Common Prayer*, the bishops proposed a more gradual approach to developing new liturgical materials that carried the day. The resolution now would authorize the ongoing work of liturgical and prayer book revision. The methodology will be a "dynamic process for discerning common worship, engaging all the baptized while practicing accountability to The Episcopal Church." The resolution calls for creation of a Task Force on Liturgical Prayer Book Revision with members who reflect "the expertise, gender, age, theology, regional, and ethnic diversity of the church." Its charge is to propose revisions to the constitution and canons for more flexibility in liturgical choices. Under this plan proposed liturgical materials will employ inclusive and expansive language and imagery for humanity and divinity and incorporate references to the care of creation. Bishops are directed to engage worshipping communities in their diocese in experimentation and creation of alternative texts to be gathered and organized by diocesan liturgical commissions and shared with the proposed task force. All materials are to be professionally translated into English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole. Stay tuned.

Marriage Equality

Other forms of expansiveness called to us after a very long wait. The 2015 General Convention approved gender-neutral liturgies for trial use sixteen years after same sex marriage was declared legal in Vermont. They are appropriate for the blessing of any marriage. Prior to July 2018, diocesan bishops had the authority to prohibit same-sex marriages categorically in the parishes over which they had authority and prohibit members of the clergy under their authority from officiating at same-sex marriages. As the convention began, these prohibitions were in effect in eight dioceses. The 2018 convention considered a resolution that would have included these liturgies in the prayer book and done away with the authority of bishops to prohibit such marriages in their dioceses. This issue was the subject of impassioned discussion in committee hearings and in the two houses. Deputies approved these changes; bishops offered compromise. As a result, when changes go into effect after the beginning of the church year, same-sex couples will be permitted to marry in their home churches and their parish clergy to officiate. Any couple may request the use of the gender-neutral marriage liturgy, but it will not yet be included in the prayer book. Individual clergy members will retain the right to determine whether or not they will officiate at any marriage and rectors will retain the authority to determine whether or not a marriage will take place in the churches they lead. These guidelines are intended primarily to assure that couples marrying in the church are appropriately prepared to undertake the responsibilities of Christian marriage. When the

79th General Convention, *continued*

participation of a bishop is required, a diocesan bishop who does not approve of same-sex marriage will be obliged to arrange for alternate pastoral care from another bishop. This result is imperfect. Some would argue that it follows the pattern of delayed justice and inclusion for parishioners that the church and larger society have long held on the

margins. Others would argue that it allows for generous pastoral care and time for opinions to change.

The big tent grew bigger in Austin in July 2018. The edges may be uneven and not all of them are yet full supported by firmly grounded posts and secure cables, but we learned some important lessons about what it means for people to feel

truly that they are within it. Changes resulting from the convention's actions will begin next year. This could well be one of the most creative and expansive times of the church's history.

The Rev. Lauren Lyon serves as the rector of Trinity, Iowa City and was an alternate deputy to General Convention.

Official Youth Presence Reflection

by Emily Jetton

Ever since 1982, attendees to the General Convention have been treated to a peculiar sight: a group of eighteen or so teenagers, roaming the convention center and committee meeting rooms wearing deputy name tags, being ushered from place to place by adult wranglers. This year, I had the wonderful opportunity to be a member of that group, more formally known as the Official Youth Presence (OYP). As the name suggests, the youth selected for this group are a presence, not a deputation. We were not deputies and thus not allowed to vote. As my fellow OYP member and Austin roommate Claire pointed out in one of her blog posts, we were there to be present. Over the course of our two weeks at General Convention, being present took on many forms, including attending every legislative session of the House of Deputies, sitting in on (and sometimes speaking at) committee hearings, and participating in the social and worship events offered at the Convention.

Fortunately, we were not allowed to go into all of that unprepared. The OYP's whirlwind adventure actually began on the first weekend of April, when

all of us flew to Austin for an intense training course. This included a long lecture on the history of The Episcopal Church, personality tests, lessons in parliamentary procedure, and long discussions about the issues that were important to us.

For the first time, I was introduced to my fellow group members. There were eighteen of us; two had been chosen from each province. I have already mentioned Claire (who hails from Michigan), and we were joined by Diana from Colombia, Fernando from Honduras, Angela from Hawaii, Maria from Olympia, Michaela from Texas, Cecilia from Kansas, Luisa from Minnesota, Xander from Indianapolis, Helena from South Carolina, Justin from North Carolina, Andrew from Washington, D.C., Alex from West Virginia, Anthony and Wentao from Long Island, Georgia from New Hampshire, and James from Connecticut. I could not have asked for a better group with whom to share the experience of General Convention. We were a very diverse group—in fact, the most diverse OYP ever—and I can truly say that I learned a lot from each and every one of them. At this point, it is only fair that I mention the adults

who took such wonderful care of us during our time together—Bronwyn, Wendy, Valerie, Randy, Vincent, Israel, Cookie, Karen, Chad, and Annalise. They did an amazing job arranging our travel schedules, getting us to and from places on time, and making sure we slept, ate, and stayed healthy, but they did far more than that. They were also friends and companions who we could talk to when needed...and all of us needed that support at one point or another. One of my favorite high school teachers once remarked that really intense experiences have the power of bonding people together. In this, as in a lot of things, he was right. General



*Ms. Emily Jetton in the House of Deputies.
Photo: Meg Wagner*

Official Youth Presence, *continued*

Convention was certainly an intense experience, and, throughout the course of our experience, the whole lot of us became really close. When I look back, it is hard to imagine that I only met those people four months ago.

With the Convention's opening day on the horizon, the OYP arrived in Austin on July 2nd. Austin and Texas were very special destinations for me, as I was born in Houston and spent the first nine years of my life there. My mother's parents reside in Austin, so I have spent a lot of time there, too. My Convention experience was made better by the fact that it was in a place so close to my heart. Soon after my arrival, my colleagues and I were put to work assembling the Youth Ministries booth in the convention center's exhibition hall. The following day included breakfast tacos and a meeting with the Presiding Bishop. It was my first time meeting him, and I will never forget the hour we spent with him. Bishop Curry was kind and engaging, but, as I have seen and heard, that is just the way he is with all people. A week later, the OYP also had the opportunity to have lunch with the House of Deputies' president Gay Jennings. She, too, was lovely, and discussed everything from her experiences as president to her favorite types of apples. It was a great honor to spend time with both of them.

Of course, the members of the OYP were far from the only youth who spent time at General Convention. The Young Adult Festival and other visiting groups presented further opportunities for young Episcopalians to participate in General Convention. A barbecue lunch on the 5th and a party the night of the 10th allowed us to spend time

with all of those groups. This was especially fun for me, because my friend and fellow Iowan, Maire, and her sister were among the visiting youth. I loved getting to know them better.

Along with all of this socializing, there was also business. The OYP had to attend every session of the House of Deputies, sessions which could last for hours. As can be imagined, it was not always easy to stay engaged, but I tried my best. The matter of prayer book revision generated some interesting discussion, and it was a really powerful experience to be there when the vote to allow Cuba back in the church was passed. Levity could be found when it was most needed, and most often, it had to do with the pigeons that resided in the hall of the House. Attending the smaller committee meetings was optional, but something most of us did frequently. It was a way to track issues and legislation that were important to us, such as Cuba's future in the church (The OYP had members at every meeting of Cuba's committee!). These committee hearings were also where the OYP most frequently used our right to speak. Members testified on Cuba, on the budget for the church's ministries, and Justin even took questions on a resolution he had crafted with his diocese. As I discovered when I spoke in favor of the resolution against mass incarceration, our input was valued and even listened to. Many people told me later how much they appreciated my testimony. On the subject of speaking, the OYP were also invited to select one member to address the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. In April, the group discerned that this person would be Maria. She did an

amazing job, with one of the bishops telling us afterwards that we had "inspired some old people."

All in all, General Convention was a truly unforgettable experience. For me, it was made even more unique by other experiences I've had of faith and social activism going hand-in-hand. In fact, the testimony I gave on mass incarceration was rooted in lessons I had learned along those lines. I explained that mass incarceration is an example of punitive justice, when people attempt to solve problems by merely punishing the perpetrator of a crime. In contrast, restorative justice is an attempt to examine and heal the wounds that led one to commit a crime as well as the victim's hurts. It was very exciting to see the Convention addressing environmental and societal issues the way I had learned—by digging to the roots of the issue and pursuing a course of restorative rather than punitive justice. I have never been more proud of my church or the people in it.

Since my return home, I have missed the friends I made in Austin very much. However, I personally believe that no goodbye ever has to be permanent. Cookie believes that God chose every member of the OYP, which leads me to believe that all of us were brought into each other's lives for a reason. I am sure I will see them again. After all, as Maria mentioned in her speech, we are the leaders of the present and the future. As we continue to lead, I trust that God will allow our paths to cross again.

Ms. Emily Jetton is a parishioner at Trinity, Iowa City.

EPIC 2018 in Pictures

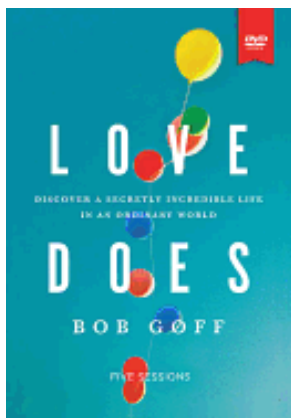


Extraordinary Resources for Ordinary Time

by Sharon E. Strohmaier

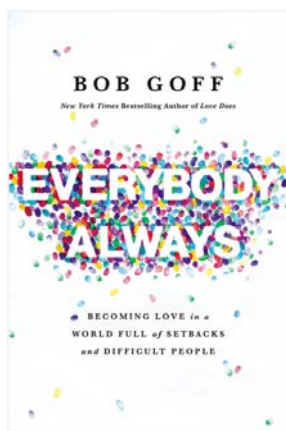
With the heat of the summer firecrackers fading from our memory, we turn now to the cadenced rhythm of fall. If you are out of ideas for your Christian education program, Iowa Religious Media Services (IRMS) has some innovative and new resources to fill this Ordinary Time. Among the thousands of resources available at IRMS, this fall we especially want to recommend six provocative studies for adults and five relevant and wonderfully illustrated children's books, that will forever change your perception of certain classic Biblical texts. With these IRMS resources you may just make your 2018 programming extraordinary!

Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World (DV1585) is a sometimes humorous, thought-provoking, and always meaningful five-lesson study that makes faith in God simple and real. Taking a solid faith approach with stories that offer a simple faith message, this study reveals what fuels the whimsy of New York Times best-selling author Bob Goff. He is fueled by love! Goff believes that Love Does. His love takes action, just like Jesus' love did. Goff's life and attitude just might inspire you

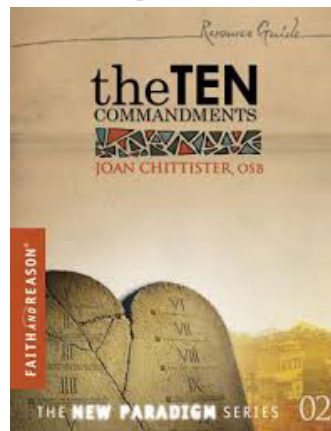


to be secretly incredible, too. And sometimes this ordinary world needs just that!

Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People (DV1605) was described by one IRMS Preview Committee member as “Robin Williams meets evangelism!” In this five-session Bob Goff study, you learn that following Christ means more than just putting a toe in the water when it comes to loving others. It means grabbing your knees and doing a cannonball! And, as Jesus revealed, it especially means loving the difficult ones!



The Ten Commandments: The Laws of the Heart (DV1530) presents Sister Joan Chittister's provocative, “no-holds-barred” approach to the Ten Commandments and how they apply in the 21st century. In this study, she invites us to think deeply about the moral fiber of our society. She presents the idea that the Ten Commandments are an adventure in human growth and that we are



not so much convicted by them as we are transformed by them. To the question, “What does it mean to us—to the world—to preserve the Ten Commandments as the bedrock of our civilization?” she offers a uniquely honest, refreshing approach. Little wonder, this resource is the hottest adult study available.

Twelve Women of the Bible: Life-Changing Stories for Women Today (DV1607) shares the lessons from

presenters Lysa TerKeurst, Amena Brown, Jeanne Stevens, Elisa Morgan, Jonalyn Fincher, and Naomi Zacharias, as they explore the lives of Eve, Rebekah, Leah, Hannah, Abigail, Gomer, Mary (Mother of Jesus), Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Martha, the woman at the well and the Syrophenician woman.



As you learn the spiritual lessons from these biblical women, you will see what those teachings mean for your ordinary life today.

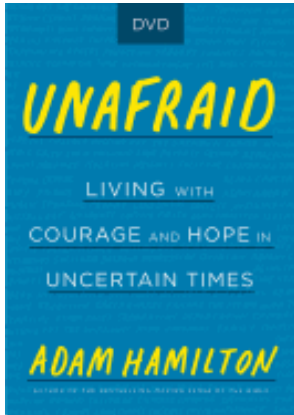
A Crazy, Holy Grace: The Healing Power of Pain and Memory (DV1595) is a four-session adult study on suicide.

As a young boy, theologian Frederick Buechner's father committed suicide. Ever after, Buechner has grappled with the nature of pain, grief, and grace. This study will help small groups approach and engage in spiritual and theological contemplations and discover what Buechner has

Extraordinary Resources, *continued*

realized—that the God who might seem silent is ever near. Demonstrating that, in the end, we all have the same story, the sessions explore the concepts of pain, loss, the healing power of memories, and the use of past goodness and the grace from an ever-present God to close old wounds.

Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times (DV1594) is the newest study from Adam Hamilton.

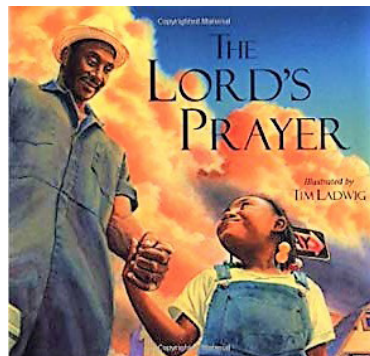


We know Jesus tells us, “Do not be afraid,” but with everything going on in the world, how is it possible not to be anxious? In this five-week study based on his book *Unafraid*, Hamilton explores the worries and fears most of us experience. Through this resource, your small group can learn to identify fears and discover practical steps for

overcoming them...all in the light of Scripture and a faith that promises again and again that we can live courageously and hopefully.

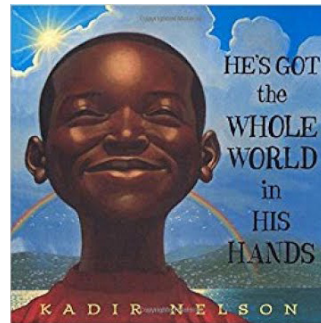
The Lord’s Prayer (BK2016), **Psalms Twenty-Three** (BK2017) and **The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights** (BK2018) are three remarkable children’s books beautifully illustrated by Tim Ladwig. The artist worked for fifteen years in the inner-city missions in Wichita, Newark and South-Central Los Angeles, teaching in teen Bible clubs and working in reading enrichment programs. While teaching art classes Ladwig realized the great need for books reflecting the images of urban African-American children. He created art that became the paintings for each of these books. Every page of *The Lord’s Prayer* and *Psalms Twenty-Three* contains Ladwig’s illustrations of short verses of the beloved Biblical texts. In

The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights, the text of Carol Boston Weatherford’s free-verse poem traces the African-American journey from slavery to Civil Rights, while Ladwig illustrates a panorama of heroes of the struggle. You will



never again experience these foundation Christian texts in the same way.

He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands (BK2019) is masterfully created by award-winning artist Kadir Nelson

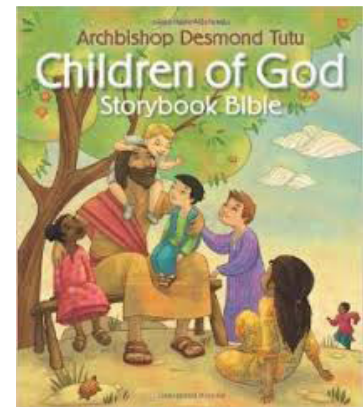


whose sublime landscapes and warm images of a boy and his family presents a dazzling yet intimate interpretation of this grand American Spiritual. Nelson masterfully connects people and nature as his stirring artwork brings new vitality to the beloved lyrics and

their message of faith, celebration, and hope. This book will leave you singing praises.

Children of God Storybook Bible (BK2020) combines, gorgeous art and the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu as he re-tells 56 of the best-known stories in the Bible.

Tutu invited artists from around the world to celebrate children as they illustrated the stories based on their own unique and rich cultural heritages. Tutu says, “Their art is truly a marvelous reflection of how we are all made in God’s image.” Don’t miss this extraordinary excursion through the stories of the Bible!



Ms. Sharon Strohmer is the Executive Director of Iowa Religious Media Services.



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Is That Enough?

by Mark E. Holmer

I was ordained in 1968 and called to serve All Saints in Fox Lake, Illinois. One of my first pastoral acts was to join in marriage a young couple named Carol and Ken Ruff. Carol was elected to be on the church council, the Vestry in Episcopal terms, shortly after their wedding. When I was called to All Saints my annual salary was \$5,000. That year my wife Linnea and I pledged to contribute \$10 per week to the parish. That was a little more than 10% of our income.

As I moved into my second year as pastor, the council decided to increase my salary by \$200 to the handsome amount of \$100 per week. Linnea and I decided to increase our commitment of giving to \$12 per week. One evening, as Carol and I walked out of a council meeting at which we were discussing the budget for the following year, she asked me point blank what we were planning to give. It has been my policy for the 50 years of my ministry to publicly share our weekly and annual giving with the church membership. I told Carol what Linnea and I were going to do: give \$12 per week. She immediately said "Is that enough?"

It took me back that this young council person was willing to question the giving of the parsonage family. I thought that we had been doing well. When I returned home to Linnea and our new-born daughter we took another look at our planned contribution. Maybe we could do better. We raised that commitment to \$15 per week. That episode with Carol, whose voice was probably God's, propelled us to grow our giving every year since. We've learned that we cannot out-give God.

One 24 year-old parishioner had the gumption to ask this pastor "Is that enough?" When it comes to everyone's giving, it is a question that ought to be posed to all who have received God's blessings.

The Rev. Mark Holmer serves as the pastor at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Algona.

2018 Stewardship Share April-June 2018

City	Church	Stewardship Share	2018 Pledge	Due to Date	Received to Date	(Over) Under
Algona	St. Thomas	2,943	3,600	1,800	1,800	0
Ames	St. John's	53,918	53,918	26,959	22,466	4,493
Anamosa	St. Mark's	500	1,500	750	0	750
Ankeny	St Anne's	14,988	6,505	3,253	3,254	(1)
Bettendorf	St Peter's	17,384	17,384	8,692	8,692	0
Boone	Grace	550	550	275	229	46
Burlington	Christ	20,408	20,408	10,204	8,503	1,701
Carroll	Trinity	500	1,000	500	1,000	(500)
Cedar Falls	St. Luke's	35,993	35,993	17,997	17,997	0
Cedar Rapids	Christ	51,772	51,772	25,886	21,572	4,314
Cedar Rapids	Grace	7,434	7,434	3,717	1,239	2,478
Chariton	St Andrew's	3,392	3,392	1,696	3,392	(1,696)
Charles City	Grace	2,171	2,171	1,086	1,086	0
Clermont	Saviour	1,792	<i>pledge form not received</i>		0	0
Clinton	Christ	788	788	394	328	66
Coralville	New Song	21,067	21,067	10,533	10,533	0
Council Bluffs	St Paul's	3,689	3,690	1,845	2,152	(307)
Davenport	St Alban's	7,201	6,743	3,372	3,372	0
Davenport	Trinity	111,133	88,906	44,453	44,453	0
Decorah	Grace	6,765	6,765	3,383	3,383	0
Denison	Trinity	550	550	275	275	0
Des Moines	St. Andrew's	32,586	32,586	16,293	13,578	2,716
Des Moines	St Luke's	30,913	14,448	7,224	6,020	1,204
Des Moines	St. Mark's	5,423	3,500	1,750	1,750	0
Des Moines	St. Paul's	67,466	67,466	33,733	28,111	5,622
Dubuque	St John's	10,117	<i>pledge form not received</i>		2,529	(2,529)
Durant	St Paul's	5,795	5,795	2,898	2,898	0
Emmetsburg	Trinity	2,490	2,490	1,245	1,245	0
Fort Dodge	St. Mark's	27,919	27,919	13,959	13,959	0
Fort Madison	St Luke's	4,400	4,800	2,400	2,000	400
Glenwood	St John's	709	709	354	354	0
Grinnell	St. Paul's	4,686	4,686	2,343	1,953	391
Harlan	St Paul's	550	300	150	0	150
Independence	St James	2,693	2,500	1,250	625	625
Indianola	All Saints'	1,970	1,970	985	985	0
Iowa City	Trinity	91,935	63,700	31,850	31,850	0
Iowa Falls	St. Matthew's	3,795	3,795	1,898	1,571	326
Keokuk	St. John's	11,432	6,600	3,300	2,798	502
LeMars	St George's	500	<i>pledge form not received</i>		0	0
Maquoketa	St Mark's	2,916	1,200	600	600	0
Marshalltown	St Paul's	12,565	12,565	6,282	5,193	1,090
Mason City	St John's	17,251	17,251	8,625	8,625	0
Mount Pleasant	St Michael's	5,126	4,200	2,100	2,100	0
Muscatine	Trinity	16,429	16,429	8,214	6,845	1,369
Newton	St Stephen's	6,149	7,590	3,795	3,664	131
Orange City	Savior	1,187	600	300	0	300
Oskaloosa	St James'	9,909	9,909	4,955	4,955	0
Ottumwa	Trinity	10,751	5,000	2,500	2,493	7
Perry	St. Martin's	8,081	5,500	2,750	0	2,750
Shenandoah	St John's	550	550	275	550	(275)
Sioux City	Calvary	1,904	1,920	960	960	0
Sioux City	St Paul's	2,842	2,584	1,292	0	1,292
Sioux City	St Thomas'	18,145	9,740	4,870	2,401	2,469
Spirit Lake	St Alban's	8,525	8,525	4,263	4,263	0
Storm Lake	All Saints'	2,288	2,288	1,144	953	191
Waterloo	Trinity	13,164	13,164	6,582	6,582	0
Waverly	St Andrew's	5,532	2,800	1,400	872	528
Webster City	Good Shepherd	7,660	7,660	3,830	3,192	638
West Des Moines	St Timothy's	55,779	48,000	24,000	24,000	0
TOTAL		877,070	754,875	377,438	346,198	31,241

Episcopal JOURNAL

QUARTERLY EDITION

FALL 2018

Episcopalians work to mobilize voters

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The election in November should catch no one by surprise at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Philadelphia, Pa. Dozens of church members are participating in voter-education drives, and the congregation's goal is 100 percent parishioner turnout on election day.

Civic engagement also is running high at Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Decatur, Ga., an Atlanta suburb. The congregation is sending parishioners to canvas the neighborhood around the church in support of statewide efforts to register up to 1.2 million new voters.

And the Diocese of Indianapolis has hosted voter outreach events where church volunteers are part of an interfaith initiative seeking to reach more than 100,000 Indianans who haven't voted before.

These are among Episcopalians' efforts across the nation to engage voters in the November elections.

"We often talk about how Jesus' life shows us to be politically active. ... We need to care about the most vulnerable members of our community," said Deacon Carol Duncan, who is coordinating St. Martin-in-the-Fields' participation in election-related efforts. Episcopalians like Duncan have been outspoken

in their call to "vote faithfully" because they say the church alone cannot change unjust systems. "You can't do that unless you vote," Duncan said.

Although Episcopalians may be motivated by personal political beliefs, church-based election efforts are



The Episcopal Public Policy Network created this graphic and tweeted that it is considering developing it as a sticker.

necessarily nonpartisan. Those efforts also are grounded in church policies established by General Convention, which in July passed resolutions calling Episcopalians to greater political engagement. That engagement has the continued support of the church's Office of Government Relations in Washington, D.C.

"Voting and participation in our government is a way of participating in our common life, and that is a Christian obligation," Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

said in a video statement before the 2016 presidential election. The Washington office's Episcopal Public Policy Network referenced Curry's comments Aug. 7 in an updated message about the upcoming elections.

The message provides voting resources, including links to voter-registration information, states' voting policies and polling locations. It also links to the Episcopal Church's voter "toolkit," which provides further guidance on individual action and how to mobilize communities in ways guided by faith.

"We encourage Episcopalians to engage in the democratic process this fall by promoting voter registration, learning about candidates on the ballot in your area, making a plan for yourself to vote on Election Day and helping others to do the same," said Office of Government Relations Director Rebecca Linder Blachly. "Our Vote Faithfully Toolkit provides resources for parishes and individuals to get involved and to participate in our civic duty."

The Aug. 7 message was perfect for adapting for an upcoming newsletter in her diocese, where not everyone has time to volunteer with voter-engagement drives, said the Rev. Fatima Yakuba-Madus, missionary for community engagement for the Diocese of Indianapolis.

In her former role as a deacon at St. John's Episcopal Church in Speedway,

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NEWS
Union of Black Episcopalians marks milestone



FEATURE
Churches help kids heading for school



ARTS
Aretha Franklin stayed true to gospel roots

VOTE continued from page A

Ind., she regularly participated in neighborhood canvassing — knocking on doors, encouraging people to vote and helping them register if they weren't yet registered.

As missioner, she is active in the collective of congregations known as Faith in Indiana, which is leading the effort to reach more than 100,000 unregistered voters and persuade them to vote on Nov. 6. Church volunteers have called some of those residents during phone banks the diocese has hosted at Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis and St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, located north of the capital in Carmel. The Episcopal volunteers' specific focus on reaching residents in a legislative district with historically low voter turnout.

Civic action is rightly influenced by faith, Yakuba-Madus said. "We have to participate in voting."

Government agencies have unparalleled capacity to fulfill the Christian mission of serving people living on the economic margins of society, and "nobody's going to if we don't vote," she said.

General Convention regularly affirms the church's commitment to political engagement.

"Our church has policy that urges all of us to advocate for the right to vote, including eliminating barriers to voting," Blachly said. "Voter-registration issues are addressed at the state level, so we encourage you to get involved."

In July, General Convention approved two resolutions addressing voting rights. Resolution C047 commits the church to advocating in support of the principle of "one person, one vote."

Resolution D003 condemns measures that result in voter suppression and supports steps to increase voter participation, such as "policies that will increase early voting, extend registration periods, guarantee an adequate number of voting locations, allow absentee balloting without the necessity of having an excuse, and prohibit forms of identification that restrict voter participation."

The resolution also criticizes partisan gerrymandering and urges the National Conference of State Legislators to develop a fair process for establishing legislative and congressional districts.

Gerrymandering is the tactic of drawing districts that will favor one party over



Photo/courtesy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields

the other in elections, usually by packing similar voters into just a few districts or diluting them across several districts where they will remain in the minority.

The debate over gerrymandering is complicated further by gerrymandering's use, under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to ensure greater minority representation in Congress by drawing district lines to create "majority-minority" districts. Critics have argued that this has had the long-term effect of pooling more Democratic voters together and ceding more districts to Republicans.

"For the follower of Jesus, gerrymandering undercuts our fundamental vow to respect the dignity of every human being," the Rev. Jarrett Kerbel, rector of Philadelphia's St. Martin-in-the-Fields, wrote in an October 2017 article. "Participation in shaping our common life is a Christian duty and something Christians regard, respect and protect for all people regardless of affiliation, belief or nonbelief."

At the time, Pennsylvania was grappling with a gerrymandering controversy. In January, the state Supreme Court ruled the congressional district boundaries were unconstitutional. The court followed up with a map establishing new district lines that will take effect when the next term of Congress begins in 2019.

St. Martin-in-the-Fields, meanwhile, has turned its focus to voter education and voter registration.

"We know how important voting is, particularly this year," said Duncan. Her church has partnered with a group called

The reform group Fair Districts PA held a presentation in October 2017 at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Pennsylvania about redistricting. The event featured the map of Pennsylvania in the form of a puzzle that attendees could piece together.

POWER, an interfaith coalition of more than 50 congregations focused on community organizing in southeastern and central Pennsylvania.

POWER organizers led a forum in July at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and about 40 parishioners attended to learn more about voter-mobilization efforts, Duncan said. Training was scheduled Aug. 26 to coincide with the kickoff event for a voter-education drive.

Other examples of Episcopal engagement across the country include Good Samaritan Episcopal Church in San Diego, which will host the League of Women Voters on Sept. 29 for a presentation about state propositions. The Diocese of Texas' Episcopal Health Foundation partnered in 2016 with Mi Familia Vota to register Latino voters, and similar efforts are planned for this election cycle in metropolitan Houston and Atlanta.

"People's votes really do matter," said Soyini Coke, a member of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Decatur, who is coordinating the congregation's voter-registration efforts in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Coke never voted and was disinterested in the political process — until the November 2016 presidential election,

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‘Heartbreaking’ devastation from California wildfires shows strength of church-community ties

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Rev. Carren Sheldon’s evening on July 26 was supposed to go something like this: evening prayer, dinner, comply, sleep. But after dinner, she returned to All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Redding, Calif., to find the neighborhood on the brink of disaster. Heat, wind and “bizarre weather patterns” fueled the sudden advance of a growing wildfire.

“The sky was orange, and the wind was blowing cinders and ash,” Sheldon recalled. “The power was out, and the traffic was gridlocked. It was apparent that it was time to gather the irreplaceable records of the church and flee.”

The church was evacuated along with most of that section of Redding, a town of about 92,000 people in Northern California. The blaze, known as the Carr Fire, had consumed more than 200,000 acres, destroyed 1,077 homes and hundreds of other buildings and killed at least eight people as of Aug. 12. The fire was one of more than a dozen major wildfires that California authorities were working to contain and extinguish, from the Oregon state line to San Diego County.

By Aug. 1, the Carr Fire was still burning but no longer threatened the neighborhood around All Saints’, enabling Sheldon to return and reopen the church. As interim rector, she had spent the past week checking on parishioners’ safety and providing pastoral care to church members and neighbors, several of whom had lost their homes or were just beginning to assess the damage.

Sheldon also kept in regular contact with the Diocese of Northern California’s Disaster Response Team, which

has been supporting All Saints’ and the smaller congregations south of Redding affected by two large fires near the Mendocino National Forest. Members of those congregations, too, were displaced or were helping with the emergency response.

As California’s annual wildfire season expands outside of its normal months and the fires grow hotter and larger, the diocese’s Disaster Response Team has responded to several large fires in recent years. The team’s priority in each case is

had to be cleaned up before the building could reopen. The typical Sunday attendance at All Saints’ tops 100, but on July 29, parishioners had to find other options for worship. Some joined St. James Lutheran Church in Redding, and others traveled to St. Michael’s Episcopal Church in Anderson.

Northern California Bishop Barry Beisner, in a video message to All Saints’, said he and Episcopalians churchwide were “mindful of the great challenges that you face, the great struggle that you face.”

“We will be praying for you,” Beisner said. “We watch, wait and pray together, and we’re prepared, once the time for watching and waiting is done. ... We will support you and help you and work together with you for as long as needed. We are with you. Christ is with you. We are one in him.”

Before its own evacuation, All Saints’ served as a gathering place for Redding residents threatened by the fire. Now that the church has reopened, Sheldon is offering the church, the largest community facility in that



Photo/the Rev. Carren Sheldon

The Carr Fire, seen here on the horizon, forced an evacuation of the neighborhood around All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Redding, Calif.

to reach out to Episcopalians affected by the fires while also establishing local churches as resources for communities dealing with the devastation.

“For us it’s, how do we help [the churches] to be a community center for so many people who are displaced and traumatized?” said Kati Braak, director of operations, who helps coordinate the team. “That cup of coffee, the WiFi, a prayer — those things go a long way in helping the surrounding communities find some stability. ... These don’t have to be big things.”

The Carr Fire came within three or four blocks of All Saints’ but caused no damage to the church other than dropping a layer of ash on the ground that

part of Redding, as a resource for organizations that need a place to stage relief efforts.

Some of the support provided by the diocese has been money raised through its standing Disaster Relief Fund. A diocesan newsletter reported that the fund paid for \$1,500 worth of Target and Safeway gift cards that Sheldon distributed. An additional \$5,000 was to cover other fire-related needs.

Much of the support the diocese provides is guidance on how congregations can partner with other local organizations in matching resources to community needs, Braak said. The diocese receives similar

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WILDFIRES continued from page C

support from Episcopal Relief & Development, which also distributes financial assistance through emergency grants that the diocese is requesting.

“We’re called by God to care for the whole community,” Braak said.

Sheldon said she felt that calling too. “We are in the very early stages of this,” assessing the community’s needs and how to help, she said.

At the same time, some members of All Saints’ live west of Redding and had to evacuate homes still in or near the fire zone.

“Those people are still very much in harm’s way, and there are a lot of people in our congregation who cannot get back into their homes,” she said.

The threat also remains for Episcopalians living in the area of the Mendocino Complex Fire, composed of two fires that as of Aug. 12 had burned more than 300,000 acres and had become the largest wildfire in state history. St. John’s Episcopal Church in Lakeport is located directly east of one of those fires.

Deborah Smith, senior warden at St. John’s, also works with the Red Cross and has been on the front line of the emergency response in that area.

“I ... have been working as a shelter manager, first in Kelseyville and then in Lower Lake when we had to move the shelter when Kelseyville went under

mandatory evacuation,” Smith told ENS in a brief written message late July 31.

Other congregation members have faced evacuations as well, including the church organist and his family, according to a Facebook post.

The other Episcopal congregation in the region, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, to the west in Ukiah, is farther away from the Mendocino Complex Fire but still was affected. The Rev. John Day, priest-in-charge, reported intermittent power outages July 30 in a news release about hosting a camp for 50 children traumatized by the fires.

As of Aug. 1, the Mendocino Complex Fire was located in mostly unincorporated areas, where the Episcopal congregations nearby are smaller. The situation there was different from what people in Redding faced with the Carr fire, Braak said, but the church maintained a similar focus on community outreach.

Sheldon lives in a part of Redding that did not need to evacuate, so she spent time in the city checking on people by phone, e-mail and text messages. She visited people staying in shelters or at the homes of neighbors. There is a great need for pastoral care in a time of disaster, she said.

“It’s heartbreaking. It’s heartbreaking. And it’s also what I’m called to do,” Sheldon said. “It’s hard, but it’s important. And it’s a blessing to be able to do it.” ■

VOTE continued from page B

she said. She was disheartened by the outcome but committed herself to turning her anger into action, she said. “It is not sufficient to just complain.”

She and about 20 parishioners met at Holy Cross on Aug. 4 for voter-registration training, followed by making direct contact with voters. Some broke into teams of two to knock on doors, guiding unregistered voters through the process of signing up. Others remained at the church to call potential voters on lists provided by the New Georgia Project.



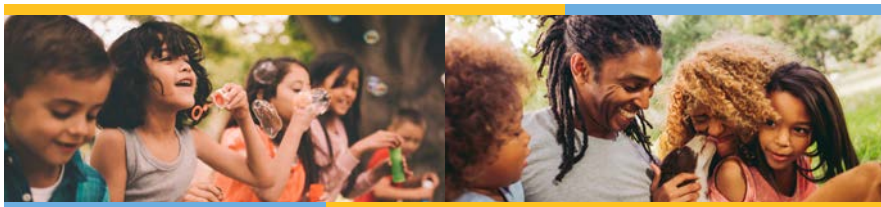
Photo/Dennis Patterson Jr.

Soyini Coke, right, arranged for a voter mobilization training at Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Decatur, Ga., led by the New Georgia Project organizers, including Carey C.J. Jenkins.

The nonpartisan project has been registering Georgians to vote for several years, with a goal of full participation of all eligible voters. It identified 400 unregistered residents within a two-mile radius of Holy Cross, Coke said. The Aug. 4 registration drive generated 396 phone calls, 97 contacts with voters and seven new voter registrations.

Holy Cross hopes to organize similar drives before the November election, Coke said. It is a majority black church, and such activism has deep roots in the black church tradition, she said.

“It’s very natural there,” she said. “If you’re going to talk about activism in the black community, the church is at the center of that and always has been.” ■



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New grant program to support congregational work on racial healing

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

A new grant program approved by General Convention in July will help congregations tackle issues of racial reconciliation at the local level.

Building on the progress made under the church's Becoming Beloved Community framework, the grant program will be the first such churchwide program dedicated to financially supporting Episcopalians working toward racial healing and justice in their congregations and communities.

The 2019-2021 church budget includes \$750,000 for the grants. While that is much less than the \$5 million requested, it "could really seed some powerful work," said Heidi Kim, the church's staff officer for racial reconciliation. She hopes that the grant process will shine a brighter light on existing efforts already

making a difference, she said. "I think people all over the church are doing amazing things that we just don't know about."

This year's United Thank Offering grants also focused on racial healing, reconciliation and justice. UTO in July announced it was awarding more than \$1.2 million in grants for 34 projects.

The convention also passed a resolution calling for creating a Becoming Beloved Community by the end of 2019 to support and inspire the leaders of racial-reconciliation initiatives. This will allow people involved in local programs to share insights with others across the wider church.

As these programs develop, church leaders and staff point to the model of the Episcopal Church's church planting network, through which the creators of new ministries receive grant money and learn from fellow church planters.

"That's when grants make a huge dif-

ference in the church, and that's what we now have the opportunity to build around 'beloved community,'" said the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism, reconciliation and creation care.

General Convention in 2015 identified racial reconciliation as one of the church's three top priorities, along with evangelism and creation care.

Last year, the church launched Becoming Beloved Community. The framework divides into four parts, illustrated as a labyrinth: telling the truth about our churches and race, proclaiming the dream of 'beloved community,' practicing the way of love in the pattern of Jesus, and repairing the breach in society.

Because Becoming Beloved Community launched in the middle of the triennium, about \$1 million was left from the money budgeted for implementation in 2016-2018. When General Convention met in July in Austin, Texas, it approved a new budget that applies that unused amount to continued implementation in the new triennium.

Overall, the convention approved \$10.4 million for work on racial justice and reconciliation over the next three years. That funds a range of expenses, from anti-poverty initiatives to ethnic ministries, as well as Becoming Beloved Community and the new grant program. The convention tasked Executive Council, which next meets in October, with developing and implementing the grant program.

The local focus of the grants will be critical, said the Rev. Edwin Johnson, a deputy from Massachusetts and chair of General Convention's Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee.

"We're excited because there is considerable funding available for communities to do this work in their own context," said Johnson, rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Dorchester, Mass. "There was overwhelming support in both houses [of General Convention] for this work and, in particular, for work that is decentralized."



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Johnson points to the experience of his own congregation, which is largely Afro-Caribbean. He received a Mission Enterprise Zone grant to start a Spanish-language ministry there, and it has thrived with support from the network of Episcopal church planters, he said.

Johnson is active in developing a similar network of racial-reconciliation leaders. About 50 people testified on resolutions before Johnson's committee at General Convention. Afterward, he reached out to each to enlist them in a new community of action around racial healing.

"I think we did a really good job of bringing forth and calling forth new leadership in this area," he said. Their energy is "precisely what we're going to need for the long haul."

Catherine Meeks, a leader in the church's longtime push for racial justice, echoed Johnson in emphasizing the role of congregations.

"This work has to be done at the parish level ultimately ... Becoming Beloved Community is trying to make that happen," said Meeks, one of the featured speakers during a TEConversation on racial reconciliation at General Convention. "The more informed, the more conscious people are, hopefully, the more they engage with the work."

Meeks' work in developing and conducting anti-racism training for the Diocese of Atlanta has served as a model for such training, which was mandated for ordained and lay leaders by a 2000 resolution passed by General Convention.

Implementation has been uneven. "It's a mandate that nobody really enforces," she said.

In July, General Convention passed Resolution A044 to try to clarify the criteria for such training, suggesting a structure coinciding with the four parts of Becoming Beloved Community. Another resolution said that "not all dioceses have followed the spirit of the anti-racism training required," and called for better documentation of participation in the training.

The training is vital, Meeks said, because it provides a safe setting for Episcopalians to confront tough questions about their church and themselves while helping them open their minds and consider ways they engage in racial healing and justice.

Meeks is executive director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing, a ministry of the Diocese of Atlanta that offers a churchwide resource for fostering open dialogue about race and racism.

Questions about the language of reconciliation and clarifying the mandate of the Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism generated spirited debate during General Convention. Meeks led a push this year to move away from the term "anti-racism" in favor of a greater focus on healing, justice and reconciliation. She helped Atlanta Bishop Robert Wright



Photo/the Episcopal Church

A labyrinth diagram showing the four parts of the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community is colored for an Advent mailing.

and others draft a resolution shifting that language.

"To talk about our work under the rubric of healing and justice and reconciliation just has a more positive energy around it and states what we're trying to do in the world," Meeks said.

The final resolution changed the committee's name to the Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism & Reconciliation. It also adjusted the church's focus to "dismantling racism" while emphasizing "racial healing, justice and reconciliation."

"What pleased me the most was the conversation we had around the issue, because I think that conversation was very healthy and very needed," Meeks said.

Many people feel strongly about these issues, whether affirming the need

to maintain a focus on dismantling racism or pushing for a more theological approach to racial healing, said Kim, the staff officer for reconciliation. The value of the Becoming Beloved Community framework, she said, is that it seeks to engage all Episcopalians in that conversation, wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.

"We all have room to grow in terms of how we can be reconcilers and healers," she said. ■

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Charlottesville Episcopalians join peaceful gatherings a year after violent demonstration

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The three Episcopal congregations in Charlottesville, Va., participated in a weeklong series of ecumenical and interreligious events to promote peace, faith and unity one year after a white-supremacist demonstration turned violent, thrusting the city into a national debate over race and Confederate symbols.

The churches are part of the Charlottesville Clergy Collective, which scheduled prayer gatherings each weekday from Aug. 13 through 17. The collective also organized an evening worship service, described as “a service of gratitude, repentance and hope,” and an afternoon “singout.”

“There was a somewhat unspoken consensus that we wanted — we being Charlottesville — we wanted to be in charge of what this weekend looks like,” said the Rev. Cass Bailey, vicar of Trinity Episcopal Church. “There just was a sense that we wanted to project a positive image.”

That positive image was intended as a contrast to the events of Aug. 12, 2017, when one counterprotester died amid clashes with a large assembly of neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klansmen and other hate groups who had come to Charlottesville for a “Unite the Right” rally they said was in opposition to the city’s plans to remove two statues of Confederate generals.

A year later, the legal battle continues over the statues, which remain in place. The white supremacists appeared to be focusing on a new rally in Washington, D.C., on the anniversary rather than returning to Charlottesville en masse, which relieved some anxiety locally, Bailey said.

Police still were “gearing up for the worst-case scenario,” Bailey said. Because

the city’s security measures would make it virtually impossible to hold worship services downtown, Christ Episcopal Church decided to close for the weekend and worship in the morning with Bailey’s congregation at Trinity and in the evening at St. Paul’s Memorial Church.

The Diocese of Virginia and its clergy and congregations, meanwhile, expressed support for the churches in Charlottesville a year after many of them came to the city and joined with the faith community in standing against racism and hatred.

“I think that God has given an im-

Washington National Cathedral altered its stained-glass windows to remove Confederate symbols. Sewanee: University of the South moved a Confederate general’s monument from a prominent byway in Sewanee, Tenn., to a campus cemetery. An Episcopal church in Lexington, Va., that had been called the R. E. Lee Memorial Church in honor of the Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee changed its name to Grace Episcopal.

When Presiding Bishop Michael Curry traveled to Charlottesville last September for a pastoral visit, most of his itinerary

was filled with clergy meetings and an evening sermon promoting love over hate. He also took a few minutes to reflect at the foot of the downtown statue of Lee, then wrapped in a black tarp.

The tarp is gone, and the statue is visible from the second-floor office window of the Rev. Paul Walker, rector of the historic Christ Episcopal Church in downtown Charlottesville. He returned in August from a four-month sabbatical and was not involved in the decision by other church leaders to close during the anniversary weekend, but he said he thought it was the right call. Other downtown churches made similar arrangements to worship elsewhere.

Virginia’s governor also declared a state of emergency in Charlottesville because of the potential for renewed unrest.

“I’m very grateful that all hands are on deck for the weekend because last year was horrible, deeply traumatic for our city,” Walker said before the anniversary.

“I think there’s a strong sense, in terms of the city and state police ... that law enforcement and government are going to be overprepared rather than underprepared,” said the Rev. Will Peyton, rector of St. Paul’s Memorial Church, which overlooks the campus of the University of Virginia. ■



Photos/Charlottesville Clergy Collective

The Charlottesville (Va.) Clergy Collective holds an interfaith service at The Haven during faith-based activities to mark one year since hate groups’ demonstrations ended in violence.

perative to the church to hold firm in our resolve to stand in the public square in opposition to anything that is contrary to Jesus’ teaching that we must love one another — no exceptions,” Virginia Bishop Shannon Johnston said in a written statement. “We will therefore always stand up to hate-mongering, and we will continue to do all in our power to ensure that the world around us knows without question that the love of God is present to us and will always prevail over division and hatred.”

The events last year in Charlottesville turned this Southern university town into a flashpoint in the larger debate over the Confederacy and the enduring legacy of racism. Episcopal institutions, too, were swept up in that debate.

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Union of Black Episcopalians celebrates 50 years

By Pat McCaughan
Episcopal News Service

The Union of Black Episcopalians wrapped up a 50th-anniversary celebratory conference in Nassau, Bahamas, July 27, reviewing and renewing the organization's commitment to justice for all, embracing the "Jesus Movement's" way of love and affirming the organization's calls to youth and to ministry to the most vulnerable.

About 300 people from across the Americas and the United Kingdom attended. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's opening sermon July 23 at Christ Church Cathedral launched spirited, standing-room-only nightly worship with gospel choirs, jazz music and dance ministries in local congregations.

Participants attended daily morning prayer and Bible study. Panel discussions and presenters considered UBE's role and continuing relevance in a post-Christian, increasingly racially and ethnically divided and politically charged world. Discussions included the complexities of multiculturalism, "becoming the beloved community," the "Jesus Movement," environmental justice, current clergy trends and youth leadership.

UBE National President Annette Buchanan proclaimed the organization "the largest advocacy group in the Epis-

copal Church." And she announced the addition of new chapters, expanding a collaborative-advocacy initiative and offering ongoing support of black youth, seminarians, congregations, clergy and institutions.

Aaron Ferguson, an Atlanta financial consultant, told banquet attendees on July 26 that the organization's mentoring and support transformed his life. It afforded him opportunities to travel, create lasting friendships, acquire college scholarships and garner appointments to such church bodies as the Standing Commission on National Concerns at age 19.

"We hear the board meeting, the business meeting, we talk about all those things. [But] UBE has a spirit about itself that affected my life tremendously," he said. "I promise you, there's some young people here whose lives will be changed in ways you can't imagine, with the wonderful way UBE operates, to create this inner sanctum of peace, safety and security for young black people in the church."

UBE emerged in 1968, the year the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and the Kerner Commission concluded that the nation's 1967

riots and civil unrest were sparked by its steady move toward two societies: one black, one white; separate and unequal.

That knowledge made the anniversary celebration "both exciting but also bittersweet, because we are looking at the very same conditions in our society then and now," said the Rev. Gayle Fisher Stewart, an associate pastor at Calvary Church in Washington, D.C., and a conference co-dean.

Conference presenter the Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas, dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary, New York, agreed.

"We've come a long, long way during these 50 years, yet ... the very violence that took Martin Luther King's life remains a prevalent and pervasive reality in our land, in our nation today," she told the gathering via Skype. "That assassin's bullet is a manifestation of the very same violence that is the legacy of slavery, the very same violence that is white supremacy ... that is 'make America great again.'" she said.

African Americans continue disproportionately to experience extreme poverty; institutionalized racism; and a lack of decent housing, jobs, educational and recreational opportunities. This contributes to pervasive violence — both self-inflicted and often at the hands of law-enforcement authorities — and makes eventual incarceration more likely, contributing to "a poverty-to-prison-to-death pipeline," she said.

U.S. poverty rates hover at 22 percent for blacks and 19 percent for Latinos, compared to 8.8 percent for whites. African Americans number 13.2 percent of the U.S. population but are 5.1 times more likely than whites to be incarcerated, constituting almost 40 percent of the prison population, she said.

Douglas and the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism and reconciliation, described Curry's initiatives as a way for the black church to strengthen its characteristic faith and to help others thrive despite the current climate.



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UBE continued from page J

Curry's "Jesus Movement" calls us to a "rule of life," a way of life, back to "the center of black faith ... to discover what compelled slaves to continue to fight for justice against all odds and never succumb to the enslaving conditions of death that were around them," Douglas said.

That faith was born of struggle and challenge, yet when slaves sang spirituals such as "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord," they were affirming Jesus' presence with them in their suffering and pain — that, not only was he there with them, but they also present to him, she said. "They were living in this crucified reality" from which they drew strength to survive.

That song represents both a call and a challenge to the black church's present reality, she said. "What does it mean to be there with Jesus, not at the foot of the cross, but on the cross? What does that mean to be with the crucified classes of people in our own time?"

It means being accountable to and in solidarity with the most vulnerable today, such as transgendered teenagers, who have the nation's highest suicide rate, or with asylum-seeking immigrant parents separated from their children, she said.

Spellers told the gathering that Curry's May 19 sermon at Britain's royal wedding "proclaimed the gospel, and the world responded with a resounding, 'Amen!'"

"Now, black Episcopalians have to step out of the shadows and outside of our churches and proclaim it, too, proclaim the gospel we know," she said. "Proclaim the love and saving power of the God we know in Christ so that the world can know him and love him, too."

May 19 was the day "Christians woke up and said, 'That's not the church I left when I was 13. I'm coming back.' It was the day that atheists began to tweet, 'If that's Christian, sign me up,'" she said. "The word 'Episcopal' was the most searched term on Google that Saturday. People were so curious about what is this church and what kind of Jesus does this guy know about."

Within a week of the royal wedding, a newly created Facebook page, Episcopal Evangelists, had 2,000 followers, she said.

While Curry woke the world up about the Episcopal Church, she said, "at times such as these ... when white supremacy has gained not just a toehold, but is sleeping in the White House, ... when our nation scoffs at the poor and the refugee and the widow and children and everybody Jesus loved most," the world needs Christians to wake up, too.

"The world needs Episcopalians whose lives depend on the God we know in Jesus Christ, and if there is anyone in this church who has needed this faith to survive, who has wrested the faith from the hand of the colonizer and the hand of the master, surely it is black Episcopalians," Spellers said.

UBE is celebrating not just a half-century but 400 years of black Anglicans on this continent, with "the ups and downs, the trials and triumphs that have brought us to this moment," she said "The question now is: Do we know what time it is?"

Multiculturalism

Panel discussions focused on changing circumstances affecting many already-vulnerable black churches, such as di-



From left, the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, Indianapolis Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows and the Rev. Keith Yamamoto attend UBE's 50th-anniversary celebration.



UBE National President Annette Buchanan renewed the organization's mission to support African-American seminarians like Shawn Evelyn, left, from the Diocese of Los Angeles, who attends the Virginia Theological Seminary.

Photos/Pat McCaughan/ENS

minishing opportunities for full-time traditional clergy employment, and ways to welcome those with different cultural identities, including youth, who have largely left the church.

While the United States prides itself on being "a melting pot" for all cultural identities, the percentage of foreign-born people in the general population has remained static over the past 156 years, said Elliston Rahming, author and Bahamian ambassador to the United Nations.

"In 1860, foreign-born citizens within the U.S. represented about 13.2 percent of the population. In 2016, there were 43 million foreign-born citizens within the United States, representing about 13.5 percent," he said.

Quoting a 2013 "Christianity Today" article by Ed Stetzer, Rahming added, "The church is called upon to be an instrument in the world showing and sharing the love of Jesus. The church is also to be a sign pointing to the kingdom of God and acting as a credible witness of God's power. People are supposed to look at the church and say, 'That's what the kingdom of God ought to look like.'" ■

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Houses of worship mobilize for back-to-school time

By Bobby Ross Jr.
Religion News Service

On a recent weekend, Pamela Jennings brought her 7-year-old granddaughter, Amara, and 4-year-old grandson, Trend, to People's Church, an evangelical congregation in Oklahoma City. But, though Jennings is a Christian, the family didn't come for worship.

Instead, they were drawn by the church's Day of Hope — an annual Saturday event where volunteers give away 3,200 backpacks filled with school supplies and offer free services such as medical exams and haircuts.

"It's just awesome, because some people really can't afford to get school supplies or get a haircut," Jennings said. "This is a real blessing for a lot of people."

From the National Council of Jewish Women in Southfield, Mich., to the Islamic Center of Northridge, Calif., religious groups nationwide organize back-to-school events in the late summer and early fall to serve needy families.

Christy Watson, communications director for the Oklahoma State School Boards Association, said she had noticed an uptick in engagement between houses of worship and public schools throughout Oklahoma. Since much of the activity occurs at the grassroots level, though, it's difficult to quantify, Watson said.

Houses of worship and schools "are both places people turn to



Photo/courtesy Shahid Farooqi

Volunteers organize supplies during an event with the Islamic Circle of North America's back-to-school drive in Hempstead, N.Y.

and gather at in times of celebration and need," she said. "So it makes a lot of sense that they would join forces to serve their communities."

The Oklahoma State School Boards Association gives an annual award for outstanding community partners, and, each year, school districts nominate faith groups, Watson said.

Emmaus Baptist Church, in the Oklahoma City suburb of Moore, has received the award. The Southern Baptist congregation buys

school supplies and provides mentors for students, Watson said. It also served as a temporary school location for an entire year after a tornado devastated the community.

"I don't have any baseline data, so I'm reluctant to claim there is a trend of any sort," said Lallie Lloyd, director of All Our Children, a national network that promotes church-school partnerships as a way to address social justice. "However, our organization was formed because we noticed that these ministries were emerging."

Lloyd, whose organization is affiliated with the Episcopal Church, said church-school partnerships typically have two purposes. "One is to provide direct services to the children ... and that's where the school supplies would come in," she said.

"But the second purpose, and really the motivating aspiration and dream behind All Our Children, is taking a more systemic approach to the realities of educational inequity."

According to the National Retail Federation, families with children in elementary through high school will spend an average of \$684.79 on back-to-school shopping this year.

But for the poor, buying crayons and pencils, much less shoes and jackets, can be a major financial burden. That has inspired many houses of worship nationwide to get involved, said leaders of faith groups doing back-to-school work.

"Islam teaches that you cannot just sleep at night if your neighbor is hungry next door," said Shahid Farooqi, national coordinator for Islamic Circle of North America's back-to-school drive. That principle applies to children who need school supplies, Farooqi said.

This year, the ICNA drive is distributing 50,000 backpacks in 34 states. Both numbers have increased every year since the project's launch six years ago, he said. The Northridge, Calif., mosque is among the participants.

Sandi Matz, co-president of the National Council of Jewish Women in Southfield, Mich., said her organization aimed to help women, children and families.

Before school starts, the group will welcome 600 Detroit schoolchildren to a shopping spree, Matz said. "They will come and shop — but they don't pay — for a complete set of clothing, jacket, hats, mittens, pants,

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Two dioceses ponder sharing one bishop, staff, mission

Episcopal News Service

A friendship in the House of Bishops between the Episcopal Church's oldest active diocesan bishop and its youngest has fostered a first-of-its-kind collaborative experiment that could point to the future shape and feel of dioceses.

Western New York Bishop William Franklin, 71, told the House of Bishops at General Convention that he and Northwestern Pennsylvania Bishop Sean Rowe, 43, acted upon a common concern for the mission of the church.

On Oct. 26-27, the two dioceses will hold a joint convention in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Western New York will vote on whether to make Rowe its provisional bishop for five years. Franklin is due to retire April 2.

For the past five years, Episcopalians in the two dioceses have shared a formation process for deacons and a board to examine chaplains for the ordination



Photo/ENS

Northwestern Pennsylvania Bishop Rowe, left and Western New York Bishop Franklin announce plans for greater collaboration between their dioceses.

process, and they have held some joint clergy conferences. The dioceses recently started sharing transition-ministry functions.

It will remain a collaboration, not a merger, if the Western New York convention elects Rowe. Merging would require the consent of General Convention, and neither diocese currently wants to lose its identity, the two bishops told ENS.

"The only way we're going to know if these models work is to try them, so it's a risk. This is not being driven by finances or trying to drive success," Rowe said. "This is us asking, 'What do we think is the next best step, given where we are?'"

James Isaac, chair of the Western New York Standing Committee, said his attitude was: "Why not give it a try?"

"The pooled energy of ministry of both the clergy between Western New

York and Northwestern Pennsylvania and the strength of the laity has huge potential," he said.

The neighboring dioceses are in a part of the United States that has undergone a massive economic downturn. Western New York, with headquarters in Buffalo, includes 57 churches. Northwestern Pennsylvania, headquartered in Erie, has 33 congregations.

The area has declined with the loss of employment in now-outdated steel mills. However, redevelopment is happening in cities in both dioceses. "Both areas have seen the worst, and they're coming back in a different form," Isaac said.

"We're trying to do church in a way that allows the Episcopal Church to survive and flourish in an area where we've had challenges — demographic and cultural challenges," Franklin said.

Rowe agreed. "This is not a move to save an institution. This is not about diocesan viability. What this is about is what's best for the mission of the church in our region and the mission of God," he told the bishops.

Eventually, the dioceses would share one staff. Rowe would have offices in both Buffalo and Erie, which are about 90 minutes apart, and would visit congregations in both dioceses. Elected leaders in both dioceses would exercise their canonical functions, and each diocese would maintain its cathedral. ■

SCHOOL continued from page L

shirt, shoes, underwear and a backpack that will be filled with supplies and a book."

Some of the children never have owned a new pair of socks and light up at how soft they feel, she said, "just like you gave them the biggest candy bar in the world."

It's easy to forget how costly a new school year can be, said Andy Wynn, People's Church's director of communications.

"You've got to get new clothes for your kids. You've got to get school supplies, immunizations, haircuts, shoes and things of that nature," Wynn said. "So when you multiply that across having four or five kids, and maybe being a single parent and having only one job, it can really add up to where it's not possible."

Besides school supplies, People's Church regularly dispatches remodeling, painting and landscaping crews to public-school buildings.

"It's just another part of being part of the community ... and just showing the love of Christ," Wynn said. ■

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'Queen of Soul' kept church connection throughout her career

By Adelle M. Banks
Religion News Service

Aretha Franklin, a singer who began her career with gospel music and was later crowned the "Queen of Soul," died on Aug. 16 after battling a range of health issues.

"Her instantly recognizable voice has captivated listeners ever since she toured with her father's gospel revue in the 1950s," read the citation when President George W. Bush awarded her the 2005 Presidential Medal of Freedom.

A Memphis, Tenn., native, Franklin, 76, got her start in the Detroit church of her pastor father, the Rev. C.L. Franklin. She was first recorded at his New Bethel Baptist Church on the album "Spirituals" at age 14.

"Aretha, like Al Green, is one of the few artists who is universally accepted in the black church," Bil Carpenter, author of "Uncloudy Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia," told Religion News Service. "The church often shuns artists who



Photo/Andy Kropa/Invision/AP

Aretha Franklin performs for the last time at the Elton John AIDS Foundation gala at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on Nov. 7, 2017, in New York.

sing R&B as backsliders and reject them when they come back and sing gospel. However, Aretha's always been given a pass."

Franklin was a "gifted singer even as a young girl," said gospel and soul singer Candi Staton, who traveled on the gospel circuit with Franklin during the 1950s. "What I love about it is that she never lost her connection to the church, and that church training was always chan-

neled through her music regardless of what she was singing," Staton said. "She took you to church even if she was singing about a no-good man."

A lifelong Baptist whose mother and sisters were gospel singers, Franklin continued to represent her church roots on stage and on some of her secular albums for decades, Carpenter said. She influenced artists in genres stretching from R&B to country, as well as inspiring gospel artists from Richard Smallwood and The Hawkins Family to Karen Clark Sheard, Donald Lawrence and Anita Wilson.

"It's the sheer power of her voice and the unique phrasing that distinguish her from her peers. In her prime, Aretha's voice took listeners to a place that few other artists' voices could take them," Carpenter said. "Whether she was singing a Broadway tune, a Jazz standard or an R&B song, she always brought that authentic black gospel flavor to it."

The singer known for "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" and "Respect" also gave a nod to faith in "I Say a Little Prayer," which begins: "The moment I wake up/Before I put on my makeup/I say a little prayer for you."

Her best-selling album, 1972's "Amazing Grace," is among five Franklin recordings that are featured in the Grammy Hall of Fame.

"Critics always talked about the gospel feeling in Aretha's voice, so it was a very big deal when she finally made a proper gospel album like 'Amazing Grace,'" Carpenter said. "For years, it was the best-selling gospel album by a woman ever ... until Whitney Houston's 'The Preacher's Wife' stole that top position at 3 million units."

Franklin's two-record set includes the classic hymn by John Newton as well as "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "God Will Take Care of You."

On that live album, Franklin "sings like never before on record," a Rolling Stone reviewer said.

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continued on page P

Writing icons reveals the presence of God

By Melodie Woerman

Acrylic paint. A wooden board. Short brush strokes. More paint. Those all help the Rev. Les Jackson, rector of St. Matthew's, Newton, Kan., finish an icon of Jesus, Mary or one of the saints. But they are

icons are a form of beauty that helps reveal God's presence to us, he said. And to create an icon one must slow down, be intentional and be truly present to God. "We are consumed by 'fast,'" he said. "Here you slow down. Be aware of the textures and colors. And ask God for the grace to do this work."

And breathe, he said: It takes deep breathing to calm the soul enough to be attuned to God's presence.

Pointing you back to God

You don't paint an icon, Jackson said, you write it, because Eastern Orthodoxy believes icons and Scripture equally are revelations of God. And the reason for icon writing always points back to God, he said. "The purpose isn't to create a great work of art but a great time of prayer."

The need for a deeper prayer life that drew Jackson to icons 13 years ago. A friend suggested it when he struggled with questions of vocation. Writing icons helped still his mind and heart and find peace, he said.

It also connected him to the intentionality of creating. "All the time we are creating things in our lives but are not aware of it," he said. "Writing an icon is

intentional. We can do the same thing in life — be intentional about what we create, including relationships."

Halos, eyes and color

Writing an icon starts with a pattern



The Rev. Les Jackson writes an icon of Jesus.

traced onto a board — plain wood or, more often, an art panel — composite wood made for painting. Designs usually come from pattern books, but Jackson said he would take inspiration wherever he found it. A stylized icon of Jesus as the Good Shepherd came from a church school lesson.

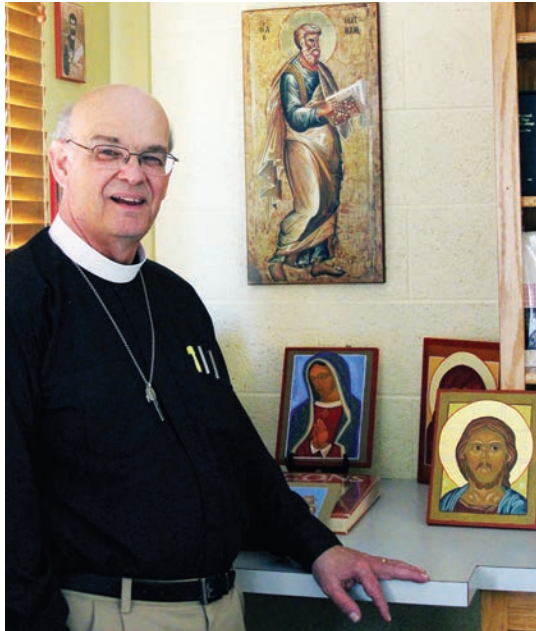
He uses acrylic paints because they are easier to use, even though that strays from the tradition that icons be made only with natural substances, he said, noting that egg tempera is much harder to use.

He starts by applying a dark base coat, using short brush strokes in different directions so the paint stays smooth. Then come highlights: layer upon layer of different paints to create the features of a face and hands, or the folds in clothing.

He adds halos last, sometimes in thin sheets of gold leaf but more often in gold paint. Gold leaf is tricky to use, and it's almost impossible to repair if it tears, he said.

Icon colors are highly symbolic: blue for the transcendent mystery of God, green for life and hope, deep red for royalty, white for glory. But when at a loss for the right color to use, Jackson said,

continued on page P



Photos/Melodie Woerman

Above, the Rev. Les Jackson poses with some of the icons he has written. Another icon writer created the icon of St. Matthew, hanging on the wall, that belongs to his church. At right, Jackson's icons are displayed surrounding a book about icons.

not what got him started.

It's prayer. "To write an icon is to engage in prayer," he said. "We make ourselves present to God."

And breathing. "You breathe in God's mercy and grace, and breathe out all the bad stuff."

And creating. "Creating is what God did in the beginning and created us to do that, too."

Icons are central in Eastern Orthodox practice but are less understood in Western Christianity, Jackson said. But icons' origins in prayer and as vehicles for creating beauty can enhance the spirituality of believers today, he said. "The theological understanding behind icons is that God created us beautiful, in his image, and then someone lied to us. And we believed the lie."

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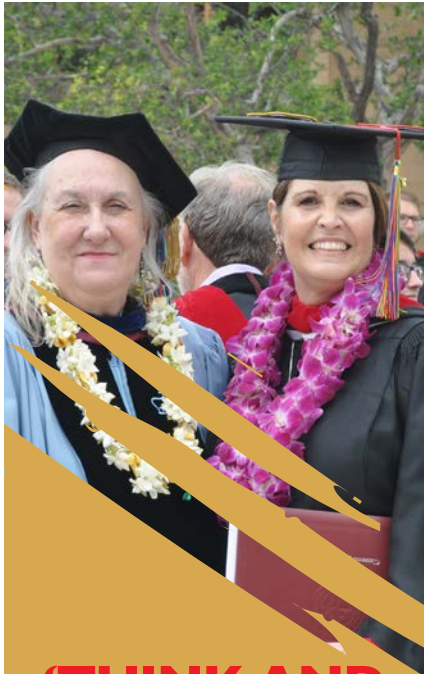
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ARETHA continued from page N

“Amazing Grace’ is more a great Aretha Franklin album than a great gospel album,” wrote Jon Landau at the time. “The liberation and abandon she has always implied in her greatest moments are now fully and consistently achieved.”

Clara Ward, of the Ward Singers, and Mahalia Jackson were among Franklin’s mentors. She sang “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” at Jackson’s funeral. She also performed the song, a favorite of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at the 2011 dedication of the Washington memorial in his honor.

When asked in 2017 by the Chicago Sun-Times about her faith, Franklin said: “It is very important. It certainly has sustained me to this day.”

Earlier, in 2013, she told The Associated Press that her healing from an undisclosed condition was considered “absolutely miraculous” after she had been ill for several months.

“I was talking to Smokey Robinson, my oldest best friend Smokey, talking about the fact that some doctors are not very well acquainted with faith healing,” she told the Associated Press. “And Smokey said, ‘Well, they just don’t know who your healer is.’”

In 1987, Franklin became the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll

Hall of Fame in Cleveland. “In Aretha Franklin’s sprawling career, she has taken on many roles — the devout gospel singer, the sensual R&B siren, the pop crossover phenom, Lady Soul — and dominated them all,” the hall’s website says.

The same year, Franklin again recorded sacred music at New Bethel for



Aretha Franklin’s gospel albums were “Amazing Grace,” released in 1972, and “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism,” 1987.

the album “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism,” which won a Grammy for best soul performance.

Franklin received a Kennedy Center honor in 1994.

Her more recent Grammy wins one in 2007 for “Never Gonna Break My Faith” with Mary J. Blige. The song was featured on the soundtrack of the film “Bobby,” about the 1968 assassination of U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy. In 2010, she won a Grammy for “You’ve Got a Friend,” recorded with Ronald Isley.

Franklin, who had announced retirement plans in 2017, had hoped to continue touring in 2018. ■

ICONS continued from page O

ask God to guide you, and then be still and wait.

Eyes are prominent features in icons and often seem like they follow the viewer around a room. Jackson sticks to the tradition of not painting a glister in the eyes. “The light is supposed to come from within,” he said.

It takes him 12 to 16 hours to complete a simple icon, which he then gives away. “In the process of doing one, I usually think of someone who needs it.”

One exception is an icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a recent work that he will give to one of his daughters. He wrote a similar icon several years ago, and she asked if he would create one for her. This one, he said, “invokes a sense of kindness, compassion and gentleness. I hope

my daughter also sees my love for her.”

His favorite icon, he said, is whatever one he is creating.

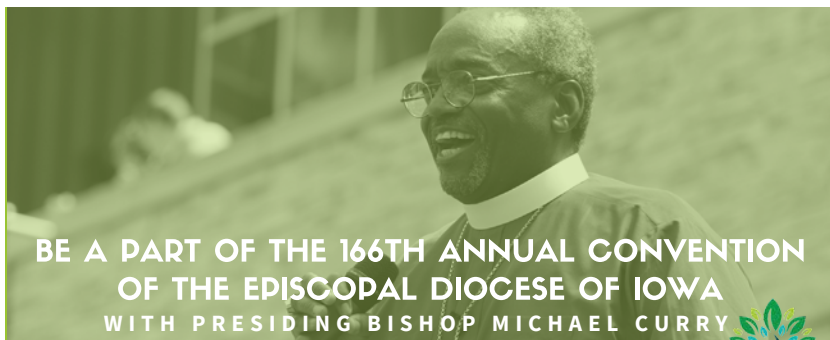
Icons have become a major part of Jackson’s spiritual life. “This practice has taught me that being whole is better than being perfect; that mistakes add strength, learning and character; and that we seek God’s image in all things,” he said. “We ought to create and bring beauty into our lives at every stage.”

But don’t be judgmental about it, he added, saying that he knows he is not a great artist. But that isn’t really the point, he said. “Doing this work prayerfully allows us to get to the heart.” ■

Melodie Woerman is director of communications for the Diocese of Kansas. This story first appeared in the diocesan magazine, The Harvest.



General Convention: A-Iowa youth in the House of Deputies, B-Presiding Bishop Curry preaches at the Revival with his Spanish translator, C-Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, D-Iowa's deputies, E-Native American flute at opening Eucharist, F-Ms. Ellen Bruckner at the Province VI meeting, G-Young Adult Story Weavers, H-Bishop Scarfe leads one of the daily prayer services to remember victims of gun violence, I-Digital worship materials, J-The Rev. Winnie Varghese, K-Family worship. Photos: Meg Wagner



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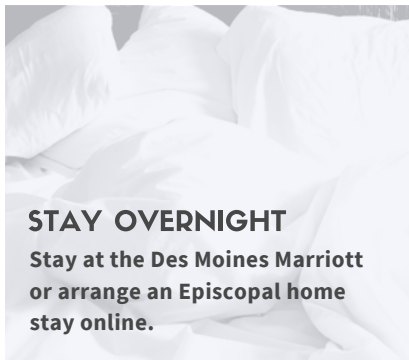
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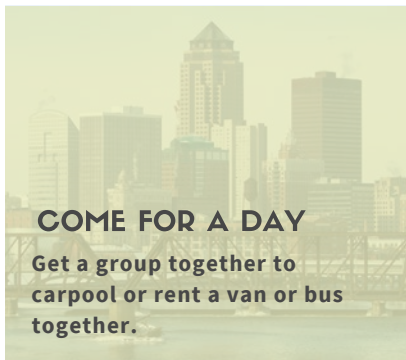
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